

2017 AJLD and LDA Award Recipients

2017 AJLD Eminent Researcher Award – Professor Anne Castles

Anne Castles is Distinguished Professor at Macquarie University, a cognitive scientist, and an expert in development and disorders of reading and language. Anne completed her Honours degree in Psychology at the Australian National University and her PhD at Macquarie University, supervised by another LDA Eminent Researcher, Professor Max Coltheart. For over 20 years she has been contributing important research in this area, sharing this research with the scientific and wider communities.

As well, Anne is a passionate and active advocate for students with learning difficulties and ensuring they are supported by known evidence-based interventions with effective best-practice strategies. She is active in the print and electronic media, using social media effectively to translate and promote key messages from her own research and from other important research undertaken elsewhere.

She undertook teaching and research at the University of Melbourne before returning to Macquarie University. Anne has been recognised with an innovation award for the development of the Motif assessment interface, a fabulous tool of which many in this room will have used.

In 2010, Anne became the Scientific Director of the Macquarie Centre for Cognitive Science and then Head of the Department of Cognitive Science. In 2011, she became the Deputy Director and Reading Program Leader for the ARC Centre of Excellence in Cognition and its Disorders.

Anne has led and contributed to important research projects through ARC grants, published many influential articles and books, supervised and supported postgraduate students, and served on the editorial boards of influential academic journals including *Annals of Dyslexia*, the *Journal of Child Experimental Psychology*, and the *Scientific Studies of Reading*.

Anne is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New South Wales and a member of the Steering Committee of the Australian Brain Alliance. Anne has been on the LDA Council since 2009, and has now accepted the position of President of our association. LDA is very privileged to have Anne and her expertise on Council.

To recognise Anne's significant research contribution, we welcome Eloise Ford, the Managing Editor of Routledge Taylor and Francis Australasia. We thank her for joining us, and on behalf of LDA thank Routledge not only for sponsoring the AJLD Eminent Researcher Award, but also for its ongoing support for the growth and strengthening of its academic publication, the *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*.

2017 LDA Mona Tobias Award – Professor Pamela Snow

Pamela is Professor and Head of the Rural Health School at the Bendigo campus of La Trobe University. She is both a registered psychologist and a Fellow of the Speech Pathology Association of Australia. Pamela earned her Graduate Diploma in Communication Disorders at the Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences, and her PhD at La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Throughout her academic career her focus has been on speech and language difficulties and how these impact on individuals, particularly those at risk, including youth offenders and young people in the state care system. Her research interests include oral language as an academic and mental health protective factor in childhood and adolescence, as well as the application of evidence in the language-to-literacy transition in the early years of school.

Pamela's research has been reported in over 120 publications in a wide range of international journals. Her most recent publication is a book, co-authored with Caroline Bowen, on *Making Sense of Interventions for Children with Developmental Disorders: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*. This witty and accessible book provides an invaluable guide for parents and professionals in distinguishing between programs and interventions that are based on research and evidence, as against those that are not.

Pamela has written and co-authored articles for the LDA Bulletin, including:

Snow, P., Castles, A., Wheldall, K. & Coltheart, M. (2017). Why Australia should trial the new phonics screening check. *LDA Bulletin*, 49(1), 4-5.

Wheldall, K., Snow, P. & Graham, L. (2017). Explainer: What does the term 'synthetic phonics' really mean? *LDA Bulletin*, 49(1), 6-7.

Snow, P. (2016). Reading is a verb. Literacy is not. *LDA Bulletin*, 48(2), 8-9.

Snow, P. (2014). Reading Recovery and Cassandra's curse. *LDA Bulletin*, 46(3), 19-20.

Pamela has played a leading role within the Australian academic community in identifying and commenting on issues of significance relating to the link between literacy and educational outcomes and the impact of poor literacy skills for young people in the justice and welfare sectors. She draws attention to critical issues relating to effective literacy instruction in schools and the importance of evidence-based practice through her blog the Snow Report, at: <http://pamelasnow.blogspot.com.au> and articles published in the Conversation. She has been a member of the Expert Committee set up by the Government to advise on the implementation of the proposed National Phonics Check.

Pamela contributes to the support of students with learning difficulties through her continuing membership on the LDA Council, and through her many publications which address the needs of children and adolescents who have difficulties because of poor language and reading skills.

2017 LDA Bruce Wicking Award – Mr Chris Eveans

Chris Eveans, Principal of Robina State School on the Gold Coast for the past 6 years, has been in education for 38 years. He was Principal at Birkdale South State School in Brisbane for 19 years and has worked at remote indigenous schools in Queensland.

Chris is instrumental in translating education research into the classroom practice, implementing highly effective literacy instruction based on three key inquiries into reading – the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy 2010, The National Reading Panel 2000 and the Rose Report 2009. Pedagogy at Robina State School is based on *explicit instruction* using multisensory techniques, integrating the Big 6 of Reading. He takes a whole school approach by inspiring teachers and managing school resources so evidence based teaching practices are embraced and feature prominently in every classroom.

Mr Eveans' continued willingness to gain more knowledge for himself and his staff is demonstrated by inviting teachers from the Queensland Public Education system into his school to learn, observe, and see tangible evidence of the successful application of educational research. He has also shared his knowledge Australia wide through help with the production of the Outside the Square program.

Chris leads by example with a collaborative culture of professional learning, developing a high personal level of expertise in education research and connecting with leading education researchers. He shares his wealth of knowledge and experience by mentoring schools, writing publications, visiting progressive schools to observe best teaching practice, being a source of inspiration by hosting local

and interstate schools, and by presenting seminars – e.g. at the Australian Council of Education Research ACER ‘Excellence in Professional Practice’ conference. He has written articles for the Learning Difficulties Australia Bulletin. Chris works in partnership with professional associations and community groups to host professional development seminars, parent information sessions, and children's workshops at his school.

Chris ensures instruction and intervention are tailored to suit the unique learning needs of each student, so every student has an opportunity to participate on the same basis as their peers. Student learning is supported and scaffolded through differentiated teaching, classroom accommodations, universal design for learning, assistive technology, and the provision of reasonable adjustments.

Chris facilitated the establishment of Robina State School as a pilot ‘dyslexia-friendly’ school. In recognition of this innovation, it became the first school accredited by the Australian Dyslexia Association in 2012. This prototype was endorsed by the Queensland Education Minister, the Hon. John Paul Langbroek, as a model for other schools to replicate.

Chris Eveans is a proactive educator and visionary school leader deserving of formal recognition for putting the best interests and welfare of the child first and foremost, and for bringing education research to the classroom so every student at Robina State School has an opportunity to attain their learning potential.