This issue of *English in Australia* demonstrates the breadth of research articles that are accepted by the journal. While each article has been separately written, submitted, reviewed and revised; and each author has engaged with the advice of different reviewers as they have prepared their manuscript for publication, there are always surprising resonances between articles.

Notably, several of the articles in this issue are explicitly described by their authors as ‘case studies’. In educational research concerned with teaching and learning, where curriculum is animated by teachers and students in the live spaces of classrooms, case studies are ideal for describing the intricate relationships between curriculum as ‘planned’ (e.g. involving standards, scope-and-sequence charts, and lesson plans), enacted (i.e. how it is put into action), and received (i.e. how students perceive what is presented and enacted) (Burroughs & Smagorinsky, 2011, p. 170). Many examples of classroom-based case studies can be found in previous issues of *English in Australia* and there are particular characteristics of this method that are worth considering in more detail here.

There is no formula for designing a case study, rather the method can be adapted to the particular phenomenon that the researcher seeks to explore in situ in specific educational sites. A ‘case’ can be a single person, student or teacher; a single group, class, school; a particular innovation or intervention; or can be designed as a multi-sited case study to facilitate comparison. However the ‘case’ must be precisely bounded and defined. Emily Frawley focuses her case study of creative writing in VCE on English teachers in one Victorian high school, and collects data from focus group discussions where they discuss their experiences and attitudes towards creative writing in the increasingly high stakes environments of the upper years of school. The cases elaborated by Sylvia Pantaleo and Peter Thomas are classroom interventions over extended periods of time with Year 7 and 8 classes. Each researcher is an embedded ‘participant-observer’ who works alongside the classroom teacher and collects a wide range of data – including student work samples, written and interview responses, classroom planning documents, and research field-notes – during units of work on graphic novels and hypermedia narrative.

The breath and variety of data in case study research presents additional dilemmas for analysis and representation of findings. Undoubtedly, there was far more data gathered than has been used in these articles and evidence has been used selectively and effectively to create an argument. The authors have been meticulous in describing how they have approached analysis, have drawn on seminal texts on educational research and have carefully explained how they have approached analysis systematically (e.g. thematic coding), and of their ethical processes (e.g. informed consent, pseudonyms). They situate their work in relation to key qualitative research concepts including ‘grounded theory’, ‘emic’ and ‘inductive’ approaches to research. Furthermore, each article demonstrates familiarity with relevant theory (e.g. reader response, new literacies) and puts theory to work to analyse empirical data in sophisticated ways.

This thorough approach to situating research in terms of method, theory and previous scholarship is apparent in articles reporting on empirical studies incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods. Margaret Merga and David Hastie both describe mixed method research that incorporates large scale survey data as well as interviews and other qualitative data in their respective studies of young people’s e-Book reading practices and parental complaints about English texts in NSW Protestant schools. Crucially, although each of these studies is situated
in a particular site, at a particular time and within a particular curriculum or institutional context, each researcher has also spoken beyond these particularities to present arguments with relevance for teachers and researchers elsewhere. This is an important consideration for all prospective authors to *English in Australia*.

This issue also includes articles that are not empirically based, but that resonate surprisingly well with other articles. Tom Gyenes and Judith Wilks argue that reductive understandings of ‘the essay’ as a literary form have come to dominate school English, and that this impoverishment increases in senior schooling. Their argument has affinities with Frawley’s examination of the impact of high stakes assessment on creative writing in senior English. It is interesting to see how this and other articles engage closely with previous work in *English in Australia*, notably Brian Moon’s 2012 article on rhetoric, giving a real sense of extended intellectual conversations taking place across issues and through time. It also directly addresses the English for the Australian Curriculum project (English4AC.edu.au), led by AATE, and suggests how those units might be adapted to facilitate essay writing.

Finally, the articles by David Hastie and David Cole have an uncanny and perhaps uneasy resonance. Each of these focuses on literary texts in English classrooms and each is attuned – David Cole’s most explicitly – to the ‘affective’ dimensions of reading, or to how feeling and emotion circulate around texts and people, however they take this up very differently. Hastie’s article examines the impact on text selection of parental fears of particular texts, particularly those that are seen as having sexual or occult/supernatural content. In contrast, Cole selects a provocative early example of the horror genre – the ‘weird fiction’ of H.P. Lovecraft – to promote the affective dimensions of reading as a key component of an expanded Multiple Literacies Theory.

As always, the last word in *English in Australia* goes to Deb McPherson in her Reading/Viewing column. The affective dimensions of reading are explicit in her advocacy of YA novels that will provoke and appeal, that students might enjoy or find fascinating, disturbing and compelling. As always, she provides many useful suggestions as to how these texts might be integrated into English programs.

Forthcoming issues of *English in Australia* will celebrate the 50th anniversary of AATE, and will include articles from the annual conference in Darwin, as well as other research articles submitted for review. Please send your articles of approximately 5000 words to the editor.

**References**