**Annelise Balsamo –** Welcome to this on-demand video, part of the VCE English and EAL study design implementation programme which will explore the ways, ideas and mentor texts connect with the crafting and creating texts areas of study. My name's Annelise Balsamo, I'm the English Curriculum Manager at the VCAA, and I'm joined today by Kelly Heintz the EAL Curriculum Manager, also at the VCAA.

In this presentation, we'll explore the vision for the areas of study, the ways ideas and mentor texts fit into the areas of study, advice about choosing ideas and mentor texts and examples of ideas and mentor texts that could be used in a unit one classroom. Please remember that the study design advises that no idea or mentor text listed for study in unit three can be studied in unit one.

**Kellie Heintz -** The areas of study of crafting and creating texts evolve from a decision to create a study design that has a stronger balance between the language modes and provide students with more opportunities to write beyond response to text. The design of the areas of study came from the review panel, and was then further refined through critical friends, academic advisors, expert reference groups, and feedback from stakeholders, including teachers. These areas of study are designed to offer students ways of seeing writing as a skill set beyond the classroom and into their post-secondary worlds. Through a focus on purpose, context and audience and a more flexible approach to genre, students can transfer these skills into other context, environments, circumstances and needs.

The areas of study are also designed to extend students engagement with purposeful and meaningful discourse, and to equip them to become literate citizens in an increasingly complex world. We want our students to engage with the wider society as they exit our classrooms and contribute to the dialogues and discussions that shape their worlds, and finally, though by no means less important, the areas of study are designed to connect students with opportunities for personal expression both in private and public.

**Annelise Balsamo –** The role of idea and for this see the Framework of Ideas in the VCE English and EAL study design on pages 22 and 23 is significant for these areas of study. While the focus is on students creating text within a stated purpose, context and audience, an idea will offer classrooms assistance in anchoring the skills of creating text to content, and we know from research and evidence that fixing skills to content will positively influence students’ connection to both. Having a core idea also provides for cohesion in the classroom, as all members are discussing and exploring similar or aligned concepts, and they can share and exchange their understandings of those concepts.

An idea will also offer students a frame on which to build personal connections, and can connect their own voices to these ideas, and will provide an additional hook to which to extend their ideas into new and other possibilities.

**Kellie Heintz -** The role of mentor texts in these areas of study are equally significant. Mentor texts should be aligned with the idea in terms of content and show and offer students some inspiration in terms of extending the idea selected for the areas of study. However, the mentor texts should inspire their writing more than shaping their ideas. They provide opportunities to unpack text structures, language features and vocabulary that is used by the author. They also show how textual elements interweave with ideas for effect and aid students understanding of textual intention and integrity. The mentor text shows students the importance of registers in their own work, and how registers intersect with audience and context, and importantly, they enable students to collaborate with these established writers, and offer a space for students to see their own writing in a wider context.

**Annelise Balsamo –** In Unit One teachers and students are free to select any idea they feel would be powerful in their classroom context. The unit three teachers must choose from the framework of ideas in the VCE English and EAL study design. See pages 22 and 23. When choosing an idea for unit one, we invite teachers to collaborate as appropriate with their students and to consider the context of their cohort and their communities. Within that, we advise that teachers consider ideas that are open and broaden their classrooms and offer many entry points. We also advise that the idea should inspire and stimulate discussion an idea that students would connect with and care about and is inclusive of their cohort. We would also suggest that the idea can connect with students lived experiences or with their aspirations and dreams.

**Kellie Heintz -** When choosing mentor texts connect them in some way, in terms of content, with a selected idea for the area of study. We would also advise that mentor texts are short and engaging and represent a shape and a length that a student writer could aspire to. If you are interested in selecting novels for example, we would suggest the novel is of a shorter length and that the class work with extracts to really examine the ways the text has been shaped rather than diving into the meaning of the text. We would invite you to explore different forms and writing for different purposes. There is no need to work only with imaginative texts. We would encourage exploring other forms. Having different voices and experiences in the classroom would also be welcomed and voices that students might engage with or be challenged by and importantly, we would advise that the mentor texts are accessible for students and have different entry points for exploration.

**Annelise Balsamo –** So here's an example of an idea that could be used in a unit one classroom. The idea here is food and this idea could explore the many ways food is central to our experiences as human beings. Students could explore how food is now produced, how we might prepare food and how it is consumed. Students could look at cultural practise, at family connections in relationships and could explore the history of food. MFK Fisher, an American writer who wrote passionately about food and the way it shaped her own life, makes the connection between food and the human condition, when she writes, "like most humans I'm hungry and our three basic needs for food, security and love are so mixed and mingled and intertwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the others. So it happens that when I write of hunger I am really writing about love and the hunger for it." Food takes us further than recipes though recipes of course can be part of this work. Students can consider the absence of food and as indicated earlier, it is important for teachers and schools to consider their context cohorts and communities and should only consider ideas that are appropriate within those parameters.

**Kellie Heintz -** Examples of mentor texts that could be used to explore the idea of food include the following: This example from the ABC Heywire series from a young regional Australian writer, Charlotte. Nicholas Jordan's exploration of Uyghur family, breaking their fast from the SBS website, an essay from Elizabeth David. Like MK Fisher a trailblazer in the way she wrote about food. A chapter from Nigel Slater's memoir toast an essay from Michael Pollan and a poem from Elizabeth Alexander. Here is an annotated example from the Michael Pollan essay, Breaking Ground. Here we can see with the yellow highlighting the ways Pollan engages with the sensors - weight with heft, colour and light with hue, glowing, bright, dull, shape, and connotations with baseballs, ping pong balls, cherries, and apples. With the blue, we can see how he changes that delight to revulsion, to tart potato, mushy, sheathed in leather, bitterness so profound, and at the same time, he shifts his use of pronouns from the I to the you, pushing away the experience, creating a sense of otherness and exclusion.

**Annelise Balsamo –** Tell me, sorry. A second example of an idea for unit one is the idea of future. It's a concept that can preoccupy young people particularly young people in the precipice of leaving school. There are all kinds of ways students can engage with this concept, personally, politically, culturally. We can see it occupies the final part of the human trinity of past, present, future, and is the element most associated with opportunities and possibilities. Of course, opportunities and possibilities can excite and terrify, can invite and reject. We can improve the future, but we can also see its demise.

**Kellie Heintz -** Here are some examples of mentor text that could be used in connection with the idea of future. We have an extract from Jennifer Mills Dsyschronia from Kill Your Darlings, a podcast produced by journalism students on the Science Gallery website, an extract from Tim Flannery's essay on the future, an extract from the BBC story podcast forest 404 or the poem from Amanda Gorman, read at the inauguration of Joe Biden. Here is an extract from the Mill's story. We see the ways she juxtaposes the connected and the familiar with the strange and the alien to create an unsettling effect on the reader. The use of we against the don't know why, the window that they must wind up. The urgency of the dog and the hills disappearing in the rear-view mirror, now watchful. The sense of unease and the anticipation that something unwelcome will occur is created in the choice of this language, not in the events of the story. We also have a rhyme in the work established through matched beginnings and a combination of sentence structures.

**Annelise Balsamo –** More support will be made available for teachers for this new study design including a series of live webinars with practising English and EAL teachers, published support materials which we previously called advice for teachers, and this will be published in May, and more on-demand videos, and you are always welcome to get in contact with us, if you have any questions or concerns. Our details are on this slide. I'm on the left and

**Kellie Heintz -** I'm on the right. Thank you so much for being part of this on-demand video.

**Annelise Balsamo –** Thank you.

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