Continuing ACSA’s commitment to leading curriculum change, this year’s Symposium to be held on the 14th and 15th October in Sydney, focuses on curriculum integration. We want to critique curriculum integration models and challenge teachers and leaders to consider the best approach to meet the needs of their students. We also want to provide school leaders and teachers with strategies, tools and skills to become curriculum innovators and designers. To that end, we have an excellent program with outstanding presenters including academics, school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders who offer a range of supportive programs for schools. I encourage you to consider attending, as this Symposium will provide a useful springboard for our 2017 conference that will be held in Sydney in October.

My own work centres around Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) integration where I have been influenced by the work of Rodger Bybee (2013) from the United States. As many of you will be aware, STEM education has been a priority in the United States for over a decade with many approaches to increasing the focus on STEM in schools. Some schools are now STEM-focused schools while others have embraced project-based and problem-based learning from the STEM perspective. Bybee acknowledges the importance of the separate disciplines but also notes:
If we want students to learn how to apply knowledge, their education experiences must involve them in both learning the knowledge of STEM disciplines and reacting to situations that require them to apply that knowledge in contexts appropriate to their age and stage of development. (Bybee, 2013, p. x)

In addition, he suggests the impact of STEM education in the United States has been varied and recommends we need to consider particular challenges if we wish to implement an integrated STEM curriculum in Australia. In particular, he recommends we need to rise to the challenge of:

- including technology and engineering in STEM approaches
- using contexts for STEM education in schools
- moving from STEM as a slogan to an education definition.

I believe the last challenge will be the hardest—all too often new ideas come and go in education and there is a real chance that STEM education will just become another bandwagon. However, a focused, planned approach by schools might prevent this from happening—we need to focus on purpose, policy, programs and practices when planning a STEM education approach in schools, particularly if teachers and leaders are to design integrated curriculum.

To focus planning around curriculum redesign, I recommend school leaders use the following (or a similar set of) questions to lead conversations:

1. Why do you want to add STEM to our curriculum? (PURPOSE)
2. What problem are we aiming to solve? (PURPOSE)
3. Given the problem, which STEM strategy might address this? (POLICIES/PROGRAMS)
4. Which teachers should be involved?
5. What school structures need to change to implement the strategy?
6. How can we find the time and space to develop the plan?
7. What PRACTICES will we implement?
8. How will we know they have been effective?

Of course this advice applies to all forms of curriculum design and curriculum integration including STEAM and HASS (Humanities and Social Sciences) and the many other combinations schools may consider. Another approach to curriculum integration could be to design learning experiences based on the ACARA general capabilities so that students might solve complex problems and draw on knowledge from any subject area to help frame their responses. I am aware that some primary schools have embarked on this approach.

Speakers at the ACSA Symposium in Sydney will challenge our thinking, encourage us to evaluate what we currently do and consider new ways of delivering curriculum to meet the needs of our students. I am looking forward to these challenges and hope you will join me in these important conversations.

Judy Anderson
ACSA President

This newsletter details many of ACSA’s activities during 2016. In this column I’d like to highlight a new focus on professional learning for ACSA this year. It has taken the form of a series of hour-long webinars presented during the evening throughout school terms. At the time of writing we have had more than 360 registrations for our series throughout the year with more webinars yet to be completed! We are delighted with the take up among members and others.

Our survey of attendees shows that presenters, content and relevance are very highly rated. Attendees are also very pleased with the time and length of presentations and are delighted with the ease of being able to access professional learning from their desktop in the evening, no matter where they happen to be.

We have been very fortunate to have some amazing, dedicated educators willing to present and share their thoughts and ideas with others. Thank you to all those who have been a part of this series, ACSA highly values your input and commitment to Australia’s teaching profession. You can find further information on the webinars and presenters later in this newsletter.

The next ACSA News (February 2017) will have details of the 2017 series, so if you haven’t joined us yet, please consider doing so. You might find, as some of our delegates have, that you enjoy them so much you will become a regular attendee!

The ACSA Executive have been planning to extend our professional learning offerings even further in 2017. ACSA will be going on the road and you might find a workshop close to you! Details will be available in February’s ACSA News and we hope you will be able to use this information to plan your professional learning throughout the year. To support teacher identified professional learning hours, certificates of participation are given to attendees at these activities.

Finally, I’d like to take this opportunity to invite you to attend our major professional learning opportunity of the year—the ACSA 2016 Australian Curriculum Symposium to be held in Sydney on Friday 14 and Saturday 15 October. See details starting on page 7. It is not too late to register! We would be delighted to see you at the two-day Symposium!

I am very excited about the renewed focus that ACSA has on providing professional learning and hope I have the opportunity of meeting you through those activities.

Katherine Schoo
ACSA Executive Director
ACSA is delighted to announce that from 2017 ACSA’s professional journal *Curriculum Perspectives* will be published by Springer and available from their website.

This is an excellent development as it will mean authors who have their articles published in *Curriculum Perspectives* will receive the benefits of having their work more widely circulated internationally.

From the beginning of 2017 ACSA members will be able to access the *Curriculum Perspectives* journal online through a link from the member’s area of the ACSA website to the Springer website. The April 2017 edition will be the first to be accessed in this way. You will be sent further information about access closer to the time. ACSA members will be sent alerts when the each edition of *Curriculum Perspectives* becomes available on the Springer website. Please note: To ensure you receive these alerts and other benefits of membership it is important to keep ACSA updated with any changes to your email address. Any changes should be forwarded to acsa@acsa.edu.au

Authors intending to contribute to *Curriculum Perspectives* should now do so via the following link http://www.springer.com/41297. You will find instructions on how to submit online and links to register as an author.

Our sincere thanks go to the ACSA Executive members for their commitment and diligence in progressing the ACSA/Springer partnership. They have achieved excellent results for ACSA and the future of *Curriculum Perspectives*. Thank you to Kerry Kennedy, Deborah Henderson, Kathryn Moyle, Judy Anderson and Michael Kindler.
At ACSA we know how important it is to communicate effectively with our members. In the past we have relied on a combination of electronic and postal delivery of information and updates.

During the year ACSA has moved most of our postal notifications (invoicing, renewals etc) to email and therefore we require some updated information from our institutional members. Many of you have already forwarded this information, and we thank you for that.

To streamline our service, we ask that you provide more than one contact for your organisation so you do not miss out on notifications, publication updates and fantastic professional development opportunities. The more contacts you are able to provide, the better we can target our messages to your individual needs and allow you to enjoy the full benefits of your ACSA membership. This is particularly important to ensure that notifications about the journal being available online reach the appropriate person. We are asking for a separate email contacts for billing, Curriculum Perspectives and professional learning information.

If you are comfortable with maintaining the one contact for all or some areas within your organisation, feel free to do so. Our aim is to achieve an outcome that makes management of your membership both easy and seamless.

Many of ACSA’s institutional members have provided this information, however, if you have not—please complete and return by either:
1. Cutting and pasting the following into an email and sending to acsa@acsa.edu.au
2. Printing and faxing to 02 6260 5665

**Organisation name:**

**Membership number:**

**Billing contact name:**

**Billing contact email address:**

**Curriculum Perspectives journal recipient name:**

**Curriculum Perspectives journal recipient email address:**

**Professional learning contact name:**

**Professional learning contact email address:**

If you wish to manage your account differently or discuss this at all please do not hesitate to contact our Secretariat on 02 6260 5660.
ACSA 2016 AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM SYMPOSIUM

ACSA is once again leading the way presenting innovative strategies for curriculum implementation. Come along to the ACSA Symposium and join like-minded colleagues who are exploring great ideas and approaches to integrated curriculum and implementing the Australian Curriculum.

The Symposium offers an exciting line up of keynotes, masterclasses and workshops.

See full program and presenter details here.

AIMS OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Currently there is great interest in STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] and STEAM [STEM with the Arts] to enhance student engagement, to encourage more students into STEM subjects in senior secondary schooling, and to promote STEM-related programs in tertiary education. Concurrently, there is also a push to foster integration across the learning areas (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business) in the revised F–6/7 HASS curriculum as a pathway for meaningful learning in the primary and secondary school curriculum.

How can integration be conceptualised and achieved in primary and secondary curricula so young people are given opportunities to build on their learning and develop their ability to question, think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, make decisions and adapt to the changes and challenges of the 21st century?

This Symposium will consider STEM and STEAM as well as other approaches to integrating school subjects including the integration of the learning areas across the subjects in HASS.
The purpose of the Symposium is to provide an opportunity for teachers and school leaders K to 12 and academics to:

- share their knowledge and experiences of developing and delivering curriculum integration in schools,
- critique the range of approaches to curriculum integration, and
- develop their knowledge and understanding of new approaches to consider implementing in their schools.

This Symposium aims to build capacity of curriculum leaders in schools and offers a chance to access the latest information and participate in discussion about curriculum in Australia.

**Who should attend?**

Principals, deputy principals, teachers and teacher leaders, heads of curriculum and executive teachers at all levels and from all learning areas in state, Catholic and independent systems. Educational administrators, consultants, teacher educators, academics and educational researchers will also benefit from the insights shared at this Symposium.

**For further information and to register click** [here](#)

**REGISTRATION FEES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prices</th>
<th>ACSA members</th>
<th>Non-members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symposium registration per person</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$760</td>
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<tr>
<th>Prices</th>
<th>ACSA members</th>
<th>Non-members</th>
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<tr>
<td>Four to six teachers from a school when each person attends for two days</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>*$660 per person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seven or more teachers from a school when each person attends for two days</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>*$610 per person</td>
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*You might like to consider joining ACSA as an institutional member for $240 and registering for the Symposium at members’ rates. Link to online registration here.

A ‘certificate of participation’ for this professional learning opportunity will be issued to all delegates. To be eligible, delegates must sign in at the beginning of each day and out at the end of each day. Please don’t forget to do so!

When you sign up to the ACSA Symposium you will also have a chance of winning a free registration for ACSA’s 2017 Biennial Curriculum Conference. The draw will take place at the end of the Symposium, but you must be present to win the prize!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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| 9.00 am | Welcome and introductions including Welcome to Country. Associate Professor Judy Anderson, ACSA President  
               Welcome to Country  
               Official welcome  
               Why should curriculum be redesigned? |
| 9.15 | KEYNOTE 1  
               Examining models of curriculum integration (20 minutes each). Chair, Associate Professor Judy Anderson  
               1. STEM: The perils and rewards of interdisciplinarity. Professor Russell Tytler, Deakin University  
               2. STEAM: Creativity as the innovation literacy. Professor Michael Anderson, University of Sydney  
               3. HASS: Is deep learning ‘the elephant in the room for integration’ in the Humanities and the Social Sciences?  
               Associate Professor Deborah Henderson, Queensland University of Technology  
               Respondent—Professor Robyn Ewing, University of Sydney  
               Questions and reactions from the audience |
| 10.45 | MORNING TEA |
| 11.15 | WORKSHOPS SESSION 1  
               Creating new solutions—using design thinking  
               How hard is 4C transformation and integrated learning?  
               Human rights in civics and citizenship education  
               The hybridisation of constructivist instructional models to support the implementation of STEM  
               How can STEM make my life easier?  
               Showcase—Schools  
               1. STEAM: The synergy of six. Nicole Morton Xavier High School, NSW  
               2. Teaching STEM: Flipped, electives or integration? Kathy Harris, Independent Schools Queensland |
| Donna Loughran, Doonside Technology High School | Rob Muscat, Delany College; Yvette Baird, Holy Family; Mary Harb, Sacred Heart  
               Associate Professor Libby Tudball, Monash University  
               Gavin Hays, Parramatta Marist High School  
               Shirley Casper, Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards, NSW |
| 12.00 pm | Move to next workshop |
| 12.05 | WORKSHOPS SESSION 2  
               Riding the rollercoaster  
               Lessons learnt the hard way  
               The place of HASS in the curriculum  
               Australian Curriculum: Technologies and STEM Connections  
               Family routes—connecting through story  
               Showcase—Research  
               1. Enabling integrative STEM in regional high schools. Dr Paul Unsworth, University of South Australia |
| Dr Charlotte Forwood and Geoff Little, Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School, Melbourne | Andrew Stone, Australian Mathematics & Science School, Adelaide  
               Malcolm McInerney, Australian Geography Teachers Association  
               Julie King, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority  
               Shelley Diamond and Robyn Edwards, Casula Public School |
| 12.50 | LUNCH |
### FRIDAY 14 OCTOBER 2016

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1.30</th>
<th><strong>MASTERCLASSES SESSION 1</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A learning design platform created by teachers, for teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Steve Collis, Northern Beaches Christian School</td>
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| 3.00 | **AFTERNOON TEA** |
| 3.20 | **WORKSHOPS SESSION 3: Engagement with other organisations** |
|      | Shifted thinking: New school–museum learning | Teaching creativity | Putting the A in STEAM | Want a STEM professional in your classroom, why wouldn’t you? | Drama, literature and literacy in the primary classroom | Exploring hands on multidisciplinary STEM with Arduino Esplora |
|      | Peter Mahony, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences | Frank Newman, Sydney Opera House | Leeanne Carr, Art Gallery of NSW | Joel Cowey, CSIRO | John Nicholas Saunders, Sydney Theatre Company | Dr Abelardo Pardo, University of Sydney |

| 4.00 | **PANEL SESSION 1** |
|      | Integrated curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners. Chair, Dr Kevin Lowe | Phillip Roberts, Canberra University | Dorothy Hoddinott, Principal, Holroyd High School | Others TBA | Questions and comments from the audience |

| 5.00 | **PRESIDENT’S RECEPTION**: Canapes and drinks |
# PROGRAM

**SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER 2016**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td><strong>KEYNOTE 2</strong></td>
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<td><em>Curriculum integration: What could it look like? What would it take?</em></td>
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<td>Chair, Associate Professor Deborah Henderson</td>
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<td>Dr Nicole Mockler, University of Sydney</td>
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<td>Questions and reactions from the audience</td>
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<td>10.00</td>
<td>Move to workshop</td>
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<td>10.05</td>
<td><strong>WORKSHOPS SESSION 4</strong></td>
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<td>Project-based learning at its purest and best—handing the choice and voice of learning over to middle school students</td>
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<td>Game on— the role of game mechanics and online resources in cross-curriculum teaching and assessment</td>
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<td>Using ‘real world’ contexts to bring interdisciplinary learning to life</td>
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<td>Promoting pre-service teachers’ STEM learning through collaboration between education, mathematics and science</td>
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<td>How does your garden grow? Cultivating the curriculum with STEM</td>
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<td>Pip Cleaves, Sydney Secondary College</td>
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<td>Bill Cohen, Asquith Girls High School</td>
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<td>Dr Carly Sawatzki, Monash University</td>
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<td>Associate Professor Vince Geiger, Australian Catholic University and Professor Joanne Mulligan, Macquarie University</td>
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<td>Kirstin Beck, Alstonville Public School</td>
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<td>10.50</td>
<td><strong>MORNING TEA</strong></td>
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<td>11.15</td>
<td><strong>MASTERCLASSES SESSION 2</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Making the seemingly impossible possible with HPC and PBL in K–12 contexts</em></td>
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<td><em>Curriculum integration: When I get a minute!</em></td>
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<td><em>Creating significant learning experiences through PBL</em></td>
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<td><em>Intercultural competence for 21st century learners: Integrating curriculum in primary school</em></td>
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<td><em>Curricula integration revisited in K to 6</em></td>
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<td>Dr Jane Hunter, University of Technology, Sydney; Bianca Hewes, Northern Beaches Secondary College and Lee Hewes, Merrylands East Public School</td>
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<td>Dr Debra Talbot and Dr Nicole Mockler, University of Sydney</td>
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<td>Jake Plaskett, Rosebank College</td>
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<td>Associate Professor Ruth Reynolds, University of Newcastle</td>
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<td>Vilma Galstaun, University of Sydney</td>
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<td>12.45pm</td>
<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
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<td>1.15</td>
<td><strong>FINAL KEYNOTE</strong></td>
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<td><em>Quality teaching and learning across all models of curriculum.</em> Chair, Cameron Patterson</td>
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<td>Professor Jenny Gore, University of Newcastle</td>
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<td>Questions and reactions from the audience</td>
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WEBINARS 2016

What do our members think of our new professional learning webinars?

“Just want to say thank you again for the great initiative of having webinars throughout the year. It is so good to be able to engage in thought provoking presentations and hear what other teachers and researchers are doing around Australia.

I have gained something valuable from each presentation that I have been ‘attended’!

It is so good that it is after school hours I am sure I have said it before but I am thankful to be able to join in from an area where not very much happens unless we go to the mainland.

I appreciate the topics you have chosen as they are about education in the 21st century and the webinars are based on moving learning and teaching forward. More teachers need to hear the concepts being discussed!”

Margaret Shearer, St Brendan-Shaw College, Tasmania, July 2016

Throughout the year, we have had more than 20 fantastic speakers giving their insights on all areas of curriculum in Australia today.

ACSA’s webinars run concurrently with school terms and are a great way to benefit from the knowledge of experienced curriculum planners and academics, right from your desktop. We know how difficult it can be for busy educators to find time for seminars and other professional development opportunities so we are bringing them to you.

Each one-hour webinar is cross-referenced against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers for ease of professional development planning and a ‘certificate of participation’ is provided when you have attended the full online session. Check the 2016 webinars here http://www.acsa.edu.au/pages/images/2016%20full%20program.pdf

There are four more webinars you can participate in this year.

- 7.00pm Thursday 8 September. Developing and connecting conceptual thinking through the teaching of the HASS learning area. Malcolm McInerney, Flinders University and University of South Australia
- 7.00pm Tuesday 25 October. Standards Referenced Assessment. Val Klenowski, Queensland University of Technology
- 7.00pm Wednesday 2 November. Cultural wellbeing in Australian schools: Theorisations, provocations and implications for curriculum. Sherridan Emery, University of Tasmania and Margaret Shearer, St Brendan-Shaw College, Devonport
- 7.00pm Thursday 10 November. Enacting curriculum for diversity: A case study. Anne Hampshire, The Smith Family

We are in the process of putting together a new, exciting series of webinars for 2017 so keep an eye out for information in the next ACSA News at the beginning of 2017 and plan your professional learning throughout the year!
ACSA recently ran focus groups with a number of school leaders with the aim of informing the development of relevant events and activities for ACSA members. We enjoyed the productive discussions we had with our members and others who gave up their time to participate. Thank you to those who attended and contributed, we really valued your input.

While discussion in the focus groups centred on current issues in school leadership and development of professional learning programs each focus group identified different priorities with overarching concerns being: curriculum and equity (what is the role of curriculum?), leading curriculum, teaching/learning curriculum and critical issues in curriculum.

At its last meeting the ACSA Executive used the deliberations of the focus groups to guide planning for ACSA activities in 2017. February’s ACSA News will have details of this work once it has been finalised. In the meantime the main messages from the focus groups are as follows.

**Focus group A**
- Offering professional development for middle school leaders e.g. curriculum coordinators, deputy principals
- Professional development on using data to make decisions in schools
- ACSA to focus on big picture curriculum issues.

**Focus group B**
- Curriculum implementation
- Webinars: going in right direction
- Student wellbeing an emerging curriculum issue.

**Focus group C**
- Using data in senior years: teacher assessment, assessment tasks, external assessment
- Age: demographic change of teaching profession and mentoring teachers
- Embedding Indigenous.

**Focus group D**
- How to drive curriculum change locally at school
- Partnerships
- Inclusion, access and engagement. Impact on student’s wellbeing, health and its effect on learning.

**Focus group E**
- Integrated curriculum
- Principals in schools need to be aware of ACSA
- Competing professional associations.

If you would like to contribute to this discussion on issues you feel need addressing in school, curriculum leadership or professional learning opportunities we would love to hear from you. Please send any comments to katherine.schoo@acsa.edu.au
Invitation to nominate for the Award

In recognition of Garth Boomer’s contribution to school-based curriculum theory and practice, ACSA invites nominations for the Garth Boomer Award. In 2017 the Award will be presented at the ACSA Biennial Curriculum Conference in Sydney. This is a team award that recognises the work of two or more educators working together to promote collaborative principles in a school. The team may include teachers, students, consultants, parents, academics or others.

The recipients of the Garth Boomer Award receive a certificate and $2000 to assist in furthering the work being recognised. A representative from the team will be the guest of ACSA at the 2017 ACSA Biennial Curriculum Conference where they will be presented with their award.

Garth Boomer (1940–93)

Garth was one of Australia’s major contributors to the advancement of school-based curriculum development. Through his publications and his work as the Director of Wattle Park Teachers Centre in Adelaide, Garth encouraged teachers to see education as a collaborative partnership between themselves and their students.

During subsequent positions as Director of the Curriculum Development Centre, Chairman of the Commonwealth Schools Commission, Interim Chair of the Schools Council and Associate Director of Education in South Australia, Garth was also an advocate for teachers being responsible for what is taught in their own classrooms.
What was Garth’s educational philosophy?
Garth believed in the power of children to learn, the promotion of children’s understanding of how they learn, and the value of inquiry and experiment in learning. He strongly advocated that teachers should negotiate curriculum with their students. Such negotiation requires that, for example,
- curriculum intentions should be made explicit to students
- students should be ‘actors’, not just be ‘acted upon’
- curriculum, including assessment, must involve collaboration between teacher and student
- power relationships in the classroom, school or system should be examined.

What are the criteria for the Award?
In five pages or less please provide evidence of one or more of the following:
- Critical literacy practices that question power, inequality and injustice
- Curriculum that is developed, negotiated and constructed with participants and key stakeholders
- Learners thinking about how they can learn and reflecting on their learning strengths
- Team based and collaborative learning capabilities
- Inquiry based learning that is innovative and outcomes focused
- Curriculum that highlights the student and their learning at the heart of its design and implementation.

Why does ACSA present the Award?
It is appropriate that ACSA recognise and commemorate Garth’s substantial contribution to educational thinking and practice, because ACSA and Garth share a similar educational philosophy. Garth was involved in establishing ACSA and he supported ACSA directly in a number of ways, including the organisation of the first Biennial Conference in Adelaide in 1983.

NOMINATIONS
Nominations must be submitted on the Garth Boomer Award Nomination cover sheet available on the ACSA website: http://www.acsa.edu.au/pages/images/Nomination%20Form%202017.pdf Nominations may be submitted by the nominees themselves, colleagues or others familiar with the work. A description of the work indicating how it meets the Award criteria must be provided to enable the judges to determine the merit of the contribution.

Names and addresses of two referees who are familiar with the work of the nominees should be included, as well as the name and address of the proposer.

Nominations must be received by Friday 14 July 2017.

Nominations should be emailed: Attention—Executive Director acsa@acsa.edu.au. If your work, or that of a colleague, centres on an aspect of the criteria above, please consider sending in a nomination, we would be delighted to receive it.
The 21st National Schools’ Constitutional Convention (NSCC) was held at Old Parliament House in Canberra from 16–18 March 2016 with 120 students from government, independent and Catholic schools from across Australia, covering metropolitan and country areas, attending.

The NSCC seeks to promote understanding and informed discussion amongst young Australians about the Australian Constitution and system of government. Its three main aims are:

1. To provide an opportunity for senior students to explore constitutional issues.
2. To encourage those students who are informed and actively interested in the Australian system of government to pursue this interest.
3. To increase student awareness of key constitutional matters.

The Convention was officially opened by Senator The Hon. Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training, and Senator for South Australia. In his address, Senator Birmingham outlined the respective roles of the states and Commonwealth in the funding of early childhood, government and independent schools and universities and stressed the benefits of the states having primacy in the funding of the schooling system.

Professor John Warhurst (pictured at left) facilitated the Convention with input from the following speakers.
The final day started with a panel session that discussed the arguments for and against state and federal control of education. Contributors to this discussion were Dr Andrew Banfield, Head of School of the School of Politics and International Relations, ANU; Justin Mohammad, CEO, Reconciliation Australia; and Moira Najdecki, Director, Catholic Education Canberra and Goulburn. While each speaker provided a different lens through which the control of education could be considered, all three broadly agreed that the community would best be served by the control of schooling being a shared responsibility of the Commonwealth and the states.

Megan McCrone from the Australian Electoral Commission outlined the grounds upon which a change can be made to the Australian Constitution and how a referendum is conducted. Delegates then participated in a mock referendum. The referendum ballot paper contained the following proposal:

A proposed law: To alter the Constitution to empower the Commonwealth Parliament to legislate for education.

Delegates were asked to write ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ in response to the question: ‘Do you approve of this proposed alteration?’

So how did our delegates vote? Should education be a state or Commonwealth responsibility? The mock referendum to alter the Constitution to empower the Commonwealth Parliament to legislate for school education was successful!

The Convention Communiqué outlining the Convention program, processes and outcomes was developed and endorsed by delegates. Senator Gavin Marshall, Deputy President of the Senate representing Senator the Hon. Stephen Parry, President of the Senate, joined the delegates in the House of Representatives Chamber of Old Parliament House and accepted the Convention Communiqué for presentation to the Parliament and incorporation into Hansard.
Can reflective writing assist student understanding of conflict scenarios?
Abstract
Can reflective writing assist students and teachers in early years to explore class and playground behaviour issues to gain positive outcomes? Action research was used with a single Year 3 class of 15 students in an independent school in suburban Brisbane to examine if reflective writing could be used to assist the teacher in processing ‘in and out of class’ conflict issues more efficiently for the teacher and students. Students’ reflections on scenarios were assessed prior to and after a series of six sessions that explored the options when dealing with confronting behaviour. A rubric adapted from the revised 5Rs Reflective Writing Scale by Bain, Ballantyne, Mills and Lester (2002) was used to assess the depth of students’ understanding. The action research results suggest that structured examination of specific cases and reflection through writing can assist student understanding, which may assist students’ reaction and future response to challenging behaviour. The process and outcome of this action research providing the classroom teacher with further clarity for future supportive practices.

Introduction
Time is precious in the classroom and there are many demands on a teacher to meet all the curriculum requirements. Student issues in the class and the playground can ‘hijack’ quality learning time. Historically, behaviour issues in the playground have been a challenge for many school communities. These issues may include bullying or teasing which are significant issues in both primary and secondary, public and independent schools and can seriously affect a student’s capacity to attend, assimilate and achieve in the school setting. This in turn affects the learning of other students, teachers, families and the community involved with the school. Action research was chosen by the classroom teacher as part of a Master’s study program to investigate these ‘real-world’ (Johnson & Christenson, 2012) issues to inform for future positive actions. Therefore a review of the current contexts of ‘conflict resolution’ programs, reflective practices and techniques to assist student engagement is necessary, in order to design this action research project.

The school’s current conflict management program, is the ‘You can do it’ program (Bernard, 2006). The emphasis is to encourage positive emotional, social and academic outcomes for students (Education Queensland, Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2014, p. 1). One of the key areas in this program is ‘Getting along’. The school has also implemented the ‘My Life Rulz; Building emotional resilience in children’ program. This promotes “the formation and development of good social and emotional health in the child’s formative years which will, in turn, result in emotional resilience during their life” (Paraclete Productions, n.d., p. 2). One of the key rules in this program is encouraging students to talk through conflict issues to find a solution. Both of these programs are designed to assist students but at times they are not able to resolve their conflicts or issues and a teacher is needed to assist them to deal with these issues fairly and justly. How can we help students to come to a satisfactory resolution without teacher assistance?
Prior research has revealed various methods schools use to address the issue of conflict management and social justice. For example, Rigby’s (2010) compilation of case studies of Queensland schools revealed that each school examined was attempting to provide a whole school approach to conflict resolution and ensure positive support for students in conflict. Morrison (2002) reported on a restorative justice approach to bullying and victimisation in schools in the Australian Capital Territory. She suggests that when considering Braithwaite’s (1989) comments on restorative justice it could be said that it is a “participatory process that addresses wrongdoing while offering respect to the parties involved, through consideration of the story each person tells of how they were affected by the harmful incident” (Morrison, 2002, p. 3). However, the effectiveness of providing restorative justice is a challenge. Morrison (2002) believes that in order to “sustain any shift in the way schools operate lies in each party questioning, in the most fundamental way, their own beliefs and practices” (pp. 5–6).

How can we ensure each student has an authentic and ‘heard’ voice in resolving conflict?

Reflective action is not a new concept, it was Dewey (1910; 1933) who first suggested there was a difference between an action done out of habit and an action due to reflection. More recent writers have refined and extended these ideas with reference to teacher practice. Schön (1983) believed that professionals learnt through a process of action and reflection rather than by studying a variety of knowledge. Van Manen (1977) suggested there was a value and worth in recognising the possibility of different levels of reflection to assist in educative thinking. Examining these levels of reflection may assist in providing opportunities to improve behaviour, class knowledge, analysing goals, and practices and power in relationships. Bain, Ballantyne, Packer and Mills (1999) suggested providing constructive feedback on weekly student reflective journals during their teaching placements may encourage the quality of their reflective writing. The 5Rs Reflective Writing Scale (Bain et al., 1999) was designed initially, to gauge the reflection levels of student-teacher’s journals while on their teaching placements. However, this framework was enhanced and adjusted (Bain, Ballantyne, Mills & Lester, 2002), to also encourage students to be able to assess their own reflections and appreciate what may be necessary for “serious reflection” (pp. 14–15). They found that students needed to be compelled to write reflectively and by using the framework, they could self assess their reflections to encourage deeper engagement and improved future actions. The University of New South Wales Learning Centre (2013) also emphasised the benefits of reflective writing as the key in their undergraduate programs to gain improved understanding, the ability to learn from mistakes and clarity for future practice. How can we provide students with the opportunity to have space and time to develop their ‘reflective’ skills?

A large body of literature indicates that the use of writing tasks can be a powerful tool in addressing emotional health, learning and social issues, even in healthy individuals. For instance, when dealing with emotional dilemmas, a study by Pennebaker and Beall (1986), highlighted the use of writing over four consecutive days as being beneficial for healthy undergraduates to confront traumatic experiences. A similar study, concluded that “individuals who showed the greatest health improvements were those who wrote about topics that they had actively held back from telling others…[and] actively confronting a trauma allows for the understanding and assimilation of the trauma” (Kiecolt-Glaser, Pennebaker & Glaser, 1988, p. 244). Children can begin to write before they have learned to read due to their desire to communicate their ideas (Bellamy, n.d.; Bissex, 1980; Graves, 2003). Hamer and Adams (2003) reiterate the power of writing, stating it “is a potent social tool which empowers children, links them into communities and helps them develop strong reciprocal and responsive relationships with people, places and things” (p. 111). How can we use writing to assist students to understand what they are thinking?
When considering the style of investigation and methods of instruction for this current study, Bloom and Krathwohl (1956) suggest that higher-order thinking would occur when understanding, problem solving, analysing, synthesising and evaluating skills are encouraged. Fleet and Torr (2007) suggest that in literacy if “communication as a social practice” (p. 184) is to be embraced then multiple perspectives need to be considered and Healy (2000), adds the necessity for meaningful and authentic activities. An attitude of respect for student’s writing is imperative in this process (Calkins, 1994), to encourage a supportive environment and the value of writing as a social practice (Annandale, 2005). How can we provide opportunities for students to be engaged in this learning?

To summarise, the challenge before the class teacher is that students need to be able to have an authentic voice and be able to gain a satisfactory resolution in conflict. Can action research by encouraging reflective skills through writing and engaging learning opportunities provide the vehicle for this destination? While there have been a number of studies (e.g. Bain et al., 1999; Kyles & Olafson, 2008) encouraging reflective writing at a tertiary level, the researcher is unaware of any specific studies using reflective writing as a strategy to assist with conflict resolution in a lower primary level of schooling. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether reflective writing in a Year 3 class, in response to exploring behavioural issues ‘in and out’ of the class can assist students to understand, process and suggest positive future actions towards dealing with conflict.

Method

The context

The researcher’s Year 3 class in an independent suburban Brisbane school in the past has used reflection in writing as a simple method of reviewing the day’s events in a diary style report. The class behaviour modification program required the individual to reflect on their actions, identify reconciliation practices and suggest future options. While this process was simple and immediate, there was a sense that students didn’t appreciate the positive consequences of considered reflection. The challenge would be as a teacher to design a program of activities “to facilitate learning” (Froebel, 2005, p. 2), and create a positive environment through “social relationships” (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 163), for students and teachers to explore the benefits of reflection.

The concept of reflective writing offering the student an opportunity to gain understanding and perspective to assist with conflict situations inspired the researcher to conduct an action research project. Action research was chosen because it allows exploration of a specific issue in the classroom as a local response to a local problem by the classroom teacher (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This style of research is appropriate in this study as it can attempt to resolve an immediate problem with the creation of a product or procedure that can assist students and teachers. However, it needs to be acknowledged as Mertler and Charles (2005) warn, that action research is prone to bias, reliability and validity errors. In order to minimise the potential for bias the researcher ensured students chose pseudonyms on their marked paperwork to try to avoid predictive or assumed levels due to prior knowledge of the student. The researcher must also acknowledge their own limitations and bias and try not to “‘prove’ that one educational theory is better than another” (Kemmis, 1980, p. 53) but rather use this process to develop an appreciation of informed strategies to adjust future educative practices (Kolsy, 2010).

A program of six sessions was created by the teacher to provide opportunities to explore and scaffold student understanding of the four reflective key questions (What happened? How do you feel? Why do you think this may have happened? and What to do now?) that assist in understanding conflict. This series of lessons was implemented to explore behavioural dilemmas, that encourage empathy, insight and resolution to suggest possible constructive future options.

Sample

There were 24 students in the class with two students excluded due to consent forms from a parent or guardian not being returned and seven students excluded for not completing the student consent section. This resulted in a sample of 15 children who participated in the study; six (40%) males and nine (60%) females aged between eight and nine years. Participants were predominately of Caucasian ethnicity with two Asian students and one Filipino student.
Data collection

Measurement instrument

The 5Rs Reflective Writing Scale developed by Bain and associates (2002), is a five-component measurement scale with three levels within each scale. This framework and assessment scale while initially designed in 1999 to assess tertiary student-teacher’s levels of reflection, was modified in 2002 to help students identify what is necessary to reflect deeply, to assess themselves and improve their levels of reflection.

An adapted version of the 5Rs Reflective Writing Scale (Bain et al., 2002) was created by the researcher for this action research study to provide a measurement of the level of student reflection on a behavioural dilemma scenario, as a pre- and post-assessment task. These adaptations to the original writing scale were to make the measurement tool more appropriate for Year 3 students as opposed to a university level. The adjustments included: A reduction from the five key categories to four categories, as it was felt that the “relating” category would be too challenging for this year level to engage with; simplifying the statements that identified the requirements for each level, within the categories; and renaming the four categories, to encourage a clear understanding of the concepts at this level. The new titles for the four categories were simplified to ‘What happened?’ instead of ‘Reporting’, ‘How do you feel?’ for ‘Responding’, ‘Why do you think this may have happened?’ for ‘Reasoning’ and ‘What to do now?’ in place of the ‘Reconstructing’ category.

Procedure

Instructional strategies

The researcher, a qualified teacher, conducted all sessions during normal class time with approximately one hour allowed for each session. Students completed a pre-assessment written response to a behavioural dilemma using four questions based on the four key categories of the adapted rubric. This rubric (see Figure 1) was used by the researcher to measure the level of reflection of these responses. Then followed six sessions, with the first four focused on unpacking the key concepts to scaffold the examination of conflict scenarios and assist in the final reflective assessment task. The fifth session, a collaboration of student understanding and creation of a class poster to

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**FIGURE 1: YEAR 3 REFLECTIVE WRITING RUBRIC**

Name: _________________________________

☐ Pre-program writing task  ☐ Post-program writing final task

Reporting/What happened?

Level 1: A simple description of the event.

Level 2: Increased detail of the event with limited explanation of important details.

Level 3: A conclusion about the event can be gained because of the detail of the description.

Responding/How do you feel?

Level 1: A feeling or attitude to the event is written.

Level 2: A judgement is also included e.g. they shouldn’t have done that.

Level 3: As for level 1 and 2 but also includes a question or describes the problem from their perspective.

Relating–Reasoning/Why do you think this may have happened?

Level 1: One possibility is used to explain the issue.

Level 2: Two or more possibilities are considered.

Level 3: As for Level 2 and also the inclusion of an insight or different perspective as a result of these possibilities.

Reconstructing/What to do now?

Level 1: A simple plan is suggested for future situations.

Level 2: More than one possible alternative suggested.

Level 3: As for Level 2 and also a new understanding directs their consideration of future actions in different circumstances.

provide a visual representation of the four key areas to assist student processing and future reference to the key concepts. The sixth, was an opportunity to complete a practice scenario encouraging student questioning and comments to assist their understanding. Finally, students were given the post-assessment written response to a behavioural scenario in a final session.

The first session, ‘What happened?’, focused on the necessity to have all the facts in a situation and appreciate that there may be several different perspectives involved with conflict. The second session, ‘How do you feel?’, focused on the importance of empathy and acknowledging how students feel, to assist in understanding conflict issues. The third session, ‘Why do you think this has happened?’ explored possible causes of a situation and the importance of insight to understand the dilemma. The fourth session, ‘What to do now?’ examined the previous concepts and used these understandings to inform for action.

At the conclusion of each of the first four sessions, students recorded their understanding of the session’s concept and designed a visual symbol to encapsulate that concept. A ‘Reflective Writing Journal’ was created by the researcher, specifically to provide an opportunity for students to record their responses in each of these sessions. These journals also indicated to the teacher the ongoing understanding of each student of key elements examined for each of the four phases.

The fifth session, examined these reflective summary statements and symbols and the class collaboratively reviewed these elements. The symbol and definition considered the best representation for each category was chosen through student voting and was then included in a class poster. By incorporating a variety of teaching and learning approaches the “teachers[s] and children collaborate[d] as joint investigators seeking to develop understandings together” (Fleet & Torr, 2007, p. 186). The sixth session, allowed students to complete a practice conflict scenario summary task using the class poster for assistance. This provided an opportunity for students to unpack the whole process with teacher assistance and discussion. In the final session, the post-assessment task was completed using a different scenario but the same four questions as the pre-assessment task.

**Ethics**

A ‘Working with Children Blue Card’ was required for the researcher conducting the study. Parents, guardians and students were given written information and consent forms before the study, and permission to participate was gained by the return of these completed forms. In addition, students were verbally informed by the researcher about what their participation involved, and that they had the option to leave the study for any reason at any time without penalty. Approval for the study was granted by Griffith University. Students chose a pseudonym to protect their identity.
Data analysis

Student responses to the four questions posed after reading the pre- and post-assessment scenarios were scored using the adapted rubric created for this study. The four questions were based on the four categories in the adapted rubric. Each question had a maximum possible score of three with a total score of 12 overall, a 12 indicating a deep level of reflection. The researcher then entered this data into an excel spread sheet which allowed a visual representation and comparison in graph form of the pre and post results (see Figure 2). The researcher then compared these findings to assess students’ initial and eventual understanding and depth of reflection on behavioural issues as measured by the rubric.

Results

Session one: Students examined the importance of understanding what has happened in a scenario to begin the reflective process. The ‘jigsaw sentences’ allowed for some authentic conversations about the necessity of knowing all the facts to understand a situation, which was revealed in many of the students’ written summaries of the lesson. One student’s reflection on the value of knowing ‘what happened?’ in a situation stated, “otherwise it won’t make sense [sense]”.

Session two: Students appreciated the non-sense selection of emotions related to sentence situations. Group work matching emotions and situation scenarios saw much dialogue and collaboration.

The final ‘adjective-matching-the-emoticon’ saw most students seeking help from the dictionaries. ‘Upset’, challenged students, questioning was it a ‘sad’ or ‘angry’ word? This was a great opportunity to discuss context. One student’s final reflection of the importance of knowing people’s feelings when resolving conflict in this lesson was, “if you don’t know about how people feel you can’t figure [figure] it out.”

Session three: Group brainstorming to see beyond the obvious and explore the possible causes of scenarios produced some of the following comments: Referring to the scenario card showing a boy quite upset: “maybe someone posted something bad about him”, “everyone didn’t like him” and he “watched too much scary movies”. Four groups listed several comments that revealed obvious and hidden context.

Session four: Groups examined role play scenarios and then brainstormed and suggested actions to respond to their scenarios. One situation was a reminder that sometimes it is necessary to tell a teacher when school rules are being challenged, therefore the responses from that group required teacher intervention. Of the remaining responses, only one response suggested teacher assistance, all others were attempts at student reconciliation. Sessions three and four were vital to unpack and focus on the whole reflective process, yet there were numerous interruptions including phone calls and early student departures for other activities, which detracted from the desired atmosphere.

Figure 2: PRE- AND POST-ASSESSMENT WRITING TASK RESULTS USING THE RUBRIC, ADAPTED FROM THE “5RS REFLECTIVE WRITING SCALE” (BAIN ET AL., 2002)
Session five: This session summarised student definitions and symbols, with voting on the ‘best’ representations of the class’ experiences. One student designed the background for the final poster using the ‘Paint’ program on a class computer. The poster was then produced by the teacher and displayed in the classroom to direct and inspire the practice scenario and post-assessment responses.

Session six: Students worked through the practice scenario with the opportunity to ask questions to clarify the four phases. This was a good opportunity for the teacher to gauge student engagement, understanding and misunderstandings of the program thus far.

Students then completed the post-assessment writing response questions the following week on the behavioural issue scenario.

When analysing the pre-assessment task the majority of students were working on a ‘Level One’ understanding, indicating a basic response to the question given in the four phases, with an average overall total score of 3.9 out of 12. Four students recorded some ‘Level Two’ statements, mainly in the ‘What to do now?’ area. One student showed a ‘Level Three’ comment in the area of ‘How do you feel?’ including a feeling, judgement and a sense of seeing the problem from the other person’s perspective by stating, “I would feel sad and never want to play with them again.” Many of the responses to the third question, ‘Why do you think this has happened?’, were at a Level One response, suggesting only one possibility for the problem. Most responses to the final question suggested repairing the situation.

The post-assessment task revealed that: No student decreased in their total ‘Level’ scores; five students achieved the same total scores as the pre-assessment task; 12 students were working above ‘Level One’ in some questions, with three students reaching a total of ‘Level Six’ or above and one student had increased their result by four ‘Levels’ in total. An average score of 5 out of a possible 12 was achieved in the post-program task. While reflection at a Year 3 level has some limitations compared to studies examining university students, there appear to be a number of students who evidenced higher levels of engagement with the scenarios and a measured increase in their level of understanding of what is required in the process to gain these results.

Discussion

Has the process of action research through interactive writing, multi-literacy activities and the creation of an authentic class resource encouraged problem solving and positive reflection at a deeper level for the teacher and not just the students? Danielson (2008) suggested that there are real challenges in trying to effectively evaluate reflective thinking such as the “complexity of documenting it in practice” (p. 31). Students identified their understanding of each session’s concepts in their reflective student journals. These written responses at this year level may be prone to misinterpretation by the researcher. When exploring reflection, there are three essential attitudes necessary for reflective practice, open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness (Dewey, 1933). This action research was implemented to encourage students to appreciate that they are responsible for their actions, to recognise their behaviour can affect others, be open to other students’ points of view, and be prepared to adjust their attitudes or behaviours with assistance through the process of reflection.

The findings of this study revealed that the Year 3 students in this study were generally operating on a Level One standard of reflection in most categories, when applied to a conflict situation without any prior instruction. There were some individuals that gained lower and higher scores than Level One in the pre-assessment task. The lower scores could be due to an inability to understand what was required in the task, or students may have been challenged to write what they are thinking. In the higher case, students may have had some experience with reflective practices or deeper thinking strategies. There were a few students who didn’t respond to some questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels. One student wrote a total of five lines to answer all questions in the pre-assessment task, and by responding in the post-assessment task, this improved their achieved levels.
questions, ‘What to do now?’, one student’s pre-assessment response was simple, “Josh would get in big trouble.” Their response in the post-assessment indicated an understanding of what was required to address the question with reconciliation and positive outcomes evident by stating, “Matthew might of been a new person to the school and was trying to steal all his friends so at half time invited Joseph in and another person out.” These responses suggest a developed understanding of a more positive response in the post-assessment. All students in the post-assessment task maintained, and 10 students improved their levels of reflection on average by one whole level. This may indicate that the students have understood what the task required of them and were able to gain from the instructions on reflection and apply this knowledge to their responses. Bain and associates (2002) used the 5Rs framework to inform and improve pre-service teachers’ levels of reflection to hopefully enhance their teaching episodes and experience. This study used the adapted rubric to identify the pre-test and post-test levels of reflection that students were operating at, to assist the teacher in appreciating their level of understanding in each key area in managing conflict.

With the combined student observations throughout the educative program and the analysis of the data obtained, the researcher would suggest the following recommendations for future research be considered if planning to provide these resources publicly or to other colleagues: Some adjustments to the original student Reflective Writing Journal and Teacher Resource such as; Session Two, the inclusion of scenarios to explore the feelings that may be experienced due to a conflict, would be more beneficial; more time provided for Session Four to unpack the role plays, as these were pivotal in allowing reflection and application of the whole conflict resolution process; and finally, administering these sessions when other pressures such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy assessments are not occurring.

Analysing the responses to the assessment tasks, indicates some further adjustments for future research would be: Redesign the rubric, for further differentiation of responses that are more suited to this year level. Vital in this revision, is restructuring Questions Three and Four to appreciate the cause and solution factors in student reflections; emphasising the importance of considering the real source of a problem rather than assuming a reaction is only due to a current situation; and distinguishing between feasible and well suited actions for future situations at this year level would assist in promoting sustainable relationships.

While the process of writing a response following a conflict situation may be challenging for some students at this level, the ability to independently reflect on a situation and record these thoughts allows for actual events and reflections to occur rather than responses influenced by other students. One of the key benefits of this study has been structuring a process of analysing a conflict scenario using the four key questions. This appears to have provided a sequential scaffolding for the teacher and the student to work together to gain a better understanding of an issue.

The benefit of the action research study was that a local issue was identified by the researcher in a local setting. “Action research is a state of mind” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 11), which encourages local solutions to local problems, allowing the teacher to improve instruction and outcomes for students (Ferrance, 2000). While this study was a focused approach to reflective writing for students, Borg (1981) suggests that action research is more about teacher learning. This study has challenged the researcher to consider infusing teaching practice with a more genuine approach to writing tasks and the value of planned, intended and meaningful writing opportunities to support students in their challenging journey at school (Hamer & Adams, 2003). By providing scaffolded and contextual opportunities for students to explore, examine and discuss challenges in conflict situations, students can have the opportunity to reveal reflective suggestions to assist the individual and thus the whole class context. Kemmis (1980, p. 53) also suggests that while there can be some challenges using action research, it can provide the opportunity for the “development of critical communities of practitioners.” The strength of the study was the provision and exploration of the four key reflective questions to provide a cooperative and agreed procedure for students and teachers when they are involved in a conflict. The benefit of the action research study was that a local issue was identified by the researcher in a local setting.
Limitations
Some of the limitations of the study were the small sample size of the study and the student population being predominantly a Caucasian group from one independent school in Brisbane. Teacher bias with the desired goals of the study may potentially influence the marking of the rubrics and interpretation of student engagement in the activities. The researcher being the class teacher may also have influenced the participation levels due to student motivation to ‘please’ the teacher. The timetabling of these sessions in the last hour of the day, meant concentration and the ability to explore reflective concepts were less than ideal.

Implications for future teacher practice
The implications of this study for future teacher practice would be to observe and record student responses and actions when dealing with future conflict. Take note of the student use of the class poster created, to determine whether it assists students to direct their reflection and action and the level of student-teacher conferencing required following a conflict. The students involved in a conflict could be encouraged to refer to the adapted rubric with assistance from the teacher to encourage deeper reflection and gain more meaningful and useful outcomes from the resolution process.

Implications for future research
In future studies students could be surveyed to determine their appreciation of the reflective process and their perception of its benefits. A study including a larger group of students, different year levels and specific ethnic groups could be the focus of further studies to encourage a whole-school approach to this system of social justice. A social justice focus using the four stages to unpack dilemmas could be examined without the use of writing responses but rather, oral interviews to gauge student understanding. While the inclusion of a practice scenario prior to the final assessment scenario provided an opportunity for student clarification of the requirements of this task, this action may have educated and thus influenced students’ post-assessment and final results. Therefore future research, should consider the removal of the practice scenario prior to the post-assessment task to identify current rather than rehearsed responses.

Conclusion
The results of this action research study using an adapted 5Rs Reflective Writing Scale by Bain and associates (2002, pp. 14–15), as a measuring tool, revealed that a small number of students didn’t change in their level of reflection on conflict scenarios. However, many students had an improved level of analysis and insight in the final assessment following an educational program incorporating the key elements of this simplified framework to scaffold conflict resolution strategies using reflective responses.

It is hoped that just as this study encouraged students to structure their reflections to seek insight and meaning to guide their future actions, particularly with behavioural issues in the class and playground that it may encourage other teachers to explore the use of action research to inform, reflect and adjust their future practice.
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