

Education Horizon

Research grant scheme

Approved Proposals – 2017

Grant category: Early childhood education and care

Lead researcher	Project title	Project summary	Sponsor organisation	Funding awarded
Dr Sally Staton	Choosing rest: Finding effective alternatives to mandated rest-times in ECEC services.	The National Quality Standard (NQS) for early childhood education and care (ECEC) requires that services provide for each child's sleep, rest and relaxation need. Yet current evidence shows that 80% of services in Queensland mandate a rest-period during which all children are required to lie down without alternative activity. During these periods 70% of children do not sleep, emotional climate declines, and some children exhibit overt distress. Rest periods for many are in fact stressful. This study aims to strengthen the capacity of educators to provide effective restful experiences and learning opportunities focussed on child agency and self-regulation. Using an intervention design, the study investigates the effect of a professional development program on interactional quality, child learning, and the well-being of children and educators.	The University of Queensland	\$81,866.00
Associate Professor Susan Irvine	Professionalism, paperwork and pedagogy: Identifying leadership strategies that enable professional practice in long day care.	Society has high expectations of the ECEC workforce, given the role of educators in laying the foundation for lifelong learning. Driving professional practice, the NQS requires educators to: design responsive curriculum using the Early Years Learning Framework; observe and document children's learning; and engage in critical reflection and ongoing learning. Our current research, conducted with DET, Goodstart Early Learning and C&K, identifies systemic and service barriers to professional practice. Time demands, especially those of "paperwork", are described as impediments to pedagogical practice, contrary to intent. Centre directors have a critical role to play mediating such barriers, providing time and supporting quality practice. Mining national workforce data and studying contextualised examples of effective leadership, this project will identify leadership strategies that enable professional practice in long day care. The outcome will be dissemination of practical solutions to support directors to meet the expectations of the NQS.	Queensland University of Technology	\$45,314.00



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Grant category: Schooling

Lead researcher	Project title	Project summary	Sponsor organisation	Funding awarded
Professor Robert Schweitzer	Towards inclusive classrooms: Building acculturation and settlement for refugee and migrant students.	<p>Past research with schools that have large numbers of students from refugee and migrant populations has highlighted the challenge resulting from disengaged children. While representing a minority of children, for every 'disengaged child' the effects can be far-reaching: impacting long-term education quality; impacting peers, classroom climate and continuity of teaching; and impacting teacher well-being. This project builds on previous research, exploring the Psychosocial and Academic Development of Students from Diverse Backgrounds. The project yielded insights into the Milpera State High School (MSHS) learning environment, demonstrating protective factors and processes instrumental in promoting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students' settlement and well-being. The aim of this project is to deploy dynamic and creative avenues to widely disseminate the successful aspects of the MSHS environment to the DET community for maximum impact and sharing.</p>	Queensland University of Technology	\$44,312.00
Dr Michelle Redman-MacLaren	Evaluating the impacts of boarding schools' social and emotional learning strategies on the resilience and learning engagement of remote Indigenous students: A mixed methods study.	<p>This study will assess the social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies implemented in Queensland (QLD) boarding schools to support remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (hereafter, respectfully Indigenous) students navigate resilience and engage in learning. Previous research has shown that SEL programs offer significant returns for resource and time investment. SEL programs can improve academic achievement and reduce the likelihood that psychosocial distress will progress to mental illness. This research will inform the implementation of effective SEL strategies in QLD boarding and other secondary schools by determining the impacts of boarding schools' SEL strategies on the resilience and learning engagement of remote Indigenous students.</p> <p>Expected Outcomes and Benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. impact evaluation of SEL strategies on student resilience and engagement in learning 2. a SEL toolkit with evaluated strategies to support remote 	Central Queensland University	\$71,040.17

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		<p>Indigenous students</p> <p>3. a network of boarding schools and remote parents/community leaders.</p>		
Dr Jenna Gillett-Swan	Wellbeing matters: a collaborative approach to harnessing student voice to develop a Wellbeing Framework for Action in the middle years.	<p>Building on existing work conducted by the research team, this research will determine what matters most to students in relation to their wellbeing at school using an authentic student-centred participatory approach. The participating school will receive a personalised summary report about the wellbeing climate of the school. The project will empower and build capacity of participating students by supporting their exploration of wellbeing issues at school and emphasising the value of their contributions in informing teacher professional practice. Data from this project will inform the development of a PD package that includes strategies and techniques to assist teachers and other education professionals in implementing Voice Inclusive Practice (Sargeant & Gillett-Swan, 2015). The research team will work with students and staff to develop a Wellbeing Framework for Action that operationalises practice measures in response to student-identified wellbeing issues.</p>	Queensland University of Technology	\$65,766.28
Dr Michalis Stylianou	Using physical activity to enhance classroom engagement and readiness to learn: Stakeholder Perspectives, Recommendations, and Dissemination of Findings from a localised project.	<p>This project aims to examine the elements of active school cultures that contribute to students' classroom engagement and readiness to learn, and how schools build active school cultures that support learning. This project is significant because it addresses the limited research examining localised, bottom-up approaches of developing and sustaining physical activity initiatives to support student learning. Further, this project supports the aims of iAIM (Increasing Activity and Intelligent Minds), a partnership project between the Departments of Education and Health in Darling Downs South West region. The outcomes include a collaborative showcase session with iAIM and Department Staff where findings will be shared with end-users, and a report will be prepared with information about best practices, challenges, and recommendations for future actions. The benefits include enhanced understanding of active school cultures and their contributions to student readiness to learn, dissemination of best practice across Queensland, and informing future</p>	The University of Queensland	\$18,257.70

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		policies/strategies adopted by the department.		
Dr Dawn Adams	Reducing the impact of anxiety on learning and behaviour of anxious students with autism in the classroom.	<p>Approximately 14,000 children with autism attend Queensland schools. Published anxiety prevalence rates indicate that 5,600 of them will have an anxiety disorder and another 4,200 will have elevated anxiety levels impacting on their learning and behaviour. Awareness of how anxiety manifests in young children with autism in the classroom is poorly understood.</p> <p>Consequently, educational strategies to lessen anxiety in the classroom and thereby improve learning and behaviour are underutilised. This project aims to address this issue by: (a) increasing teacher understanding of how anxiety in young children with autism impacts their behaviour; and (b) increasing teacher capability in using appropriate educational strategies to reduce anxiety and improve learning outcomes. Information from multiple sources (teacher- parent- child triads) using standardised assessments and interviews will be used to document how anxiety manifests for children at home and school. PD materials for teachers will then be developed, implemented and evaluated based on this information.</p>	Griffith University	\$86,738.44
Professor Les Dawes	Scaling up Queensland teachers' capacity to teach creativity and innovation: Piloting Design Thinking in Digital Technologies.	<p>The Digital Technologies (DigiTech) curriculum is a vehicle for students to learn creativity and innovation. It provides students with opportunities to use design thinking and be innovative developers of digital solutions and knowledge (ACARA, 2016). However, previous research suggests that some Queensland teachers could be better equipped with the pedagogical content knowledge to teach design thinking.</p> <p>This project will pilot a novel and scalable approach to support teachers in bringing design thinking into their pedagogical content knowledge by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> working in partnership with teachers in one school to develop model pedagogy, assessment, and student work curating a networked learning portfolio of student work and modelling of teacher practise and 	Queensland University of Technology	\$46,402.00

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluating the impact of this networked learning to develop the capacity of teachers. <p>It will result in: a validated method for developing the capacity of teachers to teach creativity and innovation that is scalable and adaptable for new curricula; and an online resource and research instrument.</p>		
Professor Deb Keen	Listening to the evidence: Using what works to improve educational outcomes for students with autism.	The aim of this project is to improve educational outcomes for Queensland students with autism by increasing teacher use of evidence-based teaching practices (EBP). Research has shown educational outcomes for students with autism can be improved if teachers do two important things: a) use EBPs; and b) stop using ineffective teaching practices. But efforts to facilitate uptake of EBP by educators have been somewhat ineffective and valuable time and resources are being diverted from EBPs and used on practices that research has shown to be ineffective (e.g. sensory diets; facilitated communication). There is an urgent need for well-designed professional development (PD) for educators to facilitate uptake of EBP in Queensland classrooms while reducing or eliminating the use of ineffective practices. This project will address this need through the design and delivery of a teacher professional development program.	Griffith University	\$98,310.41
Professor Greer Johnson	Enhancing and measuring primary school principals' capabilities for building authentic relationships with marginalised families.	Research confirms children need the support of schools and their families to learn. Yet collaboration remains a significant problem, especially with diverse families. Most professional learning and effectiveness measures focus schools on partnerships with middle-income, English-speaking families. This research aims to develop a measurement tool for use by principals working with diverse families, combined with an innovative, evidence-based, online professional learning program that provides direction for principals and families to enact subtle but crucial differences between traditional school-centred approaches to parental engagement, and more authentic approaches informing the role marginalised families should play in their children's schooling. The scale will be administered before and after principals undertake online PD, to measure changes in their capabilities to lead authentic family-school relationships.	Griffith University	\$47,752.72

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		Immediate benefactors of the research are principals whose enhanced capabilities will facilitate new leadership and learning partnerships with marginalised families for children's learning.		
Dr Judith Howard	Requirements for a state-wide framework for Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) in Queensland Schools.	<p>Complex Childhood Trauma (CCT) can have a profound impact on student behaviour, engagement and educational/life outcomes that can be difficult and expensive to remediate. Challenging student behaviour can also impact on teacher well-being and retention. Indigenous students may experience further challenges from intergenerational trauma suffered by family and community. There is growing demand for schools to be knowledgeable regarding CCT and what is referred to as Trauma- Informed Practice (TIP). However, no overarching state/territory frameworks exist for this in Australia. There is growing interest in Queensland for this to occur, but in consideration of the geographical and cultural diversity of the state.</p> <p>This study aims to minimise schooling concerns and financial, human and social costs resulting from the impact of CCT on students and their educators.</p> <p>The research will result in a framework that outlines recommendations for training and support processes to minimise negative impacts of CCT for students and educators.</p>	Queensland University of Technology	\$38,541.00

Grant category: Vocational education and training

Lead researcher	Project title	Project summary	Sponsor organisation	Funding awarded
Dr Anna Daniel	Improving healthy partner relationships via a self-directed online program.	<p>The Healthy Relationships Education Program is a joint initiative of YWCA Queensland and TAFE Queensland. It is a primary prevention approach that aims to reduce violence against women and to improve attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and skills for safe, respectful and healthy relationships. Its purpose is to provide an engaging and interactive online educational resource to promote healthy partner relationships.</p> <p>A program developed by YWCA is being piloted within TAFE Queensland.</p> <p>The online program takes roughly two hours to complete in two sessions several weeks apart. A small pilot was held and - prior to a major rollout across TAFE Queensland - we will integrate into the program a survey, and monitor social media to</p>	TAFE Queensland	\$19,794.00

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		measure and provide evidence of its impact. This evidence will support a case to offer the program to other education institutions, and make recommendations to improve the program.		
Professor Stephen Billett	Enhancing the standing of vocational education and the occupations it serves.	The perceived low standing of vocational education and the occupations it serves constitutes a significant impediment to this educational sector realising its goals and full potential. These perceptions shape how individuals participate in, parents advise about and employers' willingness to engage with and support vocational education, and the kinds of educational purposes expected of and processes enacted through it. The proposed inquiry seeks to capture the perceptions of parents, potential and current students, employers and teachers about the geneses of this educational sector's standing and those occupations within the Queensland community, and, importantly, how they can be enhanced. These perceptions and responses will be initially gathered through interviews and focus groups, then verified and elaborated through a survey of a wider population of these informants. These findings will be used to identify and inform policy interventions about promoting the standing and status of this important educational sector across Queensland's communities.	Griffith University	\$71,479.00

Grant category: Cross-portfolio

Lead researcher	Project title	Project summary	Sponsor organisation	Funding awarded
Dr Wojtek Tomaszewski	Transition costs: Improving young people's career choices and post-school pathways	Rates of youth unemployment, underemployment and precarious employment are increasing, presenting young people with difficult decisions on their post-school pathways. This research aims to understand the factors that influence the young people's decisions about their post-school destinations and how these decisions impact on their prospective economic outcomes. We will examine the quality of initial post-secondary destinations for students with different levels of academic achievement and from different backgrounds. Quality is defined by a set of projected economic outcomes, including estimated employment probability, expected occupational status, and expected wages. It also includes longer-term outcomes such as projected life-time earnings and longer range employment prospects associated with different occupations/courses. Our research will identify cohorts who appear to be making sub-optimal choices - these are students to whom interventions could be targeted to enhance career decision-making and post-school transitions. We will also consider student trajectories, including subject choices, to determine critical time-points for intervention.	The University of Queensland	\$76,700

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Grant category: Open

Lead researcher	Project title	Project summary	Sponsor organisation	Funding awarded
Dr Amanda McFadden	Digital play - using pedagogical approaches to teach information literacy skills through play.	Being able to find, evaluate and apply information for personal benefit is a key attribute in today's knowledge economy. Termed information literacy, this process goes beyond developing functional skills to creating attributes that enable lifelong learning. However, simply having access to digital technologies and online resources does not always equate to developing these attributes. Findings from our 2016-17 Education Horizon project show significant knowledge gaps relating to how best to support young children's information literacy. This project expands the pedagogical model developed in our 2016-17 Horizon study by investigating approaches that embed information literacy through play in order to promote children's evaluative, creative and critical thinking skills. Through a focus on information literacy, this research embeds such skills into the curriculum via digital play. Digital play provides a contemporary perspective on children's everyday experiences in a digital culture.	Queensland University of Technology	\$47,247.93 (over 2 years)
Dr Wendy Fasso	Girls, self-concept and social identity in STEM: The role of makerspace pedagogy.	<p>The benefits of using a creative space (or 'makerspace') approach to engaging girls in STEM are well recognised in the research. Gaps still exist however with regard to explicit links between design, pedagogy and makerspace learning outcomes.</p> <p>This research extends a previous Education Horizon funded project with a focus on the process of engagement in STEM through creative making and the changing self-concept in adolescent girls. It also investigates female role models and mentors in makerspaces and STEM classrooms and the growth of their identity and pedagogy. These questions lead to a framing question which is associated with gendered pedagogy in STEM classrooms, and the way that a creative makerspace approach can support the development of gender-friendly STEM pedagogy for female STEM teachers.</p>	Central Queensland University	\$46,998.99
Dr Linda-Dianne Willis	Principal Leadership for Parent-School-Community Engagement.	Parent-school-community engagement and student learning are strongly linked. Principal leadership influences school culture and is central to shaping parent-school-community engagement. The strategies principals use to facilitate effective engagement however, vary according to school contexts. The 2016 Education Horizon project investigated principal leadership for parent-school-community	The University of Queensland	\$199,237.00 (over 2 years)

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		<p>engagement in disadvantaged schools. Exemplary and innovative parent-school-community engagement strategies and practices were identified and documented.</p> <p>The 2017-2018 project extends this research in 6 more schools. Richly-detailed contemporary case studies and vignettes of the additional schools will complement those produced during 2016. An online parent engagement professional development module and Parent Engagement Toolkit (PET) for school leader, teacher, P&C, and parent use will simultaneously be developed. Using a waitlist control group pre-post design, 8 schools will pilot PET to ascertain the most useful information and resources and to improve PET for broader school use.</p>		
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