Welcome to the inaugural edition of ‘The Educator’ from UWA's Faculty of Education.

Our expanded suite of teacher education and post graduate courses at the Faculty of Education has raised the profile of The University of Western Australia as a leading centre for teacher education and school leadership in Western Australia.

In each edition of The Educator I am keen to highlight the celebrations and issues surrounding teaching and learning to the broader education community.

Success Stories, our UWA Alumnus

Luke Chapman was awarded the 2010 WA Beginning Teacher of the Year Award by the WA Department of Education in recognition of his outstanding contribution to education. Luke graduated from the Faculty of Education in 2007 with a Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary). He is now Head of Science at Hampton Senior High School. Luke is a dedicated, innovative and engaging science educator who is lauded by colleagues and students for his commitment to science and technology. During 2011 Luke is a special ambassador for UWA as part of the promotional campaign to the broader community.

Bridging the Gap

Quality and authentic school placements for student teachers present an ongoing challenge. However they are key ingredients in the preparation of teachers across all courses in Australia. Schools and teachers are often reluctant to take on student teachers. The many jurisdictional demands and priorities leave little time for that mentoring role. An ageing workforce, the Australian curriculum, NAPLAN and increased teacher workload impact on teachers’ capacity to be part of preparing the next generation of teachers.

The Faculty of Education is working on this challenge by providing opportunities for student teacher placements to be more cooperative and useful to schools. There are the usual classroom tasks student teachers need to undertake. However they are encouraged to volunteer specific expertise, for example, tutor a child identified by the teacher in specific literacy and numeracy skills or develop classroom e-learning resources. Our staff provide Professional Development and assessment advice to schools as part of this partnership approach. This is proving to be very popular with the teachers who are working with UWA teacher education courses. For many years, our students have undertaken field trips and practica in rural and remote communities taking up leadership positions in the Wheatbelt, Pilbara and Kimberley schools.

UWA's Graduate School of Education

Top of its Class

The Faculty of Education has been recognised as The University of Western Australia’s highest achiever in teaching and learning for 2010 by winning the Distinguished Teaching and Learning Award for Schools. This award is open to all Schools at UWA and it is judged according to criteria, which include rigorous and consistently applied teaching and learning priorities, and evidence of interaction between teaching and research.

Arguably, the true benefactors of this award are our students who are given the opportunity to learn from some of the finest, and most experienced, educators in the country.

Making the Links Report released - Integrating Spelling, Vocabulary, Knowledge and Comprehension across the Curriculum

In 2010 the Catholic Education Office of WA (CEOWA) commissioned Associate Professor Valerie Faulkner and Associate Professor Grace Oakley to undertake a detailed study that explored supporting student improvement in spelling, word knowledge and reading comprehension.

A key focus for the study was to improve teacher knowledge of how to support students with spelling, word knowledge and vocabulary development. Eight schools participated in the study during 2010: four schools from the 2009 pilot study; and four additional schools that joined the study in first term 2010. The report of the first two phases is titled Making the Links: Integrating Spelling, Vocabulary, Knowledge and Comprehension across the Curriculum (March, 2011).

The CEOWA is continuing this project into a third phase with funding of $100,000 in 2011 and 2012.

The full version of this report is available on the Faculty of Education’s website: http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/makinglinks
2011 UWA’s Year of Mathematics

Celebrating the role of mathematics in everyday life...

A series of educational, thought provoking and entertaining events are set for 2011 where people of all ages can explore the exciting world of mathematics and the array of opportunities that exist.

To find out more visit:

Perfect synergy: The Muriel Horsfall Bequest and the Year of Mathematics

Muriel Horsfall, a passionate mathematics educator, has left a bequest of $650,000 to The University of Western Australia. This bequest will seed the establishment of a Chair in Mathematics Education at UWA and the university aims to raise another 2.5 million dollars in 2011, UWA’s Year of Mathematics, to create the chair in perpetuity.

Muriel taught Mathematics in Western Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales and England. She retired in 1955 to Tasmania where she remained until her death in 2009, aged 102.

Muriel and her two sisters, Margaret and Constance, attended Perth Modern School and then studied for degrees in Arts followed by Diplomas in Education at The University of Western Australia. All went on to become highly respected educators. The three Horsfall sisters were determined to assist other young people, as they had been helped, by funding bursaries in memory of their parents.

Western Australian Science Awards 2011

- Do you know an outstanding Primary or Secondary Mathematics Educator?
- Do you know an outstanding Primary or Secondary Science Educator?

Winners from these categories will receive $10,000. These prestigious awards are administered by the Department of Commerce.

Nominate online at:

Is Mathematics a Foreign Language?

Professor Jacqui Ramagge
School of Mathematics and Applied Statistics
University of Wollongong, NSW

In the first of three scheduled visits to UWA, Professor Jacqui Ramagge began her exploration of the signposts and pathways to a numerate Australian population. In her May presentation, Professor Ramagge challenged Early Childhood and Primary educators to consider the obstacles to digital proficiancy and suggested that for many teachers there is more discomfort with numeracy than there is with literacy. In her August and October visits, Professor Ramagge will expand upon this theme, exploring practical methods for breaking down barriers to numeracy acquisition. This is an illuminating not-to-be-missed series of seminars for educators teaching at all levels.

To find out more about these upcoming events, and the year of mathematics please visit: http://www.maths.uwa.edu.au/community/year-of-maths

Staff Profile
Assistant Professor Sarah Hopkins

Assistant Professor Sarah Hopkins is a passionate mathematics educator and a keen advocate of UWA’s Year of Mathematics. Her motivation, classroom practice and underpinning philosophy have been shaped by a personal journey to improve learning for school students considered to be at risk. Professor Hopkins explains: “After many years of teaching secondary school mathematics I accepted a position within a maximum-security detention centre for young men. There I realised just how much more I had to learn to become an effective teacher. All my teaching tricks and resources were ineffective. It was in the detention centre that I learned how to teach”. Assistant Professor Hopkins has developed primary and secondary teacher education courses based on the philosophy that to become an effective teacher of mathematics, pre-service teachers must learn not just what to teach, but how to teach. In 2010 she was awarded with a UWA Excellence in Teaching Award for her outstanding commitment to mathematics teacher education.

Lasting Leadership

Professor Simon Clarke is coordinating the Graduate Diploma of Educational Leadership designed to be attuned to the changing world of school leaders. In the words of Andy Hargreaves, ‘mediocre managers who are not up to the job, heroic individuals who cannot be copied, or self-sacrificing martyrs who burn themselves out are not the right models for the leadership of the future’ (Hargreaves, 2006). AISWA and WAPPA are partnering with the Faculty of Education to promote an approach to leadership development premised on the belief that school leaders of the future not only need to be powerful leaders of learning, but they also need to be powerful learners themselves. The Diploma is structured to enable cohesive cohorts of participants engaging in collegial dialogue around issues and concerns arising from the day-to-day realities of school leadership. We are delighted with the strength of the partnerships we have forged with these two peak bodies and believe that we are helping to promote school ‘leadership that matters, school leadership that spreads and school leadership that lasts’ (Hargreaves, 2006).