



Hills Grammar

Hills Grammar | 2023

The Learning Centre



Preparing Young People to Meet the Demands of a Complex Future with its Wicked Problems

Karen Yager has over 25 years' experience in education in the public and private sectors and over 18 years in leadership. Karen has provided critical advice to NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) on syllabus implementation and development and is a life member and vice president of the English Teachers Association NSW. Karen is the 2022 president of the Professional Teachers' Council NSW (PTC), vice president of the Australian Professional Teachers Association (APTA), and the 2023 president-elect of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE).

In 2006, Karen was awarded the NSW Premier's Scholarship to travel to the UK to research using Shakespeare in schools. She has published three English texts with the Oxford University Press, winning a national publishing award. In 2020, Karen was awarded the National Reading Australia fellowship to research how to improve student writing and created a [website of resources](#) developed for primary and secondary teachers.

In 2020, she received a leadership scholarship to travel to China to visit leading schools. Karen is a Lab Champion for Learning Creates Australia that is researching alternative credentials for pupils.

Karen's ongoing commitment to education is evidenced by the recognition she has received. She was awarded the first International Teaching Fellowship by the Singapore Ministry of Education in 2011, the NSW PTC award in 2009, the APTA award in 2014 for her contribution to the teaching profession in 2021, the NSW PTC award for exceptional contribution to the teaching profession over a significant period, and in 2022, she was awarded the NSW Teachers' Guild fellowship.

Karen is currently doing a PhD focusing on how an effective professional learning model can enable teachers to foster global competency and academic excellence. With an emphasis on developing each student's unique strengths, agency and voice, Mrs Yager will continue to nurture, grow, and inspire our Hills Originals to achieve their potential for greatness.

About This Session

"To succeed in this ever-changing world, students need to be able to think like entrepreneurs: resourceful, flexible, creative, and global" (Professor Yong Zhao, University of Kansas).

When young people leave school, they will be facing a complex, dynamic, and uncertain world that will require them to be resilient, courageous, and agentic. The literature confirms that the last two years of COVID and the uncertainty that has been caused by this pandemic have impacted the wellbeing of young people. The Education Council (2020) reports that young people are becoming increasingly anxious about the uncertainty of their futures. Our young people know they are inheriting global challenges, such as climate change, international conflict, and health epidemics. The rate of change in society and the workplace is such that all we can say for certain is the future will be very different.

What is needed in schools is a focus on supporting our students to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and the crucial enterprise and life skills of creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, citizenship, and collaboration.

What is becoming increasingly evident, is that schools need to find ways to enable young people to find ways to cope with this uncertainty and experience greater hope and optimism. According to Jan Owen from Learning Australia (2022) at a recent AIS Conference, for young people to flourish and experience wellbeing, they need to experience mastery, agency, and purpose.

This presentation will share the approaches that Hills is currently using and implementing in 2023 to enable our young people to develop resilience, courage, agency, and hope so they can meet the demands of our complex future.

Session Date And Time

Venue: Hills Grammar - Details provided to Registrants prior to the event

Date: Term 1, Week 6B, Tuesday 7 March

Time: 6 – 7.30pm

[Click here to RSVP](#)



The Whole World in their Hands. Smartphones and Tweens: Towards an Understanding of Digital Puberty

Mark Yeowell | CEO Language Disorder Australia

Mark is currently the CEO of Language Disorder Australia, based in Brisbane. Over the past 20 years Mark has led four Schools, in England, the United Arab Emirates and Australia. He is currently a doctoral candidate at UNSW, supervised by eminent Finnish Educator, Professor Pasi Sahlberg, and is undertaking research into the experiences of children aged 10 to 13 when they get their first smartphone. Mark frames this event as a rite of passage and as a trigger for 'digital puberty'. Mark is particularly interested in understanding early social media use and the impact, opportunities, and risk for tweens when they are constantly connected via their smartphone to the internet. He is also a parent of two teenage sons aged 17 and 18.

Session Information

'Everyone's got one except me!'... 'I want to be able to keep in contact with my child.' As a parent, deciding to give your child their first smartphone is a big decision and not one to be taken without careful consideration. Owning a smartphone will mark a transition point in your child's digital life, impact the way in which they interact with technology and require them to manage with increasing independence a whole new set of issues. This phase brings with it new opportunities as well as risks, and the way in which you engage with your child during this stage is of utmost importance.

This session will provide parents with an overview of some key considerations and include areas such as social media, FOMO, gaming, phones in bedrooms and at mealtimes, face-to-face versus online communication, digital distraction, problematic internet use, wellbeing issues, privacy, risk, opportunities and of course, parenting a digital tween. The aim of the session is to begin to empower parents through greater understanding to support and guide their child as they navigate digital puberty.

Session Date And Time

Venue: Hills Grammar – Details provided to Registrants prior to the event

Date: Term 1, Week 8B, Thursday 23 March

Time: 6 – 7.30pm

[Click here to RSVP](#)



Celebrating Deeper Water, Deeper Learning at Hills Grammar

Geoff Gates | Director Of Learning And Teaching Pre-K To 12

As the Director of Learning and Teaching Pre-K to 12, Geoff works closely with the Heads of ECEC, Junior School and Senior School, to ensure a high-quality curriculum is in place across the School. He also works closely with teachers on projects such as Cultures of Thinking and Deep Learning, where the aim is to develop innovative, future-focused approaches to learning and teaching.

Geoff started teaching at Hills Grammar in 2004. Prior to Hills, he worked in Sydney, London and Hamburg and has taught HSC, GCSE, IGCSE and IB Diploma courses. His past leadership roles have included Literacy Coordinator, Student Services Coordinator, and Head of English. Geoff has presented at education and university conferences on pedagogy, literature, and creative writing.

Geoff completed a Master of Arts in 2007 (with Vice Chancellor's Award), and a Master of Education in 2013 (with Educational Alumni Leadership Award, 2014). In 2016 Geoff received the Australian College of Educational Leaders (ACEL) 'New Voice' in Educational Leadership Research Scholarship. He has recently completed a Doctor of Creative Arts degree exploring the representation of Australian artists in fiction and biography. He is the author of two novels and has written for both professional publications and literary journals, and has recently been awarded a Varuna Fellowship. He has also received a NAB Scholarship to assist his participation in the AIS National Flagship Program for 2023.

Session Information

During the second half of 2019 the Hills Grammar executive discussed the idea of creating a poster to help capture the learning journey Pre K to 12. The metaphor of 'Deeper Learning, Deeper Water' emerged out of this discussion – with the relatable idea that children first stay close to the sand, and then over time gain confidence, eventually swimming 'out beyond the breakers'. What followed was a creation of a 27-page booklet which captures the key themes of work in the school to engage students in an education that prepares them for the future.

In this session, Geoff (author of the text) will unpack some of the key ideas from Deeper Water, Deeper Learning and the progress made in implementing them in practice, with illustrations including our signature interdisciplinary programs (Years 6-9), entrepreneurship (Year 9) and the Personal Passion Project (Year 10). People can be rightfully sceptical about manifestos and mission statements, but in this case we argue that developing a shared language around our deeper purpose as a school has enabled a powerful balance of innovation and cohesion.

Session Date And Time

Venue: Hills Grammar – Details provided to Registrants prior to the event

Date: Term 2, Week 6B, Tuesday 30 May

Time: 6 – 7.30pm

[Click here to RSVP](#)



Creativity: Engaging Learners for the Realities of the 21st Century

Presenter | Professor Michael Anderson

Professor Michael Anderson is Professor of Creativity and Arts Education in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work at The University of Sydney and Co-Director of the [CREATE Centre](#). He is an internationally recognised educational leader in school transformation processes, arts and creativity education. He has taught, researched, and published in education and transformation for over 20 years, including 19 books and over 60 book chapters and journal articles. His international research and practice focus on how the 4Cs can be integrated using coherent frameworks to support leaders as they work towards transformation in their contexts.

Michael's most recent work emerging from his research and partnerships with schools include [Transforming Education](#) (with Miranda Jefferson, Bloomsbury, 2021) and [Transforming Schools](#) (2017).

Session Information

Our schools were designed in a world that looks very different to the one we live in today. Over the past 30 years, technology has fundamentally changed how we work, live, and learn. In the face of these changes many of our schools have begun to transform to make them more creative, collaborative, communicative and critically reflective places.

So, what can parents do through the ebb and flow of everyday life to use creativity to engage their children in learning and life, in ways that relate to the realities of the 21st Century? Join Professor Anderson to consider ways that parents can help meet the educational and developmental needs of our young people to not only survive but thrive through the development of cognitive interpersonal and intrapersonal dispositions. Approaches including The Learning Disposition Wheel will be considered as possibilities to build innovative, deep, and engaging learning that prepare our young people for the challenges of their present and our future.

Session Date And Time

Venue: Hills Grammar – Details provided to Registrants prior to the event

Date: Term 3, Week 6B, Tuesday 22 August

Time: 6 – 7.30pm

[Click here to RSVP](#)



Establishing Your Family’s Digital Guardrails. Realistic strategies to navigate the online world with your family

Dr Kristy Goodwin is a speaker, author, researcher, and media commentator exploring the impacts that our digitalised lives have on our physical health, mental wellbeing, and productivity. She is passionate about igniting peak-performance in a digital age by sharing brain-based solutions. Kristy explains how the human brain and body operate in the digital world we now live and work in. With clients including Apple, the Reserve Bank of Australia, Westpac, Macquarie Bank, Deutsche Bank, the National Broadband Network, McDonald’s, Optus and the NSW Department of Education Kristy helps both large and small organisations support their employees’ health, wellbeing, and performance in a digital landscape. Kristy is regularly called upon by the media for her expert opinion about the science of productivity and wellbeing in a digitalised landscape. She’s adept at providing research-backed solutions to foster sustainable digital behaviours, without proposing #digitaldetoxes or #phonebans. She appears on TV, radio and print publications distilling the latest science into practical and relevant information. Dr Kristy was the recipient of an Australian Postgraduate Award for her PhD studies, has been awarded a NSW Quality Teaching Award and won a University Medal for her research examining the impact of technology on the brain. Kristy has spoken to thousands of professionals and employees and executives across Australia and internationally and is renowned for her engaging and practical presentations.

Session Information

This workshop will equip families to support their child's digital wellbeing with research-based, yet realistic advice about setting up their own family's digital guardrails. Dr Kristy will assist in family discussions of pertinent issues and guide participants to design their own personalised, realistic family digital wellbeing plan. During the session Dr Kristy will explore with participants what their children do online, how much time they are spending on devices, where, how and when devices will be used at home and with whom students can interact online.

Session Date And Time

Venue: Hills Grammar – Details provided to Registrants prior to the event

Date: Term 3, Week 9A, Thursday 14 September

Time: 6 – 7.30pm

[Click here to RSVP](#)
