RESEARCH STUDENTS’ FORUM

Thursday 4 June 2009, 3.30pm-8pm
Faculty of Education and Social Work

The University of Sydney
Welcome

I would like to welcome you to today’s Research Students’ Forum. A key aim of this forum is to provide research students with the opportunity to present their work to fellow students as well as to academic staff in the faculty. The students undertaking research degrees in the faculty are extremely diverse. The range of projects students undertake is also diverse, as is their disciplinary orientation and the perspectives they are taking on their research. This range of students and views on research is very clear in the set of presentations we have for you today. The people who are presenting are the next generation of Education and Social Work researchers. I am sure you will see, from the presentations today that the future of Education and Social Work research is indeed in very good hands.

Thank you all for coming.

Brian Paltridge
Director of Doctoral Studies
Faculty of Education and Social Work
### JUNE FORUM PROGRAM

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| 3.30PM | **REGISTRATION**  
Foyer, Education Building                                                    |
| 4.05PM | **PAPER PRESENTATIONS**  
(see timetable for presentation titles & room allocations)                  |
| 6.05PM | **WELCOME & KEYNOTE ADDRESS**  
Dr Sue Goodwin, Associate Director, Division of Doctoral Studies  
Professor Brian Paltridge, Director, Division of Doctoral Studies  
*Getting published in academic journals.*  
Lecture Theatre 351 |
| 6.55PM | **OUTSTANDING RESEARCH STUDENT AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT**  
Professor Brian Paltridge, Director, Division of Doctoral Studies      |
|       | **7:00 – 8:00pm**  
**DINNER**  
Staff Common Room, Room 401                                              |

5:05 – 5:55pm  
**PAPER PRESENTATIONS**  
(see timetable for presentation titles & room allocations)
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<td><strong>Karen Skilling</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Christine Preston</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fei Ai</strong></td>
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*Please note:* This panel discussion will be a continuous discussion over 50 minutes. It will be particularly important for this session that the audience stay in this room for the whole session.
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<td><strong>Ruth Edwards</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tensions of an Anglican identity for a happy school: A study in organisational culture.</td>
<td><strong>Naomi Chisuwa</strong>&lt;br&gt;Need for culturally aware educational strategies to improve body image concerns amongst Japanese adolescents.</td>
<td>There are no further presentations in this room</td>
<td><strong>Judith Guy</strong>&lt;br&gt;Privatisation and commercialisation of schooling in India: The international baccalaureate in the market place.</td>
<td><strong>John Montgomery</strong>&lt;br&gt;Censorship and the drama curriculum.</td>
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<td><strong>Vijai Rajagopal</strong>&lt;br&gt;An ethnographic study of decision making by administrators at a private K-12 school in India.</td>
<td><strong>Fernanda Timerman</strong>&lt;br&gt;Factors contributing to body concerns among Australian male and female children in the transition from Primary to Secondary School.</td>
<td><strong>Neville Ellis</strong>&lt;br&gt;Teachers' experiences as practitioner researchers in secondary schools: A comparative study of insiders' perspectives.</td>
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**Poster Presentations**<br>Please refer to page 7 for presenters’ names and titles.
Three third year PhD students talk about the highs and lows associated with the logistical aspects of their data collection.

Rose Amazan
Thesis title: Mobilising the Ethiopian Knowledge Diasporas.

Methodology/Methods: The aim of this research is to examine how Ethiopian Knowledge Diasporas can be mobilised to participate in the Tertiary Educational Process in Ethiopia. My primary data collection took place in different Ethiopian communities in Canada, United States and Ethiopia. In keeping with my methodology approach (embedded case studies) I divided the data collection process into two stages. The first stage involved administering a questionnaire to approximately 200 participants from the above regions. The questionnaires were administered via web survey, email, in person and a third agent. The second stage involved conducting approximately 40 in-depth interviews sourced from the initial questionnaire group. The information obtained from the interviews reflected the opinion of a sample of highly-skilled Ethiopian Diasporas from different age groups, gender and background.

Supervisor: Prof Tony Welch
Associate Supervisor: Dr Nigel Bagnall

Suzanne Egan
Thesis Title: Knowledge production and sexual assault services in NSW.

Methodology/Methods: The overall aim of the research is to examine the ways in which feminist knowledge/s of sexual violence have been produced and reproduced; using the local field of sexual assault service provision to elucidate this process. The methodological approach taken, a history of the present is ground in the work of Michel Foucault. At its most simple a history of the present implies that the analysis begins with a question posed in the present. In this instance the question was, what place do feminist and other discourses currently occupy in sexual assault policy and practice in NSW? To answer this question documentary material was collected and interviews were conducted with 30 sexual assault practitioners. This talk will focus on the interview process and challenges involved in accessing the participants, the actual process of conducting interviewing and will highlight the importance of utilising project management skills throughout the data collection process.

Supervisors: Assoc Prof Jude Irwin and Dr Sue Goodwin

Alex McCormick

Methodology/Methods: In this research, critical policy document analysis is supplemented by information gathered through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (government, donor and NGO) in education policy processes through fieldwork in six case study countries. Documents include sections of National Constitutions and International Covenants relating to education, national ‘Education for All’ (EFA) development plans and assessments, and, where available, NGO policy statements. Gathering documents can therefore be equally as important a component of fieldwork as interviews. Challenges include: the role and reliability of ‘gatekeepers’; ensuring continuity of approach across vastly differing contexts; and deciding whether to record interviews. Experiences in identifying and adapting interview cohorts/sample and methods (sometimes while in the field) are also considered.

Supervisors: Prof Phillip Jones and Dr Elizabeth Cassity
Developing number sense in Kindergarten children identified at risk of developing mathematical difficulties through the use of a Tier 3 intervention.

Lynelle Campbell

Students with mathematical difficulties have reduced life choices and innumeracy is increasingly becoming a problem for society and of concern to governments worldwide. Research in the area of mathematical instruction suggests that children with poor number sense go on to develop mathematical difficulties. While early intervention is known to avert a cycle of school failure, what is not known is whether children can be identified early with number sense difficulties and then what programs would constitute appropriate intervention? This research seeks to determine if the Number Knowledge Test (NKT) can provide identification of Kindergarten children with number sense difficulties and then provide appropriate intervention with the Number Worlds program. By the use of a single subject research design the program will be assessed as a Tier 3 level of intervention with ongoing monitoring of the students’ progress with the Early Numeracy and Curriculum Based Measurements.

Supervisor: Assoc Prof David Evans

Engaging dramatically.

Claire Coleman

A reflective practitioner case study exploring whether, the use of process drama to teach social studies, engages Year 10 Pasifika boys at Ihi College. This study aims to identify factors which create Pasifika student engagement with curriculum studies and provide valuable insight into the nature of Pasifika learners. It will explore possibilities and seek to build an in depth and comprehensive picture of Pasifika learners and how existing pedagogy might evolve to better service them. As a qualitative study it will value the personal story of this specific case and enhance our understandings of our changing learning communities. Through this work new ideas and theories may be generated on how to better address student disaffection and lack of engagement.

Supervisor: Dr Michael Anderson

Engaging students with Shakespeare.

Linda Lorenza

The Creative Arts have been found to assist in students' development of self confidence, self esteem, collaborative or group activities, literacy and numeracy. This study intends to consider the range of responses to practical Shakespeare education programmes presented by Bell Shakespeare Education in metropolitan, regional and remote Australian secondary schools.

Supervisor: Dr John Hughes

Associate Supervisor: Dr Michael Anderson
DINNER 7PM

STAFF COMMON ROOM
KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Getting published in academic journals.

Professor Brian Paltridge, Director, Division of Doctoral Studies
6.05pm, LT 351

It is becoming increasingly important for research students to publish their work in international peer-reviewed academic journals. This presentation will discuss strategies for students to help increase their chances of success in this process. It will discuss the peer-review process and criteria that reviewers typically use to assess the submission of journal articles. It will also provide advice on ways of targeting journals, what decisions to expect, and suggestions for responding to reviewers’ comments.

Brian Paltridge is Professor of TESOL in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. He is author of Genre, Frames and Writing in Research Settings (John Benjamins, 1997), Making Sense of Discourse Analysis (AEE Publishing, 2000), Genre and the Language Learning Classroom (University of Michigan Press, 2001), Discourse Analysis (Continuum, 2006) and with Sue Starfield, Thesis and Dissertation Writing in a Second Language (Routledge, 2007). He has recently completed a book titled Teaching Academic Writing (University of Michigan Press, 2009) with colleagues at the University of Sydney and, with Aek Phakiti, an edited volume on research methods to be published by Continuum in 2010.
ABSTRACTS

Cultural conversions in literary translation: An analysis of the Chinese translation of 'Memoirs of a Geisha'.

Fei Ai - 4.05pm, Room 508

It has been taken for granted for centuries that translation merely takes place between languages. Therefore, the traditional theories of translation studies tend to focus on the linguistic equivalence. From 1980s, the nature of translation as an interdisciplinary subject has been widely acknowledged. Disciplines like pragmatics, semiotics, cultural studies and discourse studies have made considerable direct contribution to translation studies. Despite the diversity of methods and approaches, a common feature of translation studies is an emphasis on cultural aspects of translation. The research will make a systematic analysis on the English novel 'Memoirs of a Geisha' and its Chinese translated text to investigate the cultural conversions in literary translation. Through the theoretical framework of translation theories, cross-cultural pragmatics and discourse studies, the research intends to argue that besides the challenge of language competence of both the source language and target language, the translators are also permanently confronted with the problem of how to treat the cultural aspects implicit in the source text and of finding the most appropriate technique of successfully conveying these aspects into the target language. A translator is not only bilingual but also bicultural.

Supervisor: Dr Hui Zhong Shen
Associate Supervisor: Dr Marie Stevenson

The collaborative teaching of Shakespeare in secondary schools: A study of teachers' principles, practices and perceptions.

Linzy Brady - 4.05pm, Room 530

A significant number of collaborative projects exist between arts organisations, universities and schools in the field of Shakespeare studies, offering new ways to understand the way Shakespeare's texts are and can be taught. Many of these projects are interdisciplinary and aim to bridge the gaps between educational institutions (such as high schools and universities) and arts institutions (such as theatres and their educational outreach programs). This paper is based on case study research of teachers involved in a collaborative project between the English Department in the University of Sydney and a Sydney based boys' school. The principles, practices and perceptions of the teachers involved in this research will be explored with reference to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and with implications for the way future collaborative projects are developed and how teachers may develop their Shakespeare pedagogy.

Supervisor: Dr John Hughes
Associate Supervisor: Dr Jackie Manuel
Need for culturally aware educational strategies to improve body image concerns amongst Japanese adolescents.

Naomi Chisuwa - 5.05pm, Room 508

Body image concerns have grown in prevalence in Japan and as such are now a major threat to adolescent health. In a non-western context, these problems have been recognised and dealt with to a much lesser degree because of their later emergence and the need for more culturally aware research and intervention. Japan, although a non-western country, has reached economic parity with many Western countries and along with this economic development has been the adoption of many western ideals, lifestyles, habits and trends. Similar issues related to health including eating disorders, unhealthy weight control and obesity have all recently increased in Japan. While it is certain that the influence of western society on Japanese culture is quite pervasive, Japan still remains in many ways a traditional culture. Consequently, in order to prevent the increasing prevalence of eating problems, it is necessary to gather more detailed information on body image perceptions and to understand the particular socio-cultural impact on body image amongst Japanese adolescents. In this presentation, the current status of body image issues in Japan will be briefly reviewed. Research methodology in exploring body image perception and socio-cultural influences amongst Japanese adolescents will be addressed in terms of need for culturally appropriate educational strategies.

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Jenny O'Dea
Associate Supervisor: Dr Stephen Juan

Tensions of an Anglican identity for a happy school: A study in organisational culture.

Ruth Edwards - 5.05pm, Room 438

This paper describes a study in the organisational culture of schools, based on the perceptions and experiences of teaching staff. The central research focus is to define common qualities of culture at Anglican schools, using the Grounded Theory methodology which derives theory from empirical data. In a competitive schooling environment, different educational sectors in Australia are seen as representing different values and approaches to education. While Catholic education has been well scrutinised, this is not so for Australian Anglican schools. In recent times there has been a growing number of Anglican schools, which present an attractive choice for parents. These schools are marked by great diversity in tradition and fee structure.

After a brief explanation of the methodology and of the concept of organisational culture, the paper uses concrete information and examples from one school that was studied in depth, to illustrate how the distinctive qualities of the Anglican Church affect the specific cultural character of this school. The site is an exemplar pointing to general qualities to be expected in Anglican schools. The research suggests that Anglican schools are typically marked by a set of paradoxes and contradictions. Because this school displays a predominantly positive and happy working environment, an underlay of tensions can be clearly related to its core religious identity.

Supervisor: Dr Kevin Laws
Associate Supervisor: Dr Carmel Fahey
Teachers' experiences as practitioner researchers in secondary schools: A comparative study of insiders' perspectives.

* Neville Ellis - 5.05pm, Room 527

Many contemporary education systems encourage the notion of the teacher as practitioner-researcher as part of their professional learning agenda. However, there is no compelling data as to whether teachers themselves value the idea of doing research in their own classrooms or schools as a means of improving practice. This study aims to explore what teachers think and feel about doing such research; their understanding of policy, their motivation for doing research, the types of research they do, the type of learning and support they receive, the difficulties they face and whether they find the experience beneficial or not. A comparison will be done between the perception of teachers in secondary schools in NSW and Singapore to see if their experiences are similar or different, to explore how context - such as differences in culture or policy - might help to shape teachers' experience. The findings of this study will make a valuable contribution to one area of knowledge about practitioner research that perhaps has been somewhat overlooked or neglected. Results from this case study will give an insight into teachers' perceptions of the strengths, weaknesses, advantages, as well as the disadvantages, of doing research in their own schools and any barriers or difficulties they might face. This information might then be used to better inform policy makers and school leaders when designing policy, developing programmes or allocating resources.

Supervisor: Dr Ann Cheryl Armstrong
Associate Supervisor: Prof Susan Groundwater-Smith

Privatisation and commercialisation of schooling in India: The international baccalaureate in the market place.

* Judith Guy - 5.05pm, Room 527

Demand by a new elite in India for access to improved quality and quantity of schooling is exerting enormous pressure on schooling provision in a country where already the middle class number more than 250 million and growing. This paper considers the recent growth of the International Baccalaureate programmes in India and unravels the claim that the IB is being utilised as a tool to support the growing commercialisation of private education. It explores the shift evident in the private sector where charitable trusts have traditionally been the key private providers of primary and secondary schooling to the current trend where individual entrepreneurs and a business sector are responding to the perceived economic opportunities despite the regulatory environment. The relative advantages / disadvantages of this increasing commercialisation of the private unaided sector in India are deliberated.

Supervisor: Dr Nigel Bagnall
Associate Supervisor: Prof Tony Welch
The Chinese reading competence of Taiwanese children in two primary school contexts: A comparative study of bilingual programs and regular Chinese programs.

Chien Yi Jan - 4.05pm, Room 508

The number of Taiwanese preschools and primary schools implementing English immersion programs has grown dramatically since 1999. This phenomenon essentially results from public's belief in the global notion "earlier is better" (e.g., DeKeyser, 2000; Johnson, 1992; Newport, 1990; Slavoff and Johnson, 1995) of second language acquisition and the inspiration of overseas-return ed educators gained from the success of French Immersion programs worldwide. However, in October 2004, the Taiwanese Ministry of Education launched a new policy to forbid English teaching in kindergartens (Taiwanese Ministry of Education, 2004). The policy makers claimed that many kindergarten graduates of English immersion schools performed poorly academically in the primary school years comparing with their counterparts who did not study English at all during kindergarten years. They further assumed these children's deficiency in Mandarin, the mother tongue, was caused by their long exposure in English immersion programs during the critical kindergarten years and the lack of instruction in their first language.

The aims of illuminative evaluation in this study are to investigate the two types of primary school programs (bilingual and regular Chinese programs): how they operate; and the factors (e.g. educational, personal, etc.) that shape children's reading competence. The study also aims to discover and document the experience of stakeholders, i.e. teachers, parents and pupils. The ultimate purpose of the study is to provide some research-based evidence for Taiwanese policy makers, parents, teachers and other stakeholders to make judgments about the worth of the programs by themselves.

Supervisor: Dr Lesley Harbon
Associate Supervisor: Dr Lindy Woodrow

An ethnic identity as an acculturative resource among Korean immigrant families in Australia.

So Young Lee - 4.05pm, Room 521

Immigrants may encounter various stress circumstances during the process of moving or acculturating to a new country. For example, they may experience the breaking of ties to family and friends in their native country, also, many immigrants may experience factors that are specific to their new environment. These experiences can be various forms of discrimination, language inadequacy, and the lack of social and financial resources, stress and frustration associated with unemployment and/or low income, feelings of not belonging in the host society, discomfort and anxiety in response to the unfamiliar circumstance.

However, the impacts of resources and support mechanisms such as social support networks, religious services, multicultural programs. Among various supportive factors for strengthening of migrants' empowerment and satisfactory settlements, an ethnic identity can be a useful protective factor in the contents of culture construct and has been emphasised in academic area and clinical assessment, treatment, and health-seeking behavior of migrants and ethnic minorities.

As part of broad PhD research on examining the relationship between acculturative stressors and the resources among Korean migrant families, this paper provides the disputed points of current research outcomes focusing on an Ethnic Identity.

Supervisor: Dr Ruth Phillips
Associate Supervisor: Dr Lesley Laing
Censorship and the drama curriculum.
John Montgomery - 5.05pm, Room 530

The purpose of this study is to inform our understanding of the relationship between secondary Christian schools in New South Wales and the dramatic arts and from this, create a framework to assist the development of policy and practice. This research is examining the practice of and the philosophical basis for censorship in the study of HSC drama and its public performance in secondary Christian education in New South Wales. Through a deeper understanding of why decisions are made, praxis can be informed and transformed. Decisions made at senior policy levels are having a profound influence on what dramatic art is deemed acceptable for study and performance in our schools. The division, diversity and passion within this debate demonstrate a need for further thought and research by which a framework for discussing the nexus between values, paradigms and pedagogy can enable sensible future directions in the development of future drama curriculum. This has particular significance at this time as we begin the move to a more standardised national curriculum. The research methodology employs case studies utilising the research tools of interview, focus groups and questionnaire.

Supervisor: Dr Michael Anderson
Associate Supervisor: Assoc Prof Craig Campbell

Thai families’ concern over children’s sweetened-food habits: A case study of Khon Kaen, Thailand.
Piyachat Patcharanuchat - 4.05pm, Room 521

Parents, grandparents and other family members play an important role in influencing children’s eating behaviors and one area of concern that has been addressed in Thailand is children’s sweetened-food habits via the "Reduced Sugar Consumption program". The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate Thai families' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes towards children’s sweetened-food habits in Khon Kaen, Thailand. The methodologies of ethnographical and narrative approaches were encompassed. Data were gathered by face-to-face interviews and observations from 4 extended families including 16 adult participants in Khon Kaen between October-December, 2008. The results indicated high concern over children’s excessive sweetened-food habits among those families. All participants were aware of the relationship between sweetened foods and child dental cavities and they also perceived a role in obesity and Diabetes Mellitus. However, a permissive food parenting style in which parents “let the child eat what they want” was found in all families. In practical terms, all participants were likely to surrender control of what their children eat in their daily lives. A number of unhealthy environmental influences were mentioned including grocery stores near their houses; schools selling numerous sweetened foods; TV advertising; peer group pressure. In addition, participants complained about their personal skills and ability to resist such environmental influences. These findings may assist the planning of preventive strategies to enhance the impact of the "Reduced Sugar Consumption program" in Thailand. We suggest that the program expand its aims to encompass enabling strategies which focus on building healthy public policies; creating supportive environments and developing the personal skills of parents and grandparents.

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Jenny O'Dea
Associate Supervisor: Dr Ian Hughes
Learning from children’s open-ended responses to electric circuit diagrams.

Christine Preston - 4.05pm, Room 438

Science diagrams are used widely in primary schools for instruction and assessment despite the absence of substantive research into their effectiveness as aids for conceptual development or as indicators of scientific literacy. This paper addresses one section of a larger PhD study involving Year 3 and Year 5 pupils designed to explore how primary children interpret commonly used science diagrams. The study aimed to investigate how children read diagrams and the meanings they construct from them. Of further interest was whether and in what ways the diagrams enhanced children’s knowledge and understanding of science concepts.

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Michael King
Associate Supervisor: Dr Louise Sutherland

An ethnographic study of decision making by administrators at a private K-12 school in India.

Vijai Rajagopal - 5.05pm, Room 438

The research I intend to undertake is based in the setting of a co-educational, private, K-12 school in the city of Bangalore, India. My focus of research is to study decision making by the school administrators as it pertains to the academic domain in the school. The background context that propels this study is the recent implementation of the ISO 9001:2000 quality standards for provision of education in the class levels of K-10. Examining the process by which the ISO Quality standards were implemented have led me into formulating my research questions that intend to investigate factors influencing decision makers, understanding claims for exclusivity over decision making domains and examine the decision making process as it currently exists in the school. My personal involvement in the school and its decision making, as an administrator and a member of the school management committee, adds a further dimension to this study.

In this presentation, I intend to elaborate my research plan by identifying key research questions and present my rationale for choosing ethnography as my methodology for research. Further, I intended to position myself as a participant researcher through the use of auto-ethnography in parallel with the ethnographic methodology and enable a personal introspection and investigation of my opinions, assumptions and influences on decision making in the school.

Supervisor: Dr Kevin Laws
Associate Supervisor: Dr George Odhiambo
**Queer reading for the classroom.**

David Rhodes - 4.05pm, Room 530

This research seeks to investigate the use of young adult imaginative literature in the English classroom as a method by which homophobia and heterosexism can be challenged, diversity celebrated and individual identity reinforced. A critical examination of a sample of young adult imaginative literature will be made, with particular emphasis placed on young adult literature from Australia.

The presumption of heterosexuality is very much encoded into the fabric of western society and is reinforced and validated in schools. Young people, struggling with their own sexual identity, face many obstacles in self-efficacy, especially if they believe that they may not be heterosexual. Homophobia remains as the last "acceptable" prejudice of the twenty-first century. Laws still exist that discriminate against same-sex attracted people. Indeed, many people fail to recognise that there are any queer youth at all.

There is much misinformation about same-sex attraction and there are too few safe places for young people to look for answers to their questions about sexuality whether heterosexual, bisexual, transgender or homosexual. Imaginative literature opens up a world of possibilities for young adults. For same-sex attracted youth it can provide the opportunity to see authentic representations of aspects of their own lived experiences.

The extent to which imaginative literature can have an impact on negative attitudes to same-sex attraction may perhaps be minimal. However, it can stimulate discussion where otherwise there may be silence; make the invisible, visible; offer hope and reinforce dreams. It can give a voice to those who may not be able to speak out loud.

Supervisor: Dr Jackie Manuel
Associate Supervisor: Dr John Hughes

**Motivation and engagement in mathematics: The transition from Primary to Secondary Schooling.**

Karen Skilling - 4.05pm, Room 438

Student engagement and motivation in mathematics is a significant issue for education (McPhan, Morony, Pegg, Cooksey, & Lynch, 2008; Tytler, Osborne, Williams, Tytler, & Cripps Clark, 2008). Increasingly educational research is taking note of the characteristics and attributes of motivation and engagement on learning and the influence they have on achievement outcomes (Martin, 2008b).

This research comprises two studies and is nested within a larger project known as the Middle Years Transition, Engagement and Achievement in Mathematics or MYTEAM (Way, Bobis, Anderson, & Martin, 2008). The two studies for this current proposal examine student motivation, engagement and achievement in mathematics as well as exploring pedagogy that is successful at maintaining student engagement in mathematics during the crucial middle years of schooling. It does this through in-depth qualitative examination of factors affecting student motivation and engagement on their achievement trajectories and through the identification of "best practice" pedagogy.

The aim of this research is twofold. To establish the circumstances and factors that contribute to shifts in student engagement and achievement in mathematics during the transition from primary to secondary schooling. Secondly, to identify effective pedagogy that maintains high levels of student engagement in mathematics during the middle years of schooling. A major outcome of the study will be the development of clear guidelines for educators, enabling them to increase student engagement and achievement in mathematics in the middle years.

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Janette Bobis
Associate Supervisor: Assoc Prof Andrew Martin
Factors contributing to body concerns among Australian male and female children in the transition from Primary to Secondary School.

Fernanda Timerman - 5.05pm, Room 508

Several factors influence body weight perceptions amongst children and adolescents. In the Australian society, a significant number of people are attempting to lose weight, primarily because of social pressure, as opposed to health motives. There is a clear absence of long-term studies assessing weight concerns in the transition between primary and secondary school.

This study will explore children's perceptions of body weight, physical self-esteem, nutritional knowledge and quality of breakfast in the transition from primary and secondary school. Years 6 (2007) and year 7 (2008) will be analysed focusing on the change between primary and secondary school.

Sixteen catholic schools were categorized as low (5), middle (6) and high (5) socio-economical status. A self report survey was administered to the participants in year 2007 and re-applied in 2008. Trained researcher assistants measured height and weight of participants. There were 161 students between 10 to 14 years-old in year 6 (79 boys and 82 girls) and about 80% of them (130 being 59 boys and 71 girls) were re-accessed to participate in year 7. The participant’s ethnicity was mostly (around 85 percent) Anglo/Northern and Southern European. The Food, Health and Sports Survey questionnaire were administered as a self report survey.

The current study aims to improve the knowledge about the weight perception scope, which has been described as a stronger predictor of depression, low self-esteem and negative practices to lose weight than the actual body weight.

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Jenny O'Dea  
Associate Supervisor: Dr Lina Markauskaite