RESEARCH/ING ENGLISH / DIALOGUE

Lesson planning: central to the work of teaching or a mechanism for control?

No one denies the value of a well-designed lesson. Without careful curation, the experience of the classroom can be fragmented, confusing, busy without purpose.

As English teachers become more experienced and knowledgeable, they develop a keen sense of how a plan enables learning for diverse students. In the process of planning, they draw skilfully upon discipline knowledge, research about how learning occurs in school contexts like their own, understandings of the learners and the dynamic experience of the evolving group, and on questions inherent in our cultural worlds. The teachers' personal practical knowledge shapes the design for learning, informs how the learning evolves in action, and is then used to critically reflect on what has occurred so that future decision-making is intentional. This work of teachers is multi-dimensional and complicated because it is imbued with values, moral purpose, personal histories, dispositions, and importantly, the lives of students.

Lesson planning should rightfully be in the spotlight. But for what reasons? And what should be at the forefront of our thinking?

This online Dialogue Seminar seeks to engage participants in a robust, thought-provoking discussion focused on the following questions:

- What value should we place on the process of lesson planning in education?
- How does lesson planning enable professional learning, collegiality, and understandings about learners?
- What is the place of outsourced or externally developed lessons and how are they used in practice?
- What sort of role is AI playing in the creation of lesson plans?
- What does the mandating of selected lesson plans and packaged curriculum suggest about trust in the profession?
- Is lesson planning a workload issue?

FACILITATOR:

Amanda McGraw,
Federation University

Associate Professor Amanda McGraw is a VATE Life member and VATE Council's Research Officer. Amanda uses a range of research methods to tap into life stories including extended conversation, and visual and shared analysis of artefacts. Her research interests include a focus on teaching reading and writing in English, dispositions in teaching, school/university partnerships, and teacher professional learning. She has expertise in developing communities of practice involving practising teachers who use practitioner inquiry to learn deeply about teaching and learning processes.

DATE:
Tuesday 5 May 2026

TIME:
3.30 – 4.45pm

VENUE:
Live via Zoom

REGISTRATION:
Concession $40
Individual $45
Organisational $50

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It is timely for us to investigate our practices in relation to lesson planning, to examine systemic expectations, to highlight tensions and rewards, and to better understand planning approaches that enable effective learning for young people.

Facilitated by VATE's Research Officer, Associate Professor Amanda McGraw, this Dialogue Seminar, the first for 2026, will feature **Dr David Howes**, Deputy Secretary, Schools and Regional Services, Victorian Department of Education, and **Associate Professor Meghan Stacey**, University of New South Wales. The aim will be to draw upon current research and policy and to examine the implications for practice. There will be an opportunity for teachers to discuss ideas raised in small online discussion groups.

Research panellists

Dr David Howes,
Victorian Department of Education

David Howes is the Deputy Secretary, Schools and Regional Services, Department of Education.

David Howes began his career as a teacher in the western suburbs of Melbourne. He has had several senior executive positions in the department. In 2021, David was awarded a PSM for his commitment to deliver educational equity and excellence for Victoria's school students. David holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Diploma of Education, Master of Education and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the University of Melbourne. David also holds an Executive Master of Public Administration from ANZSOG.

Associate Professor Meghan Stacey,
The University of New South Wales

Meghan Stacey is an Associate Professor and ARC DECRA Fellow in the UNSW School of Education. Following several years' work as a secondary English and Drama teacher in NSW public schools, Meghan completed her PhD with the University of Sydney in 2018. Her research is in the critical policy sociology of teachers' work, where she takes a particular interest in teacher workload and time use. Most recently, her focus has been on policy responses aimed at addressing teacher workload, for which she is currently undertaking an ARC-funded fellowship. Her books include *The Business of Teaching* (Palgrave, 2020) and the edited collection *Analysing Education Policy: Theory and Method* (Routledge, 2024, with Professor Nicole Mockler).