



HOW WE LEARN WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

**A selection of literacy and numeracy
case studies from NSW primary schools
that have achieved enhanced outcomes
for Aboriginal students**

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Introduction

This publication presents case studies of seven NSW primary schools that have developed educational programs and teaching strategies specifically for Aboriginal students.

The aim of the case studies project was to identify programs, strategies and processes which, in the opinion of regional Aboriginal Educational consultants and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, work effectively with Aboriginal students, and to describe how the programs were developed.

Several questions were asked of each school. These were:

- What aspects of your program work well for the Aboriginal students?
- How did the programs evolve?
- How do you communicate with parents and the community?
- What problems do you face?

The selection of the schools for the project was based on advice from Aboriginal Education consultants from five Department of Education and Training districts and suggestions from contacts in the field.

Sampling was not random and there were many biasing factors. The project was in many ways a pilot and methodological rigour was secondary to clarifying issues of content.

Ten schools participated in the project and each of these was visited by the project officers. In the end, seven case studies were selected for publication. Some schools have similar approaches to those presented here and time restraints restricted opportunities to amplify all the material collected.

This report on case studies follows two important documents, both of which were produced by the Australian Council for Educational Research.

The first of these documents was the 1998 report, *Enhancing English Literacy Skills in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students – A Review of the Literature and Case Studies in Primary Schools*. This report was on strategies that produce the successful progression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through their years of compulsory schooling.

The second document, commissioned by the Office of the Board of Studies NSW, was the 1999 report, *Resources and Teaching Strategies to Support Aboriginal Children's Numeracy Learning*. Its purpose was to provide a theoretical framework to inform the development of numeracy materials for teachers of Aboriginal children in NSW primary schools.

Summaries of those reports follow. The main findings on particular issues are listed. These are followed by some suggested strategies for addressing these issues, along with examples of their use that can be found in this document.

Literacy

Enhancing English Literacy Skills in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students – A Review of the Literature and Case Studies in Primary Schools, by Batten, M, Frigo, T, Hughes, P & McNamara, N, ACER Research Monograph No 54, 1998, ISBN 0 8643 1260 1

This report concluded that successful progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is more likely to be realised when:

- responsibility for students' competency in English literacy is jointly taken by the school and its community
- the teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are informed of the social and cultural background of their students
- the teachers are provided with guidance about teaching strategies that work well with these children.

Some findings related to Aboriginal English and the acquisition of school language:

- Schools need to learn and practise how to value the cultural heritage of Aboriginal students.
- Schools need to learn how to value and respect the home language of Aboriginal students.
- Schools need to support Aboriginal students' acquisition of Standard Australian English.
- Schools need to appreciate that, culturally, Aboriginal students may not use verbal social conventions such as 'please' and 'thank you'. Conventions such as these may not be part of the language practice in some Aboriginal communities.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- acknowledging Aboriginal culture and heritage at the whole school level and classroom level, via informed understanding
- teachers and support staff learning to value the home language and developing ways to use it as a tool for the teaching of Standard Australian English
- teachers and support staff modelling the use of Standard Australian English in a variety of situations
- teachers developing an awareness of the social conventions in Aboriginal culture through consultation with the Aboriginal Education Assistant or the local Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group

Case studies exemplifying some of these strategies:

Condong Public School

- using Aboriginal English as a tool for developing Standard Australian English

Forster Public School

- a community designed Reconciliation project that led to the production of a book on local Aboriginal culture

Some findings on English literacy development:

- Some Aboriginal students experience little exposure to literature in Standard Australian English.
- Some Aboriginal students have had limited exposure to the ways of operating in school contexts.
- The first language of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child may be Aboriginal English or a different language or dialect.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- immersing the Aboriginal students in all forms of literature
- modelling, explicit teaching, repetition, games, integration of approaches, small group work, code switching and experiential learning

Case studies exemplifying some of these strategies:

Batemans Bay Public School

- creating opportunities for the Aboriginal community to become partners in the educational process of all students

Camdenville Public School

- an assessment program that carefully tracks students' progress
- collaboratively developing individual education programs
- using a guided reading approach

Condobolin Public School

- a peer tutoring program for Year 4 to Year 6 focusing on decoding – breaking down words and texts
- a peer tutoring program for students in Year 4 to Year 6 focusing on reading for meaning

- an individualized literacy program collaboratively designed by the learning support team and classroom teacher
- an individualized guided reading program requiring a peer or adult tutor, either administered in the classroom or in a withdrawal situation

Crawford Public School

- Year 5 and 6 students regularly listening to Year 1 students reading their home readers
- Aboriginal parents providing additional literacy support
- an integrated literacy and Human Society and its Environment unit designed with community consultation

Dulwich Hill Public School

- a unit of work that focuses on Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal history and contemporary issues
- a collaboratively designed novel study that led to in-depth discussion and sophisticated writing
- using guided reading groups

Some findings on Aboriginal students in the classroom:

- Aboriginal students need to be allowed to progress at their own rate.
- Aboriginal students have a wide range of learning styles although some strategies appear to support Aboriginal literacy learning in general.
- Aboriginal students respond well to modelling, explicit teaching, repetition, games, experiential learning, learning in context and an integration of approaches.
- Aboriginal students work well with a partner or in a small group.
- Computers can make learning easier.
- The classroom can be used as a starting point for a shared learning experience for all students.
- Establishing a good teacher-student relationship enhances the student's learning.
- The use of humour enhances students' learning.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- gradually moving from the whole group to small group to partner work and finally to individual work
- including a number of opportunities to work with a variety of concrete materials and visual stimuli
- presenting concepts initially within the context of the students' own experiences
- providing meaningful opportunities to work with the computer

Case studies exemplifying some of these strategies:

Condobolin Public School

- a peer tutoring program for students in Year 4 to Year 6 focusing on reading for meaning
- an individualised literacy program collaboratively designed by the learning support team and the classroom teacher
- different formats for using the computer as a tool for literacy learning
- an individualised guided reading program requiring a peer or adult tutor, either administered in the classroom or in a withdrawal situation

Condong Public School

- recognizing and employing the learning styles of Aboriginal students in the learning process.
- establishing relationships with the students in the classroom

- using cooperative learning methods within groups
- using the process of teacher modelling followed by teacher and student working together and finally the student works independently

Dulwich Hill Public School

- a collaboratively designed novel study that led to in-depth discussion and sophisticated writing
- using guided reading groups

Forster Public School

- Aboriginal Health and Education Officer day program

Some findings on teachers of Aboriginal students:

- Teachers need continuing support, advice and training, and the opportunity to share their successful experiences in order to improve the achievement levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- A good teacher-student relationship is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- inservicing in Aboriginality, Aboriginal history, Aboriginal culture, the impact of British colonisation, the Stolen Generations, racism and discrimination, and poverty and health of Aboriginal people.
- establishing an Aboriginal Education Team within the school
- establishing a district Aboriginal Education Team

Case studies exemplifying some of these strategies:

Camdenville Public School

- anti-racism targeted projects

Condong Public School

- establishing relationship with the students in the classroom
- recognising and employing the learning styles of Aboriginal students in the learning process

Crawford Public School

- description of the school and community

(The case study schools in this document are currently continuing professional development on the modules of the Aboriginal Education Policy.)

Some findings on Aboriginal Education Assistants (AEAs):

- The main communication between the school and the students' homes was through the AEA.
- The AEA requires a clear statement on role and skills required, as well as preparatory training.
- The main theme of communication between the school and community was negative.
- Positive communication concerning the students' educational lives needs to occur.
- AEAs are often members of the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and have sometimes been placed in compromising positions.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- adopting a variety of ways to communicate with the community

- making clear the role and skills requirement of the AEA position and providing the necessary training to the AEA, school staff and the Aboriginal community
- making regular positive contact with the community
- developing an awareness of the important fact that the AEA is a member of the community and trying other means of communication for particular issues
- providing the AEA/community with a resource room

Case studies exemplifying some of these strategies:

Forster Public School

- school description and overview for examples of communication between school and community
- Koori Express newsletter
- Minimbah Resource Room

Crawford Public School

- school description and overview for examples of communication between school and community
- employment of Aboriginal staff
- AEA resource room
- The AEA has been trained in Reading Recovery.

Some findings on absenteeism and lateness:

- It is difficult to convey to some parents how important regular attendance and punctuality are to educational progress.
- It is difficult for non-Aboriginal teachers to understand the complexity of reasons for students' absences and lack of punctuality.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- introducing a bus pick-up service
- undertaking professional development related to Aboriginal issues and schooling
- establishing Homework Centres

Case study exemplifying some of these strategies:

Forster Public School

- addressing attendance, literacy, health and social skills

Some findings on otitis media

- Otitis media is a middle ear disease commonly found in Aboriginal children. Infections can be resolved with antibiotics. Untreated infections can result in conductive hearing loss requiring surgical intervention.
- There are educational implications of otitis media. Specific problems are:
 - reduced audition (the power of hearing)
 - impaired auditory acuity (sharpness of hearing)
 - selective attention and reduced recall
 - delayed speech development
 - inability to hear low intensity sounds, such as ed, s, v, th.
- The prevalence of otitis media and the hearing loss associated with the disease mean that special strategies need to be adopted by teachers with Aboriginal students in their class.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- reduce noise in the classroom – ensure there is carpet and soft furnishings, turn off noisy air conditioners, use artworks and 3-D designs to help absorb the sound
- with the students: identify children with runny ears, keep the children with sore ears and a known hearing loss close by; ensure that the children can always see your face and the room is well lit, make sure all children are quiet when you talk to them, work in small groups
- your teaching style – when speaking aloud be careful not to obscure your face with your hands or a book; use visual aids as much as possible; check that the students understand what they have to do; encourage students to let you know if they can't hear or have not understood; establish class routines so students know what activities they are working on and what comes next
- introduce the BBC (Breathing, Blowing, Coughing) program for all students
- raise awareness among parents of the symptoms and strategies for treatment at home

Case studies exemplifying some of these strategies:

Camdenville Public School

- professional development in Aboriginal education

Batemans Bay Public School

- Koori dental and hearing program

Summary of Teaching Strategies Employed by Year 3 and Year 5 Teachers Interviewed for the Enhancing English Literacy Skills Report

The table below illustrates the literacy teaching strategies used by the teachers interviewed for the report. Underpinning the teaching process is explicit teaching with modelling and making clear explanations of tasks and expectations.

Reading	Viewing	Writing	Speaking	
Big Books	Linking a video to a topic	Variety of text types	Daily news by working with a partner or small group until able to stand by themselves	
Word attack skills	Follow with retelling or acting out	In particular journal writing and poetry	Developing code-switching skills	
Phonic decoding using 'prompt and praise'	Listing likes and dislikes	Creating a secure environment for spelling	Giving instructions	
Individual reading	Follow by explicit teaching	Using topical issues	Greetings and farewells	
Peer reading	Taking notes during three viewings then writing a report	Using the computer	Taking an oral message	
Teacher to student	Verbal retelling	Word banks	Improvisation in role-plays	
Student to student	Questions and answers	Peer conferencing	Awareness of otitis media and placing students in the front of the class	
Student with teacher	Facilitating discussion about Australian and world issues	Variety of stimuli		
Silent reading	Dual use of videos and books			
Choral reading				
Small group				

Numeracy

Resources and Teaching Strategies to Support Aboriginal Children's Numeracy Learning, by Frigo, T, commissioned by the Office of the Board of Studies NSW, June 1999

This report focuses on a review of the literature about the development of numeracy skills in Aboriginal children. Most of the literature relating to Aboriginal children and mathematics has been conducted in geographically remote areas of Australia.

Some findings on barriers to achievement:

- Aboriginality is not in itself a reason to expect poor educational outcomes.
- Aboriginal students experience education with predominantly non-Aboriginal teachers who are not adequately skilled to meet their needs, and in learning settings that are not culturally suitable for the students.
- Aboriginal children live in a 'dual world' of western mathematics and the mathematics of their Aboriginal community.
- The differences between home language and school language can hinder a student's understanding of mathematical concepts.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- setting expectations high for all students
- inservicing of school staff in the Department of Education and Training's 'Aboriginal Education Policy' modules
- providing all school staff with professional development in the mathematics of the local Aboriginal community

Case studies exemplifying some of these strategies:

The case study schools in this document are currently continuing professional development on the modules of the Aboriginal Education Policy.

Some findings on engaging in the language of mathematics:

- Mathematical teaching practices require talking about mathematics and discussing and making explicit mathematical ideas and concepts.
- The teaching of mathematics is characterised by the pacing of lessons, hands-on activities, visual aids, peer support, discussion and well-structured tasks and assessment.
- Community consultation and participation in planning is a necessity.
- The focus on language is even more important when the home language is not the school language.
- There is a need to tie the mathematical language of the classroom to the mathematical language of the students' world.
- Students gain more understanding of mathematical concepts when they are able to use the language of mathematics correctly and confidently.
- Teachers need to be aware that computers do not necessarily teach the language of mathematics that will enable students to perform numerical operations.
- All mathematical concepts and terms, regardless of the difficulty, need to be taught to ensure achievement of all outcomes.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- consulting with the local Aboriginal community to determine their language of mathematics and mathematical concepts

- structuring learning experiences that allow discussion of concepts and terms
- implementing learning experiences that include fun activities, the use of concrete materials, small group work and peer support
- linking the mathematics of the local Aboriginal community with the mathematics of the classroom

Case studies exemplifying some of these strategies:

Camdenville Public School

- implementing the Count Me in Too numeracy program K–2

Condong Public School

- using a range of teaching strategies in mathematics

Dulwich Public School

- implementing a mathematics unit
- establishing structures and situations that allow students to use their language skills in mathematics

Forster Public School

- Aboriginal Health and Education Officer's Day Program

Some findings on contextualising mathematics:

- Learning experiences should employ everyday activities, important issues and the students' own experiences.
- The gathering of information on mathematics in the local community through sketching, tapes, photographs and charts and incorporating this into the classroom mathematics makes for a meaningful exploration of mathematics.
- Mathematics programs that are presented with an Aboriginal perspective or in an Aboriginal studies unit that incorporates Aboriginal mathematics, enhance the students' learning.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- implementation of learning experiences that incorporate the use of mathematics in the Aboriginal community
- consultation with the local Aboriginal community and incorporating this knowledge into the classroom numeracy and Human Society and its Environment plans and programs

Case study exemplifying some of these strategies:

Crawford Public School

- A unit of extension work for problem solving incorporating an Aboriginal perspective and addressing the learning styles of the Aboriginal students.

Some findings on Aboriginal children in the mathematics classroom:

- Teachers need to listen to and respect the language of the student.
- The school needs to provide a learning environment that encourages 'risk taking' and the asking of questions.
- Teachers need to have high expectations for all students.
- A link between the mathematics of the real world and the classroom needs to be understood by the students.
- Assessment strategies should be such that the teacher and student see success as the focus.

Some strategies for addressing the above issues:

- establishing a classroom environment where the students feel secure

- consulting with the local Aboriginal community to determine the mathematics of the community
- development of appropriate assessment strategies
- development of strategies that acknowledge the individual student's efforts
- using the Aboriginal Education Assistant or Aboriginal community member or support teacher
- setting up independent work stations (task centres) within the mathematics program

Case studies exemplifying some of these strategies:

Camdenville Public School

- involving a Mathematics Support Teacher in the Stage 2 and 3 classroom

Crawford Public School

- A unit of extension work for problem solving incorporating an Aboriginal perspective and addressing the learning styles of the Aboriginal students.

Using This Document

Although the focus of the case studies featured in this document was the delivery of literacy and numeracy programs, many contextual factors which supported and shaped the programs were also considered.

In drawing upon these case studies as references for developing similar programs, there are several things that other schools should bear in mind. These are set out below.

Contexts

The programs described in this reference happened within schools that differed from each other in many significant respects. Readers should recognise that school programs do not stand alone and have to be understood within the contexts in which they operate.

No program can be considered to be perfect, and those described here are not put forward as being such. However, they do represent effective practice in meeting the needs of the students of particular schools.

This document is offered to other schools as a reference, so they can see how the schools included here have responded to the challenge of ensuring Aboriginal students achieve outcomes that are equitable to those of non-Aboriginal students. Schools that have or are developing such a learning environment are working in accordance with either the NSW Department of Education and Training's Aboriginal Education Policy, or the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.

None of the case study programs is presented as the only solution. Circumstances vary from school to school and the communities in which these schools operate are all different. A program that has the support of one community may not be given the same support from another community. Consultation with the community is the foundation for a successful program.

In reading this reference material, it is necessary to take into account the resources available to each school. Staff and funds were crucial resources that were used effectively in all of the schools.

The most influential resources, however, are staff who:

- are aware of what it is to be Aboriginal, and are knowledgeable about Aboriginal culture and history;
- have a commitment to the implementation of strategies as outlined in the NSW Department of Education and Training's Aboriginal Education Policy
- have a commitment to working in partnership with the community and involving the community in the program. The mandating of community participants in policy documents is based on well-established evidence that such practices lead to improved educational outcomes
- are motivated towards equitable learning outcomes.

Regular Community Consultation

Different schools provide different opportunities for their communities to have access to the school. Relationships between schools and their communities develop over time and, in relation to Aboriginal Education, perhaps the most relevant factor to be addressed is the Aboriginal community's opportunity to regularly have its voice heard.

Regular and sincere consultation will lead to the implementation of programs that will have more chance of achieving the desired outcomes than programs which are imposed on the students.

One important observation from the case studies was that opportunities for training motivated key community members to participate more effectively in the education processes at their schools.

Curriculum Knowledge and High Expectations

The educational demands of the curriculum are high. In order to enable students to achieve the syllabus outcomes, the programs must be of good quality and they must incorporate high expectations which persist in the face of obstacles. For example, if a child is away from school for some time, the program has to be able to respond to that circumstance and maintain the expectation that the child can achieve to a high level.

All educational programs referred to in this document focus on progress. However, progress in itself is not enough. There must be commitment to the achievement of curriculum expectations and to Aboriginal students' learning outcomes being equitable with those of non-Aboriginal students.

The NSW syllabus support document for English, English K–6 Modules (1998), stresses the importance of teachers developing an understanding of Aboriginal history and culture. Equally important is an appreciation of Aboriginal English.

Who will use this document?

This document offers insight and information for school executives, class teachers, support teachers, Aboriginal Education Assistants, Aboriginal Education Resource Teachers, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, aides, tutors and Aboriginal communities. It should also inform the work of Literacy teams, Reading Recovery teachers and networks, numeracy teams, and district and state level bodies.

Executive Staff

School executives have an important role in developing a productive working relationship with the local community. The school executives presented in this document have developed such involvement through newsletters, Homework Centres, Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) meetings and programs, and through the effective use of the Aboriginal Education Assistants' time. These are approaches that could be followed by other schools.

Class Teachers

Educational outcomes depend directly on the programs implemented by classroom teachers. In Aboriginal Education, community involvement is a key component and class teachers who establish effective links with the community are rewarded in many ways. However, such involvement must be characterised by high expectations, and programs that have been designed according to syllabus outcomes.

While withdrawal strategies have worked for some students, the classroom teachers must be involved in the learning process. In working with Aboriginal students in the classroom, the teacher must consider the effectiveness and appropriateness of particular teaching strategies and make critical choices about practice. The non-Aboriginal teacher needs to reflect upon the different cultural nuances and values that may challenge their own belief system and to be prepared to change their practice accordingly. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to ensure the learning of their students just as it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the teacher is equipped with the knowledge and skills to be an effective teacher for all students in their classroom.

Support Teachers

This document provides support teachers with examples of resources that can be used to assess students' literacy skills and to assist in the design of programs that target specific learning needs. It also includes suggestions for how community members can be involved in the implementation of education programs.

Some schools have established a learning support team in which members of the support staff and class teachers work together to ensure the planning of a comprehensive whole school literacy and/or numeracy strategy. The advantage of such an approach is that it enables subject expertise and cultural knowledge to be shared. It also ensures that children withdrawn from the mainstream program do not miss out on important topics being covered in other key learning areas.

The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties (STLD) plays a central role in a number of the programs described here. However, this does not mean that Aboriginal students have a learning deficit. In most instances, they do not. (Aboriginal students enter school ready to begin learning. However, due to language and cultural differences the students often achieve below their potential. The difficulty does not lie with the students or teachers; it is due to the fact that schools have yet to gain a clear understanding of the impact of Aboriginal English and cultural difference.) The STLD position has the flexibility to coordinate and organise programs while classroom teachers have a busy timetable.

In schools with high numbers of Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) students, the English Second Language (ESL) teachers' literacy programs provide excellent strategies for teaching all students how to acquire both the oral and written English skills and understanding of the curriculum. When used with Aboriginal students, ESL literacy programs prove to be most effective when the ESL teacher has a strong understanding of Aboriginal history and culture.

Community Members

This document also looks at various ways in which the Aboriginal community can be involved in the school.

For example, Homework Centres have proved to be very successful ways of facilitating communication between teachers and the community. Their use is described in this document along with the implications that arise from these centres for both community members and class teachers.

The work of Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) committees is another example. These committees provide vital assistance to schools in the organisation of cultural events and through the contribution they make to the acquisition of resources and to the development of educational programs.

Other factors that facilitate partnership between schools and communities are the involvement of Aboriginal Education Assistants in school programs and the recognition of Aboriginal culture by schools. Some forms the partnership can take are described in this document.

Finally, it must be understood that the responsibility for the education of Aboriginal students does not lie with one person, one institution or one community. It is not the sole responsibility of the Aboriginal Education Assistant or the Aboriginal community. It is the school's responsibility to provide an effective educational program through consultation and in partnership with the community.

Methodology

In formal terms, the project used case study methodologies. The approach was cross-sectional. Such an approach provides a 'snapshot' of schools at the time they were visited.

All schools change, including the schools described here. By the time this report is printed and released, all the schools studied will have changed to some extent. There is a need for longitudinal studies to track programs such as these over time in relation to the achievement of syllabus outcomes by Aboriginal students.

The Case Studies: An Overview

The following schools and their respective programs and approaches are featured in this document:

Batemans Bay Public School

- creating opportunities for the Aboriginal community to become partners in the educational process of all students
- conducting workshops to equip workers/volunteers with the necessary skills needed to assist the teacher in the classroom.

Camdenville Public School

- an assessment program that tracks students' progress
- collaboratively developing individual education programs
- using a guided reading approach
- implementing the 'Count Me In Too' numeracy program K-2
- involving a Mathematics Support Teacher in the Stages 2 and 3 classroom program
- developing anti-racism education strategies

Condobolin Public School

- a peer tutoring program for Year 4 to Year 6 focusing on decoding
- a peer tutoring program for students in Year 4 to Year 6 focusing on reading for meaning
- an individualised literacy program collaboratively designed by the learning support team and classroom teacher
- different formats for using the computer as a tool for literacy learning
- an individualised guided reading program requiring a peer or adult tutor, either administered in the classroom or in a withdrawal situation

Condong Public School

- using Aboriginal English as a tool to develop Standard Australian English
- recognising and employing the learning styles of Aboriginal students in the learning process
- establishing relationship with the students in classroom
- using cooperative learning methods within groups
- using the process of teacher modelling followed by teacher and student working together and finally the student working independently
- using a range of teaching strategies in Mathematics

Crawford Public School

- Year 5 and 6 students regularly listening to Year 1 students read their home reader
- community members providing additional literacy support
- a unit of extension work for problem solving, incorporating an Aboriginal perspective and addressing the learning styles of the Aboriginal students
- an integrated literacy and Human Society and its Environment unit designed with community consultation

Dulwich Hill Public School

- a unit of work that focuses on Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal history and contemporary issues
- a collaboratively designed novel study that leads to in-depth discussion and sophisticated writing
- using guided reading groups

- implementing a mathematics unit
- establishing structures and situations that allow students to use their language skills in mathematics

Forster Public School

- a day's program for the Aboriginal Health and Education Officer addressing attendance, literacy, numeracy, health and social skills
- a reception program that targets student attendance
- a community-designed Reconciliation project that led to the production of a book on local Aboriginal culture.

Main Findings

The schools featured in this document fall into one of two categories. Some have a high Aboriginal population and, as a consequence, have high levels of support. Other schools have a smaller Aboriginal population and lower levels of support.

The main findings from all schools are summarised below.

Underlying principles shared by the project schools

Time at school has to be productive. There can be a number of different starting points for improving the benefit Aboriginal students gain from their time at school. The experience of the schools that were visited suggests the following underlying principles are effective starting points when designing programs:

- Educational outcomes improve when Aboriginal students' culture is valued in the school. This can happen at a whole-school level through school celebrations, the recognition of the importance of Reconciliation, and through inclusive school structures that give Aboriginal people a voice in a wide range of school activities. It is also important at the class and curriculum level where the content of the programs must relate to the diversity of the students' experiences.
- Educational outcomes for Aboriginal students are improved by effective communication between the teaching staff, the school executive and Homework Centres.
- Educational outcomes in the area of literacy and numeracy for Aboriginal students are improved when classroom teachers have an outcomes focus that incorporates the explicit teaching of skills and understanding and the effective use of modelling and guided practices to help students to read, write, talk and listen independently.
- Educational outcomes are achieved when the school and the Aboriginal community work in partnership. This occurs when:
 - schools consult with the community either formally or informally;
 - schools recognise the community as a valuable resource; and
 - schools have an Aboriginal Education Committee that has a membership of school staff and community representatives.
- Educational outcomes are achieved when the school staff have a clear understanding of what it means to be an Aboriginal, and knowledge of and understanding about Aboriginal culture and the impact of British colonisation on Aboriginal people and culture.

Common Factors

Some factors were common to all schools in their response to the challenge of achieving equitable outcomes for their students. All of the schools:

- included Aboriginal perspectives in each of the key learning areas. The fact that it was common to all schools suggests it is a factor of considerable educational significance
- had Aboriginal people working in different paid and unpaid positions in the school.

There were also factors that were common to specific types of educational programs:

- All successful literacy programs had a combination of a well-devised structure, explicit teaching practices and active student participation. The programs were highly structured and the structure was designed to deliver the desired educational outcomes. At the same time, the educational processes gave students a voice and incorporated ways of learning that encouraged critical and creative thinking.
- All numeracy programs in Stage 1 included the program 'Count Me In Too' and schools devoted time and resources so that the program worked successfully for all students.
- Numeracy problems were looked at in a number of different contexts, encouraging the development of solutions to specific problems rather than concentrating on abstract principles.
- All teachers spent a substantial amount of time in the numeracy lessons discussing mathematical problems and clarifying the language of mathematics.
- Perhaps most importantly, one factor which was common to all successful programs, whether literacy or numeracy, was the high expectations for success held by the teachers for all students. Associated with these expectations was confidence in the capacity of the teaching process to respond to particular student needs.

Common Challenges

Some challenges were common to all the schools; the most significant of these are highlighted below.

To implement extensive change in a school program, the school needs to be flexible and creative. This level of flexibility and innovation can be difficult for a school to maintain because of the demands of keeping the school running smoothly and because of staff turnover.

A school has to be prepared to commit itself to a long period of time to making the necessary changes. Time is needed for the development of community involvement in the school and for educational programs to evolve. (The staff implementing the programs featured in this document acknowledged that they did not get everything right at the first attempt.) There will be problems for schools if they are not prepared to persist in their efforts over time.

The newness of the syllabuses in NSW poses another challenge. Teachers are still becoming familiar with the requirements in terms of content and outcomes, and this lack of thorough knowledge can lead to difficulties.

Another problem is that understanding of the cultures and history of Aboriginal people is not widespread in the education system. Without that understanding, the development of effective educational programs and partnerships is impossible.


Finally, there are the problems of resourcing, especially in terms of teacher support. All the schools that participated in this project reported problems in responding to the needs of students when teacher support was inadequate.

Indicators of effectiveness

The impact of the school programs in these seven case studies is not easily measured through standard testing methods. Indicators used to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs were both empirical and anecdotal. Schools used external and internal monitoring devices to demonstrate changes to the learning outcomes of their students. Improvements to student literacy and numeracy outcomes were seen to be in response to the development of school programs as described in this document.

Although schools provided details of these improvements, external advice was sought on matters that could not be easily tested or observed in the classroom. New South Wales consultancy teams and Aboriginal Community organisations were asked to advise not only on the strength of individual school programs, but also on the school's capacity to engage with parents and community.

The ACER research, used to determine key criteria for the selection of successful school programs, identified the involvement of communities in the educative process as an essential ingredient in the long-term success of students in schooling. The twin tasks of overcoming the past history of Aboriginal education and making schools conducive to community involvement are crucial if schools are to deliver effective outcomes for students and communities.



The critical indicators of success in these programs were:

- in-school monitoring and assessment of programs
- external assessment by consultants and community
- analysis of data by the case study team.

Future Initiatives

As a result of the insights gained during this project, several future initiatives are recommended. These are outlined below:

- The development of effective educational programs requires increased awareness of Aboriginal education. There must be increased and comprehensive attention given to professional development in this area. For example, in government schools a commitment to implementing all the modules in the Aboriginal Education Policy would be highly desirable. Other school systems might require the development of specific policies and training programs.
- There is a need for a system that will facilitate the continuity of education for these students who change schools. Such a system could be developed in collaboration with the community and would require parental support. It would enable specific information about achievements in the key learning areas and information on individual learning styles to accompany students when they move from school to school.
- Further work must be done with classroom teachers to trial specific innovative teaching strategies, especially in the area of numeracy.
- In the course of this project it was found that different organisations were conducting a range of similar projects. There is a need for these projects to be coordinated so that the accumulated knowledge can be shared and built on in an efficient and systematic way.
- In order for schools to benefit from the resources produced to promote Aboriginal education, an effective way of distributing and implementing these resources needs to be developed.

Case Study One

Batemans Bay Public School

What is it that makes this program special?

'It is the commitment of everyone involved to making a difference and improving the outcomes: the community, the teacher, the Aboriginal assistants, the school executive, the Aboriginal Education Assistant, the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties, the Aboriginal Education Resource Teacher and the ancillary staff' (from a 1999 school report).

Description of the School and Community

Batemans Bay Public School is located on the south coast of New South Wales. It is on Yuin nation land. It has a school population of 400, of whom 62 are Aboriginal students. Many of the local families now have third or fourth generation children attending the school. The school has been established within the town since 1869. It has a transient population of between ten and twenty percent with many students returning to the school at some time in the latter part of their primary school education.

The school has a principal, two assistant principals and two executive teachers. There are 15 classes including a special unit for students from the local schooling district. The support staff includes a four-day teacher librarian and a Support Teacher Learning Difficulties (for three days with an additional two days being provided through school funds). The school has an Aboriginal Education Assistant and an Aboriginal Education Resource teacher for five days a week. Teachers' aides are employed by the school to work with students who are on special programs. The school has established a literacy support team who work with the teachers in developing appropriate programs and lessons in order to extend student outcomes.

The staff attend Aboriginal community meetings and are seen by the local Aboriginal community as having a commitment to Aboriginal students. They have attended workshops on the Department of Education and Training's *Aboriginal Education Policy* and, through the support of the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) committee, have up-to-date resources.

In 1997, the school's Aboriginal Early Intervention program received a Director General's award for Excellence. (This program, which is the focus of this case study, is highlighted in the Department of Education and Training's *Aboriginal Education Policy* video.)

Aboriginal Staff Involved in the Program

What is it that makes this program special?

'It is the on-going, hands-on, on-the-job training. It is the employment of Koori assistants.'

Aboriginal Early Intervention Assistants

The school currently employs three Aboriginal Early Intervention assistants. The assistants work at the school for three days a week for two hours per day and also have a weekly 30 to 60-minute training, skill development and debriefing session. Assistants are also involved in school excursions, camps, gross motor and swimming programs. They are also involved in the pre-school program during Term 4. The assistants were selected for employment through interview.

Aboriginal Education Assistant

The school has had a full-time Aboriginal Education Assistant since 1998. This position had been previously shared with the local high school. The school's AEA is an accomplished artist whose artworks decorate the school's walls. She was one of the first assistants to be trained as an early literacy assistant and has recently graduated as a qualified primary school teacher. The Koori Dental and Hearing programs are coordinated and supported by the AEA. She played a major role in the initial implementation of the Early Intervention program but now more of her time is spent working with the students in Years 3 to 6.

Aboriginal Education Resource Teacher

The school has an Aboriginal Education Resource teacher. This position, which was originally part-time, is now full-time. The Resource teacher has regularly inserviced the school's staff regarding the education of Aboriginal students and stimulated discussion on the importance of Aboriginal English.

Resources for the Program

What is it that makes this program special?

'It is the dedication of those who refuse to fold under pressure.'

Support Teacher for Learning Difficulties

The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties (STDL) was the trainer/coordinator until 1999. At the beginning of 1999 the Aboriginal Education Resource teacher became the trainer/coordinator. The school funds two days of the STDL's week. Additional support was given to the program's daily operation by the STDL in her regular role in assessing students and through the monitoring of the assistants to determine the requirements for their training program.

'Junior School' (K-2) Team

The Literacy Program in the 'Junior School' (K-2) does not stand alone. It is a comprehensive program that works effectively because of the collaboration between the staff and community. It includes Reading Recovery, Special Needs, Gross Motor and Guided Reading programs as well as the program run by the Early Literacy Assistant's program.

Funding

The school does not attract either Disadvantage Schools Programs or Country Area Schools Program funding. However, throughout their existence the programs for Aboriginal students have depended on external sources of funding.

From 1993 to 1999 funding has been received through a variety of sources. Namely Burnside New Ventures Scheme, Aboriginal Programs, Priority Schools Program and a one-off grant from the Norman Catts Trust.

The Aboriginal Early Intervention program commenced in Term 2 1993, employing and training six Aboriginal community members as Aboriginal Early Intervention assistants to work for one term in classrooms in the three feeder primary schools to the local government high school. The program proved to be a success, which prompted a further submission to the Priority Schools Program for funds to extend the program through to Term 3.

Resource Rooms

The AEA has an office located in the library. The Aboriginal Early Intervention assistants share the reading resource room with the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties.

Community Involvement

'This program is about Reconciliation: About all young children interacting with each other and with significant Koori adults at a time when racial prejudices are not part of their natural being.'

Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness

The current AEA is the president of the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee. The principal, assistant principal (K-2) and the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties join community members on the committee.

The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee takes an active role in school events. The committee organises whole-school activities for National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration week. It is also involved in school camps, excursions, swimming and sports activities. The committee supports the school's educational programs through the making and purchasing of resources and by their involvement in the school's Health and Nutrition programs.

Homework Centre

The Homework Centre operates for two afternoons a week from 3.00 to 5.00 pm. It is supervised and coordinated by the AEA. The Aboriginal Early Intervention assistants are employed as tutors. The Centre is completely staffed by members of the Aboriginal community.

The Program

Aboriginal Early Intervention Program

An elderly great-grandparent stated how wonderful it was that the school tried to make 'our young ones' more at home and at ease and this just proved that things have improved since her time.

- creating opportunities for the Aboriginal community to become partners in the educational process of all students
- conducting workshops to equip workers/volunteers with the necessary skills needed to assist the teacher in the classroom.

Background

In 1992, Batemans Bay Public School participated, as a feeder primary school of Batemans Bay High School, in the Priority Schools Program. In order to determine how the program's funding should be spent, an Aboriginal person visited the homes of all the Aboriginal students attending the three feeder schools and surveyed the parents about their concerns for their children's education.

The parents' greatest concern was that their children should become literate in the early years at school because they saw a connection between literacy problems in the later years of schooling and poor attendance and behavioural problems. Following the reporting of these findings, the community and the schools met to determine an appropriate program.

The program commenced in Term 2, 1993. Six Aboriginal community members were employed and trained as Aboriginal Early Intervention assistants to work in classrooms for one term across the three feeder public schools. Though the program has been running for some years, it continues to evolve.

Program Overview

The Aboriginal Early Intervention assistants learn how to develop the oral language skills of students 'at risk' in literacy. These oral language skills lead to the development of effective written language skills.

The school believes that the cultural differences between the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal contexts greatly affect children in their early days and years at school.

Accordingly, they feel that it is essential that the student's home language be:

- accepted and valued by teachers, adults and children with whom they come in contact; and
- used as the basis for all encounters with Standard Australian English.

The program has a trainer/coordinator. This position, which is supported by the assistant principal, is responsible for the training and employment of the assistants. The assistants are given preliminary training and have a daily or weekly skill development and debriefing session.

At the beginning of the year, all assistants work in the Kindergarten class to help the students adjust to school. Once this has happened, the assistants work with students in other classes who have been identified as being 'at risk' in literacy. The identification process for students who are 'at risk' in literacy uses the assessment information from the school's K-6 monitoring and assessment programs. This information is passed on each year to the students' teachers.

The assistants are currently employed for three days a week for two hours a day with an additional weekly 30 to 60-minute skill development and debriefing session being included in their time at the school. The timetable is negotiated between the classroom teacher, the assistants and the coordinator.

Goals

The following goals were established for the program:

- The Aboriginal Early Intervention assistants will acquire skills and knowledge to assist all students in the development of oral and written Standard Australian English.
- The Aboriginal student will increase his/her understanding and use of oral and written language, to maximise achievement in all areas of the school curriculum.
- The Aboriginal student will develop confidence to initiate conversations with others and to respond in discussions, thereby raising his/her self-esteem, in the school context, and profile as learners.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for the program:

For training the Aboriginal Early Intervention assistants

- learning strategies, processes and techniques that will enable them to work alongside the classroom teacher and with other support personnel, and to individualise the program delivered to each student
- discussions about the sessions they had with students between training sessions, with a focus on positive experiences, what the trainee achieved and what the student achieved, problems or difficulties experienced
- demonstrations of techniques, processes and strategies to use with students at different stages of development
- trainees observe, question, comment
trainer explains, asks for observations (eg What did you notice ...? What happened when ...? What could you try if ...?)
- opportunities, where appropriate, to engage in activities from the training session with a student or group of students, followed by time to share experiences, clarify issues, discuss alternatives
- keeping of journals for comments, observations etc, and noting any problems or concerns to raise with the class teacher, support person or trainer.

For the students who work with the assistants

- providing opportunities for them to communicate and use language in one-on-one contact with caring adults
- providing models of language patterns for the students to experience and learn from in conversation with adults
- sensitively developing the range and flexibility of the patterns of sentences they are able to control
- extending their knowledge and control of vocabulary
- writing for and with them about their individual experiences.

The following is an overview of the training program for the Aboriginal Early Education assistants. It includes the major topic areas and items.

Session One and Two

Oral Language

- effective communication
- how oral language skills assist reading and writing development
- using open-ended questions
- modelling sentence structures and vocabulary
- working with students who are reluctant talkers
- using games to develop vocabulary and experience of sentence structures

Session Three

Stimulating Oral Language Development Through a Multi-Sensory Approach

- Kim's game – visual memory
- I went shopping ... to stimulate auditory and short-term memory
- development of concept words through games and activities both indoors and outdoors
- following verbal instructions – giving and receiving

Session Four

Simple verbal instructions

- incorporating concept words (eg between, in front of, colour, size, shape)

Following more complex verbal instructions

- outdoor group games including non-Aboriginal students
- demonstrating and modelling appropriate responses to increase oral language

Session Five

Using concept words in giving and receiving more complex instructions

- verbal only, no gesturing
- emphasis on positive expressions avoiding words like no and that's not right

Session Six

Writing

- stages in early development
- routines to follow in a writing session
- working at the child's level
- developing a story and working with a cut-up sentence

Session Seven

Writing

- developing a child's writing vocabulary during the writing process
- teaching letters and sounds during writing
- reviewing known letters and words in the writing session
- generating a sentence/story/recount



Session Eight

Writing

- helping a child to hear the sounds in words with slow, clear articulation
- using sound boxes to sequence sounds and spell new words in writing
- fostering independence in spelling new words in writing
- sound out to spell new words

Session Nine and Ten

General Review

Session Eleven

Reading

- What is reading?
- What do we do when we read?
- What do we need to know and learn to be readers?
- How do we become independent readers?

Session Twelve

Reading

- early strategies for beginning readers
- orienting a book/ text
- responding to a student's reading
- fostering independence (when listening to students reading) through encouraging self-monitoring, cross-checking, searching and self-correcting strategies
- developing fluency with familiar reading.

Session Thirteen

Reading

- combining reading and writing in a session
- stimulating writing through a shared book experience

Results

The following are considered to be indicators of the program's success:

Student Achievements

- Just one student out of all who have participated in the program has needed continued support after completing the program.
- All new Kindergarten students, with the support of the community, take part in the pre-school program which operates for two hours twice a week over a five week period.

Student Behaviour

- Students who have started school and continued in the program through to Year 2 are working with few of the behavioural problems that were evident before the advent of the program.

School/Community Links

- There has been a positive response from Aboriginal parents at parent/teacher interviews about the program.
- There is greater involvement of Aboriginal parents in school and class activities.
- There is a greater involvement of the Aboriginal community in the National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration activities organised and coordinated by the Aboriginal Education Assistant and Aboriginal Education Resource teacher.
- Some Aboriginal families from outside the area have chosen to come to the school because of the success of the program.
- Some assistants have become involved with community groups and have accepted executive duties within the group.
- Some assistants who have trained with the program have continued their studies and become teachers.
- New members of the local community have been trained to replace those assistants who have moved on to continue their studies.

Whole-school Practices

- The framework for the program is being adopted as a model by other schools.



Case Study Two

Camdenville Public School

Description of the School and Community

Located in the inner west of Sydney, Camdenville Primary School has a student population of 220. There are 20 Aboriginal students from pre-school to Year 6. The traditional owners of the land are the Cadigal People who are part of the Dharug language group.

Until 1996, the school was part of the Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP).

In 1999 there were nine class teachers (P–6) and two support learning teachers (the equivalent of six days a week). The Support Teacher for Learning Difficulties component is used for literacy support in K–6 and maths support in Years 3–6. In 2000 the school's Support Teacher for Learning Difficulties allocation was reduced to two days.

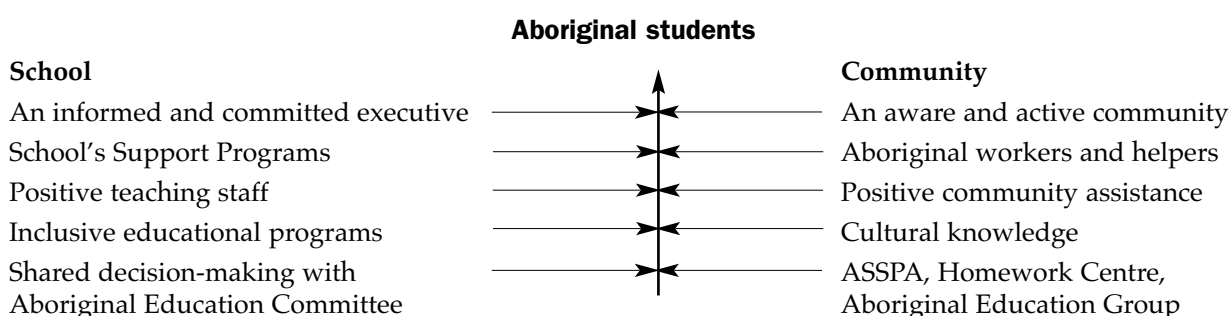
Other staff include an ESL teacher (four days a week), a Reading Recovery and Relief from face-to-face teacher, a teacher-librarian (two days a week), two pre-school teachers' aides, four integration aides and an Aboriginal literacy aide. There are three teachers trained in Reading Recovery and another teacher is soon to be trained in this area. The executive staff includes a principal, an assistant principal and an executive teacher.

The school has been active in forging ties with the community over many years. It has worked to form partnerships to make learning experiences relevant and empowering for the students, who come from a diverse range of language, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

In 1988 the executive teacher at the school and a parent introduced into the school the Aboriginal Student Support and Awareness Committee. Three community members and a staff representative then formed an Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee that organized the school's first NAIDOC week celebration. These celebrations continue to be a focal point in the school's calendar.

The Aboriginal community and the school staff work together in an atmosphere of trust and respect. This has led to increased attendance rates and participation in the learning programs by the Aboriginal students, with an overall improvement in the achievement of literacy and numeracy outcomes at each stage of the curriculum. This is evidenced by Basic Skills Test (BST) results, improved reading levels at all Stages and the 'Count Me In Too' numeracy assessment results in Early Stage 1 and Stage 1.

There is a coordinated approach to literacy and numeracy and these programs have a clear focus. Class teachers, support learning staff and community members work closely together. There is a whole-school approach to planning programs. These programs form and change over time.



Overview of Factors Contributing to Aboriginal Students' Success

Aboriginal Staff

Aboriginal people work in the school in a number of different roles. The positions they work in, however, are not identified as being specifically for Aboriginal people. The staff employed in these positions work with all students.

Integration Aides

At different times the school has received funding from the Department of Education and Training for assistance with students with special needs. The school's teachers design programs that can be implemented by the aide either in the classroom or in a one-to-one withdrawal program. In 1990 an Aboriginal community member began work in several of these positions over a period of eight years. She was trained and worked closely with the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties. Programs that were designed to meet the individual needs of each student were many and varied. The integration aide that works at the school at present is an Aboriginal community member who has also worked with the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and class teachers to support students with special needs.

Pre-school Teachers' Aide

Two Aboriginal community members are employed in the pre-school as teachers' aides. Both have been active in the school in various paid and unpaid positions. They take a leading role in the organisation of cultural events and also work in the Homework Centre. One has, in the past, worked closely with the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and has many skills to use in the pre-school and the Homework Centre to assist the students with their reading and writing.

In 1992 the school was successful in gaining funding from the Priority Schools Program (PSP) for an Aboriginal literacy tutor. The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties trained this person to extend the Aboriginal students' decoding and comprehension skills in reading. The funding for the program was discontinued after one year, but because of the success of the program, the school has continued to support this position from school funds.

Aboriginal Literacy Aide

The Aboriginal literacy/numeracy aide was appointed to the school in 1999. This position was funded for one year from the Department of Education and Training. The funding was a result of the excellent literacy programs implemented in the school. The person in this position contributes to the literacy and numeracy whole-school plan. Her role includes:

- designing and implementing programs for particular students
- working with teachers in Years 3 to 6 in guided reading groups
- assisting in mathematics problem-solving activities
- working with K-2 teachers in the 'Count Me In Too' program, and
- working with the Aboriginal students for one day each week, focusing on their individual literacy needs.

At different times Aboriginal people have worked as guest artists and workshop leaders with the students on short-term creative arts projects. They have led workshops in painting, printing and dance.

The School Council

In 1996 the school formed a School Council as the main parent representative body. The chair of this body is an Aboriginal community member and one of the parent representatives is also an Aboriginal community member.

Resources for the programs

The Literacy Programs

All the literacy programs involve the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties, class teachers, and English Second Language teacher, integration aides and the Aboriginal Literacy Aide.

All programs were undertaken using a combination of targeted projects funding and the school's own resources.

Professional Development

The staff have been involved in ongoing professional development over an extended period of time to assist in the implementation of the school's literacy plan.

In 1995 all staff participated in the Disadvantaged Schools Program Scaffolding-Genre Writing course which ran for four hours a week over a ten week period.

All staff participated in the 'ESL In The Mainstream Language Course', which was funded by the Department of Education and Training.

The school's literacy team provided in-class support for teachers in the implementation of the English K-6 syllabus.

All staff have been in-serviced on matching students to texts and using running records to diagnose students' reading difficulties and strengths.

The integration staff receive ongoing training from the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties in supporting students in literacy and numeracy.

The Numeracy Programs

The numeracy programs involve the class teachers, the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties, the Aboriginal Literacy/numeracy Aide, the mathematics support teacher and the K-2 Relief from Face-to-Face teacher.

The Numeracy programs were funded from Aboriginal Targeted Programs grants.

Professional Development

In 1998 all K-2 teachers participated in the 'Count Me In Too' numeracy program. The mathematics consultant from the local Department of Education and Trainings' district office provided in-class support of one hour for each K-2 class over two terms. New K-2 teachers and support staff have received support from staff trained in this program and have attended after-school in-service sessions.

Professional Development in Aboriginal Education

In 1996 all staff were in-serviced in the first three of the Education and Training's 'Aboriginal Education Policy' modules. The modules will be completed in 2000.

The hearing support teacher, based at Redfern Public School, has in-serviced all staff on Otitis Media and gave lessons to all students from Pre-school to Year 6.

Most staff have been involved in the 'Whole School Anti-Racism Policy' training course. Those teachers who have come to the school since the training course might not have had a similar in-service.

Community Involvement

Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Program

The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee has helped students to participate in the school's programs by funding their participation in excursions and school events, and by providing culturally appropriate resources. It has also been active in coordinating and organising the school's NAIDOC week activities.

NAIDOC week is very much a partnership between the school staff and the Aboriginal community. Over a period of 10 years the range of activities organised by the community has included:

- dance workshops
- visiting storytellers
- artists in residence
- craft workshops
- a 'Johnny Cakes' Day
- community and school barbeques
- interschool visits and performances, and
- excursions to cultural centres, museums and dance performances.

Each year at the beginning of NAIDOC week there is a flag-raising ceremony organised by the staff and students. A school concert is also held in NAIDOC week, where every class performs an item for the community.

The Homework Centre

The 'Koori Kids Working Homework' Centre, which was established in 1991, is well attended by the students. It has always operated to support the students to achieve outcomes in mainstream schooling and to reinforce their Aboriginal identity. The Centre is also a meeting place for families who come and talk to tutors and workers and often provides assistance. The Centre personnel liaise with all the teachers regularly about the students' work and their progress.

The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties has ascribed levels to all the texts in the Centre and matched all the students to texts. She has worked with all the tutors and staff to increase their teaching strategies in reading and spelling. This has led to well-established literacy routines, where all students have achieved age-appropriate reading levels. The mathematics support teacher liaises with families and tutors regularly. The atmosphere of the Homework Centre is informal and it is easy to talk to parents about their children's progress.

The Aboriginal Education Committee

The Aboriginal Education Committee includes all Aboriginal workers in the school, the Homework Centre coordinator, the executive teacher and the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties. This group meets at the beginning of the year, and in consultation with the principal, draws up the school's twelve-month action plan. For example, activities that were listed for the last twelve months included:

- revisiting the Department of Education and Training's Aboriginal Education Policy
- attending Aboriginal Education Consultative Group meetings
- organising NAIDOC Week celebrations
- training the Aboriginal Literacy Aide
- implementing the Aboriginal literacy program
- surveying and recording all Koori students' literacy achievements using running records
- setting up reading folders for students working at the Homework Centre, and
- levelling texts at the Homework Centre.

Programs

Initial Literacy Assessment Program

- an assessment program that carefully tracks students' progress

Individual Education Program – Literacy

- collaboratively developing individual education programs

Aboriginal Literacy/Numeracy Program

- a program to meet the identified areas of need

Guided Reading in Stages 2 and 3

- using a guided reading approach

'Count Me In Too' Numeracy Program K–2

- implementing the Count Me In Too numeracy program K–2

Mathematics Support Program

- using a Mathematics Support Teacher in the Stages 2 and 3 classroom program

Anti-racism Targeted Projects

- developing anti-racism education strategies

Initial Literacy Assessment Program

Background

The Assessment Program draws on a wide range of resources. No one test is used for all students and the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties (STLD) is always looking for more appropriate assessment tools. The school uses diagnostic tools for identifying the gaps in students' literacy learning. The areas of need can then be addressed either in a class program or in an individualised education program. The students' progress is tracked carefully.

Organisation and Timing

The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties has designed a comprehensive literacy assessment package for new students. The information gained from the assessment is shared with the students, teachers and parents and Homework Centre tutors. Teachers, aides, tutors and parents and the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties then work together on strategies to address the identified areas of need.

Program Overview

The assessment package is made up of the following components:

- a running record from a resource, the 'Benchmark Kit', which is used to assess the student's reading skills and strategies. The contextual and semantic, grammatical, phonological and graphological strategies the student uses are assessed. The comprehension questions are oral. The students are then matched to their instructional level for guided reading
- the Burt Word Test, for students eight years and younger
- the South Australian Spelling Test
- the High Frequency Dolch Word Test
- a Decoding Checklist
- the Reading Assessment Screening Package, a reading and comprehension resource for eight to twelve-year-old students. Texts are matched to students' interests or knowledge areas.

Strategies

The following strategies are used by teachers and aides involved in the program:

- Formal diagnostic assessments are carried out after an initial period of getting to know the students. This is important for establishing trust and rapport and for gaining a wider knowledge of the students beyond their test results.
- The purpose of the formal testing is explained to students.
- When carrying out assessments, the teacher must be aware of possible hearing problems that could affect a student's responses. The positioning of the student is important. This may affect spelling and comprehension results.
- Discussion with the Aboriginal Education Aide or an Aboriginal worker is important, especially in establishing the level of understanding the student has of the language used in the assessments. It may be more appropriate for the Aboriginal Education Aide or integration aide to carry out the testing, with the support and guidance of the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties.
- Testing of the different components may be done at different times. The timing and pacing of the assessment may affect results.
- Results are discussed with class teachers, support staff, homework tutors, and parents for the purpose of working out appropriate strategies.
- The students performing at age-level reading competency and beyond, are matched to text at their reading level and grouped into the appropriate guided reading level.

Individual Education Program – Literacy

Organisation and Timing

The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties, the Aboriginal literacy aide, integration aide and class teacher discuss assessment results and plan a program to meet the identified areas of need. After initial training of the aides, done by the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties, the programs are implemented by either the Aboriginal literacy aide or integration aide. The programs are implemented three times a week. The individual reading programs are timetabled as part of reading time. It is important that students do not miss out on learning experiences in other key learning areas. The class teacher informs the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties of the class theme or topic and the related text types they are studying. Once the student has achieved an independent class reading level they participate in guided reading groups.

Program Overview

The programs are holistic, incorporating the following roles of the reader into the individual's program:

- code-breaker (word attack skills)
- text-participant (comprehension skills)
- text-response (individual understandings)
- text-analyst (critical literacy skills).

Thus, the student's strengths are incorporated into the program and specific literacy skills are not isolated from the contexts in which they occur.

The programs use a range of text types, including texts from the Homework Centre. Where possible, texts that relate to the class themes/topics or student's interests are part of the program.

Specific games are used to build up speed and proficiency in word recognition and word attack skills. These are related to the targeted skill area that needs practice.

Students are given appropriate home readers after each session.

Strategies

The following reading routine has been established so that students know what to expect and can gain confidence in participating in the reading process:

Student re-reads known text, building fluency and speed.

Orientation to the new text

- The new text is introduced. Student uses picture clues and title to predict what the book will be about.
- The type of text is discussed, as is its purpose and who would read it.
- The student and teacher look through the text discussing pictures and related background knowledge.

Reading text

- The teacher supports the student's reading of the text, using Reading Recovery prompts.
- Observation of reading strategies determines the support activities required.
- Oral questioning of student's understanding and appreciation of the text. Both literal and inferential questions are used.
- Specific games and activities played to build up word recognition and word attack strategies.

Aboriginal Literacy/Numeracy Program

Organisation and Timing

In 1999, class teachers, the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties, the mathematics support teacher and the Aboriginal literacy/numeracy aide discussed each Aboriginal student's outcomes in literacy and numeracy, using Basic Skill Test results, class work samples, Reading Recovery levels and 'Count Me In Too' levels. The student's results determined the priorities of individualised programs.

The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and class teacher design individual support programs. The Aboriginal literacy / numeracy aide implements these one day a week. Programs are aimed at improving the student's individual reading skills and mathematical computation skills. The student's experience leads to greater confidence when participating in class activities.

Strategies

It is important to note that the programs change throughout the year according to the needs of the individual student and the amount of funding available. Ongoing assessment is used to determine the type of programs that would be beneficial for each student. Different strategies are used with each stage. An example of how this was undertaken over a recent twelve-month period is outlined below.

Kindergarten and Stage 1

Literacy

- Students read texts at their instructional reading level with the literacy aide.
- Reading recovery prompts are used to build word attack skills.
- Word recognition games are played.
- Students in Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 come together after the individual programs have been implemented and listen to a story. Stories that have an Aboriginal theme are used extensively.

Numeracy

- In Semester 2 the students in Later Stage 1 were supported in building their numeracy skills. The class teacher identified this area as needing more support than their literacy skills, which had been developed to a high level in Semester 1.

Stages 2 and 3

Literacy

- In Semester 1 the students' comprehension skills were developed using the 'Headworks' reading and comprehension texts.
- Questions went beyond a factual recall of the texts.
- This program challenged the students to think more deeply about a range of texts

Numeracy

- In Semester 2 the students were tested on their computation skills.
- Specific areas that needed practice were identified.
- Explanation models and teaching aids were supplied by the class teachers.
- Students practised skills.
- Students were retested and assessed by the class teacher.

Guided Reading in Stages 2 and 3

Organisation and Timing

All students in Stages 2 and 3 are assessed using the running records in the 'Benchmark Kit' and grouped accordingly into guided reading groups. All class teachers, the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and the ESL teacher take a guided reading group from each class, three times a week.

Program Overview

The school has a reading resource room with multiple copies of texts from various reading schemes and novels that are used for guided reading. Big books and levelled boxes of individual texts that classes use during independent silent reading time and for take-home-reading, are also used. Once a student has reached the 'Countdown' level in reading, a School Magazine is ordered each month for the student, at their instructional level. As they progress, the magazine level changes accordingly. Particular emphasis is placed on students' understanding of texts at both the literal and inferential level, the purpose of the text and the language structures. Students are at one of the following levels, 'Countdown', 'Blast Off', 'Orbit and Touchdown'.

The Reading outcomes and indicators in the English K–6 Syllabus have guided the scope of the reading program over each term.

The following scope from the syllabus is addressed throughout the year:

Learning to Read: Reading and Viewing Texts

- Responding to Texts
- Contextual and Semantic Information
- Grammatical Information
- Graphological and Phonological Information
- Information Skills

Learning About Reading: Context and Text

- Purpose
- Audience
- Subject Matter
- Responding to Texts
- Text Structure
- Grammar
- Text Language

Strategies

The following Teaching/Learning model was used by teachers in a flexible way to introduce new skills and to give students practice:

- demonstrating and modelling particular features of the reading program
- practising the skill with teacher support and peer support, and
- independent use of the skill by the students with teachers assessing skill acquisition.

Count Me In Too Numeracy Program K–2

Program Overview

In 1999, a 'Count Me In Too' numeracy program operated three times a week in each K–2 class. The staff included the class teacher and the Aboriginal aide. Class teachers undertook 'Count Me In Too' training in 1998. This included a semester of support from the Department of Education and Training's district mathematics consultant. The support staff have been trained by teachers who had previous training from the district consultant and all teachers attended after-school inservice sessions organised by the consultant.

Each student is individually assessed at the beginning of the year using the program's SENA assessment test. The teacher is released from class to video the assessment tasks. After viewing the video, the teacher groups each child into the level at which they need to practise specific skills. Each class has three groups and is supported by the two staff. As students become proficient in using numeracy strategies, they progress to the next level of activities. Students are formally reassessed in Term 4.

Each class has built up a collection of games and activities for the program's four developmental levels. The games and activities are part of each lesson and can be used in more informal ways once the students know how to use them and can assume responsibility for packing them away.

The games and activities have the following attributes, which contribute to their success:

- they are concrete and visually appealing
- some make use of calculators
- they focus on problem-solving contexts
- they use the language of mathematics
- they include partner activities.

Strategies

The teachers have developed the following strategies:

- Whole-class counting games as well as number problem games begin each lesson. Teacher questioning is directed to the whole class and response time is extended until nearly all students have had time to respond. The teacher then takes a field of answers, without affirming or denying any contributions. This is good classroom practice for many students, but especially critical for ESL and Aboriginal students who are not familiar with using the grammatical structures of Standard Australian English.
- When the group activities are introduced, it is important to give a clear demonstration of the activity and state clearly the purpose of the activity. Give students the opportunity to observe games, as played by peers or the teacher, before they participate.
- During the demonstration time, use the language of mathematics consistently and clearly. Make sure that the focus of the lesson is maintained. Do not include too many concepts when introducing a new activity or game.
- Organise students into partners to play games and determine their level of literary skill and understanding.
- Accept students' home language when they answer questions, pose problems and play games.
- Organise learning experiences that acknowledge students' knowledge and skills.
- Organise the group so that students who may have hearing difficulties are in a position to see the teacher's face and see the activity clearly.

See the following organisational chart as an example of a week's 'Count Me In Too' activities for Kindergarten.

Teaching/Learning Activities for Kindergarten (one week in Term 2)

Whole-class Activities		
Counting forwards 0–23 and backwards 23–0 using physical activities, such as marching in a circle, bobbing up and down, stretching hands for 'teen' numbers and stretching out the 'teen' part of the word when saying those numbers (13, 14, 15, etc.)		
Circle Count by 4s – emphasise the 4th number with a clap, stamp or shout		
Group Work		
PERCEPTUAL GROUP	FIGURATIVE GROUP	COUNTING ON GROUP
Outcome: ES 1.6 Recognises, describes, makes and continues simple number and spatial patterns	Outcome: N 1.3(a) Represents addition and subtraction facts up to 20 using concrete materials and in symbolic form	Outcome: N 1.1 Approximates, counts, compares, orders and represents whole numbers and groups of objects up to 100
DAY 1		
Bingo Game 1–20	Tub Take-away – 10 cubes	Skip Counting by 10
Match numerals with, and then without visual clues 1–10 Mark the numeral after or before chosen number	1st player hides some cubes under tub, rest on top 2nd player works out number hidden under tub	Demonstrate use of constant key with +10 Count as demonstrate procedure Scribe onto grid new 10s number Collect grid
Resources	Resources	
Bingo cards and counters	Cubes and container	

<p>DAY 2</p> <p>Memory Match 15–20 Pairs turn over matching numerals and take turns to find the matching pairs Students should say the number an turn over</p> <p>Resources Matching numeral cards</p>	<p>Diffy Towers 20–0 Pairs – Each player places 20 cubes in 2 columns of 10. Take turns to throw dice. Take away number of cubes the dice shows. Write down remaining number after each throw First to 0 wins</p> <p>Resources Dice, cubes or counters, paper and pencil</p>	<p>Count by 10 to 100 Calculators by 10s to 100 Cut up grids, mix up and put in order</p> <p>Resources Calculators, grids and scissors</p>
<p>DAY 3</p> <p>Which card is missing? 1–12 Set of dot cards 1 to 12 Pairs – 1st player takes away an unknown card 2nd player lays out all cards and works out missing card</p> <p>Resources Set of 12 dot cards for each pair</p>	<p>Tub Take-away 12 or 15 cubes Played same way as Day 1 Using different number of cubes</p> <p>Resources Cubes and containers</p>	<p>Teddy Toss Toss teddy into box or hoop. 10 points for in the box and 1 point for out of the box. 5 teddies eg 2 in and 3 out = 23 Revise 10 using calculator constant Give out envelopes of cut-up 10s and order them Circle counting by 10s</p> <p>Resources Teddies, boxes, calculators, 10s to 100 in an envelope</p>
<p>Whole-class concluding activity</p> <p>Tiggy Tag: Class sits in a circle. One group at a time has a turn to stand in the circle. Teacher fires questions at group in the circle. First hand up is chosen to answer. If the answer is correct they can touch someone and the person they touch sits down. If they answer incorrectly they must sit down. The person left standing is the winner. Questions relate to concepts learnt in group work or the forward and backward number sequence from the introductory activity.</p>		
<p>Where to from here?</p> <p>PERCEPTUAL GROUP Continue forward number sequence and backward number sequence and number identification to 20</p> <p>FIGURATIVE GROUP Further subtraction & addition games & problems</p> <p>COUNTING ON Group Bundling paddle pops in 10s, Diennes blocks and number cards making numbers</p>		

Mathematics Support Program

Organisation and Timing

The Mathematics support program operated three times a week for Stage 2 and Stage 3. The implementation of the Mathematics Support Teacher's program varied according to the needs of the students in each class. At the beginning of Term 1 the class teacher and the support teacher test students in the four strands of the Mathematics K–6 Syllabus (Space, Measurement, Number and Working Mathematically). An analysis of the Basic Skills Test results was used to establish the Year 4 and Year 6 priorities. The school had a well-resourced mathematics room that was used extensively by all classes. The support teacher also used the room for small group work.

The mathematics support program ran in a flexible manner. The needs of particular students in the school determined the way the program was structured for each class. At times the support teacher would withdraw particular students who needed extra practice and then let them rejoin their class for the beginning of a new unit of work.

Program Overview

Year 3

Team teaching was used with an emphasis on the language structure and terminology of mathematics problems. A key focus was the close analysis of how word meanings change in particular contexts and the mathematical procedures associated with these meanings.

Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6

Team teaching and withdrawal groups were used for students in these Years who needed additional practice. New concepts and skills were introduced during these sessions.

The Mathematics K–6 Syllabus was used to determine the scope and sequence for the year. Appropriate activities from the syllabus and the support documents were used alongside activities drawn from a wide range of texts and kits.

Strategies

The teachers developed the following strategies:

- talk with students as they work through problems
- clarify the meaning of words within a problem, using a mathematics dictionary
- use a range of visual aids and patterns to support mathematics concepts
- display students' work and refer to work samples
- use problem-solving task cards where students support each other while solving problems
- set up practice skill routines and provide feedback on progress
- explain why we are working on a particular mathematics skill
- use a range of ways to record mathematics solutions, including diagrams, words and tables
- relate mathematics problems to situations in people's lives
- use games and hands-on activities to support the learning of mathematics concepts
- provide positive encouragement as students achieve outcomes
- set up high expectations with the students
- talk to parents about the program and your expectations
- make ongoing assessments of students' skills and knowledge
- conference with students regularly and discuss the different strategies students use to solve problems with the whole class
- revisit different skill areas regularly
- use a range of resources including calculators, computer software, different texts, the syllabus and support documents and kits.

Example

The following is an example of one week's numeracy lessons for a group of students working towards Stage 2 Outcomes.

Program Overview

A group of students in Year 3 needed support to develop their understanding of the number patterns for the 2 times tables. The program extended the number concepts about two, to include 2 less than and 2 more than any number up to a thousand, as well as the doubling and halving of numbers. The lessons below are a beginning and the work would be extended until students can use their knowledge of numbers to solve a range of problems.

Resources

- Hundred chart, tiles or counters, numeral and symbol cards, array cards calculators, base 10 material, bingo cards References for the following activities include:
 - Mathematics K–6 Syllabus
 - Resource Materials for Basic Learning K–6 Number
 - Patterns in Mathematics K–6 Book 4
 - Young Australian Maths Level Three

Mathematics K–6 Syllabus Outcomes

N 2.3 (a): Models and explains patterns related to number facts for the four operations.

N 2.3 (b): Recalls multiplication facts up to 10×10 .

Activities

Day 1

- Discuss what we do in 2s, for example, lining up, card games, sports games, quick counting and matching things.
- Students count by 2s and mark the numbers on the hundred charts.
- Teacher demonstrates how to skip count by 2 on the calculator and discusses the number pattern.
- Students play the following guessing game with a partner, using a calculator and a hundred chart. The first player presses the 2+ and then the = a number of times and the other player, who can see how many times the = sign is pressed must find the answer on the hundred chart. Discuss how to solve this problem.
- Students construct a staircase model of the table of 2s using interlocking blocks. Numeral and symbol cards are used to label the model.
- Students and teacher play a game of bingo using numbers up to 100. The players mark the number that is 2 more or 2 less than the number selected by the caller.

Day 2

- Revise previous day's work by looking at models and counting by 2s.
- Students look at a picture of Noah's Ark and the animals in the student book of Young Australian Maths Level Three. Teacher and students discuss questions set out on this page.
- Teacher models how to make up questions about the picture. Students make up a question related to the picture for a friend to answer. Discuss how to interpret data and questions.
- Students play bingo using numbers between 100 and 1000. They find the number that is 2 more or 2 less than the number called.

Day 3

- Students count by 2s.
- Students find how many eyes in the group. One person leaves, now how many? These problems are continued using different situations.

- Teacher shows one row of biscuits in a packet of biscuits. Students predict how many.
- Teacher talks about how doubling is the same as 2 lots of or 2 times.
- Teacher shows pictures of half of a cricket pitch (3 stumps), one dog (4 legs), one set of fingers (5 fingers), a row of eggs in a carton (6 eggs), one spider (8 legs). Double these and find how many altogether.
- Use a collection of picture cards with a number of objects on each card. Students double the objects and write a sentence using either the algorithm form $2 \times _ = _$, or in a sentence, for example, double 12 eggs is 24 eggs.
- Make fold downs for the 2 times tables. Refer to the syllabus (p 241).
- Play bingo game that was played the previous day.
- Students write down as many take-away algorithms that they can where the answer is 2. Use this as an assessment task.

Anti-racism Targeted Projects

Background

Camdenville Public School has been developing anti-racism education strategies through the implementation of a number of programs and with the involvement of staff, students and community members for some years. Some of these strategies are:

- the school's involvement in an Aboriginal English Project
- school and community involvement in a Multicultural Day
- the development of anti-racism/anti-bias units for Kindergarten, Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6
- talks to all classes by the local school anti-racism officer, explaining the role, the students' rights and the procedures that protect these rights, and
- training of staff and community members in the Department of Education and Training's 'Whole School Anti-Racism Project'.

Program Overview

In 1998 the staff and community held meetings and set up an action plan. The following initiatives were implemented over the year:

- a school sign that said 'welcome' in 27 languages (most of the languages at the school) was erected
- three flag poles were erected to fly the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian flags
- work commenced on the development of a series of cultural units to be implemented as part of the Human Society and Its Environment key learning area. The units will culminate in International Day celebrations.

Cultural Units

The outcomes and indicators from the culture strand in the Human Society and Its Environment K-6 Syllabus have been used to guide the range of activities. They will also be used to assess the students' skills and understanding within each class unit.

The learning experiences in the content overview sections of the syllabus were also used as a guide to determine the program's scope and sequence. The plan for each Stage is set out on the following page.

Early Stage 1 and Stage 1

The study of families and celebrations is used as the framework for the study of different cultures.

Stage 2

Through the study of a culture that is part of the school or class community, the students look at how shared customs, practices, symbols, languages and traditions in communities contribute to Australian and community identities.

Stage 3

Through the study of a particular cultural group, the students examine features of a traditional culture within its country of origin and then how it changes within another country such as Australia.

Students from each class present an assembly item that showcases the work they have done on their cultural unit.

The community and school then celebrate with a shared table of food from many families.

Every second year, the students learn a dance from the 'Dance Nova' dance group and perform their dance as part of International Day celebrations.



Case Study Three

Condobolin Public School

Description of the School and Community

Condobolin is the centre of a progressive rural community with a population of 3 500.

It is situated in the centre of New South Wales, on Wiradjuri land, about 500 kilometres west of Sydney. Today Condobolin stands as a major service and facility town, serving central and outback areas of New South Wales and has pastoral, agricultural and secondary industries.

Condobolin has three schools: two primary schools (one Catholic) and one high school.

Condobolin Public School has 390 students of whom 31% are Aboriginal students. Each grade has two classes. The school also has an IO class.

The school has established a Learning Support Team that comprises the Support Teacher for Learning Difficulties, two Aboriginal Education Assistants, the school counsellor and a welfare coordinator, who is usually an executive member. The team's concerns are the academic progress, emotional wellbeing and behaviour of all students. Under the guidance of the Support Teacher for Learning Difficulties, they meet on a weekly basis to assess the performance of the students and their programs.

The programs offered at the school are determined by the needs of the student population. Together, the school and the community influence the ways in which the programs are delivered.

The success of the learning support team's program is dependent on the support the community offers and the relationship between the school staff involved in the program and the community. Condobolin Public School's learning support team and the program it has implemented has the wholehearted support of the Aboriginal workers at the school and the school's Aboriginal community.

Aboriginal students are not the sole focus of this program. The learning support team's program targets all students that the school has assessed as working below their chronological age level. There were 162 Year 4–6 students involved in the program. 41 were Aboriginal students. In March 1998, 51 students knew less than 306 sight words. By November 1999, only 2 students knew less than 306 words. As for benchmarking status: in March 1998, 72 students were on levels below extension while in November 1999, 13 remained below extension.

The program was not developed to replace the classroom literacy program. It provides the students with a 'second go' at literacy. The program has short-term goals that aim to assist the students in reaching the English K–6 syllabus outcomes for Stages 2 and 3, and beyond if necessary.

The learning support team and the classroom teacher meet to determine what action is to be undertaken and to design a collaborative plan.

The collaborative plan has the following features:

- length of intervention
- focus on literacy or numeracy
- present level of achievement reached by student
- skills to be developed
- targeted outcomes
- responsibilities of the support and classroom teachers
- resources
- strategies/learning activities
- evaluation and evaluation key
- resources.

The school's assessment and monitoring policy was devised with reference to the documents *Principles for Assessment and Reporting in NSW Government Schools* (1996) and *Strategies for Assessment and Reporting Primary Schools* (1997). Both the monitoring and assessment procedures are presented in the form of an action plan. The school's policy is reviewed on a yearly basis.

Assessment Procedures and Strategies

A formal test is given to all students by their classroom teachers in Term 2 and Term 4. The program uses a range of assessment procedures and strategies including the use of standardised tests, pupil profiles (special support), Reading Recovery and screening devices.

Monitoring Procedures and Strategies

Guided reading is undertaken in each class each day. The program incorporates a range of monitoring procedures and strategies including drill and practice activities, analysis of students' work samples, running records, information obtained from parents, homework tasks and end-of-unit (summative) assessment tasks. A 'Gold Book' is also used for communication between teachers and parents.

The data collected on the working levels of all students in Term 1 of 1998 showed that half the students required assistance. The school felt the need for a new approach to meet their needs. The solution was to introduce a number of different strategies to achieve improvement.

The learning support team designed a literacy support strategy for targeted students and presented it to the staff who agreed to its implementation. The focus group was to be all Year 4–6 students who had a reading age below their chronological age. The strategy included peer tutoring, parent tutoring and home programs, based on staff-devised individual education plans as well as a program of ten-week intervention lessons taught by the Aboriginal Education Aids and the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties.

The priority for 1998 was to improve decoding skills. Phonics, sight words and vocabulary extension were the focus of the lessons. Reading Rampage, an individualised guided program that requires a peer or adult tutor, was used for those students who had adequate phonics skills and good sight word knowledge but needed regular reading practice and development of their comprehension skills. Students were assessed at the end of each term. By the end of 1998 the school was able to support all students including those who had a reading age six months lower than their chronological age.

The school decided that in 1999 there would be mandatory reading intervention. Collaborative discussions with all staff determined that the following strategies would be employed:

- Reading Recovery – Year 1
- Phonemic Awareness – withdrawal groups for Year 1 to Year 3
- Withdrawal Skills Groups – Year 4 to Year 6
- Peer Tutoring – Year 4 to Year 6
- Reading Rampage – for students who met the determined criteria in Year 3.

These strategies were not developed to replace the classroom literacy program. They provide the students with a 'second go' at literacy. The purpose was to supplement classroom learning.

Condobolin Public School believes the staff need to assist, support and trust the learning support team and demonstrate flexibility in the organisation of the classroom. The staff also need to be informed. The school participated in the Department of Education and Training's School Focused Training and Development program in 1998 and under the guidance of a trained staff member, have implemented a State Literacy Strategy plan using funding from the Early Literacy Initiative. The school believes these to be important and relevant actions. It is recognised by the school that whole-school collaboration is a necessity for this approach to be successful.

Aboriginal Staff Involved in the Programs

Two Aboriginal Education Assistants are employed. They are both members of the learning support team and are proficient in designing their own programs that contribute to the Aboriginal students' literacy and numeracy support programs. It is their desire to participate in the team's approach in the interest of changing the strategies for improving the education of the middle and low achieving Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students at the school. The Aboriginal Education Assistants feel that they should be aware of and have a sound knowledge of everything that is happening within the school. The Aboriginal Education Assistants are considered to be invaluable to the school.

The Aboriginal Education Assistants are involved in:

- the selection of Aboriginal students for the program
- the preparation of timetables in liaison with teachers and other support workers
- the preparation of group or individual packages to coincide with relevant literacy and numeracy work
- benchmarking of students to enable the selection of appropriate texts
- the design of work sheets in relation to the above individual packages
- coordination of inservice workshops for Aboriginal parents who work as tutors
- raising parents' awareness of the need to be involved in their children's school work when needed
- assisting teachers with parent interviews
- regular marking and monitoring of students' work.

At the end of each term the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and the Aboriginal Education Assistants work as a team and are heavily involved in assessing targeted students that have been recommended for assistance in either literacy or numeracy.

The Aboriginal Education Assistants work in conjunction with the occupational therapist in the weekly programs for individual students. The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and Aboriginal Education Assistants run weekly language programs with targeted Kindergarten Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

The Aboriginal Education Assistants are members of the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee, help in the running of the Aboriginal Student Homework Centre and carry out other duties.

Reading Rampage Tutor

The Reading Rampage tutor is a non-identified position selected on merit. The Reading Rampage tutor supervises peer-tutoring sessions and is involved in the design, monitoring and marking of the students' work. This position is presently funded through the federally funded CAP program. It was previously funded by PSP, Disadvantaged Schools Program and school funds.

Resources for the Programs

Support Teacher Learning Difficulties

The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties plays an essential role in the program. The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties is the coordinator of the program and is recognised by the Aboriginal staff as a main contributor to the success of the Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal Education Assistants' Room

The resource room is an essential resource for the Aboriginal Education Assistants, the students and the community. It provides a workplace and meeting place that allows issues in achieving targeted literacy outcomes to be discussed. These may be issues related to students, the school or the community.

Train carriage

A train carriage was purchased eight years ago with the assistance of Disadvantaged Schools Program funding. The carriage has been fitted with tutoring areas divided by partitions. Each area has a small desk and two chairs and ensures privacy from other tutoring pairs while enabling the supervisor to easily monitor the students at work.

Orange District Office (Department of Education and Training)

The Learning Difficulties consultant from the local district has worked with the school's Learning Support Team in assessing the students and in the design of the school's literacy support strategies. This support has assisted the school in making major improvements in the delivery of quality literacy programs for students with learning difficulties.

Community Involvement

Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness

The school's Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee organises school activities to celebrate National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander week in July each year.

The Aboriginal Student Homework Centre

The Homework Centre operates on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons each week during Terms 2 and 3. The strategies that have been used in the school's literacy support program have influenced the way the students are being taught in the Homework Centre. The school receives funding for the Centre through the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Programs

Buddy Reading

- a peer tutoring program for Year 4 to Year 6 focusing on decoding

Buddy Reading for Meaning

- a peer tutoring program for students in Year 4 to Year 6 focusing on reading for meaning

Literacy Skills Groups Year 4 to Year 6

- an individualised literacy program collaboratively designed by the learning support team and classroom teacher

Using the Computer for Comprehension

- different formats for using the computer as a tool for literacy learning

Reading Rampage

- an individualised guided reading program requiring a peer or adult tutor, either administered in the classroom or in a withdrawal situation

Buddy Reading – peer tutoring program for Year 4 to Year 6 focusing on decoding skills

'Regular phonic sequence drill for Years 4–6 has enhanced decoding and retention of phonics for all, especially Aboriginal students.' Teacher

Background

During 1998 the school's literacy support priority was to improve decoding skills by increasing sight word knowledge, automatic recognition of all sounds, fluency and comprehension.

Condobolin Public School believes Aboriginal students respond well to the peer-tutoring program because:

- students are more inclined to seek guidance from a peer than a teacher in order to gain understanding
- both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are involved in the program and neither group is made to feel different
- students take risks because no-one other than the tutor sees the errors that may be made
- students have individualised education programs that are systematic and incremental, taking small steps forward.

Program Overview

The learning support team uses previously collated baseline data to select students for the program. The Buddy Reading program has three folders:

- an individual education program folder contains an individual ladder of unknown sounds
- a timed reading folder that contains sequential reading passages and word lists (unknown words and/or comprehension sheets)
- a buddy reading texts folder that contains individual oral reading lessons for set texts.

The supervisor oversees the buddy teams, and monitors and marks students' work. The supervisor trains the students' tutors (buddies). The learning support team maintains the folders. The school believes that it is desirable to use texts that have Aboriginal or Indigenous content or perspectives.

The 30-minute tutoring session takes place each day of the week at a time negotiated with the classroom teachers.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

Individual education program

The student reads from a ladder of unknown sounds and then from a ladder of unknown words while the buddy (tutor) ticks or crosses known and unknown sounds and words. The buddy tells the student the name of unknown sounds and words after the reading is completed.

Timed reading folder

The buddy models reading 120 words in a minute. Using a stopwatch, the buddy times the student. The student reads the passage for one minute. The buddy promptly says the difficult words so as not to interrupt flow of reading. Mistakes are taken off the final score for the task. The student and tutor set a reading speed goal for each session. When the student can read at that speed then another speed goal is set. The optimum speed for Years 4 to 6 is 120 words per minute.

Heather Harvey Word List

The buddy reads all list words. The student then tries to read the list. The buddy circles, in pencil, errors for revision before starting the next time. When the student can read them correctly, the buddy times the student. The student must read all words correctly in two minutes before going on to the next level.

Buddy Reading Texts

The student reads a benchmarked-level text and completes related exercises.

Buddy Reading for Meaning – a peer-tutoring program for students in Year 4 to Year 6

Background

Once all students achieve competency in using decoding skills and display motivation to read, then the Buddy Reading for Meaning program is introduced. Again the one-on-one strategy is used, which generally is highly suitable to students experiencing learning difficulties.

Program Overview

The learning support team organises each student's folder. Each folder contains comprehension worksheets, vocabulary worksheets and an activity worksheet. The learning support team maintains the folders. The supervisor (who in this school is either the teacher's aide, an Aboriginal Educational Assistant or Support Teacher Learning Difficulties) supervises the buddy teams, and monitors and marks students' work.

The comprehension methods students use include:

- skimming and scanning
- finding main idea
- summarising
- locating details
- critical reading.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

Comprehension worksheets

- the student and buddy (tutor) revise the comprehension methods at the beginning of each session
- the buddy reads the comprehension passage while the student listens
- the student reads the comprehension passage. If the student finds a word difficult, they are encouraged to try the following strategies
 - look at the picture
 - sound out the word
 - leave it out and read on and then come back
 - guess it after looking at the beginning sound
 - think of an easy word it might look like (eg holden = gold + en)
- the student answers comprehension questions in pencil and using whole sentences.

Vocabulary worksheets – Heather Harvey

- the buddy reads the list correctly.
- the student makes an attempt. The buddy circles words read incorrectly. The buddy writes them on a vocabulary sheet, which is divided into three columns.
- the student writes the word correctly and then reads the words in the second column. The buddy fills in the third column if the word is spelt incorrectly.
- complete Heather Harvey exercises.
- work is continued on the list until the student can read all words correctly in two minutes.

Activity worksheets

- when the student has finished one comprehension sheet and one Heather Harvey list sheet they can try an 'activity for the week' worksheet.

Literacy Skills Groups Year 4 to Year 6

'Aboriginal students seem to have achieved very good results in small groups of students with similar ability.' Teacher

Background

During 1999 the support staff, Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and the Aboriginal Education Assistants operated withdrawal groups or groups within the classroom for students in Years 4, 5 and 6, emphasising comprehension and text types.

The school believes that the withdrawal program has been successful because the students:

- will answer questions or make an attempt
- have equal access to equipment (the students often 'hang back' in class groups)
- secure teacher time quickly (the students often give up if they have to wait a while).

Program Overview

The support staff assess students to determine achievement levels before and after the program. Having obtained the necessary information, the support staff and classroom teacher collaborate to design withdrawal programs that include skills objectives, strategies and learning experiences. The responsibilities of the support staff and classroom teacher are also outlined.

Most withdrawal lessons do not occur during prime learning time. The half-hour lesson happens after 12.15 pm daily for four or five days a week, at a time negotiated between the learning support team and the classroom teacher.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

1. Each week a different text is to be read using modelled reading. The process is
 - orientation to text
 - mask all print and discuss the pictures
 - teacher/ Aboriginal Education Assistant reads text while students follow
 - pause to discuss text
 - find a focus for re-reading (eg focus could be direct speech)
 - focus is to change each week
 - students re-read to locate the 'focus'.
2. Each week/fortnight the text will be read to
 - survey (predict what it is about)
 - find detail
 - locate things (by using the index and contents and through skimming)
 - do actions: follow steps, match pictures to words, read to others, list technical terms, change audience (writing), true or false questions
 - generate (write a similar story).

3. Back to basics

Activities are selected to develop grammar, spelling and punctuation skills.

The program includes the following range of activities:

- drill 306 most frequent sight words. Begin Heather Harvey list
- make up word banks for topics of student's choice. Place these words in order of difficulty for the individual students
- find similar words to those in the word bank
- look for these words in context
- write how these words are pronounced to show how poor pronunciation can lead to poor spelling
- make lists of words that the student can spell generally or as a topic list
- explain that it is impossible for anyone to know how to spell all the words in the dictionary
- identify spelling words, if any mistakes are made in the list
- students develop individual list of 'demon' words
- look for spelling rules and add these to the back of an exercise book
- read passages selected aloud with a proficient reader
- teacher reads a passage and deliberately makes mistakes while students use semantics to tell which word doesn't make sense
- teacher reads passages and makes grammatical or context mistakes
- teacher reads passages and makes phonological errors
- focus on reading strategies and verbalise them
- the student makes up a mind-map of things to do when they are not at school. Use this as a focus for all English activities
- drill sound clusters
- listen for sounds in words (exclude beginning sounds).

Using the Computer for Comprehension

Background

The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties works with a group of children during the afternoon session. The lesson integrates content from the key learning areas using the computer as a tool to record information.

The school finds that the Aboriginal students at Condobolin Public School respond well to computer technology because:

- they are able to focus on the task at hand
- teacher supervision is close as all screens can be viewed relatively easily
- they can self-correct quickly and easily
- tasks are usually fun
- the software has been especially selected to develop specific skills.

The teacher selects a design-and-make product. The selected format will depend on the age, ability and interest of the group. The students' comprehension skills are improved by observing, listening, writing and following instructions while the teacher makes the object. These skills are practised again as students follow their own instructions at the conclusion of the unit. (The students record instructions for how to make an object on their computer. The procedure must be typed, saved and printed.)

Program Overview

The teacher considers it preferable to have individuals on each computer for this program. Familiarity with the basic keyboard functions assists the students' work performance. The teacher should be located in a central position to assure that all students can observe the activity. The purpose of the lesson and what is expected of all students should be made clear.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

Format One

- the teacher makes the product without verbal instructions
- students observe closely
- the students record what they have seen as the procedure
- students then make the product according to their procedure.

Format Two

- all steps are stated aloud
- each student records all steps onto the computer
- when the procedure has been completely recorded the students are then required to make the object.

Format Three

- the object is displayed for the students
- the students are to determine and record the procedure that they believe outlines the making of the object
- the students then follow their own instructions and make the object.

Format Four

- the teacher says a step
- the students record the step
- this is repeated until all the steps have been recorded
- after the steps have been recorded, the students make the object.

Format Five

- students take turns at reading each step
- one student reads the step
- the students record the steps
- another student reads the next step
- the students record the step
- this is repeated until the procedure has been recorded completely
- the students make the object.

Reading Rampage (an adaption of a Reading Support Program of Wingham Public School)

Reading Rampage is an individualised guided program, requiring a peer or adult tutor. It can be administered in the classroom or in a withdrawal situation.

Background

The program is best suited to students who have adequate phonic skills and good sight word knowledge yet still require regular reading practice and development of their comprehension skills.

Reading Rampage takes place in a converted train carriage at the school. (The grounds around the carriage have been landscaped with the assistance of the local soil conservation group). This in itself is a major motivation to the participating students.

Program Overview

The program has a coordinator who is a member of the learning support team. The coordinator's responsibilities include:

- involvement in the testing of students
- involvement in the selection of students for the program
- preparation of the timetable in liaison with the classroom teachers and other support personnel
- preparing individual packages which include:
 - prompting sheet
 - choral passage
 - one book at the benchmark level with ten comprehension questions (books need to be read and questions should be typed and put in the back of each book)
 - one timed reading passage
 - various activity sheets
 - blank phonics ladder, and
 - monitoring sheets
- inservice of classroom tutors, teachers and community tutors
- monitoring of skill acquisition
- supervising tutors
- regular correction of work
- constructing comprehension questions relating to text
- advertising the program and securing services of volunteers
- caretaking and maintaining Reading Rampage equipment and resources
- assisting teachers with parent interviews
- attending staff meetings, and training and development courses
- designing activity sheets.

The program involves a daily lesson of 30 minutes duration at a time negotiated with the classroom teacher.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

Assessment

All students are assessed at the end of the year.

- An ACER year-appropriate approved standardised test is administered by the class teacher.

- If a student's reading average is below the class average, the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test is administered by the learning support team looking specifically at
 - word attack
 - word identification
 - passage comprehension.
- If word attack skills are below chronological age then phonic skills are tested.
- If word identification is below chronological age then Heather Harvey placement test is used in addition to Johnson's 306 High Frequency Sight Words.
- All students from Kindergarten to Year 3 and identified students in Years 4 to 6 with reading difficulties are benchmarked.

The selection of students for Reading Rampage is based on the above assessment data.

Reading Rampage Steps

- Sounds refresher – student reads from ladder of unknown sounds.
- Choral passage reading at appropriate level. Shared reading of a brief non-fiction passage which is read three times daily.
- First reading – the tutor's voice is louder than the student's;
- Second reading – the tutor's voice is the same as the student's voice;
- Third reading – the student's voice is louder than the tutor's.
- Book chat (student doesn't read the book at this point) – text at child's benchmark level.
 - Look at the pictures in the book.
 - Talk about the title.
 - Look for the names of the characters in the book.
 - Go over sight words in the book.
 - Discuss story line.
 - Go over unknown words written on the blank ladder (these are words the student could not say on sight).
- Model Reading – the tutor reads the book, or part of the book depending on the length, to show the student how the story should be read.
- Student reading – student reads the book to the tutor. The tutors should use the prompting sheet always and follow the Reading Rampage steps. Write down on a blank phonics ladder the words that the student could not read on sight and then read for five minutes.
- Comprehension – text at student level. Each day the tutor asks 2 or 3 of the questions located in the back of the book. The student must write the answers. If the answer is incorrect the tutor writes the answer to demonstrate correct sentence writing. Whole sentences only are accepted.
- Timed reading – appropriate level. Students read a passage and the tutor times the student for one minute.
- Activity Sheet – related to sight words. The student completes as much of the activity sheet as possible for the remainder of time.
- Completion of monitoring sheet.

Case Study Four

Condong Public School

Description of the School and Community

Condong is a small primary school on the north coast of NSW, situated on the banks of the Tweed River and within walking distance of a large sugar refinery. The traditional owners of this land are the Bundjalung People. There are 93 students at the school, of whom 3 are Aboriginal. This small number of Aboriginal students has not diminished the importance and effectiveness of the Aboriginal Education Policy that has been developing at the school over a long period of time.

The school has a teaching principal and three classroom teachers. There is also a teacher working a six day fortnight teaching various programs such as library and science and technology. A Support Teacher Learning Difficulties (STLD) works 30 days a year at the school.

The teachers are organised into key learning areas and the students rotate, in stage groups, to each of the key learning areas throughout the day. This system was established before the present principal started working at the school this year. Both the staff and the community feel that this structure has achieved high academic results and outstanding achievements in areas such as PDHPE and Creative Arts.

Support for the school from the community is strong and this is illustrated by the voluntary work done in beautifying the grounds, painting the buildings, helping in the classrooms, making resources and transporting students to a range of events. The members of the local community attended regional NAIDOC week celebrations and Reconciliation week ceremonies.

This school has been fortunate to have had on staff, since 1981, an Aboriginal teacher who has been able to inform staff, students and the community about Aboriginal history, culture and contemporary issues. She is treasurer of the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and, in collaboration with other Aboriginal teachers in the local Department of Education and Training's district, helped produce a resource booklet of ideas for implementing Aboriginal perspectives in all the six key learning areas. This was made available to all government schools in the district.

While the staff show a commitment to broadening all the students' learning experiences by including Aboriginal perspectives they also believe it is important to include the multicultural perspective that is reflected in the wider Australian community. Two of the teachers are completing a course in Japanese language teaching and are teaching this language to the students at the school.

The principal, who has had a long association with the Disadvantaged Schools Program, believes strongly in achieving equitable outcomes for all students. He sees the need for schools to be flexible and innovative when meeting the needs of students who have difficulty in adjusting to the structures of a school environment. The challenge is to keep the expectations high for all students.

The first three programs in this case study are overviews of whole-school Aboriginal perspectives across the six key learning areas. The strategies are drawn from a resource booklet that was produced by the Aboriginal teachers in the district, and from interviews with the staff at the school.

The literacy and numeracy lessons in this case study include the following:

Literacy and HSIE

- reciprocal teaching when interpreting a text
- steps for writing an information report

Mathematics

- strategies for teaching problem solving.

Aboriginal Staff

Teacher

An Aboriginal teacher on staff is responsible for teaching literacy in Early Stage 1 and Stage 1. She also teaches Japanese to the students.

Resources for the Programs

The programs use school-based resources. A resource booklet, which is used extensively by staff, was produced at a regional conference of the Aboriginal Teachers Network.

Professional Development

Three members of staff have completed all the modules of the Department of Education and Training's Aboriginal Education Policy training course.

All new staff are participating in a course on the Aboriginal Education Policy training modules which is held at the local district office. This has raised staff awareness of many factors that impact on Aboriginal Education programs.

The teacher who teaches mathematics in the school is a member of the Southern Cross Mathematics Association and the school participates in regional mathematics competitions.

All staff have participated in literacy inservice courses over an extended period of time.

Community Involvement

Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness

All Aboriginal parents attend Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness meetings each term. The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness members organised the painting of an outside mural, which involved parents, aunts, storytellers and artists working with the students and staff.

Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)

The local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group is a small but strong association that takes grassroots issues from the local community to the regional and state levels of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. One of the parents is a member of the regional Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and a teacher is treasurer of the local branch. The local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group work with the staff and community to organise NAIDOC week celebrations.

The school and members of the wider local community travelled recently to Tweed Heads to participate in Reconciliation ceremonies.

Parent Support

Voluntary support from Aboriginal parents includes:

- implementing individual education programs in reading and spelling for students below stage level (these have been designed by the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties)
- making resources for the dance festival and transporting children to events
- maintaining the buildings and gardens
- telling stories that relate to units of work the students are studying.

Programs

Aboriginal Perspectives and Language

- using Aboriginal English as a tool to develop Standard Australian English

Aboriginal Perspectives and Learning Styles

- recognizing and employing the learning styles of Aboriginal students in the learning process

Aboriginal Perspectives and the Teacher/Student Relationship

- establishing relationship with the students in your classroom

Scaffolding Students' Reading and Talking Skills

- using cooperative learning methods within groups

Information Report Writing in Stages 2 and 3

- using the process of teacher modelling followed by teacher and students working together and finally students working independently

Mathematics Strategies

- using a range of teaching strategies in Mathematics

Aboriginal Perspectives and Language

Introduction

The importance of oral language cannot be stressed enough. It is an important component in the learning of new concepts, skills and ideas in all the key learning areas, and most importantly in establishing a positive student/teacher relationship.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

Respect what the students already know by

- responding positively to the knowledge and skills of the students (If the teacher is listening only for Standard Australian English, students' competencies and capabilities are often undervalued.)
- exploring students' understanding of Aboriginal English in order to gain a better understanding of how it may influence the way in which students use Standard Australian English
- setting up language-based activities where students can interact in their home language (ie problem solving in small groups, barrier games, design and make activities and mathematics games).

Learn and respect the principles of interaction by

- creating an environment which is inclusive of a range of interactive styles
- allowing time for students to respond to questions and requests to participate
- listening intently for responses from reticent and quiet students
- prepare students with skills and understanding that equip them for participation in situations requiring them to be prominent in front of others.

Recognise the need for support in learning Standard Australian English by

- using explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy skills through teacher modelling, joint construction (teacher support of students' work) and independent construction (students working independently)
- clearly showing where Standard Australian English is used and explicitly teaching how it is used in various contexts
- making clear the difference between spoken and written language, and teaching the skills and understanding necessary for both forms and for meeting the demands of the curriculum.

Aboriginal Perspectives and Learning Styles

Introduction

The school believes that learning styles of Aboriginal students are diverse and variable and teacher observation and trial and error in setting up structures that support the range of students in the class is important. The challenge for all teachers is to enable students to get the most out of school. In order for students' time at school to be productive, learning experiences need to be meaningful and relevant as well as empowering.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

Knowledge and understanding

- brainstorm what the students know and what they want to find out when starting a topic
- discuss events, issues, opinions and interests that are important to students; use these in learning and teaching experiences in all the key learning areas
- relate learning experiences to a 'real life' context, where the purpose is made clear to the students.

Structures and procedures

- provide opportunities for students to work with a partner when first attempting new tasks, then in small groups, and then as part of the whole class
- give students a learning role in completing group work and a way of assessing how their groups are performing to achieve the learning goals
- set clear achievable goals that build up students' skills and understanding.

Holistic and sequential approaches

- explain why particular literacy and numeracy skills are important and how they relate to society outside school
- practise discrete sequential activities and relate them to the wider context.

Visual and concrete tasks

- use visuals when explaining concepts and demonstrating skills
- model what to do and talk about what you are doing; repeat this process until students are clear about the purpose of the task
- use concrete materials to explain abstract concepts; this is particularly important in science and mathematics
- enable students to observe and then, using trial and error and feedback from the teacher, to develop skills and understanding in the key learning areas
- use a range of assessment tasks that have a range of forms in which students can respond, eg drawing, writing and talking.

Aboriginal Perspectives and the Teacher/Student Relationship

Introduction

The teacher/student relationship is an important factor in the participation and, ultimately, the achievements of students in literacy and numeracy. The different levels at which this relationship operates are complex and variable. Since all learning involves taking risks, questioning, hypothesising, generalising and solving problems, establishing a relationship that encourages students to participate fully is crucial.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this project:

Establish mutual respect by

- acknowledging students' skills and knowledge and organising safe and rewarding ways to develop and build on these
- checking that the resources used to teach a concept are familiar to the student
- observing individual students' ways of doing things and making adjustments to class practices so they are more inclusive
- reflecting on how the use of English terms and meanings can lead to confusion and embarrassment for students who do not share the same language usage.

Maintain high expectations for students to achieve stage outcomes and beyond by

- making clear to students the educational goals you expect them to achieve and making clear what they need to do to achieve these goals
- communicating with each family about the curriculum expectations and the progress of the family's child(ren)
- consulting the community about ways of achieving the learning goals in the key learning areas
- talking to students and Aboriginal Education Assistants about students' expectations of school and of the teacher.

Show a commitment to the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Policy by

- finding out how the policies and practices of educational institutions and other powerful groups in our society have impacted on the lives and opportunities of Aboriginal people
- implementing fair and equitable practices that enable each student's voice to be heard and respected.

Scaffolding Students' Reading and Talking and Listening Skills**Background**

As part of the Human Society and Its Environments K–6 unit 'People and their Beliefs,' the students were required to read and reflect on the historical recounts in the text *Side by Side* by Alan Tucker. The teacher had used a range of texts to model ways of asking clarifying questions. The strategies for finding the meanings of words was also modelled by the teacher. This led to a summarising activity where students had to talk about the main points of the text to a class audience. (It is important to address cultural or individual differences that affect the way people seek clarification.)

The school recognises that students' confidence to communicate with different audiences may require the use of different settings.

Organisation and Timing

The principal is responsible for providing specific literacy learning experiences for students in Stage 2 and Stage 3. Each day the students have a block of literacy learning.

Strategies

As well as cooperative learning methods in setting up group work, the teacher uses the following strategies:

Reading the text

- students and teacher read the selected text aloud
- students underline words they do not understand
- teacher models the following strategies for finding meanings
 - use surrounding text and refer to type of text
 - look at the type of word and the word it relates to (eg adjective relating to noun)
 - use word knowledge (eg meaning of root word)
 - use a dictionary.

Group work for practising skills

- students work in small groups using the above strategies to clarify the meaning of words encountered in the text
- group discussions focus on clarifying meanings and making the text's message clear.

Summarising the text

- teacher models the following strategies for presenting a summary of the text
 - answer who or what this text is about and why it has been written
 - use the topic sentence in each paragraph as a guide to sequencing the content
 - add relevant information to the topic sentence in point form
 - give your opinion about how successful the text was in communicating its message

- students discuss summaries with a peer
- in pairs, students present a summary to the class.

Evaluation of the students' skills and understandings

- evaluate the following as a guide for future lessons
 - students' understanding of text rather than the quality of their oral presentations
 - students' strategies for seeking self-clarification
 - effectiveness of peer support and the required level of teacher scaffolding
 - students' connections to issues relevant to the text's message, and
 - students' grammatical word knowledge.

Information Report Writing in Stages 2 and 3

Background

As the students' interest in animals was high, factual texts about animals became part of the literacy lessons. The students were keen to present a project on an animal they had read about or seen on video or knew about from personal experience.

Students brainstormed what they knew about animals and played barrier games to develop descriptive language and the teacher modelled technical language throughout the discussions. Students whose knowledge of animals came from their families (rather than books) were encouraged to share this with the class and it was valued equally with 'book knowledge'. This led to discussions about how and why people find out about animals and how this knowledge is used and communicated.

Strategies

The following activities were modelled by the teacher and then the students and teacher worked together through the activities. The students then used their skills and knowledge to write information reports.

The steps involved were:

Students

- read a variety of information reports using skimming techniques to locate key information
- used a concept map to classify information (Refer to *A Resource of Classroom Practices English K–6*, Board of Studies NSW, 1998.)
- chose headings to represent chunks of information
- matched technical terms with questions, eg What is it? What group does it belong to? (Classification) What does it look like? (Description) Where does it live? (Habitat)
- used diagrams to present information; discussed how different types of diagrams give information and support the text's message
- examined the use of maps and charts in animal books: What is their purpose in the text?

Students were then asked to examine the following grammatical features of texts

- word chains in reports, eg 'The animal was speared, allowed to run, perhaps speared again, or a rope attached to its tail, and it was eventually drowned by being kept under the water.' The Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia Volume 1, p 307
- general noun groups to build up a description, eg 'Kangaroos: **The largest indigenous land animals of Australia** in recent times.' The Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia Volume 1, p 531
- passive voice, eg 'Kangaroos were lightly roasted on the fire ...' The Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia Volume 1, p 531
- complex sentences, eg 'The major centre for dugong hunting was Torres Strait, and from there the advanced technology spread down to Cape York.' The Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia Volume 1, p 307
- relational verbs, eg 'Not only does every language have a different name for the dingo, but there were frequently different names for camp and wild dingoes.' The Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia Volume 1, p 286

Students were then asked to examine audience by

- reading reports from magazines, children's information books and advertisements and identifying the intended audience.

Students were then asked to examine point of view by

- examining how the author uses information to influence the reader
- viewing animal documentaries and noting subjective language and how it affects the message of the documentary, eg amazing, atrocious, vicious, wonderful.

Students then developed their information reports on animals

- as different resources are gathered on selected animals, students read and annotate information and use headings and topic sentences
- before students and the teacher construct an animal information report, they discuss the audience and the purpose of the report
- students and teacher jointly construct an information report on a new animal using the Disadvantaged Schools Program's 'Animal Pack Resource Book'; they model the structure and the use of technical language, topic sentences, supporting information and the use of diagrams, maps and charts
- students and teacher construct different proformas for students to use when independently writing an information report
- students work in pairs or independently to write an information report on an animal.

Mathematics Strategies**Background**

The teacher who is responsible for teaching the mathematics key learning area to all students in the school has a genuine interest in the subject along with an interest in how children learn and become confident and competent in numeracy and literacy. She believes students should be actively involved in their learning by manipulating, talking, questioning, drawing and writing, as they think and reflect on their work. The area of teaching she finds most challenging is getting the children to talk about mathematical problems. She does a great deal of modelling and asks many questions to facilitate this. Looking for the children's strengths as well as identifying weaknesses is an ongoing part of each lesson.

The learning program is rotational, with the students having learning experiences from the six key learning areas each day. All students have mathematics lessons four times a week. The teacher feels that this organisation gives her a chance to increase her own mathematical understanding and cover the content of the syllabus. She has a good knowledge of the students' strengths and weaknesses and designs individual programs for the students who are at different levels in the various aspects of mathematics.

Strategies

The following general strategies have been developed for this program:

- the integration of mathematics with other key learning areas is driven by the students' motivation to investigate real problems rather than those imposed on the students by the teacher; their curiosity to find out more is stimulated and supported by the teacher
- teacher modelling of asking questions, trying different solutions, making and correcting errors is important.

It is important that teachers

- are enthusiastic and curious
- provide support for the students by talking with them as they work through problems
- provide opportunities for students to practise skills with peer support and independently
- challenge students by setting up goals that extend them
- celebrate the students' achievements
- focus on the language used in word problems

- revisit the problem throughout the problem-solving process
- make connections between what children know and the problems presented
- model different ways of recording solutions (for example, through drawings, using algorithms and sentences)
- use open-ended investigations for children to pool their knowledge, so they can reflect on what they know
- use games and fun activities, inside and outside the classroom
- evaluate their questioning techniques, the effectiveness of the language used and the pacing of the lesson, along with the appropriateness of the resources used
- support students to enter competitions and tournaments that extend and challenge them. Competitions like 'The Tournament of the Minds' are particularly good because they require students to work as a team to solve problems.

Sample lessons on perimeters and the areas of regular and irregular-shaped rectangles

Lesson 1

- revise the words 'perimeter' and 'area' within the school context in reference to things observed, for example, books, desks, carpets and playground areas
- discuss why we want to know the area and perimeter of different thing
- discuss who uses this knowledge, eg builders, fencers, tailors, tilers
- evaluate the students' understanding and skills in calculating the area and perimeter of rectangles using a series of squares and rectangles that increase in size. Students and teacher talk about patterns for establishing the area and perimeter of each shape.

Lesson 2

- teacher draws an irregular shape on the blackboard and poses a perimeter and area problem
- talk about how we make something difficult much more easier to understand, by drawing on what we know
- teacher refers back to the knowledge and skills developed from previous lessons
- ask students how they can use that knowledge
- teacher directs students to draw on a selected shape
- eventually lines are drawn in and the shape is made into a collection of regular shapes
- students estimate what the answer might be
- students work in pairs to construct shapes on isometric dot paper and calculate the area and perimeter
- students write about what they did and display their work.

Lesson 3

- practise working on more shapes and apply knowledge to make a border around an object using toothpicks, predicting how many will be needed
- make a mosaic by covering a shape with tiles; work out how many tiles
- extension tasks include calculating costs for area and lengths required
- provide support and practice for students who are developing their understanding concepts.

Case Study Five

Crawford Public School

Description of the School and Community

Crawford Public School is situated on Dharug land in the outer western suburbs of Sydney. It has a student enrolment of 715 of whom 90 are Aboriginal students. The number of Aboriginal students is growing, with eight in Year 6 and 15 in Kindergarten. The Aboriginal families come from a variety of language groups. Approximately 210 of the school's students come from backgrounds where a language other than Standard Australian English is spoken. Languages spoken in the community include Aboriginal English, Tongan, Hindi, Tagalog, Arabic and Samoan.

There is a high student turnover and approximately seven students from each class will transfer in or out during the year: resulting in a mobility rate of 25%. There has been a reduction in absenteeism due to the implementation of proactive programs.

The school has been a participant in the Disadvantaged Schools Program over a long period of time. Literacy and numeracy are the school's current priorities. The staff comprises 26 classroom teachers, a non-teaching Principal and Deputy Principal, 11 support staff, a counsellor, three teachers' aides and an Aboriginal Education Assistant.

The school has a community room, which is available to all community members. Parents drop in for a 'cuppa' and informal meetings with staff and other parents. A group of Aboriginal parents who had been meeting regularly in the community room, subsequently formed a morning playgroup. The playgroup enables a positive introduction to school life for children and parents. Community involvement in the school's activities, which is encouraged and supported, is a high priority.

The Aboriginal Education Team, Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA) and staff work as a collaborative team in designing learning programs and culturally appropriate resources. Literacy units have been developed that use Aboriginal content and integrated units in Human Studies and Its Environment with an outcomes focus. One of the school's goals for 1998 was to provide quality teaching and learning activities for Aboriginal students in collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Assistant. The Home Reader Peer Tutoring program and the Aboriginal Parent Tutoring program are designed to supplement the classroom program. They are good examples of school and community partnership.

An Aboriginal teacher, the Aboriginal Education Assistant and two members of the school executive belong to a group of representatives from six local schools called 'ATSI Sharing', which operates as an Aboriginal Education Team for the local Department of Education and Training district. The group develops and coordinates programs for Aboriginal students in their schools. Cultural camps for students in Years 2 to 6 are conducted every three years. Funding for these camps is provided by the Department of Education and Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) and by parents. The Principal is heavily involved in the organisation of the cultural camps and always comes along as a participant.

Respect for Aboriginal people and culture is evident throughout the school. Displays of Aboriginal artwork, purchased by the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee, and works created by the classes adorn the walls around the school. Reconciliation posters are seen promoting 'walking together, learning together'.

The Home Reader Peer Tutoring program and the Aboriginal Parent Tutoring program are simple and successful. They have been operating for a number of years and have achieved results and included the community.

Aboriginal Staff

The Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA) has the respect of staff and students. All students seek her out to spend time with her.

She keeps coming up with new ideas and is forever making and designing resources to be used in the school's program. Community members who drop into her office/resource room invariably become part of the assembly production line. In doing so, the community members ask how the resources are being used as teaching tool. As a result, the resources are used more effectively in the Homework Centre and this knowledge filters out into the homes of the community.

During 'Clubs' she teaches visual arts and craft with an Aboriginal perspective. In addition to working with the teachers in the classrooms she takes a small group within the 'Count Me In Too' program.

Her advice to schools when working with the Aboriginal community is to 'realise that there is a lot to learn and that subtle ways achieve more success than more overt approaches.'

Funding for the position of AEA is provided through the Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs.

An Aboriginal teacher leads the Aboriginal Education Team and is very much a part of the school's programs for Aboriginal students. He is a member of the 'ATSI Sharing' cluster group. The school makes the necessary arrangements to enable this teacher to accompany the students on cultural camps.

Community Involvement

An Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee, which has been established in the school for the last ten years, has been very supportive of the school's proactive approach to Aboriginal issues and perspectives. Over the years the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee has purchased resources that support the school's curriculum and has organised cultural events that have been well received. The committee provides the school with regular feedback about the school's programs.

The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Committee contributes through:

- its membership of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group at the local and state level
- its organisation of the yearly whole-school celebration activities for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day of Celebration activities, including arranging for guest speakers, visiting artist and crafts people, dance groups, etc
- collaboration with the school in developing culturally appropriate programs and resources
- its membership of the local district Aboriginal Education Team
- conducting meetings for the allocation of the yearly funding for programs that are specific to the school as well as specific areas that are determined by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA)
- operating of the school's Homework Centre
- organising an Aboriginal student dance group
- involvement in the Parent Tutoring reading program.

Resources for Programs

The Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs provides partial funding for the programs implemented by the 'ATSI Sharing' group. The Aboriginal Parent Tutoring and Home Reader programs have been undertaken using the school's own resources.

Aboriginal Education Assistant's Resource Room

The Aboriginal Education Assistant's office is used as a resource room and a meeting place for the students, community and teachers. The availability of the room allows for important informal communication between all groups.

Programs

Home Reader Peer Tutoring

- Year 5 and 6 students regularly listen to Year 1 students read their home reader

Aboriginal Parent Tutoring for Years 5 and 6

- community members provide additional literacy support

Mathematics Years 2–6 Extension Workshop Activities for Problem Solving

- a unit of extension work in problem solving incorporating an Aboriginal perspective and addressing the learning styles of Aboriginal students

Original Inhabitants (Stage 2)

- an integrated literacy and Human Society and its Environment unit designed with community consultation

Home Reader Peer Tutoring

Background

The idea for this program came from the school's Aboriginal Education Assistant. Its purpose is to ensure that Aboriginal students in Year 1 have the opportunity to read aloud and be listened to on a regular basis. Year 5 and 6 students were selected by the Aboriginal Education Assistant to be peer tutors. The tutors are pleased to have this opportunity to show that they can be responsible and successful. Other positive outcomes of this program have been the 'buddying-up' of a senior student with a junior student and a positive shift in the attitude of some senior students towards school as a result of their involvement as tutors.

Program Overview

Discussions between the school executive and the Aboriginal Education Assistant concerning the program were held and agreement on how it would operate was reached.

The program was then presented to the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee for their approval and comment.

Following this, the Aboriginal Education Assistant presented the approved program to the teachers whose students were to be involved and the frequency and timeslot for the program's operation was determined by mutual agreement.

The tutors were selected and trained by the Aboriginal Education Assistant who was trained in Reading Recovery by the school's Support Teacher Learning Difficulties.

The Aboriginal Education Assistant trained the original Year 6 students who in turn trained the Year 5 students who subsequently replaced them when they moved to high school.

The Aboriginal Education Assistant organises the tutor's kit and the overall operation of the program.

Key resources for the program include:

- texts at the appropriate reading levels (For young students Aboriginal content in the readers is extremely important.)
- blank flash cards
- scissors
- pens
- paper
- student workbooks.

The 30-minute tutoring session is conducted each afternoon. The 'buddy' match is maintained throughout the program.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

- student reads the selected text while the peer tutor listens and supports
- the peer tutor records all words that have been misread by the student
- the misread words are revised using flash cards
- the tutor cuts the sentence into words
- the student attempts to order the words to produce the original sentence. The sentence is glued into the student's workbook.

Results

The school has identified the following as indicators of the program's success:

- the Year 1 students have shown a positive change in attitude
- the Year 1 and Year 6 students appear to have grown in self-confidence and self-esteem
- the Year 1 students' oral fluency and sight vocabulary have improved.

Aboriginal Parent Tutoring for Years 5 and 6

'The parents love it. They like taking ownership of the program.' Aboriginal Education Assistant

Background

This program was designed by the school and community to provide additional literacy support for senior students. The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties (STLD) identified students 'at risk' in literacy through the school's evaluation program. Following this, the school's Learning Support Team met with the Aboriginal Education Assistant to discuss the identified students. It was decided to invite Aboriginal parents to participate, as tutors, in the support program.

Program Overview

The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and the Reading Recovery teacher have trained each tutor. The Support Teacher Learning Difficulties organised and provided each tutor with a resource kit for each session, containing the following resources:

- a personal Record Graph Sheet
- a word Family Sheet
- timer
- tutor direction sheet
- selected text
- pencils and colour pencils.

A suitable and permanent location for the program was established. The tutor has a support person to assist when required.

An appointed coordinator is responsible for the operation of the program. In this school the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties is the coordinator.

The program is conducted during the 15 minute eating time before lunchtime play three times a week.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

0–5 minutes

- the tutor introduces and reads the text using Guided Reading strategies
- the student listens to the tutor
- the student discusses the text with the tutor.

6–10 minutes

- tutor selects a word from the text that has been successfully read by the student
- tutor dictates from a list of family extensions giving a cue phrase, eg If you can write 'down' then you can write 'clown'
- tutor selects further words from the instruction sheet to build upon.

10–15 minutes

- using the list derived from the text, the student reads as many words as possible in one minute

- students time themselves with a stopwatch and keep a record of their correct words per minute in their personal graph books.

Tutors, in collaboration with the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and Reading Recovery teacher decide whether students would benefit from repeating the book during the next session or whether the book level should be elevated.

Results

The students have developed a comprehensive range of skills and strategies in reading.

Mathematics Years 2–6 Extension Workshop Activities for Problem Solving

Background

A unit of extension work for problem-solving has been designed by the Deputy Principal and Aboriginal Education Assistant. The unit incorporates an Aboriginal perspective to establish a meaningful context and takes into account the learning styles of the Aboriginal students. It has integrated mathematical concepts into the key learning areas of Human Society and its Environment and Creative Arts. Aboriginal stories, patterns and artefacts have been used as a starting point for discussion and questioning. The unit can be used in the classroom with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Program Overview

At the request of the District Aboriginal Education Team, the Aboriginal Education Assistant and Deputy Principal liaised to design and deliver the program. Helpers from the Aboriginal Community have worked with the Aboriginal Education Assistant in the production of resources used in the program.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for the program:

- explicit teaching
- visual and hands-on activities
- small, cooperative learning groups
- using mathematical language, Standard Australian English (teacher) and Aboriginal English (Aboriginal Education Assistant), to discuss the process
- the Aboriginal Education Assistant uses indirect questioning to guide problem solving
- the teacher uses open-ended questioning to challenge students' problem-solving strategies
- the Aboriginal Education Assistant tells Aboriginal stories and answers questions about Aboriginal designs and artefacts
- an observation grid is used to record the ways students solve problems, use different skills, pose questions and their language achievements.

The following is an example from the unit.

Introductory Activity (whole group)

Resources: 2 balls of wool

- rolling a ball of wool from one to another each student says, I'm ... I'm from ... I like ...
- discuss the pattern created on the floor by the unravelling of the rolling ball of wool
- repeat the activity using 2 balls. Students may like to add personal information
- discuss the pattern.

Creating a Jigsaw (working in pairs)

Resources: 2 copies of The Quinkins; laminator

- Aboriginal Education Assistant reads The Quinkins
- discuss and explore the way pictures and diagrams construct meaning

- place the pictures from the Quinkins in time sequence and retell narrative
- each student is to select a picture to be laminated to create a jigsaw.

2D Shapes – straight and curved lines (working in pairs)

Tasks: Investigate what makes a successful jigsaw; what makes one jigsaw harder than another

Resources: black textas; snaplock bags for the jigsaw; labels; stopwatches; sharp scissors; newspapers; The Quinkins text

- explore straight and curved lines to make a jigsaw.
- practise with newspaper. Draw and cut a 15-piece jigsaw. Predict time taken to complete the jigsaw. Follow this by measuring and recording the actual time taken to complete the jigsaw
- swap with a partner. Repeat the process and compare the level of difficulty
- rank all jigsaws by level of difficulty and discuss
- write a procedural text and check for accuracy.

Numeration – counting and approximating (working in pairs)

Task: Find the fastest method of counting a large number of objects

Resources: Paddle-pop sticks (decorated with Aboriginal designs); elastic bands for bundles

- a large number of paddle-pop sticks is dropped between each pair
- pairs estimate the number of paddle-pop sticks on the floor
- pairs work out the most efficient strategy to count and check a large number
- student group compares methods and strategies
- discuss the use of a tally and bundles in 2s, 4s, 5s, 10s
- pairs refine their process, select the most effective strategy and give reasons to support their choice.

Mass Ordering

Task: Find the fastest way to rank a set of rocks in order of mass

Resources: Large rocks; equal arm balances; paddle-pop sticks

- each pair has 5 rocks
- hold rocks individually and order them according to mass
- check using equal arm balance. Record the process and the number of times the balance was needed
- student group listens to each pair's recount of their process and justification of their strategies
- join 2 groups together (10 rocks) and predict the order from least mass to most mass
- check by using the balance
- process is recorded and the number of times the balance was needed
- student group listens to each foursome's recount of their process and justification of their strategies
- estimate number of paddle-pop sticks needed to balance the lightest rock
- predict the number of paddle-pop sticks needed for the next rock
- measure and record each estimate
- Aboriginal Education Assistant discusses designs on displayed artefacts with student group
- students select a pattern and decorate their rock with paint and lacquer.

Time – hours and minutes (working in pairs)

Task: Investigate how accurately you can predict time

Resources: a set of memory cards with Aboriginal designs; a set of dominoes

- predict time to solve memory card game
- discuss significance of the patterns on the cards
- play several times and record time taken, names of players and any other variable
- compare and predict time taken to solve next game
- repeat game using dominoes.

Position – using coordinates (working in pairs)

Task: Plot an 8-day trip and test out your friend. Is your route the same as your friend's?

Resources: Aboriginal languages map of Australia

- look and discuss a map of Aboriginal Australia
- identify known places. Link artefacts to locations and climates
- place a clear grid on laminated map and read coordinates (alphabet horizontally and numbers vertically)
- use individual maps and find places using coordinates
- plot an 8-day trip (1cm = 100km. Do not travel more than 300km a day)
- record coordinates
- call the coordinates out to a partner to verify route.

2D Shapes – flipping, sliding and turning (individuals)

Task: Creating Australia using boomerangs for the perimeter

Resources: map of Australia; stencil of boomerangs

- look and discuss perimeter using a map of Australia
- cut out boomerangs flipping, sliding and turning to build a map of Australia
- leave no gaps and no shapes are to overlap.

2D Shapes – stretching and expanding (working in pairs)

Task: Can you stretch out the shape of a Quinkin? Keep the shape on a brennex sheet and create a design with spaces?

Resources: Quinkin; brennex paper

- segment Quinkin using straight lines
- cut shape, expand shape and explore the effect by varying the width of the spaces
- experiment and discuss with partner and then with student group
- predict height so that the shape fits onto 2 pieces of brennex glued together.

Length – estimating and measuring (working in small groups)

Resources: spears; hoops; trundle wheels

- throw a spear through a hoop attached to a totem tennis pole
- predict and measure the distance using a trundle wheel
- discuss and experiment with angle of throw and grip
- student group discuss weight, type of spear, and the significance of the spear as a traditional tool.

Position – coordinates, position and routes (working in pairs)

Resources: artefacts; grid paper

- artefacts are placed around the room
- draw a path on a 1cm grid to plot a mystery route that visits each artefact; provide written directions
- test accuracy of directions
- swap with a partner and test by following written directions
- check for accuracy and discuss.

Original Inhabitants (Stage 2)

Background

Teachers and an Aboriginal Education Assistant designed an integrated literacy and Human Society and Its Environment unit based on the Board of Studies unit, 'British Colonisation of Australia' (page 86 of *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* (1999)). The team consulted with the local Aboriginal Education Consultancy Group when planning activities and organising community members to participate as guest speakers. The school recognises that involving the Aboriginal community or the Aboriginal Education Consultancy Group in the development of the unit of work assists in developing an appropriate approach to the examination of certain issues such as the Stolen Generations and indigenous health.

The term 'traditional' is used in this unit to describe a way of living that has a long and continuous history whereas the term 'contemporary' is used to describe a way of living that is characteristic of present day society. Aboriginal peoples today live lifestyles that may be a combination of both traditional and contemporary influences.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

- consult with the Aboriginal Education Assistant, Aboriginal community members, the local Aboriginal Education Consultancy Group (AECG), and district office personnel such as Aboriginal Education Consultant and Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO)
- collaborate with the Aboriginal Education Assistant in designing or adapting a unit of work
- try to have the Aboriginal Education Assistant or community member with you in the class when carrying out the study
- be explicit in your teaching
- explain each lesson's expectations to the students. See page 177 of *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* for advice on planning and managing group work
- display as much of the students' work as you can. See page 161 of *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* for advice on planning and managing classroom displays
- respect and accept Aboriginal English as the student's home language and as a tool for learning Standard Australian English
- encourage the students' talking and listening to each other when in groups
- integrate activities (eg listening/reading/writing or viewing/speaking/reading)
- for all students who experience difficulty with independent writing, provide them with the scaffolding format for each of the text types
- be sensitive and aware of issues that may cause offence or distress.

An overview of the unit follows.

Original Inhabitants

Introduce the unit and the issues that will be explored. Explain to students what will be expected of them as learners during and by the end of the unit of work.

Outcomes

Human Society and Its Environment K–6

CCS2.1; CUS2.3; CUS2.4; ENS2.6; SSS2.7

English K–6

WS2.9; WS2.10; RS2.5; RS2.6; TS2.1; TS2.2; TS2.4

British Colonisation

What are the important dates and events that shaped Australian history between a million years ago and 200 years ago?

- see page 208 of *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* for advice on planning and managing timelines
- using a selection of texts, students work in pairs to research and identify significant events during the last 100 000 years
- students, in small groups or individually, sequence significant events and record them on a teacher-prepared timeline sheet (1cm = 200 years, 5cm = 100 000). The last centimetre is to represent British colonisation
- students check findings by cross-referencing with other texts
- class discusses terms such as ‘discovery’ and ‘invasion’
- class constructs a statement of definition for each term and places them on display
- brainstorm the meaning of the term ‘indigenous’ with the class group (see page 157 of *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* for advice on brainstorming techniques)
- display and label images of indigenous peoples, eg Inuit
- class constructs a statement of definition for indigenous peoples and places it on display
- students individually complete a teacher-prepared cloze passage using facts collected.

Key Resources: *The Aborigines – People Under Threat From Earlier Fleets*

Uluru and the Olgas, ed Liz Thompson and Jane Pearson, Heinemann Library, Port Melbourne, Vic, 1998 (on the Anangu of Uluru-Kata Tjuta)

First Australians, p 10–12

Cathy Freeman, Big Mob books for little fullas, Board of Studies NSW, 1996–7

Reconciliation, a Streetwise comic

Images and Language '88: Aboriginal perspectives on a celebration, by Jenni Stocks et al, Inner City Education Centre, Stanmore, NSW, 1988

Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work

Australian Aboriginal Peoples

- using map of Aboriginal Australia, locate the local Aboriginal nation
- on the map place a clear grid overlay of coordinates (numbers vertically and the alphabet horizontally) and find other Aboriginal nations
- teacher or student calls out coordinates and students locate and identify an Aboriginal nation using their individual maps
- groups record information on a blank map of Australia, eg ‘Wiradjuri is the largest Aboriginal nation in New South Wales’.

Key Resources: the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

Aboriginal Australia (map) by David R Horton, 2nd ed, produced by Landinfo Pty Ltd, AIASIS, Acton, ACT, 1999

Growing Up at Uluru, by Stan Breedon, Steve Parish Publishing, 1995

Aboriginal Words

- students collect a word bank of Aboriginal words gathered from books by Aboriginal authors
- groups are to list each word, write its meaning alongside it, cut list into horizontal strips and place these in alphabetical order
- groups come together and compile lists to form a whole-class list
- add to the list as the unit progresses and new words are encountered.

Key Resources: bulk loan of Aboriginal books

Aboriginal Dictionaries

Aboriginal Australia Aa-Zz cards and handbook

What was life like for Aboriginal peoples before British colonisation? *

- see page 163 of *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* for advice on planning and managing cultural activities
- brainstorm facts known about Aboriginal peoples and their culture
- list statements on a chart
- discuss the concepts ‘fact’ and ‘opinion’
- classify and label brainstorming statements as either fact or opinion.

Guest Speaker – an oral history*

- see *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* for advice on planning and managing oral histories (p 194) and on planning and managing learning experiences involving guest speakers (p 178)
- before the talk small groups design questions that will provide answers concerning the family, the Stolen Generations, reconciliation, life for Aboriginal peoples before colonisation
- during the talk the students listen and ask questions
- following the talk students return to their small groups to record answers to their questions
- class and speaker construct the speaker’s family tree.

Key Resources: Reconciliation Kit

Where are you? Big Mob books for little fullas, Board of Studies NSW, 1996–7

Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work

Family Trees

- see page 174 of *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* for advice on planning and managing activities involving family trees and page 182 for advice on planning and managing interviews
- class discusses family trees
- students to construct their own family tree as a homework exercise by interviewing their family, identifying Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal family members and asking about reconciliation
- teacher reads a text about famous Aboriginal person’s life story
- in small groups or individually record the life story as a story map and/or family tree.

Key Resources: Homework sheet for interviewing

Dreaming stories

Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work

Aboriginal Artefacts

- see page 156 of *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* for advice on planning and managing the use of artefacts
- the Aboriginal Education Assistant talks about a collection of Aboriginal artefacts used for hunting and gathering and the roles of females and males in the collection of food
- a demonstration of artefact making by local Aboriginal craftsman
- Aboriginal Education Assistant brainstorms known facts about artefacts
- Aboriginal Education Assistant and teacher discuss with the class the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’
- the class classifies artefacts according to where the artefact comes from and its use, and enter information on a prepared chart
- display of boomerang throwing
- discussion about the shape, methods of throwing and the different types of wood used
- students, working in pairs, provide answers on a prepared question sheet to questions such as ‘What materials are boomerangs made of?’
- either individually or in pairs students complete the scaffolding for a procedure on ‘how to make a boomerang’
- students write an individual procedural text.

Key Resources: artefacts

Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work

Art for decoration

- see page 196 of *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work* for advice on planning and managing pictures
- the Aboriginal Education Assistant provides assistance and information during this lesson
- discuss a picture of an Aboriginal artist painting a decoration onto an object, eg an emu egg
- small groups are given an example of contemporary and traditional artworks to determine the characteristics of both examples, eg the use of colour
- students experiment with their own colour choice and design, to decorate a wooden boomerang.

Key Resources: *Wangkangurru of the desert*, by Judy Lucas and Andrew Barlow, Reed, Melbourne (1997)

Book of Animal Prints

Picture of an artist painting an emu egg

Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Units of Work

Foods – tools

- brainstorm the foods that would be gathered and hunted with the artefacts previously presented
- discuss which woods are used for which tool or utensil and why – noting the grain and whether the wood is hardwood or softwood
- pairs or individuals select a utensil and prepare scaffolding for an information report.
- students write individual information reports
- class jointly reads *Uluru and the Olgas*, to be followed by individual reading of the text
- students complete a teacher-prepared cloze passage of *Uluru and the Olgas*.

Foods – sources

- small groups identify food sources by researching selected texts
- investigate locally developed practices, which increase biodiversity and maintain food supply, eg fish traps in rivers, the use of fire to increase new growth
- invite guest speakers from the local community to talk about local food sources and to demonstrate the making of damper

- students, working in pairs or individually, prepare scaffolding for a procedure plan for the making of damper
- students write procedural text
- view and discuss video *Kombumerri Yolungu* (saltwater people of the island)
- students in small groups list the video's key points
- groups come together to construct a class list of key points. Each point is labelled as either fact or opinion
- students in small groups construct a chart with the headings 'traditional' foods and 'contemporary' foods. Each group is to list the differences in the food groups, eg where it comes from, how it was acquired
- the Aboriginal Education Assistant speaks about health issues that have arisen as a result of the change from a completely traditional diet to the contemporary diet. *

Key Resources: Community members

What are the Dreaming stories?

Symbolism

- an Aboriginal storyteller talks about the Dreaming and its significance
- the teacher and storyteller direct the students in dramatising one of the stories
- students and teachers discuss the symbolic meaning of the sun, moon and rainbow to the Aboriginal community
- read 'The Gilla the Moon' from the Gamilaroi people
- students in pairs or individually organise scaffolding for a recount proforma for 'The Gilla the Moon'
- students write individual recounts.

Resources: Storyteller

The Gilla the Moon from the Gamilaroi people

Oral Story Telling *

- the Aboriginal Education Assistant or community member gives a recount of 'The Bunyip' from the Wiradjuri people (sequencing events) and 'The Flying Fox' (concept of past and present)
- students discuss and compare the life of an Aboriginal student in the suburbs and in 'the outback'
- read Dreaming stories, eg 'Why the Emu cannot fly' or 'Why the Bird lost its colours'
- students write a book review of a Dreaming story. Provide scaffolding for those students who require extra support
- make a chart 'Dreaming Stories': title; main idea; and moral
- complete the chart for the Dreaming Stories that have been read throughout the unit
- students in pairs or individually complete the scaffolding for a narrative
- students write the stories they have heard using narrative form

Resources: *Big Mob books for little fullas* (series, Board of Studies, NSW)

The Aborigines under threat

Bulk loan of Aboriginal Dreaming stories

Concluding Activity

- Discuss with the students the following questions and then have them write their own responses
 - What were you investigating?
 - What have you learnt?
 - What was the best part of the investigation?
 - What did you think of the topic of investigation?

Advice to consider when inviting a guest speaker

- Some people may feel more comfortable in a group. Consider a seminar approach involving several speakers.
- Make the purpose of the visit clear to the speaker.
- For speakers coming to the school, discuss whether assistance is needed with transport.
- Introduce guest speakers to the principal and other relevant staff members.
- Acknowledge the contribution made by the speaker with a letter of appreciation.
- Discuss the questions to be asked beforehand – make sure speakers know before the visit about any changes made to what was initially planned.
- If possible meet with the guest speaker before the day of the visit.

Other Resources

Office of the Board of Studies NSW website (<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>)

English K–6 A Resource of Classroom Practices, Board of Studies NSW

Note: an asterisk (*) marks learning experiences in which it is appropriate to have the Aboriginal Education Assistant or a member of the Aboriginal community involved to assist with explaining the concepts.

Case Study Six

Dulwich Hill Public School

Description of the School and Community

Dulwich Hill Primary School is situated in an inner western suburb of Sydney. The traditional owners of the land are the Cadigal People. Of the school's 475 students, 75% come from cultures where a language other than English is spoken. There are 21 Aboriginal students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The school staff consists of a range of specialist teachers: support teachers as well as classroom teachers.

The school received funding from the St George Bank for a speech therapist to work at the school one day a week. She worked with teachers to set in place assessment procedures and strategies addressing a wide range of language skills.

The school has established a culture of equity, high expectations in academic achievement, participation in the creative arts and a commitment to social justice. It has programs that support a diverse range of learners.

Community participation is strong and continues to grow in new ways each year. The school has established structures and procedures that involve parents in the design, implementation and evaluation of many school programs.

There are many displays around the school that recognise the importance of Aboriginal culture. The foyer, library, assembly hall and an outside brick wall have Aboriginal murals, posters, banners and mosaics on display. These displays are the result of collaborative efforts between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members and the school.

The students' voice in the school is strong and they have a real sense of involvement in the way things are done. The student council has initiated many successful programs and is confident in liaising with the community and staff. Many of their projects show a commitment to the environment and issues of social justice, as illustrated by the students' involvement in a recent Reconciliation ceremony.

The school has long been innovative in the area of curriculum design. The principal, school executive and past and present teaching staff have designed whole-school, outcomes-based programs that meet the demands of the six key learning areas. There has been a real commitment from the school and the community to work together to achieve high standards, through implementing outcomes-based programs that support and challenge students to think critically and creatively.

The literacy programs presented in this case study focus on:

- the explicit teaching in Stage 3 of English language skills and understanding, using integrated units of work
- a guided reading structure where students think critically and creatively
- a writing program that supports self-editing and evaluation skills.

The numeracy programs presented in this case study focus on:

- the implementation of a unit of work using a range of contexts
- strategies that support talking through mathematics problems and concepts
- mathematics in different contexts.

Aboriginal Staff

An Aboriginal community member is employed in the school as an integration aide for children with special needs. She works with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. This year she has also worked one day a week on a Kindergarten transition program for Aboriginal students.

In 1997 she worked with the staff and the Aboriginal community to establish the Aboriginal Homework Centre. The following year the Aboriginal staff at the Centre successfully completed a one-year administration course run by the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Aboriginal parents work in the school on a voluntary basis, helping to run the school canteen and organise fundraising activities.

Resources for the Programs

The literacy and numeracy programs outlined in this case study are classroom programs that use school-based resources.

Until 1996 the school received grants from the Disadvantaged Schools Program. The resources in the school-based literacy units of work and the 'Maths in Context' program were purchased with these grants. In the past the school's connection to Disadvantaged Schools Program has been very strong, as many of the executive and teaching staff have worked as consultants and coordinators in the Program. Professional development is an important component of all the programs at the school. The initiative of the principal to facilitate staff participation in a range of courses has enabled the school to develop more effective and efficient ways of implementing syllabuses and achieving equity for many students.

The school completed courses in two modules of the Department of Education and Training's Aboriginal Education Policy training course. This year two teachers in Stage 3 and the Department of Education and Training's HSIE K-6 district consultant worked towards putting a school-devised Aboriginal history unit, which they designed and trialled, on the Internet for use by other schools.

Community Involvement

Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness

The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) committee works hard to support all the Aboriginal students within the school environment. Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness meetings are always well attended and the school staff are invited to be part of the meetings, which occur each month at the Homework Centre.

ASSPA committee members have raised the knowledge of Aboriginal culture among the staff and wider school community and have made Aboriginal perspectives within the key learning areas more meaningful for students and teachers.

Each year NAIDOC Week celebrations are a big event on the school calendar and the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee works with staff to organise a week of cultural events. The culmination of NAIDOC week is a community night concert, where classes and professional performers put on a concert that is always well attended by the whole community.

The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee also conducts an annual fundraising Halloween disco. One of the ASSPA parents is a literacy consultant for the Early Literacy Initiative and she shares her expertise with other parents at ASSPA meetings.

The Homework Centre

The Homework Centre was established in 1997 and has been successful on several levels. Firstly, it has supported students in meeting homework requirements. It has also enabled them to practise reading texts matched to their reading levels and this has resulted in an improvement in independent reading and a greater level of participation in class programs. The Centre coordinator makes sure all students have homework to complete and she liaises with the students' teachers when difficulties arise. Secondly, in such a large school where the Aboriginal students are in the minority, the Centre enables the students to get together, support one another when doing their homework and play games together. Their confidence in their Aboriginal identity within the school environment has been increased as a result.

The Centre is a place where parents feel welcome. The coordinator has established good relationships with the students' families and has made it easier for the parents to liaise with school personnel about a range of issues.

Programs

Aboriginal Studies Unit with an English Language Focus

- a unit of work that focuses on Aboriginal culture, history and contemporary issues

A Novel Study as Part of a HSIE Unit on Migration

- a collaboratively designed novel study that leads to in-depth discussion and sophisticated writing

Guided Reading Groups

- using guided reading in cooperative learning groups

A Mathematics Unit

- implementing a mathematics unit

Ways of Talking About Mathematics

- establishing structures and situations that allow students to use and develop their language skills

Aboriginal Studies Unit with an English Language Focus

‘When you go into the language deeply it always takes time. But the deeper you go the more interested the kids become. They always hang in there.’ ESL Teacher

Background

In 1998 the Stage 3 teachers identified the need for a unit of work that focused on Aboriginal culture, history and contemporary issues. This was the first year of Reconciliation and the students’ understanding of this process needed to be deepened.

The ESL teacher collected a range of resources and, in consultation with class teachers, wrote a 10 week unit that addressed the literacy outcomes and a set of school-developed key competencies within the context of Aboriginal Studies. This was the first time an Aboriginal Studies unit had been written and implemented by the teachers and as they got into the unit they felt more confident to invite the participation of people from the local community and to consult them on protocols about various issues. Their knowledge was invaluable. The unit was shown to the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee after it was written and it received their endorsement.

The ESL teacher worked with each class, three hours a week, to address the English component of the unit.

Content

The NSW Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) resource book and video *Wanyarri*, was used extensively throughout the unit. The *Wanyarri* video contains nine life stories of Indigenous people. The presenters talk about their lives, giving extensive cultural information as well as discussing the broader issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia today. This resource can be used in a number of ways, depending on the students and the outcomes being addressed.

Over the ten weeks in which the unit was implemented eight different biographies from the resource kit were studied. The *Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia* and the *Koori Mail* were also important resources. The students read novels including *Idjibil* by Helen Bell and *The Burnt Stick* by Anthony Hill (which is a text about the Stolen Generations).

Program Overview

The literacy skills that are developed throughout the program include:

- preparing, presenting/performing spoken texts to different audiences
- distinguishing between fact and opinion
- distinguishing pertinent points from detail
- using a variety of strategies to select important information

- identifying the writer's/producer's intent
- constructing a variety of texts for familiar subjects
- justifying lexico-grammatical choices.

The school-developed key competencies addressed in the unit include:

- explaining difference without exhibiting prejudice
- setting a personal goal
- describing an issue from at least two points of view
- confidently expressing ideas and information
- collecting, analysing and organising ideas and information.

A part of the program is set out below. It looks at three biographies from the *Wanyarri* resource kit. The people's lives show different work situations, different times in history and different issues related to identity. Across these differences there are also important similarities that affect their identity as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

How are culture and identity related?

Defining the terms 'Aboriginal,' 'Arabic' and 'European' is used to lead a discussion on the nature of identity.

Images of different people are shown and students talk about who they might be and how they can be identified.

The difficulty of knowing a person's identity solely from appearance is discussed. What shapes a person's identity?

Students are given a written assignment to be completed at the end of the unit. They must research and write about an Indigenous Australian.

They can interview and write about a person from their family, school, local community or they can write about someone they have read about or seen on television.

Learning Experiences

Part 1 Viewing and listening to the video about Sean Choolburra, a dancer and musician from Townsville

Students:

- retell what he does and the importance of his country and family; locate his country on a map
- locate all the places connected with his family, so that the students can appreciate the diversity of backgrounds in Sean's family
- put Sean's information in correct order
- match some of the adverbial phrases from Sean's talk to the correct sentence beginnings
- locate verbs and change to present tense
- discuss how Sean's work shapes his identity
- discuss how Sean's culture influences his work and his identity.

Part 2 Reading a biography of Pat Dodson

Students:

- read an extract about his life and answer specific information on his life
- categorise information into headings
- discuss Pat Dodson's work and how it relates to his identity as an Aboriginal person. Compare this to Sean's life and write about similarities and differences
- students put information about their own lives into categories such as, Who are they? What influences them? Their experiences? Their ideas?

Part 3 Discuss how history is written from a particular point of view

Students:

- read the short biography of a young woman who was sent to Palm Island in 1919
- discuss whose point of view we read in this extract
- discuss how we know this and underline the words that tell us
- discuss the treatment of Marnie and her mother and why it happened
- discuss how treatment and identity are related; discuss how labels and specific treatment related to them are applied to people
- discuss the fairness of rules based on racial identity.

Part 4 Write a personal biography

Students:

- students in Year 6 have a year book published at the end of the year – their biographies will be published in this book
- students are given a list of categories and a set of possible questions to answer within these categories – this is a structure they can use or change to suit their life story.

A Novel Study as Part of a HSIE Unit on Migration

'I believe that when we are successful in teaching students how to use written language, then we are empowering them to participate in this society and take on the challenges that a truly literate person is capable of.' ESL Teacher

Background

The ESL teacher wrote this program in collaboration with the Stage 3 class teachers. Within this unit, other literacy skills were introduced and practised as part of interpreting data and gathering information on migration. In the novel study, complex concepts were examined and this led to in-depth discussions and sophisticated writing about the novel's themes as well as the use of language.

Each Stage 3 class received three hours of ESL support a week. The ESL teacher led each session with the whole class and the class teacher supported students within these lessons. Each student had a copy of the novel.

Content

How did I write my character profile of Nam's aunty?

Steps

1. I read through my notes on Nam's aunty, which were written while I was reading the novel.
2. Introduce the character of aunty by stating her relationship to Nam.
3. Write about what she does.
4. Write about the type of person she is.
5. I wrote a draft copy and showed it to other people who had read the novel. I listened to their suggestions and wrote my final copy.

The whole class undertook a study of *Onion Tears* by Diana Kidd. This novel was chosen because many children in the class could relate to the experiences of the main characters, and it lent itself to the study of wider social issues.

Strategies

The following strategies were developed for this program:

Reading the novel

- the ESL teacher and class teachers analysed the text beforehand and decided on the concepts and language features that would be addressed. The sequence of tasks was also determined beforehand. The areas of literacy, talking and listening, reading and viewing and writing, were given equal importance throughout the unit
- the students and teachers read the novel together. At the end of each session they added to a data bank about the main character, Nam. The data bank questions were
 - What do you know about her family?
 - What do you know about her past experiences?
 - What do you know about her at present? What do you know about her feelings? Past and present?

Writing personal recounts

- students discuss the 'teasing' incidents in the book. Why does this occur?
- students retell personal experiences of teasing
- students write a recount of an event using the following structure:

Recount Structure

1. Orientation: Who? Where? When?
2. Sequence events in chronological order.
3. Personal comments and/or evaluative remarks interspersed throughout the recount.
4. Reorientation which 'rounds off' the recount.

Grammar

- Use of nouns and pronouns, action verbs, past tense, conjunctions and time connectives, adverbs and adverbial phrases, and adjectives.

Literary language of the text

An examination of the author's use of metaphors and similes led to enhanced literary writing by the students. Specific learning experiences included:

- discussion of the images created by the similes and metaphors in the book. The Vietnamese teacher commented on how the metaphors in the book were not well known in Vietnamese culture and were more a reflection of the authors' culture, which is English
- after teacher modelling, students changed similes in the book. Example: 'the soup tasted like a salt mine' to 'the soup tasted like the ocean'
- well-known metaphors were explored and displayed in the room. Examples included 'cut it out,' 'keep a stiff upper lip,' 'get into hot water,' 'put your best foot forward,' 'pull up your socks'
- examples were cut out of newspapers
- students wrote their own similes and metaphors.

Characterisation in the novel

- teacher reads her character profile of Nam's aunty to the students
- teacher displays on an overhead slide the steps used to write the character profile
- students write a character profile of Nam
- they refer to student data bank on Nam
- pool all students' writing and give students a compilation of events
- students use the following headings to structure their profile

Introduce Nam.

Write about her past experiences.

Write about her present experiences.

Write about how her past experiences affect her present experiences.

Critical Literacy

The following teaching steps were followed, so the student, as text analyst, could think about the messages related to cultural diversity that the author was trying to convey:

- students share their understanding of 'culture' and 'cultural diversity'
- they use a mind-map as a way of recording ideas
- students do a ranking activity by responding to a variety of situations about culture and justifying their positions
- students examine situations in the novel where racism occurred and write how the characters in the novel responded
- the teacher wrote about what she thought the author's main message was. (The difficulty of literary interpretation was realised by the teacher.)
- teacher reads to class and discusses with students. Her answer is made into a cloze passage for students to complete
- students write about the author's message and they then share their interpretations
- discussion on cultural diversity in school and community contexts.

Example of a student planning sheet

Situation	Response from Character	Ideas, feelings or messages the author is attempting to convey
Page 21 Danny writes a cruel poem		
Page 22 Nam sees Tessa and her friends at the park		
Page 23 Nam remembers the soldiers taking her dad		
Page 31 Nam is invited to the beach		
Page 40 Tessa passed a cruel note around the class		
Page 45 The children let the air out of Nam's bike		
Page 50 Nam brings Miss Lily some soup		
Page 60 Nam remembers the boat trip		
Page 65 Nam tells Miss Lily everything		
Page 67 Nam tells Mary what her name means		

Guided Reading Groups

'This program acknowledges a wide range of individual strengths. Students are encouraged to have 'a say' and all differences are respected. All students are encouraged to think creatively and critically.'

Teacher

'I really love reading groups. We get to talk about interesting things and present our work to everyone.'

Student

Background

The class teacher and the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties assessed the students' reading ability using running records, and then grouped them into three ability groups.

Initially the class teacher worked with two groups, while the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties withdrew a group. After the two groups working with the class teacher were able to work independently, the third group worked with the class teacher using the same reading routines and structures. The class teacher and the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties now work together using the established structures, three times a week.

Group leaders have a bookstand and are given their text to read before they lead a group. This occurs after a period of teacher modelling in the group leader role. Initially it is a lot of work for the teacher, but once students can run their reading group the teacher can participate as a support for individuals. It enables the teacher to make assessments, using observations or formal tests. These assessments are used to program for the language needs of the students.

Program Overview

The texts used in the reading groups include excerpts from novels, multiple copies of texts from the reading resource room, factual texts that are part of units of work the class is studying, interest books from the students, maps, posters and charts. When students are confident enough to be the group leader of their reading group, they are given the text to read beforehand and they decide on the questions to be included.

The Stage 2 and 3 reading outcomes and speaking and listening outcomes from the Board of Studies English K–6 Syllabus (1998) are addressed in the program. The strategies outlined below are initially carried out by the teacher and then students assume the teacher's role.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for teachers and student leaders:

- introduce the text by predicting its content and purpose. Use cues such as pictures, title, author, type of text
- explain what we will be doing and why
- oral reading of text by all groups. The leader's role is to always comment positively on the reading and support students reading, using reading recovery prompts
- students talk about the text with a partner
- group retells the text. Each group member says a sentence in sequence
- group members can ask closed questions to make clear the facts within the texts. There is only one response for these questions. The teacher should model this at first
- group members are invited to ask open questions that draw on student's interpretation of the text and the related situations and problems that arise from discussing the text. There are three responses for these questions
- group members highlight new vocabulary
- students discuss possible meanings using context
- students check meanings in dictionary
- students write the new word on a card and display it on the 'vocabulary wall'

- students write new words in their personal vocabulary lists and are encouraged to refer to these lists when writing
- teacher's prepared questions are read by group members and answers are discussed. The questions can be about the structure of the text, the purpose of features within the text, issues that arise from the text. Students can agree, disagree or give additional information in response to questions and answers. Teacher makes clear the difference between disagreeing about ideas and unkind, dismissive responses. Any complaints about offensive behaviour are taken seriously. Setting up an open and supportive climate for all group members to participate and debate issues is considered very important.
- teacher sets an activity for highlighting aspects of the text. The activity will reflect the language skill that students are working to develop
- refer to the Board of Studies syllabus support document, *English K-6 Modules* (1998) for activities that support particular language features of different texts. The following examples have worked successfully:
 - 'Hot Seat' – a student becomes a character in the text and the group asks open-ended questions, eg Why ...? How did you feel when ...? This is used for literary non-fiction texts, and deepens students' appreciation of characterisation
 - Group story-map to sequence the main events in the story using the language of the text.
 - Dramatise the text to create the mood of the story and present the events from a particular point of view.
 - Classify information using text structures, such as headings, topic sentences and the correct grammatical structure
- each group reports back to whole class. Emphasise the importance of listening and providing positive feedback for each group. This is an opportunity for students to share their learning experiences and be heard. Groups may share an interesting question, retell the text, talk about new vocabulary or give an opinion about the text. It is important to model how to do this initially, then support the students and enable everyone's voice to be heard
- at particular times, each group fills in an assessment sheet on how the group interacted. They discuss what is working in their group and make suggestions as to how things could be improved. This is an important part of creating a supportive environment for all students.

Results

Some indicators that the program has been successful in developing students' skills and understandings in English and in group management and cooperation are that:

- students who participated in the program had acquired the necessary skills to independently
 - lead a group
 - participate in the group reading activity, and
 - report to the whole class
- in addition to achieving the talking and listening outcomes for Stages 2 and 3, all students in the current year groups had progressed to reading outcomes at Stage 2 or Stage 3 level.

A Mathematics Unit

'I like teaching maths and my enthusiasm for doing maths seems to rub off onto the children. I think there are many ways in which children can learn maths and my job is to get them talking and thinking about the subject in ways that make sense to them. Talking about what we are doing and why we are doing things is an important part of all our maths lessons.' Teacher

This unit of work was undertaken in the classroom without additional support staff and was implemented 3 to 4 times a week. The mathematical concepts were then revisited throughout the year in various contexts.

Background

Before this unit of work was undertaken, the teacher had established class routines, where students worked together, either with a partner or in a group, to finish tasks in a set time. A range of texts, kits and hands-on resources were gathered to support the unit of work. A set of card and dice games was used to build skill development. The students took home games and investigative projects as well as completing practice sheets as part of all mathematics units. Investigative projects used the home contexts, and the games and practice sheets also enabled the students and parents to work together. This was an effective way of informing parents of the level of work expected of students.

The Board of Studies Mathematics K–6 Outcomes and Indicators (1998) document was used extensively to plan the scope and sequence of the mathematical tasks.

Strategies

The outcomes and strategies outlined below are related to a unit on the measurement of time. The strategies could also be used in other areas of the Mathematics K–6 syllabus.

Part 1: Introduction: Establish where and why this aspect of mathematics is used

- read a story and discuss the references to time. Use a story that relates to students' interests or that they can relate to in some way
- brainstorm students' knowledge of time, in small groups
- groups share information and teacher classifies this information under headings
- discuss when we use time in our life. Teacher notes the contexts that students use in relation to time
- extend contexts in which time occurs. Students talk in pairs about the situations that teacher poses. Examples: In the morning I ... My birthday is on ... I was born in ... At the weekend I ... At night I ... My favourite television program is ... it is on at ... it finishes at ... Next year ... In the Year ...

Part 2: What do they know and what do they need to know

- students write down all the things they want to find out about time
- discuss and display syllabus outcomes with students (*Mathematics K–6 Outcomes and Indicators Stages 1,2 and 3*, p 56–57)
- explain to students the importance of developing skills and understanding related to time
- formal assessment using open questions to gauge the skill level of the students, eg 'Write down some times on the clocks and measure the time interval'; 'Write down all you know about digital or analogue time'. Note the complexity of what the students write down. Check the level of understanding of language used. If possible check with Aboriginal Education Assistant
- take note of the way students work through problems
- gauge the range of individual needs and what skills and understanding they need to develop.

Part 3: Working on the concept of time (telling the time on an analog clock)

- whole-class demonstration of the hour and minute hands on a working clock
- set three different levels of activity around a similar concept of time, using hands-on equipment where necessary. The three activities are explained to the class and students move to the level of activity in

which they need practice. Examples of the types of activities that can be included are:

- **Group 1: (Time 8)** Use pretend clocks (paper plates and split pins) to practise telling times on the hour. Students write numbers on clock. Partners set times for each other. Play a Barrier Game to develop the language of time. Concluding activity is a snap game using cards matching clock face to written time.
- **Group 2: (Time 9)** Use clocks to tell times to the half hour using the same equipment and games as above.
- **Group 3: (Time 10)** Use clocks to tell times to the quarter hour using the same equipment and games as above.

When the students achieve competency at each level they move to the next level of activities.

- a range of contexts in which time is used is reinforced throughout this unit and throughout the year
- links between numeracy computations and problems involving time are explicitly taught, ie when to add, subtract, divide and multiply
- the language of problem solving is explicitly taught in the following way
 - teacher demonstrates interpreting the language
 - teacher and students interpret problems together
 - teacher models setting up a time problem
 - teacher models writing a question about the situation
 - teacher sets a situation and students make up a question
 - students work in pairs with one student writing a situation and the other formulating a question
 - teacher uses examples of these situations and questions to develop specific problems set at appropriate levels for individual students
- students represent data in the form of surveys and graphs on situations using time, eg class surveys about bedtimes, time spent watching TV, hours they spend on sport per week, when school should start.

Ways of Talking About Mathematics

‘My maths lessons are not quiet; problems and solutions are always talked about. My main aim is to get the kids to ask questions and talk about how they did things with each other and with me.’ Teacher

Background

The teacher of this program enjoys teaching mathematics and feels confident with her knowledge of the content. She feels the challenge is to support students to learn in a way that enables them to experience success and keep them trying when things get more difficult. The teacher’s overriding philosophy of learning and mathematics is to set up structures and situations that allow students to apply their knowledge and develop ideas. This is done in a way that makes sense to the students and enables them to use their language skills to ask questions and communicate about problems and solutions.

The coordinator of the Aboriginal Homework Centre works in the class as an integration aide. This enables her to observe the students’ skills and understanding and to discuss these with the teacher.

Five of the students attend the Homework Centre and the coordinator’s knowledge of class expectations and achievements and the kind of support that students need is very important.

Strategies

The following strategies were developed for this program:

Using outcomes

- at the end of the year all students compile a portfolio of work samples in all the key learning areas. In order for the outcomes to have meaning for the student, the teacher makes clear the link between their work and syllabus expectations. When the students select work samples to be included in the portfolio they have an understanding of how skills and understanding are categorised, and where they are up to in their achievement of the outcomes
- throughout the year as students complete worksheets, group tasks and projects, they talk to the teacher about the outcomes they are working towards.

Using group problem-solving assessments tasks

- open-ended investigations are used so the teacher can confer with students as they apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding. These type of investigations enable the teacher to observe the students' use of language in problem-solving
- group projects enable the teacher to observe students' skills in asking relevant questions and their ability to articulate problems and solutions
- students present projects orally to class, defining the task, the method of inquiry and what they found. All students have a role in the presentation. The audience is encouraged to ask clarifying questions. Teacher models this throughout the year
- students' skills in supporting one another and participating in the group activity are noted. These skills are related to the key competencies that the school has developed.

Students talking about the week's mental

- students work through a set of mental arithmetic questions each week. During the week, they can seek support from peers. At the end of the week, discussion about the questions provides an opportunity for students to have any problems addressed. Teacher also asks students to explain their understanding of questions
- a supportive class climate is very important for this session to be productive for the students. It is stressed that this is a time to share knowledge by listening to each other's problems. The integration aide participates in this session and makes sure all students are positioned so that all students can hear what is being said. The aide also assists students to ask questions. These mental are taken to the Homework Centre and worked through with each student's tutor.

Case Study Seven

Forster Public School

'A relationship between the school and the Aboriginal community is necessary.' Aboriginal Education Assistant

Description of the School and Community

Forster Public School is located on Worimi land on the NSW mid-north coast just south of Taree. It is the State's largest primary school on the northern coast. It has a student population of 860 of whom 90 are Aboriginal. The majority of Aboriginal students live in the Cabarita community, which is located nearby. The Kattang people are the major language group. Parent and community involvement is welcomed and encouraged. The school has a high degree of community participation. The Aboriginal community is regularly surveyed to ascertain attitudes to school policy and provide strategic direction. Flexibility and cooperation are part of the school's approach to the education of Aboriginal students.

Strategies that facilitate a two-way communication process are successfully employed in the school. The Aboriginal community is better informed when messages are delivered orally, so parent-teacher interviews and consultations are a feature. Teachers and parents also frequently talk in the playground. For the last seven years, the Koori Express Newsletter has been sent to parents/caregivers at the end of each term. The newsletter has examples of students' work and general school information.

Mobility rates are high, with 18% of the school population changing during the year. The school and the Aboriginal community identified school attendance as a priority area for action in 1998, and since then attendance rates of the 'at risk' attenders have improved by 35%.

The school has established an Aboriginal Education Team and developed an action plan of programs to be implemented. Most of these programs will be funded through the school's Aboriginal Grant. In 1998 there were three programs, over a period of 20 weeks. The deputy principal and the coordinating teacher held meetings at Cabarita to inform the parents of the involvement their children may have with these programs and the level of input they would have in the programs.

The school has 31 classes. The staff includes 25 classroom teachers and seven executive staff members, including a principal, two deputy principals, two assistant principals and two executive teachers. Support for the regular classroom programs comes from a teacher librarian and a part-time teacher. Special education programs are conducted by a Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and itinerant teachers for behaviour, emotional disturbance, hearing and moderate intellectual disability. A full-time Aboriginal Education Assistant, two part-time tutors from the Aboriginal community and four teacher's aides are employed part-time to assist with the integration of children with special needs.

Aboriginal Staff

Aboriginal Education Assistant

The present full-time Aboriginal Education Assistant has been in the position for the past sixteen years. She is a member of the Cabarita community. During this time she has shared her knowledge of the community with the staff and been an important link between the school and the community.

Home School Support Person

The Home School Support Person is a part-time position. The role is part of the Reception program, which targets 'at-risk' attenders. The Home School Support Person is a communication link between the school and the parents. Part of the role is to 'gather' the targeted students and assist with the program's morning session at school. The Home School Support Person's computer skills are being developed as she publishes the Koori Express Newsletter and is working on a book, 'Koori Kids By The Sea'.

Aboriginal Tutors

The two Aboriginal Tutor positions are part-time. The role of the tutors is to assist students in their classrooms during the literacy sessions in Kindergarten through to Year 4. The tutoring takes place Monday to Thursday between 9 am and 11 am. The tutors are provided with ongoing training and development in computer skills. The tutors also support students through the school's 'middle years' program. On Monday and Friday mornings the tutors are released from classroom duties to work in the Reception program.

Aboriginal Education and Health Officer

The Department of Health is the employer of the Aboriginal Education and Health Officer. The school has acquired the officer's services through the regional Health Service. The officer is involved in the reception, boys, social skills and mentoring programs as well as coaching the Under 10s rugby league team.

The deputy principal, as the Aboriginal education team leader, coordinates the work of the people in these positions.

Community Involvement

Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness

The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee is very active, with meetings being held on a regular basis at the Cabarita Community Hall. The committee has the deputy principal and two teacher representatives as members.

'Teachers are here to help and need to establish a relationship with the students and the community.'
Aboriginal Education Assistant

The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee and the community have been involved in various activities including:

- building a bush tucker garden
- writing the small books program, eg *How to make a didgeridoo*
- parent/teacher barbeques to discuss students' progress and build links between home and school
- training its members to enable the committee to be self-sufficient
- professional development programs conducted by the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties
- planning and involvement in a cultural excursion where selected students were allowed to invite a non-Aboriginal buddy along to share a day at a beach and learn to view the beach from the Kattang people's perspective
- the ANTA Koori Mothers Program which was developed in conjunction with Tuncurry TAFE to assist the parents as they begin to move into the school setting (this course has been running for two years).
- providing student support through links with the Cabarita Medical Centre
- school programs such as the reception program, tutoring program, the Year 6 and 7 transition program, the 'Kinder' transition program, health and hygiene programs (run with the assistance of the Aboriginal Education and Health Officer), the Producing Interesting Books program and a middle school program which is new and still in development
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day of Celebration involving whole school activities held on the last day of Term 2.

Homework Centre

The Homework Centre operates twice a week from 3.00pm to 5.00pm at the school. A community representative is the coordinator; four tutors and eight teachers work at the centre as individual tutors. The Local Land Council bus transports the children home after each session. The Homework Centre won a district award in 1998 for the 'Successful Operation of A Homework Centre'.

'It's very successful. Community members and staff working together.' Aboriginal Education Assistant

Koori Express Newsletter

The Koori Express is a newsletter, published each term by a community representative and the Koori students. Information, stories and photographs are featured in the newsletters. The parents and community enjoy reading about their children and what is happening at school. The newsletter has been published for the last seven years. It is produced by the Home School Support Person.

Resources for the Programs

The reception and tutoring programs and the Producing Interesting Books program are funded through a school grant. The Year 6 and 7 transition program is funded by VEGAS-DETYA.

Home School Support Person

The Home School Support Person has been employed by the school to take part in the school's reception program. The position operates daily, for a total of eight hours per week. The position is funded through a school grant.

The Tutors

Two Aboriginal tutors are employed Monday to Thursday 9 to 11am to work with small groups of Koori students in literacy. Some numeracy skills are covered and computer programs are encouraged. The tutors also work in the afternoon in the school's middle years program.

Inservicing

Staff have attended inservice courses in the areas of Aboriginal English, Otitis Media, Aboriginal Learning Styles and Specific Learning Difficulties. They have also attended workshops on the Department of Education and Training's Aboriginal Education Policy.

Minimbah Koori Resource Room

A formal ceremony was held in December 1998 to officially open the Koori resource room called Minimbah.

Minimbah was the name of the original government school at Forster. It is a local Aboriginal word meaning 'teacher of tribes, place of teaching and learning.' The resource room's door has a mural panel painted by a local artist, Jan Leon.

Minimbah is an active place where students, Aboriginal community members and teachers meet and discuss a variety of issues both informally and formally. It is the community's school space. It has computer equipment that is used regularly, particularly in the production of the Koori newsletter.

'It should be a space where students can easily make contact.' Aboriginal Education Assistant

Programs

Aboriginal Health and Education Officer's Day Program

- a program that addresses attendance, literacy, numeracy, health and social skills for boys

Reception Program

- a program that targets student attendance

Koori Kids by the Sea

- a community-designed Reconciliation project that led to the production of a book on local Aboriginal culture

Aboriginal Education and Health Officer's Day Program

'Have I got you tomorrow? (Yes.) Well, I'll be at school'. Student

Background

After discussions with the Aboriginal community, the school asked the Department of Health to provide the services of an Aboriginal Education and Health Officer. The officer subsequently appointed to this position assists in the implementation of programs that are designed to address specific student issues that the school and the community have identified. These issues include attendance, health and boys' social skills. This program is an example of how to address literacy needs indirectly.

All students at the school enjoy his presence and refer to him as 'Uncle'.

Program Overview

The program runs for five weeks with one session each week. The Aboriginal community is consulted about the approach to targeting and withdrawal of students from their mainstream class groups. The Aboriginal Education and Health Officer conducts regular home visits in order to monitor students' progress and obtain feedback from the community.

The classroom teachers and Aboriginal Education and Health Officer consult to determine a suitable time for the social skills group. Formal and informal communication also occurs on a regular basis between the officer and the Aboriginal Education Team.

Strategies

The following strategies have been developed for this program:

- targeted boys are selected from class groups across all grades
- health and hygiene issues are discussed
- the boys construct a daily timetable to help establish a routine of self-organisation
- the officer types the timetables for the boys, making adaptations where necessary
- the boys and the officer discuss the adapted timetables
- the officer informs each student's parents of the purpose of the timetable through an information letter and home visit
- discussions on health and hygiene are supported with statistics that illustrate the seriousness of these issues to the Aboriginal community
- health issues that are addressed include smoking, heart disease and diabetes
- on some occasions a non-Aboriginal 'buddy' is invited into the class to join in enjoyable activities

The officer's timetable is shown below.

Aboriginal Education and Health Officer

Morning Session

8.00 am to 10.00 am

- Reception program

10.15 am to 11.00 am

- Visits to various classes to speak on health issues

11.20 am to 12.30 pm

- Mathematics: Mentoring and supporting of students in the classroom

Lunchtime

12.30 pm to 1.20 pm

- Organising games, eg handball, touch footy or a 'bit of a muck around' (All interested students are involved)
- Coaching the Under 10s rugby league team

Afternoon Session

1.20 pm to 3.00 pm

- Boys' Social Skills

Results

The school has identified a number of indicators of the program's success. These include:

- an improvement in student attendance
- increased understanding about health issues amongst boys
- overall improvement in students' literacy and numeracy skills and understanding
- the use of more positive social interaction skills and playground strategies
- a positive relationship between the students and their mentor 'Uncle'.

Reception Program

'A program like this wouldn't work if it didn't involve the community and the school.' Former Deputy Principal

Background

The Principal and the Home School Liaison Officer discussed the need to develop a culturally appropriate program to improve the attendance of targeted K-6 students. An Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness meeting was held and the idea of the Reception program was discussed and agreed upon.

The school established the position of Home School Support Person within the program. At the commencement of the program the support person spent a day with the Home School Liaison Officer learning the appropriate protocols and adapting these to suit the needs of the school and the community. Having done this, the Deputy Principal (leader of the Aboriginal Education team) and Home School Support Person approached the parents of the targeted students in person.

The school hopes to improve attendance by helping students understand the daily routine involved in attending school. It includes basic living skills, preparation of food, self-esteem activities and excursions. The program tackles literacy learning as a by-product of improved attendance.

Program Overview

Organisation

The program has a co-coordinator who:

- oversees the program
- organises the daily routine, helps in making healthy lunches for the students, collects absent and excursion notes and teaches life skills activities
- monitors attendance and reports to the staff on a daily basis so the classroom teachers can mark the class roll
- keeps each student's parents regularly informed of their child's progress
- monitors time spent on individual education programs.

The Home School Support Person:

- liaises with each student's parents about their child's involvement in the program
- supports each student's parents in the process of getting their child to school
- collects students from their homes and gradually withdraws the extent of this support so they are able to get to school by themselves
- assists students to develop a routine of attending school
- does the program's shopping, and
- works with the Deputy Principal to keep track of the program's funds.

The coordinator, Home School Support Person and the Health and Education Officer:

- prepare the food for breakfasts and lunches
- teach the students basic skills and understanding about hygiene.

The program operates in an area where there are kitchen and bathroom facilities and a space where the students can work.

The program makes use of the following key resources:

- the Board of Studies *PDHPE K-6 Syllabus (1999)* and support material
- computers
- computer games for literacy and numeracy
- resources with Aboriginal content
- a vehicle for the collection of students.

The program operates from 8 to 10am, Monday to Friday. It is a six-week program.

Strategies

The program involves the following strategies and learning experiences:

- talking about and listening to discussions concerning school essentials and the need for students to be brought from home
- talking about and listening to reasons why students need to be at school before the school bell and the need for students to attend the morning assemblies
- using exercise as a means of teaching healthy activities and cooperation skills
- preparing and having breakfast before the morning bell as well as preparing recess and lunch during the morning session
- setting up rosters for washing and wiping, putting away, wiping down the benches and sweeping the floor
- organising the preparation of food, putting away the items used and writing a shopping list of foods that need to be purchased
- excursions to the local supermarket to find and price the various items bought for the program

- teaching literacy and numeracy skills and understanding using individual education programs and Aboriginal resources
- photographing students with a digital camera so that they can use the photographs for language experience and use the computer to write about special events in the school, eg Education Week, creative and performing arts activities and excursions
- follow-up strategies for the students who have left the program.

An attendance chart is given to all students to monitor their own attendance. After each full week of attendance the student is given a small reward to congratulate the student for attending school.

On Fridays the students visit the coordinator who presents them with special certificates. In this way the students maintain contact with the coordinator who personally congratulates them and discusses any problems they may have.

For those the coordinator doesn't see, the coordinator will have follow-up discussions with the student's teacher.

Results

There has been a noticeable improvement in the attendance of the Aboriginal students.



Koori Kids by the Sea

'A greater understanding of Koori people and their culture will develop.' School's Aboriginal Programs document.

Background

The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee, community and Aboriginal workers organised an excursion to the local beach for the students. The students were asked to bring along a non-Aboriginal friend. The community views this type of excursion as one that will foster tolerance and understanding.

The day was spent exploring the beach and sharing the knowledge held by the local Worimi people. It also provided insight into the seafood and bush tucker caught and eaten in the local area.

The day's events were recorded using both a digital camera and a conventional camera. A book containing the photographs and accompanying text composed by the students is to be produced as a result of the excursion. The text will use the Koori vocabulary from the local community.

The book is to be developed as a resource on Aboriginal culture that can be used by local schools. The school would also like it to be published so that it can reach other areas of Australia.

Program Overview

The Aboriginal community designed and organised the excursion with the support of the school staff. The Aboriginal workers organised excursion notes and the use of the Land Council's bus.

Follow-up activities were undertaken soon after it while the excursion was still fresh in the students' minds.

Strategies

The following processes and follow-up strategies were used:

- the group met at school and travelled to the beach on the Land Council's bus
- the group explored the beach and listened to the Worimi stories as told by the Elders and community members
- the students asked questions and shared their own personal experiences
- the day's experiences were recorded using both a digital camera and a conventional camera
- following the excursion, the Home School Support Person met with the students who were involved in photographs that told a story; these students and the Support Person jointly developed the accompanying text
- the Home School Support Person incorporated local Worimi knowledge into the text
- some photographs and text were also published in the Koori Express newsletter.

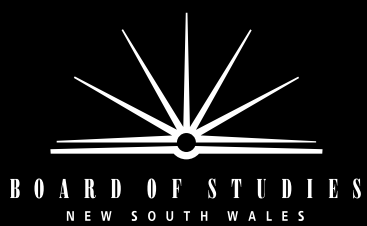
Results

The excursion was a success. The book is well on the road to publication for use by the school. Investigations to determine how the book might be published nationwide are currently being undertaken.

Glossary

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACLO	Aboriginal Community Liason Officer
AE	Aboriginal English
AEA	Aboriginal Education Assistant
AEC	Aboriginal Education Consultant
AECG	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
AEP	Aboriginal Education Policy
AEW	Aboriginal Education Worker
ALA	Aboriginal Literacy Aide
ASSPA	Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sharing
BST	Basic Skills Test
CMI	Count Me In
CMI2	Count Me In Too
DET	NSW Department of Education and Training
DETYA	Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DSP	Disadvantage Schools Program
ESL	English as a Second Language
HSIE	Human Society and its Environment
IEP	Individual Education Program
KLA	Key Learning Area
NATSIEP	National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NATSI	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration
PDHPE	Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
PSP	Priority Schools Program
SAE	Standard Australian English
STLD	Support Teacher Learning Difficulties
VEGAS	Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme





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