



the miecat institute inc.

Mission Statement

The MIECAT Institute is a not-for-profit higher education provider that offers accredited postgraduate courses in, and conducts research through, experiential and creative arts.

Our approach seeks congruence between what is taught and how it is taught. The dynamic process of inquiry invites students to be curious, challenged and immersed in a community of co-learners.

The Institute creates opportunities to reconstruct understandings of experience, values and meanings, to enrich professional practice and to contribute creatively to society.

Vision

The MIECAT Institute is committed to training practitioners working in a variety of contexts including health, community development, education and arts therapy, to understand and represent multi-arts and experiential ways of being in their professional and personal lives.

Values

Together we value:

- Multi-modal collaborative inquiry and action
- Educational and relational processes that are transformative of self in community
- An experiential arts-based approach to teaching and learning.

Background

The MIECAT Institute Inc (MIECAT) is a private not-for-profit provider of higher education that has been providing accredited courses since 1999.

The MIECAT Institute was created out of meetings convened in 1992 by Dr Warren Lett, psychologist, psychotherapist and lecturer in Counselling in the School of Education at La Trobe University. Present at these meetings were Dr Jean Rumbold, psychologist and lecturer at La Trobe, Dr Jan Allen, visual artist and educator, and Andrew Morrish, internationally renowned dance and movement improviser. All four shared a disillusion with the academic approach to counselling and the lack of experiential learning opportunities offered in universities at that time, and shared a belief in the central, formative role of the arts in therapy and in the training, of counsellors. This group developed the initial arts-based methodology for a later series of workshops and research activities that were known as 'Self as Therapist Inquiry'.

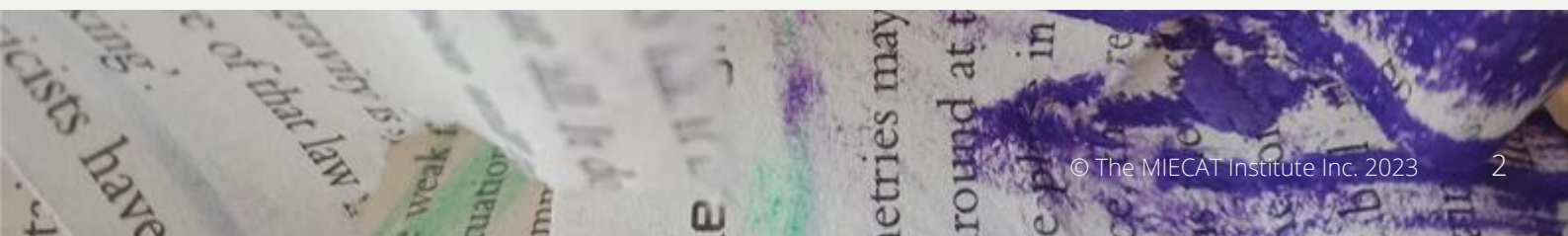
In 1997 Warren and the group set up a project in the private sector and named it The Melbourne Institute for Experiential and Creative Arts Therapy (MIECAT). This built on work developed in the Self as Therapist Inquiry and the Saturday Series and also work Warren had undertaken at La Trobe

University, in the School of Education, where he offered Master of Arts coursework units such as The Arts In Therapy, in his contribution to the Master of Counselling program, and later in the development of the first Arts Therapy Master's Program in Australia.

In 1999, MIECAT was accredited by the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority to offer degrees up to and including, Masters Level. On 15 December, 1998, MIECAT Inc. was formally established as a not-for-profit Incorporated Institution under the Associations Incorporation Act of 1981 and is currently endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as an income tax exempt charitable entity.

MIECAT offered intensive classes, usually over weekends, for interstate students and for students from regional Victoria. As demand grew, MIECAT expanded its operations to Queensland in 2001, where it offered the Graduate Diploma and Masters degrees in weekend blocks. This interstate outreach ceased in July 2008.

From an initial intake of 17 students in 1999, in excess of 1024 students have graduated from MIECAT to the end of 2022 which includes 16 Professional Doctorates, with 13 more doctorates in progress.



Higher Education and Regulation

The accreditation process is conducted by the government regulatory authority every five years. The MIECAT programs have been successfully re-accredited in 1999, 2004 and 2009 by the government regulator at the time, VRQA (the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority). In 2015 the new federal government regulator TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency) which is the independent national body responsible for regulating all tertiary education in Australia renewed MIECAT's registration and accreditation for a further 7 years.

Students enrolled in the MIECAT courses are eligible to apply for Fee Help. The accredited courses offered are:

- Masters in Therapeutic Arts Practice with a specialisation in EITHER Creative Arts Therapy OR Arts based Research (The Graduate Diploma in Therapeutic Arts Practice is nested within the Masters program)
- Professional Doctorate in Therapeutic Arts Practice.



How we learn at MIECAT

“Tell me, and I will forget.

Show me, and I may remember.

Involve me, and I will understand.”

– Confucius around 450 BC

Of course all learning involves experiencing. One experiences sitting in a lecture theatre trying to listen to an “expert” expound their views on a particular topic, and also by actively engaging one’s mind/ body in exploring images, thoughts and physical gestures that hold emotional patterns and meanings. It is the latter kind of learning that is the most often utilised at MIECAT.

This approach assumes that to learn effectively we must engage all our senses, and thinking processes — we learn multi-modally. In order to give form to our experiencing we also represent experiences multi-modally – that is using all the art forms, music making, voice, dance and movement, visual image making (both 2 & 3 dimensional).

An important emphasis in the MIECAT approach to learning is that we need others to make sense of the world and our place in it. Much of the coursework experience involves pair work, small group interactions and larger group discussions. Students and staff routinely give responses to each other about the work being done; sometimes these responses are verbal, other times they may take the form of an image, a dance, or sometimes a musical response.

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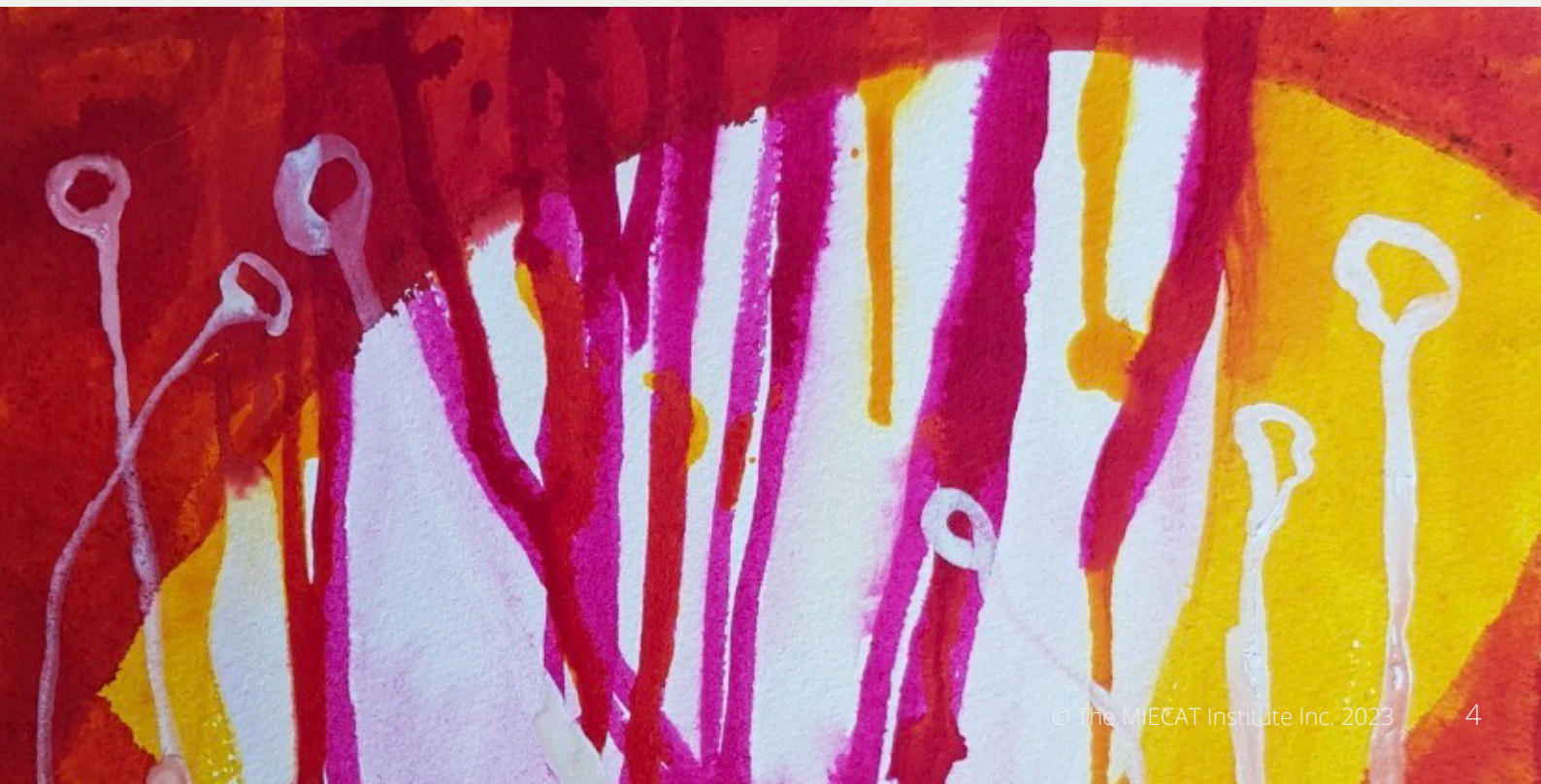
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The process of learning at MIECAT, also involves understanding the conceptual material that has been influential in developing this way of working. This is done through discussions in class, in small groups and through journal writing and assignments where students are asked to engage with the readings provided.

Taking care of yourself

The MIECAT approach to learning involves students in exploring their personal meaning. As a creative arts training program, this process of exploration cannot always be carried through to completion. It is the student's responsibility to find appropriate ways of attending to personal material that is difficult, too private or inappropriate for disclosure in the group. This can be done on their own, using the MIECAT procedures or in collaboration with another companion if required.

At MIECAT, we expect that students will take responsibility for their own experiences with the material of the course, and the necessary out of class reflection. We also assume they come to this program with a level of resilience that enables them to deal with difficult situations in a clear, compassionate and non-blaming fashion.



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