An early career teacher, just embarking on my fourth year in the primary classroom, I learned about PETAA’s key role in supporting primary teachers whilst studying at university. I have since developed a strong relationship with PETAA. This has led to the opportunity of co-authoring a PETAA Paper and presenting at PETAA National Conferences. Eventually I was invited to stand for election to the Board. It was with some trepidation that I accepted a seat on the PETAA Board and was not quite sure of my contribution to the Association. After my first Board meeting, despite mental exhaustion, I realised that my relationship with the Board could be both constructive and fruitful.

My experience as a full-time teacher meeting the unique challenges of teaching English and literacy in increasingly diverse classrooms, placed me in a position to provide the Board with insights into the kinds of ways that PETAA could support teachers in their practice. I have been able to do this in both practical and more formal ways. Sometimes a simple suggestion about how a new publication might help me in my daily work has ensured that the PETAA publication is pursued. At other times I have been able to advise the Board on effective ways of communicating with teachers and in ensuring that the PETAA initiatives are fulfilling their core mission of supporting educators. After only a year on the Board, I feel that my passion for developing strong links between teachers and researchers has played an important role in informing the Board on key decisions.

My position on the Board has also taught me so much. It has taught me to think more flexibly, develop more informed views and to listen and be challenged by others’ thoughts to consider alternate stances. I have developed leadership skills and honed my communication skills to better articulate my thoughts succinctly and with purpose. I have also gained an insight into how my classroom and my school fits into the larger education machine, within social, political and economic contexts. Most importantly however, being on the Board has allowed me to discover what I value most, what I am passionate about and the issues I believe in and helped me to engage with a range of other professionals in the core business of literacy education.

PETAA’s Board comprises many passionate and professional people who bring a broad range of valuable experiences and knowledge to collaborating and supporting teachers in new, engaging and relevant ways. If you, as a PETAA member believe that you have relevant experience, passion and a strong voice, then I would invite you to consider contacting PETAA for more information about nominating to join the PETAA Board.

IMOGENE COCHRANE
Board Director
(pictured above)

See AGM information to the right of this article.