CHRISTOPHER WAUGH

WELCOME

I invite you to take some time exploring the many links, videos, sites and evidence I have gathered to ensure that you don't have to rely on my word alone to evaluate my expertise and professional capacity.

PROFESSIONAL STATEMENT:

Winner of New Zealand's 2019 National Excellence in Teaching Award and featured in Al Jazeera's documentary on democratic schooling, I bring 23 years of transformative practice that has consistently challenged expectations of what's possible in education.

My journey to teaching wasn't conventional. After careers in radio broadcasting, managing Radio RDU and chairing New Zealand's Student Radio Network, and the fitness industry with Les Mills, I discovered my true calling: building classrooms that are sites of vivid engagement where authenticity sits in balance with deep rigour.

My innovations speak through their results. At the London Nautical School, I led our English department from 58% to 93% GCSE pass rates in four years, all while the national average for boys remained at 53%. We achieved this by systematically dismantling stale traditional practices and replacing these with evidence-based approaches tuned to that environment: students chose their teachers and programmes annually through our "You Choose" scheme; all work lived on public blogs at edutronic.net, transforming learning from private transaction to global conversation; our "Unlock Achievement" micro-credentials replaced traditional testing with dynamic badges students earned on their own timeline. The boys' success fuelled their motivation.

Here at Christ's College we have established the English component of the innovative "Christ's College Diploma" which provides a radical re-think of learning in English for Year 10 and 11 students, delivered on a semesterised basis. Choice, care and high press are our talismans.

For a non-selective school like Christ's College, to have our boys consistently achieve some of the highest NCEA results in the country in our subject is a matter of great pride to us.

I have a fundamental belief that everyone can achieve, and in my classes, they do. My use of Grammar for Writing pedagogy transforms students' writing tasks into laboratories for literary mastery. As co-host of the Teaching Boys English podcast, I tackle the challenge of boys' underachievement head-on, bringing insights

NATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

I was awarded the National Excellence in Teaching Award and the National Award for Excellence in Innovation at the ASG NEITA ceremony at the New Zealand Parliament in February 2020

DOCUMENTARY

A documentary, aired in January 2017, about my work as Head of Department at the London Nautical School

ONLINE JOURNAL

from teaching in settings ranging from rural New Zealand to inner London comprehensives, to my current role as Head of English at Christ's College, one of New Zealand's most respected independent schools.

I seek to contribute to environments that consider the pursuit of excellence the norm, where outstanding academic education is every student's right, and where courage, integrity, and respect for hard work characterise the educational culture.

I'm committed to ensuring my students are equipped to thrive and make meaningful contributions to society. Their outlook will be shaped by an education that taught them to strive to be their best, to challenge orthodoxy, embrace authenticity, and never settle for less than realising their wildest hopes and dreams.

DOWNLOAD

Use this button to download a printable version of this portfolio

Read my professional journal to explore the underpinnings of my educational philosophies and practice.

READ

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

CHRIST'S COLLEGE

CANTERBURY, NEW ZEALAND

Head of Department for English and Media Studies

January 2021 – Present

At Christ's College, I've discovered fertile ground for redefining what English and Media Studies in the confluence of 175 years of history and the latest in educational science.

Here, in this bastion of Anglican education where boys still wear those distinctive striped blazers, we've been orchestrating another quiet revolution. Heritage buildings and monastic quadrangles demand world-class pedagogy. We've employed that weight of tradition as a fulcrum for transformation.

Here we've built a department where boys they create something that matters. Where Shakespeare isn't preserved in amber, it instead helps our boys develop the moral and critical capacity they need for the 21st century. Where our school virtues of courage and honesty aren't just words on a crest but lived experiences in every lesson.

The privilege of working with academically ambitious young men in this environment has only sharpened my

CONFERENCE

TEACHING BOYS ENGLISH

Sometimes the most powerful act of influence is in bringing the right people together. In May 2024, we transformed Christ's College into the epicentre for a conversation: how do we arrest the crisis of boys' achievement in English?

We'd all seen the data: boys trailing girls by 30% in literacy measures, the widening achievement gap, the collective shrug of "boys will be boys." Instead, we created a crucible for practical revolution.

Teachers from across New Zealand descended on our Gothic halls to forge new pathways. We shared what works: Grammar for Writing that turns language into power, authentic audiences that make writing matter, choice that transforms compliance into agency.

Practitioners attended from across New Zealand who were eager for change, swapping battle stories and breakthrough moments. We demonstrated that teaching boys English is about recognising that when you give boys real tools for real expression in the real world, they excel.

conviction: excellence isn't just about maintaining standards, it's about constantly redefining what's possible. Far beyond preparing boys simply to inherit the establishment, we're equipping them to re-create it in service to us all.

IT'S A BOY THING

With my dear colleague, HoD of English at Otago Boys' High School, Gena Bagley, I produce an occasional podcast where we tackle the joys and challenges of teaching English to boys.

COLLEGE MAGAZINE

This article, published in our school magazine 'College', provides further insight into the way we do things in my department.

EMPLOYMENT 2017-2020

MOUNT ASPIRING COLLEGE

WANAKA, NEW ZEALAND

Assistant Head of Learning Area for English and Dean of Iron House

January 2017 – December 2020

After seven years teaching in inner London, the return to New Zealand, and Wanaka, was a breath of fresh air. This school serves the entire Upper Clutha region, and as such is a hub of the community. I greatly enjoyed the pivotal role a school and its teachers can have in a community, and built some strong co-operative relationships with families, students and local youth organisations.

INNOVATION

On returning from the UK, I was brimming with ideas to build upon the innovations of the past, and eager to put these into action. You'll see listed to the right of this description some of those to which I put the majority of my energy: The **micro-credentials team project**, the teacher **podcast** series and my beloved **Tri Club**. Everything I do in my professional life comes from position of humanism and pursuit of excellence.

GENRE-BASED PROGRAMMES OF LEARNING

Developing even further on the movement towards

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

TRIATHLON CLUB

The Aspiring Triathlon Club has grown rapidly since its inception only three years ago. In this time there have been too many successes to mention individually, however we are all very proud of winning the co-educational school trophy in the 2020 Secondary Schools' Nationals.

With three training sessions a week that run all-year-round, we have become a close-knit and enthusiastic group of athletes.

MICRO-CREDENTIALS PROJECT

A TWO-YEAR FULLY-FUNDED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

SMAC
SEE ME AFTER CLASS

programmes of learning in English that pursue a singular theme, I explored with my colleagues the use of genre as the unifying force in my learning programmes. You'll see in the websites for my "**Thoughtcrime**" programme, which focuses on the stylistics of satire and propaganda and how these inform the genre of future dystopia; or that of my "**Magical Realism**" programme, which similarly pursued the features of that genre.

This approach allowed for a deepening of both the literary and the linguistic aspects of the students' learning by building a highly sophisticated appreciation of the interplay between style and content.

THE PHILOSOPHY

This is possibly better framed in the words of Peter Bennett, a researcher with whom I collaborated to write a chapter for his latest book, tentatively titled at the time "The Murder of English":

"In our department the notion of writing text simply in order to achieve a grade is an anathema. Our students create texts to communicate ideas, feelings, fragments of their real and imagined lives" (Chris Waugh)

This chapter focusses on "The dissenting voice" and a pedagogy that asks students to consider the tools English scholarship provides them in the light of the urgent need for them to act for themselves. Reaffirming his insistence that the classroom is very much the real world and not a venue for the preparation of students for this, Waugh once again steps actively into the fray as an advocate for English, fully loaded. Here it describes an experience that is rich, complex, unpredictable and frequently demands everything of us, continuing to in Waugh's own memorable phrase to "luxuriate in the now".

Waugh has an ongoing commitment to shift the locus of control, and responsibility, in the classroom from the teacher, to 'the space between us and the students'. Using technology as a means to effectively create space for the core artefacts of collaboration – the students' work, Waugh's practice is always pushing boundaries

His accounts of live-streaming from the classroom, which he describes as 'raising the stakes' evoke Biesta's impassioned arguments for the beautiful risk of education. Waugh argues that this sense of risk creates an excellent frisson in the classroom and brings life to even the most conventional material, as students are 'mining' it to develop the talents and knowledge they can use to amplify their voice, and better contribute to society.

DEAN OF IRON HOUSE

July 2017 – Present

Working with my Co-Dean Charlotte, we developed a very strong house culture. With a strong philosophy that says 'you get what you attend to', we introduced a range of ways of working with the students in Iron House that emphasised the positive.

Routines and discipline are essential to the effective running of any school, and we proved via a number of measures that taking the time to notice, and acknowledge, the students who are meeting our expectations has been an extremely successful means of shifting our culture.

For example, while it should come as no surprise that acknolwedging students who maintain excellent attendance is likely to lead to higher over-all levels of attendance—it has been surprising how many of our colleagues were convinced this wasn't going to be the case!

Being a Dean allowed me to deepen my knowledge of, and relationships with, the students I taught, and as a result further increased my effectiveness with them in the classroom.

In 2018 I successfully pitched for a two year Education Hub "Bright Spots" award which allowed me and a team I assembled at Mount Aspiring College to develop a radical new badge-based approach to on-going assessment

LEARN MORE

"I was really impressed with the enthusiasm you have built among the staff, and with the clarity of your vision for the microcredentials project – it was very impressive."

Graeme Aitken
Director of Educational Initiatives, University of Auckland

While working at Mount Aspiring College, I produced a weekly podcast in collaboration with colleagues, students and parents that narrates the daily life of a school and its inhabitants

LISTEN

EMPLOYMENT 2010-2016

THE LONDON NAUTICAL SCHOOL

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

Head of Department for English

April 2013 – December 2016

The London Nautical School is a passionate and idiosyncratic boys' foundation school situated on the South Bank of the Thames in the heart of London. As such it represents all that is wonderful about London. Not only does it have a rich history (The Nautical was set up as a response to the sinking of the Titanic and resides in a unique old building in Stamford Street) but it also embraces the diverse, multi-cultural modernity of Europe's largest city.

THE RESULTS

In the four years of my tenure in the role of Head of Department for English, our key performance indicator, the Year 11 GCSE English results, progressed from a previous total of 58% A*-C in 2012 to 93% A*-C in 2016. In achieving this we took no short-cuts, and it was achieved in the context of unprecedented turbulence in the parameters of the national English exam specifications. To provide some context, the National average pass rate for boys in these same examinations is currently 53% A*-C.

THE PEOPLE

The department ran on a model that encouraged a high degree of professional autonomy to the teaching team. As a result of the national recognition our **You Choose** class selection programme and **Unlock Achievement** badge-based assessment scheme received, we attracted the highest calibre of teachers. Everything we achieved started with the engagement and empowerment of the team, the results of which I feel immensely proud.

THE PHILOSOPHY

In my work as HOD of English at the London Nautical School I had the opportunity to put my philosophies of education to test. I acted on the belief that students thrive in environments where they feel they have agency. I considered the classroom to be the 'real world' and as such a venue for the most important work we can imagine a teenager can engage in. We focussed on 'the now' in our work at the Nautical School. Students would be offered meaningful choices in their learning and have to live with – and learn from – the consequences of these choices. Finally, and importantly, the students would encounter the toughest possible challenges in their everyday learning – and they would be supported to conquer these challenges – with no short-cuts.

PRESENTATION

HOW OUR UNIQUE DEPARTMENT WORKED

Our whole department, including students, presented at the Northern Rocks conference in Leeds in June 2015, this session provided an exposition of how we work as a department in pursuit of student agency and excellence in outcomes.

ONLINE JOURNAL

Read my professional journal to explore the underpinnings of my educational philosophies and practice.

READ

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

FILM CLUB

For 5 years I had the privilege of delivering an international film making programme run in association with the British Film Institute and the French film archive, the Cinémathèque Française.

London Nautical Students presenting their short film at a local festival at the British Film Institute

This is a film learning programme like no other. Groups of students from all over Europe, South America and even Cuba engage in a year-long study of film making. Each year a specific element of film "vocabulary" is set by the film critic Alain Bergala. Mr Bergala determines the curriculum for the programme and his chosen element forms the theoretical focus for the year's work. The students then pursue a rigorous process of viewing clips of films that demonstrate the techniques in question, performing short filmed exercises to explore these techniques in practice, and reflecting on their own and each others work.

The club has frequently travelled to Paris and Edinburgh to present their films as part of international festivals in each city. You can investigate their work more via their **dedicated website**.

SAILING CLUB

As a nautical school, we ran an extensive sailing programme, including the Wednesday afternoon and Saturday sailing club. I provided on-water safety support for the club and as part of this have a current safety boat and VHF radio certification.

As a school with a high proportion of students who come from backgrounds of disadvantage, and as a boys' school, the students were nationally classified amongst the lowest performing groups in English. The fact that our boys achieved well above national averages on every measure, and that there was no achievement gap between various groups in the cohort, was the most significant testament to the impact of our innovative ways of working.

Teacher of English, Drama and Enrichment

September 2010 – April 2013

In my role as a classroom teacher of English, Drama and Enrichment I worked with 8 different groups from Year 7 to Year 13.

Even at the beginning of what has been a significant chapter in my career as a teacher, The London Nautical School facilitated my engagement in a range of exciting areas of innovation and creative practice. These included: Working with the BFI and a group of students to create films submitted to the **Cinematheque Francaise international project**, and piloting the scheme of online journalling for students in the classroom called **Edutronic.net**. Edutronic has gone on to receive international recognition.

Due to my active collaborative practice, students in my classes consistently outperformed their cohort in attainment and always enjoyed their learning. My lessons were judged to be outstanding by both internal and external observers.

2013 GCSE Pass Rate

2014 GCSE Pass Rate

2015 GCSE Pass Rate

2016 GCSE Pass Rate

2016 National Average for Boys

EQUALITIES GROUP

This group of students and teachers was responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the equalities objectives for the school. We worked with the board of governors to develop the school's long-term equalities objectives; we delivered equalities CPD training to teachers; we ran regular campaigns within the school, and consulted with teachers on curriculum choices. We were also the only secondary school group to have participated in the 2015 and 2016 London Pride march.

SOUTHBANK TEAM TRAINING

Every week an intrepid group of students and teachers headed out to the South Bank where I utilised all the public spaces and street furniture (and some of my knowledge from my previous life in the fitness industry) to run team fitness challenges.

DANCE CLUB

A weekly club where a group of students worked towards the creation of an entry into a borough-wide dance competition, Step Into Dance.

EMPLOYMENT 2005–2010

THE LEIGH TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY

DARTFORD, KENT, UNITED KINGDOM

Teacher of English

January – July 2010

The Leigh Technology Academy, in Dartford, Kent, is a secondary school judged "Outstanding" by Ofsted in October 2009. It is a school infused with enormous vigour for innovation and the whole facility was literally engineered around modern principles of large-class, integrated learning in a technology-rich environment.

MOUNT ASPIRING COLLEGE

WANAKA, NEW ZEALAND

Head of Department: English and Drama

January 2005 – January 2010

I could not have been more engaged in the role of teacher and academic leader than I was at Mount Aspiring College – and I could not have gained more from the experience.

Tucked in the Southern Alps of New Zealand, this school is privileged to have one of the most stunning natural environments at its doorstep. Inspired by this, we created a department that re-energised the teaching and learning of English for the 21st century.

As a review of the class web **pages** of the time will reveal, we turned everything on its head and placed the

As a teacher I worked as part of a collaborative team with classes from Year 7 to Year 11. I was responsible for the English learning for two classes at Year 10 and Year 11 who were preparing for their GCSE assessment in both Language and Literature.

The experience of working at The Leigh was a tremendous introduction to education in the UK. The similarities between it and the system in New Zealand far outweighed the differences, thus I found it easy to 'hit the ground running' in both the teaching and learning, and the wider school environment.

In the time since commencing work at the Leigh, some of the initiatives I took included; the implementation of an ability grouped intensive reading programme with the 60 Year 7 students, the running of a targeted GCSE revision programme and the training and support of colleagues new to the profession in the successful running of open-plan learning environments.

PROACTIVE HEALTH AND FITNESS

WANAKA, NEW ZEALAND

Group Fitness Instructor

April 2008 – December 2009

After a hiatus of a couple of years after moving to Wanaka I re-started my work as an instructor of BodyAttack and RPM. I derived great pleasure from teaching these group fitness classes to people from the town – many of whose kids I also taught at school.

learner, and their curiousity, at the centre of our programmes. Entire courses were developed around themes such as "Future Dystopia" or "Teenage Anti-Hero" and the students chose the context and style within which they learned. The results in terms of both achievement and student engagement spoke for themselves – and this work formed the template on which my widely-recognised practice at the London Nautical School was founded.

The freedom of relative isolation and innovative attitude allowed us to explore some vital ways of integrating the learning from a range of curriculum areas. We embraced this autonomy and produced learning programmes that were influenced by industries such as journalism, online publishing and theatre.

In English, the traditional texts were thoroughly examined, but the insights gained by the students were taken to new dimensions.

EXTRA CURRICULAR

MULTISPORT AND TRIATHLON

Our focus was on participation, but when students achieved competitive success there was an undeniable sense of achievement. Here's some **evidence**

PERFORMING ARTS

As the Head of Drama I was dedicated to developing this learning area in the school. When I took the position in 2005 there were 11 people in the senior programmes, and in 2009 the students in these elective Drama courses numbered 67 . Inevitably this involved extensive out-of-class involvements, including supporting and directing student entries into the Sheila Winn Shakespeare competitions, assisting with the Stage Challenge and many public performances held in the local town hall.

FUTURE LEARNING

I was the chair of a group of teachers from Mount Aspiring College who were developing innovative ideas about how we could tackle learning as a school in the 21st century.

OUTDOOR PURSUITS

I was part of a group of teachers who supported the Year 9 outdoors camp every year. The camps involved experiences such as canyoning, abseiling, kayaking and multi-day tramping.

BOOTCAMP

As part of a student support programme I ran a 'bootcamp' that encouraged young boys to get out of the confines of the school grounds and engaged in hard, fun, physical activity – to notably positive effect.

DEBATING

The debating team that teachers in the English Department worked hard to develop made the semi-finals of the hotly contested Debating Competitions in 2008. Two students were selected for the regional development team.

CASHMERE HIGH SCHOOL

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Teacher of English

July 2003 – January 2005

From the moment I started my career, I have striven for excellence as a teacher. The results of this have been apparent in the responses from students, the measurable development in their learning, and the evaluation of my peers.

[**Download a copy of a classroom evaluation**, performed by the principal of Cashmere High School.]

CHRISTCHURCH BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Teacher of English

May 2003 – July 2003

The opportunity to work at Christchurch Boys' came after my final term at the New Zealand Graduate School of Education, during which I spent 7 weeks on teaching practice there.

I was privileged to take over some of the school's extension English classes at years 9 and 12. It was a great compliment to be entrusted with these students for a term, and I took every opportunity to develop my understanding of the special conditions that support learning development in high ability students.

LES MILLS WORLD OF FITNESS

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Group Fitness Manager

June 1999 – September 2001

As Group Fitness Manager of Les Mills Christchurch, I was responsible to the General Manager for all financial planning and control within my department, personnel (recruitment, employment, training and performance management), internal marketing, rostering, membership satisfaction and facility management.

Group Fitness Instructor.

1996 – 2005

I taught a number of fitness classes at the local Les Mills gym. I like it so much that I had to push myself to place it in the 'work experience' part of this resume.

I'm a fully certified instructor of the Les Mills programmes BodyAttack, RPM and Bodycircuit. I'm an experienced National instructor trainer and I regularly present classes and training sessions at South Island training workshops.

CANTERBURY STUDENT BROADCASTING LTD

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

[A typical rdu staff meeting]

General Manager

1993 – 1998

As General Manager of Canterbury Student Broadcasting Limited, I was responsible to the board of directors for all financial planning and control, personnel (employment, training and performance management), strategic planning, innovation and day to day operations of its radio station and other media.

CSBL operated the radio station **"rdu"**, the Christchurch member of "b.net"; the NZ Student Radio Network, of which I was the chair; "Volume Magazine", a free Christchurch community and culture publication and the "alternate" website.

[**DOWNLOAD** a copy of my written reference from the Board of Directors]

RADIO 1, 91FM

DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND

Full-time News Editor

July 1992 – October 1993

As News Editor I was responsible for the running and monitoring of all news broadcasts. I was directly responsible for the 60 volunteers who worked in my area.

Alongside the tasks of my specific job I was part of the Radio One Management Collective and responsible for: the planning (strategic and budgetary-including grant applications), appointment of staff, relationship with our employer O.U.S.A., internal communication, the maintenance of our equal opportunity policies, and the daily and long-term success of the station.

Part-Timer

January-June 1992

Tasks: Various, including: sound engineering, copy-writing, interviewing/announcing, record shelver…

Volunteer

1986-92

Tasks: News-reading, announcing, Ski-report co-ordinator, trainee engineer.

EVIDENCE

REFERENCES AND EVALUATIONS

Christ's College, Canterbury, New Zealand. Phone +64 3 366 8705:

- **Joe Eccleton**. Headmaster, Christ's College. **joe.eccleton@christscollege.com** +64 3 366 8705
- **Katie Southworth**. Deputy Headmaster (Curriculum), Christ's College. **ksouthworth@christscollege.com** +64 3 366 8705
- **Jane Elworthy**. Chair of the Christ's College Parents' Association. **janewantstoknow@gmail.com**

Mount Aspiring College (2020), Wanaka, New Zealand.

Collegial Reference

- Renee Plunkett, Teacher of English, Mount Aspiring College
- **Written Reference** (Download)

Parent Reference

- Karenza Heath: **Written Reference** (Download)

The London Nautical School, Waterloo, London. SE1 9NA.

- Dr Laura Ovenden, Head of Department for English, The London Nautical School (to April 2013) **laura.ovenden@gmail.com**
- **Written Reference** (Download)

Parent References

- Lesley Mackay **Written Reference** (Download)
- Jane Elderton **Written Reference** (Download)

Mount Aspiring College (2009), Wanaka, New Zealand.

Wayne Bosley, Principal, Mount Aspiring College **Written Reference** (Download)

- Greg Thornton, Deputy Principal, Mount Aspiring College. **greg.t.thornton@gmail.com**
- **Written Reference** (Download)

Cashmere High School, Christchurch, New Zealand

- David Turnbull, Principal, Cashmere High School.
- **Evaluation of a classroom lesson**

EDUCATIONAL RECORD

NEW ZEALAND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Graduated: June 2003.

- **Diploma in Secondary Teaching**. (Dip Tch Sec)

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND

Matriculated: 1989 – Graduated: 1992.

- Degree: **Bachelor of Arts**
- Major: English (including: first-year papers in Classics, Philosophy and Economics; Drama at second-year level)

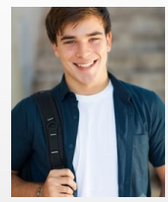
OTAGO BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL

DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND

1984 – 1988

- Bursary: A Pass
- Awards: 1988 Blue for Drama.

ACTION RESEARCH



This action research project examines how student-led professional development can enfranchise queer students in a boys' school.

Three Christ's College students designed and delivered workshops teaching faculty about LGBTQIA+ identity in the classroom, inverting the usual teacher-student power dynamic.

Interviews revealed a marked shift in students' self-perceived status, belonging, and sense of agency.

PRESENTATIONS

This is a chronological list of the data shows from a sample of the conference presentations I've made in New Zealand and the UK. From the Sunday Times Festival of Education to the SSAT National Conference and to everyone in between, great interest has been shown in the work we do.

ARCHIVE

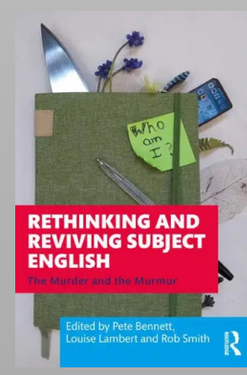
PUBLICATIONS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH – PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL: "TEACHING ENGLISH"

Download Article 1: "**Why I'm out in the classroom**"
Article 2: "Stick a Badge on it"

"DOING TEXT"

Download: **A chapter in this book concentrating on "Online Texts"**



"RETHINKING AND REVIVING SUBJECT ENGLISH"

I wrote a chapter in this text exploring the ways we were developing English and Microcredentials at Mount Aspiring College at the time.

The findings suggest that positioning marginalised students as experts can be a powerful, authentic driver of inclusive school culture.

READ