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Community and connectivity: new education leader's focus for teachers

The University of Tasmania's new leader in teacher education has a focus firmly on the future, with a research interest in young people, literacy and digital technology.

Professor Victoria Carrington has come to Tasmania from the University of East Anglia in the UK to take up the position of Head of the School of Education at the University. She will be based in Launceston.

At a broad level, Professor Carrington's aim is for teaching graduates to leave university keen and well-prepared to work in the range of communities across Tasmania, ready to make a positive difference to young people and their families.

"Teacher education is one of the ways of enabling social change for individuals and communities," she said. "Our graduates go into schools and communities and act as change agents: they educate, they are role models, and they are important contributors to communities."

"My priority is that we equip all our graduates to be highly skilled educators with a strong knowledge of curriculum, learning and teaching as well as key issues facing Tasmanian communities."

Professor Carrington's specific personal expertise is in how technologies such as mobile phones, tablets and laptops have shifted the way young people work with different types of texts.

"Literacy skills are about more than what happens in a classroom and about more than paper and pencils," she said. "As educators and researchers, we need to understand these areas of literacy and technology because they are intrinsic to how young people live their lives."

She is also interested in the skills and knowledge that young people bring into classrooms as a result of using digital devices. "There is a lot of misinformation and many assumptions made about technology and young people. Educators have a leading role to play in making sure all young people have both the skills and access to make the most of opportunities with digital technologies.

"Not all young people have access to a desktop computer, and more and more of them rely on a mobile phone for their internet access. Not all are keen or adept users of technologies," she said.

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