WA District High School

Administrators' Association

and

Society for the Provision of

Education in Rural Australia

Working Together, Staying Vital

Conference Proceedings

Edited by

Colin Boylan and Brian Hemmings

WA District High School Administrators' Association

and

Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia

Joint Conference

June 2004

Fremantle, Western Australia

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Edited by Colin Boylan and Brian Hemmings
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OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE WA DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' ASSOCIATION AND THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN RURAL AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

BY
HIS EXCELLENCY LIEUTENANT GENERAL
JOHN SANDERSON, AC
GOVERNOR OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WEDNESDAY, 2 JUNE 2004

Mr Ken Austin, President of the WA District High School Administrators' Association

Ms Anne Napolitano, President of the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia

Mr Paul Albert, WA Director General of Education

Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Because you have set yourselves such a broad ranging agenda this has not been an easy conference to prepare an opening address for. I say that even though I spend much of my time as Governor of Western Australia extolling a similar theme to that of you conference – Working Together, Staying Vital. I do that because I have a firm conviction that one of the primary roles of Governor as head of state lies in the area of building community – giving people the encouragement and the confidence that they can take control of their own destiny.

Indeed, I am clear in my own mind that empowering communities from the bottom up is not simply a good idea in this age of globalisation - it is absolutely essential if we are to avoid becoming victims of a trend to centralise all decision making in places remote from where people live. I am not just talking about decisions that affect our future being made in Perth or Sydney here, but decisions being made further away in London and New York.

Happily, I am not alone in this view, which is gathering momentum as scholars and philosophers take stock of the consequences of the market forces and user pays views that have dominated economic and social policy for nearly thirty years now. The futurist Charles Handy has this to say in his much quoted book *The Empty Raincoat*:

> *"The World is up for reinvention in so many ways. Creativity is born in chaos. What we do, what we belong to, why we do it, when we do it, where we do it – these may all be different and they could be better. Our societies, however, are built on case law. Change comes from small initiatives which work, initiatives which, initiated, become the fashion. We cannot wait for great visions from great people, for they are in short supply at the end of history. It is up to us to light our own small fires in the darkness."*

Among other things, Handy is telling us here that the natural processes of social development, like biological evolution, are driven from the bottom up, and we should not be mesmerised into believing that the answers will come from above – even though we have temporarily surrendered the control of much of the material resources to central government or, increasingly, to large financial corporations. What we have not surrendered, and should never surrender, is the creative genius of individual human beings. When it is unleashed, this is the most powerful instrument for change.

Recognising this fact and unleashing that force is another thing. People have to believe in themselves for that to happen. This requires two things: knowledge and leadership. What sort of knowledge and what sort of leadership is the question?

And that brings me back to the theme of your conference. I spend as much time in country Western Australia as I can. There are a number of reasons for that. Firstly it is where I come from, and where I take most satisfaction from my role. Secondly, it is my belief that, despite the fact that we Australians are increasingly cluttered along the coastline in the southeast and the southwest, we don't really have a long term future unless it is in the interior of this great continent. I will explain this thought later.

I am a product of a rural upbringing and a country high school in the days when only about ten percent of our population matriculated and the majority left school at fourteen and went to work, either on the farm or in some commercial or industrial undertaking where they earned junior wages and learnt about life on the job. Junior certificate was considered by most to be an entrée to the clerical jobs such as bank tellers and trainee accountants, and of course, some apprenticeships, particularly the technical ones, also demanded the three year high school certificate.

I suppose I was very fortunate to keep getting scholarships of one form or another, which saw me through to higher education, and, dare I say it, eventual command of the Australian Army and Governorship of my home state. That process required two things in my view – someone had to see your potential, and you then had to believe in yourself. This latter requirement – self belief - is by far the most important, but, again, it takes root because it is fostered by someone who sees your potential.

Now an audience like this will know as well as I do that all humans are born to be creative beings – even though this assertion may be hard to accept in some cases and at some times. That creative potential is locked up in our genes and is unleashed by the environment we experience. Some of us have more of some things than others, both physical attributes and mental acuity – but we all begin with a powerful set of capacities for development.

The answer to the age old debate about whether we gain our abilities by inheritance or from the environment has been answered in recent times. Matt Ridley's recent book, *Nature via Nurture* is a good and easy read on the latest state of play in research on this important issue. It is the environment we experience that switches on the genes we have – good or bad. Whether we like it or not some kids are going to go to the schools we serve up to them better equipped for them by virtue of the environment from which they come, including in the womb where all sorts of important genes are or are not switched on.

This suggests to me that this gives us two particular starting points from where we are now. Unfortunately, we can't go back – even though we might like to change some of the many things we have been doing wrong.

Firstly we have to reaffirm that the nurturing family is the foundation of our society and educate our people as to why this is so, and the long term strategic consequences of ignoring this fact in our now grossly materialistic society. Kids who don't have proper nourishment in the womb or before they go to school haven't got much hope of having a happy and fulfilling future. Kids who do not get the psychological nourishment of being cherished are most unlikely to gain the sort of self belief that will allow them to seize opportunities to do life sustaining good things. That is not to say they won't be able to seize opportunities to do bad things, or whatever it takes to survive, but their motivation is less likely to be good for society.

Secondly, we have to provide opportunities for young people who are not inspired by the sort of educational environment we have developed – which, quite frankly, seems much better suited to girls for example than it does for boys.

I am not speaking here simply about those children entering schools today, who need a changed environment. We have a significant backlog of people who may become or are already alienated from our society by virtue of the fact that they have not been able cope with the education environment. It would be unfortunate if the only way we could soak these people up was by increasing the number of places we have in our penal institutions and by continuing our already heavy investment in our security structures and fortifying our homes.

Now, I know that this is not necessarily a country problem – although those who don't have opportunity in the country will probably gravitate to the city as they have done in the past. What the rural problems are is firstly, how to keep schools going with diminishing numbers, and secondly, how to provide access to a broad and decent curriculum that meets the diverse needs of country children.

Let me say at this point, that if it wasn't for this latter limitation, I think country schools have got a lot going for them in terms of confidence building and opportunity. I have grandchildren growing up in country Victoria at present, and they are having the opportunity to participate in everything that country schools have to offer – small classes and a wide range of sports, plus contact with the natural environment and a freedom they never experienced in the city. They are only in primary school however, and my son, like most people in similar circumstances, is already in the business of booking them into private schools in the large cities.

On that note let me return to my second contention, that Australia's future is tied up with the issue of us reversing the demographic trend towards the coastline – as though we are transitory visitors preparing to take off for other places at a moment's notice. The real problem in our rural regions is a lack of population brought about by mobility and the trend towards larger economic units of production. When you think about it, it really isn't a great distance from where we are now to the interior being managed by robots while all the rest of us lie around on the beach.

The trouble with this trend – and I am the first to admit that it is an intransigent problem – is twofold; it does not nurture the land and it severs our connection with the land. It diminishes our claim to the country and it makes us very vulnerable strategically.

What I am saying here is that the education problems of regional Australia are the strategic problems of the whole nation. Our great hope lies in drawing our people back into our regions – a need that requires a strategic approach that seems to be defied by our current approach to defining national priorities. Once again, this seems to be something that must be solved by ordinary people taking the initiative and creating new possibilities from the grassroots.

Your conference then in my view takes on added importance. It is not simply about solving the immediate problems of rural families and educators. It is about coming up with approaches that contribute to a reversing of the momentum of regional decline. I say contribute to because education initiative can only be a part of this. We have to provide new employment opportunities that enliven and satisfy our young people and provide them with a decent living. And our education approaches and methods have to be connected to that.

Of course, when we talk about sustainability we are talking about just these things – building sustainable communities. In theory, Western Australia is the first state to have a strategic approach and a dynamic policy to this end. Indeed, it is very encouraging as far as we have gone, but it requires everyone to take up this theme and apply the vision and the objective to their creative endeavour. In this jumble of ideas I have put before you, I hope you see some of the issues that I think make up fundamental parts of the complex pattern of sustainability that is so important to our future.

This is a national conference, so let me conclude by welcoming those of you who have come from other places to join us in our wonderful state. Western Australia is a place of huge potential that already provides 30 percent of our nation's export income. It can provide much more if we can inspire our people and our nation to engage together in a very creative way to that end. Knowledge and education are the key – not simply in rural regions, but right across the board.

On that note, and having asked many more questions than I have answers for, I now take very great pleasure in opening your conference and in wishing you great success in pursuing the theme of *Working Together, Staying Vital*.

Indigenous education: A collective task for all Australians

Stephen Kemmis, Marianne Atkinson and Roslin Brennan Kemmis, A.M.[1]

Abstract

There is a pressing need for coordinated responses to the disadvantage suffered by Indigenous Australians not just from schools but from other agencies, and especially responses that involve schools alongside other agencies working with Indigenous communities to build their collective efficacy (a combination of social cohesion and social control, especially control of youth by many adults in the community). This view of collective efficacy was emphasised by Emeritus Professor Tony Vinson (UNSW) in his recent report for Jesuit Social Services (Melbourne) called "Community Adversity and Resilience" (published by Jesuit Social Services, 2004). (Vinson showed that there has been a concentration of disadvantage over the last 20 and 5 years in fewer postcodes, and that some disadvantaged communities, because they have greater collective efficacy, do better in the face of adversity than others. Schools need to work with communities to see their educational work as part of collective community capacity-building. Schools may also need to recognise that if their work is not seen by Indigenous communities (and students) as building valued collective capacities through the education of each student, then young people may be disinclined to stay on in schooling, with the consequence that the students involved may inherit and continue the social and educational disadvantage suffered by many in the current parent generation of Indigenous Australians. This paper presents a range of recent statistics to demonstrate that many of the disadvantages suffered by Indigenous Australians (poorer educational outcomes, 20 years lower life expectancy for both males and females, higher rates of heart disease, lower birth weights, lower incomes, higher unemployment rates, higher rates of domestic violence, greater incarceration rates, and so on) have sources that schools alone cannot do much about, but that they must respond to every day a student comes to school suffering the consequences of those disadvantages. Opening and sustaining a genuinely mutually-respectful conversation between the school and the community is the only way that schools can be seen as part of the solution to the problem of the disadvantage suffered by many Indigenous Australians, rather than being seen as part of the problem.

Introduction

In this paper, we will first outline some of the issues for Indigenous people in Australia today. We will do this by examining some of the statistics about life for Indigenous people around the country – where Indigenous people live, statistics about life expectancy, and the like. We will illustrate these data by referring to a fictional Indigenous family, parents Fred and Marge, and children Sam and Donna. We will speak about their conditions of housing, justice issues, employment and income. We will conclude this section with reference to some features of their educational participation and outcomes.

We will then address the question of "what is to be done?" about the social and educational problems confronted by many Indigenous Australians. We will describe some of the things that require action *outside* education as well as *within* it. Schools alone cannot address these inequalities – nor can any providers of services to Indigenous people.

In passing, we confront the question of the reproduction of social inequalities – a very pressing issue to be addressed for Indigenous Australians.

We also address the question of what needs to be done *inside education*. We argue that educational responses are necessary, but that both whole of government initiatives and community-based initiatives are crucial in meeting the challenges for many Indigenous communities. We argue that community-based solutions are always necessary, because it is in real communities that the problems occur, and in which they may be solved. We refer to the work of Tony Vinson on community adversity and resilience, to show that even, though some communities face relative disadvantage, they have the collective efficacy that allows them to meet the challenges they face. We explore ways this collective efficacy can be fostered.

We conclude with suggestions about how all Australians need to work together if the problems of Indigenous Australia are to be addressed. The solution is *not* in making Indigenous Australia dependent on the good will and social programs devised for them by non-Indigenous Australians, nor is their future entirely in their own

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[1] Stephen Kemmis is Professor of Education, Marianne Atkinson is Research Fellow, and Roslin Brennan Kemmis, A.M. is Senior Lecturer in Vocational Education and Training, in the School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales 2678, Australia. Email: skemmis@csu.edu.au, rbrennan@csu.edu.au

hands. We must work together to overcome the inequalities and disadvantage Indigenous Australians endure, and only by doing so can we practice the responsible reconciliation that we believe to be morally and socially necessary for our society as a whole.

Issues for Indigenous Australians

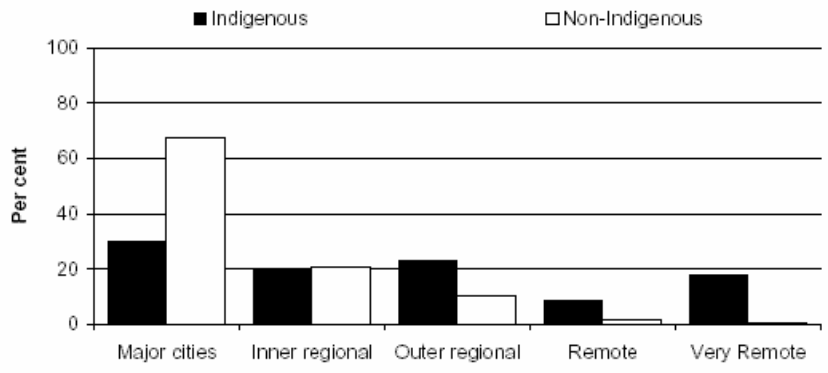
Where Do Australia's Indigenous People Live?

The family

Fred is 23 years old and Marge is 22 years old. They got together about 5 years ago and they have two children, Sam who is 4 years old and Donna who is 3 years old. They are an Indigenous family and they live in a regional centre. The following is a story of their lives set in the context of statistical data that gives precision and authenticity to the descriptions that we are suggesting. Not all Indigenous families are like this one. Some families are in better situations with more life choices and others are in worse situations. We must emphasise that the story of this family is a story of 'likelihoods'.

Fred and Mary, Sam and Donna are four of the 458,520 Indigenous people who live in Australia (actually, there were 458,520 Indigenous people in Australia on June 30th, 2001). Over 70 per cent of Indigenous people live in NSW, Queensland and Western Australia.

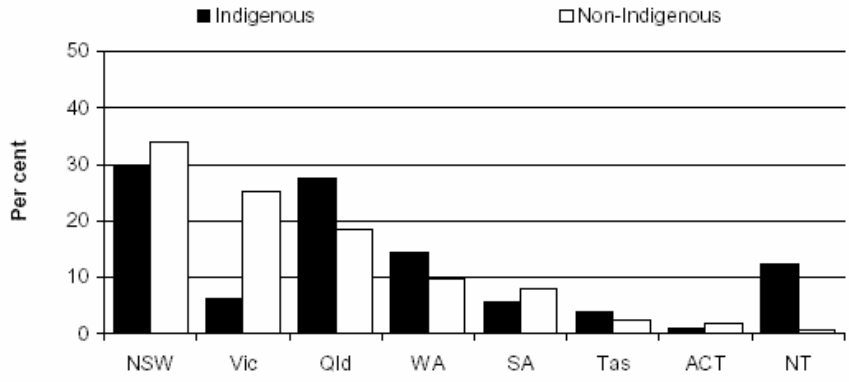
Figure 2.4 **Proportion of the population in each geographic region, 2001**



Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p 2.18

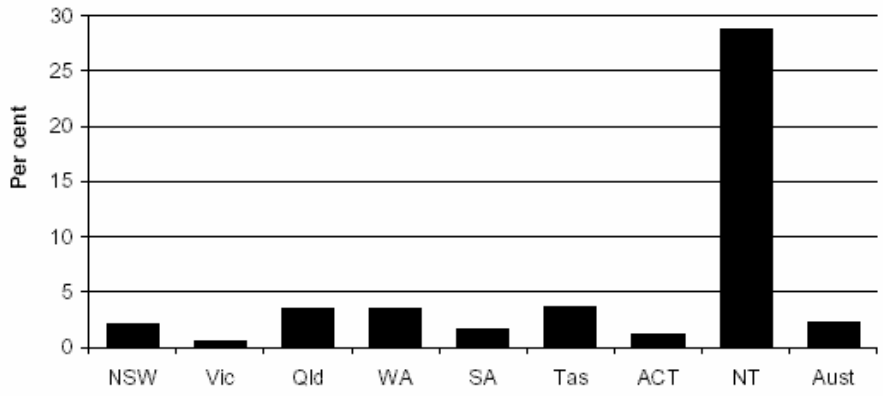
The next graphs and table show the distribution of Indigenous Australians by state/territory:

Figure 2.5 **Proportion of the population in each State and Territory, 2001**



Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p 2.19

Figure 2.6 **Proportion of the population who are Indigenous by State and Territory, 2001**



Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p 2.19

Indigenous population of Australia by state/territory

2.4 EXPERIMENTAL ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION(a) — 30 JUNE 2001

	Indigenous population	*Proportion of the total Australian Indigenous population*	*Proportion of the total state or territory population*
	no.	*%*	*%*
New South Wales	134 888	29.4	2.1
Victoria	27 846	6.1	0.6
Queensland	125 910	27.5	3.5
South Australia	25 544	5.6	1.7
Western Australia	65 931	14.4	3.5
Tasmania	17 384	3.8	3.7
Northern Territory	56 875	12.4	28.8
Australian Capital Territory	3 909	0.9	1.2
Australia(b)	458 520	100.0	2.4

(a) Final rebased experimental Indigenous estimated resident population as at 30 June 2001.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

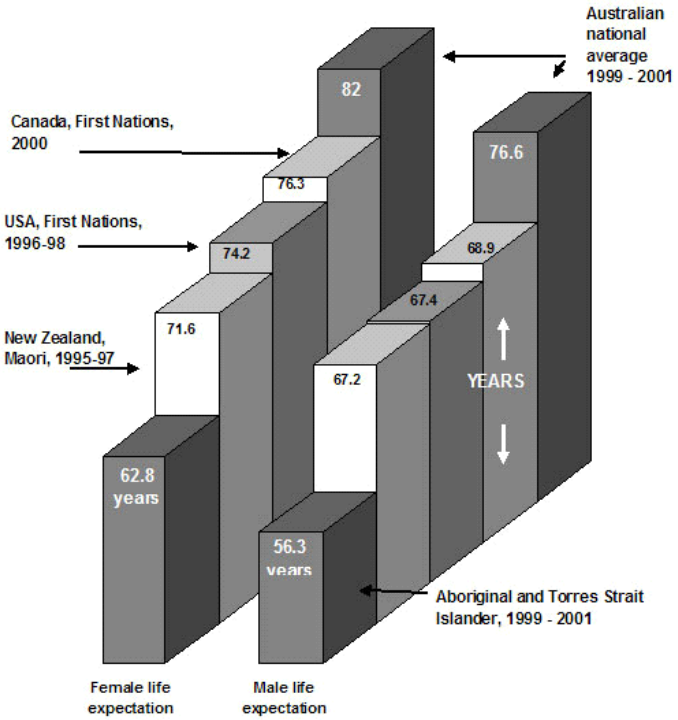
Source: ABS and AIHW (2003)The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, p.16

Indigenous Life Stories and Statistics

How Long Is a Life?

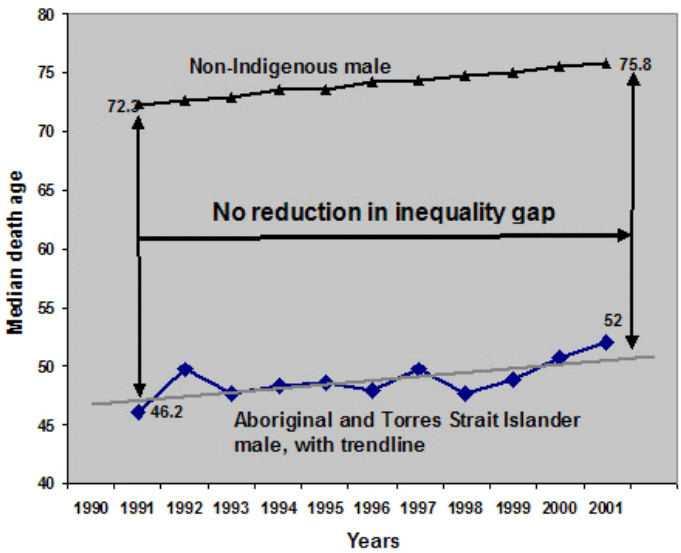
Fred and Marge cannot expect to live to old age. Fred has a life expectancy of 56 years and Mary will die around the age of 62 years. They will both die about 20 years before their non-Indigenous Australian counterparts. Fred and Mary will die appreciably earlier than New Zealand Maoris and the members of the First Nations of both the USA and Canada. Improved health services have contributed to a slight increase in the life expectancies of Fred and Mary but the gap between the possible lengths of their lives and those of non-Indigenous Australians has remained static. Sam and Donna may be facing the same circumstances.

The life expectancies of selected Indigenous peoples, selected years



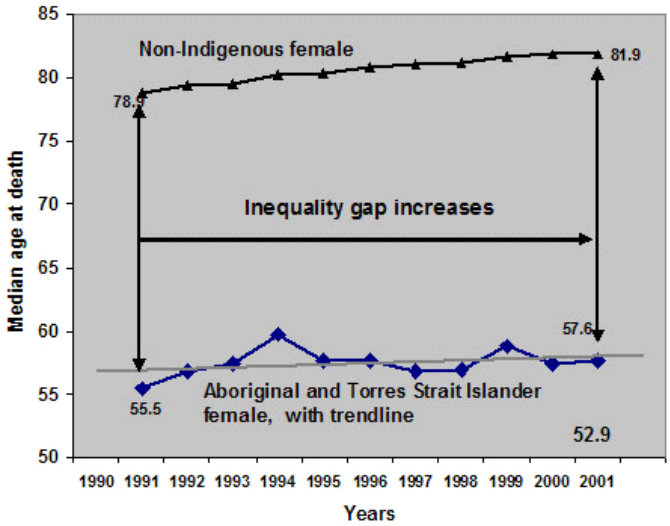
Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, p.???

Although there have been big increases in the life expectancy of Indigenous males over the last decade or so, the gap between Indigenous males and non-Indigenous males has remained large – Indigenous men live about twenty years less than non-Indigenous men in Australia:



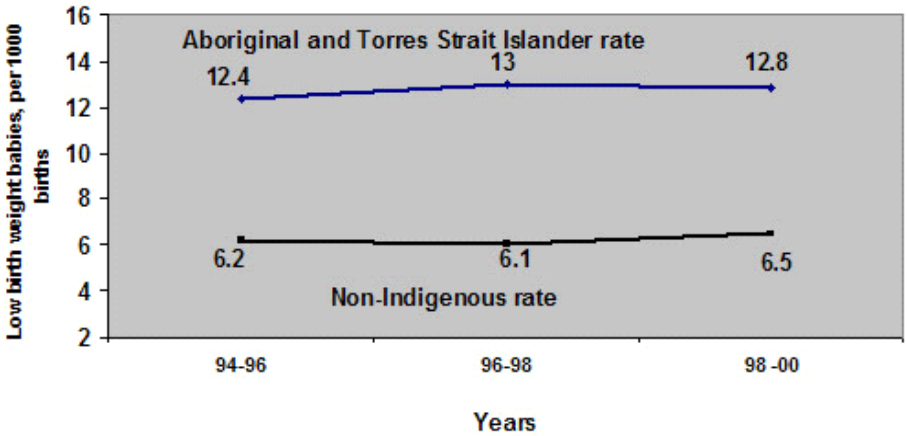
Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, p.???

Indigenous women also live about twenty years less than non-Indigenous women in Australia, but the gap between them appears to have increased slightly over the last ten years or so.



Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, p.???

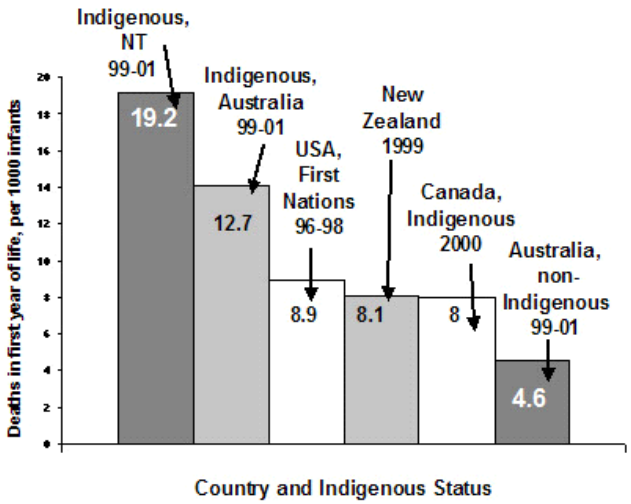
Sam and Donna are amongst the Indigenous children who have survived their first year of life. Their cousin in the Northern Territory died at 3months of age and the family knows that life can be snatched easily between birth and one year. Sam was born five weeks pre- mature and weighed less than average. Fred was out of work during Marge's pregnancy and they were forced to move house. All the expenses associated with relocation meant that high quality food was out of the question and Marge's general health suffered at this critical time. Sam is likely to be a below average student and is prone to many ear infections but he is currently receiving treatment from the local Aboriginal Health Service.
The rate of low birth weight is much higher for Indigenous babies than for non-Indigenous:



Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, p.???

Indigenous babies also have a substantially greater chance of dying in their first year of life than non-Indigenous babies. The next graph gives international comparisons for selected years between deaths in the first year of life per 1000 infants for some Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous infant mortality of Australia as a whole is nearly three times the rate for non-Indigenous infants. In the Northern Territory it is nearly five times the rate for non-Indigenous infants.

Infant mortality, Indigenous peoples, selected years



Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Marge and Fred both smoke and have diets high in fat and sugar. Fred drinks a little too much and does not enjoy a life style that is characterised by regular exercise. Both are candidates for respiratory and circulatory problems far in excess of those risks experienced by non-Indigenous Australians. They are also at risk of accidents and violence that could result in early death. Marge and Fred, and the children as they grow older, are the potential victims of suicide. Fred is particularly in danger as he approaches the 25 to 34 year age group and his son Sam is in much greater danger between the age of 15 and 24 than his non-Indigenous friends. Suicide is a problem that affects the lives of many Indigenous families and communities.
The ABS and AIHW give data for what they call "excess deaths" – deaths that occur at rates higher than expected for the Australian population as a whole. The causes from which Indigenous people die at a higher than expected rate than for all Australians appear in the next table:

9.12 MAIN CAUSES OF EXCESS DEATHS(a)(b) — 1999–2001

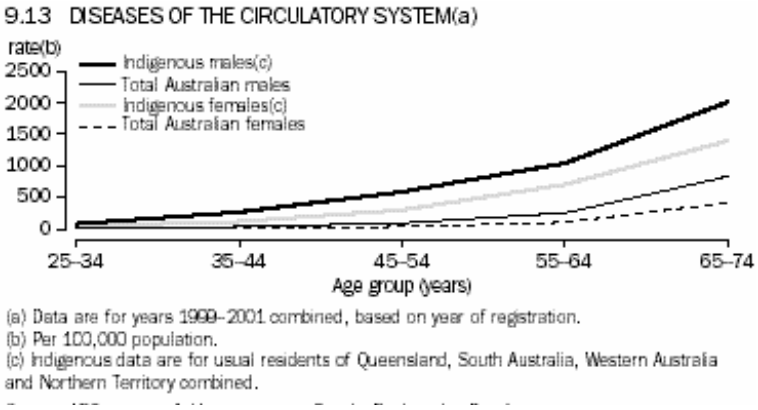
	Indigenous males	*Indigenous females*
	Proportion of excess	*Proportion of excess*
Causes of death	%	%
Diseases of the circulatory system (I00–I99)	27.7	27.0
External causes of morbidity and mortality (V01–Y98)	20.0	11.3
Neoplasms (C00–D48)	8.0	8.3
Diseases of the respiratory system (J00–J99)	9.4	9.2
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases (E00–E90)	9.3	17.4
Diseases of the digestive system (K00–K93)	5.1	5.7
All other causes	20.5	21.2
All causes	100.0	100.0

(a) Excess deaths are equal to observed deaths minus expected deaths (based on 1999–2001 total Australian age, sex and cause specific rates).

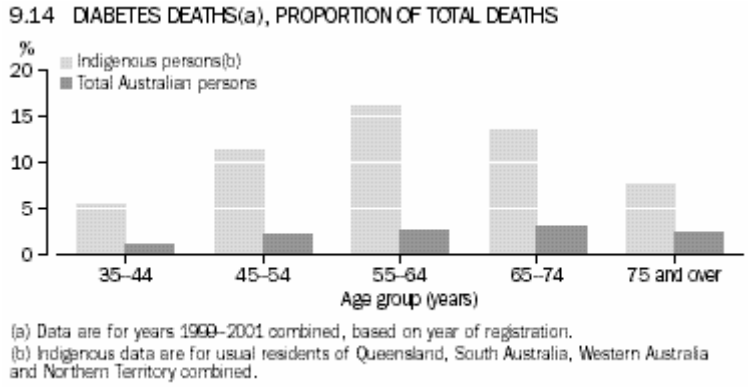
(b) Data are for Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory combined. Based on year of registration.

Source: ABS and AIHW (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, p 193

Lifestyle factors like smoking and diet contribute to some of these, as the following tables show.

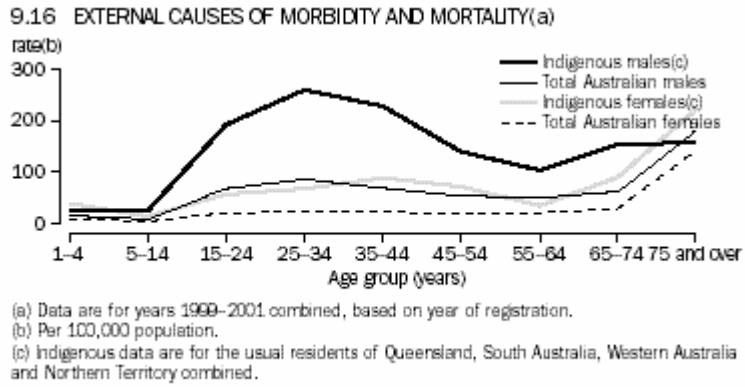


Source: ABS and AIHW (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, p 194



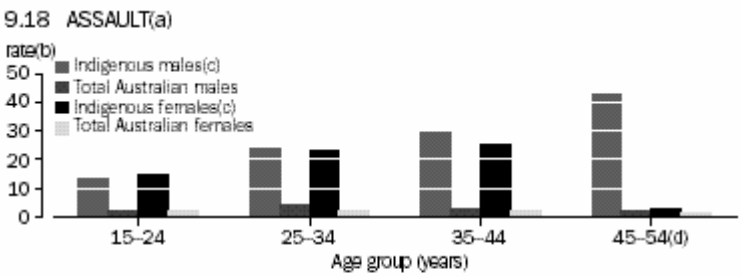
Source: ABS and AIHW (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, p 194

But some of the causes of excess Indigenous deaths are deaths from "external causes" – accidents and the like:



Source: ABS and AIHW (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, p 196

Some are the results of assaults:

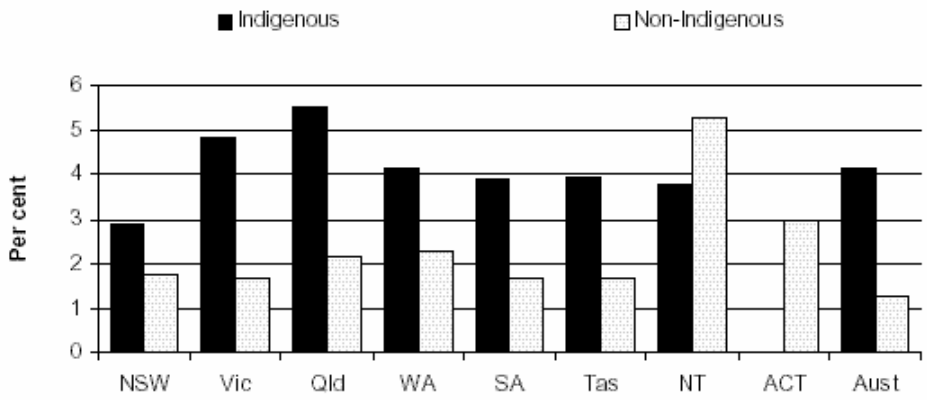


(a) Data are for years 1999–2001 combined, based on year of registration.
(b) Per 100,000 population.
(c) Indigenous data are for usual residents of Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory combined.
(d) Total Australian female rate is one.

Source: ABS and AIHW (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, p 197

And some are from "intentional self-harm" – suicide:

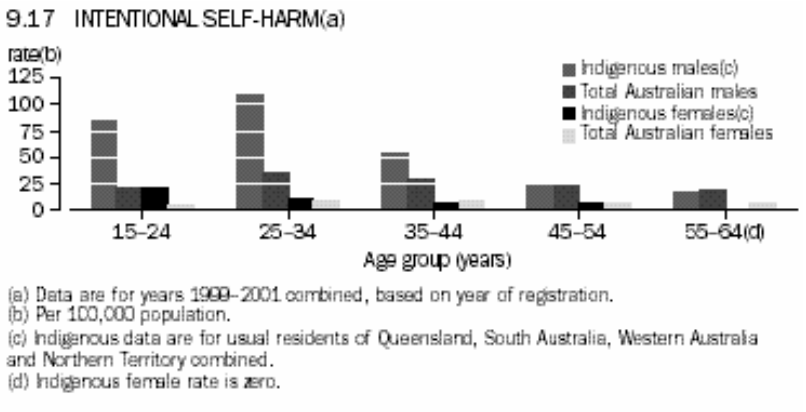
Figure 3.8.1 **Intentional self harm (suicide) deaths as a proportion of total deaths, 1999–2001**[a, b, c, d]



[a] Excludes Indigenous origin not stated. [b] Indigenous death registration data coverage varies across jurisdictions. While it is considered likely that virtually all Indigenous deaths are registered, there may be a proportion of deaths that are not identified as Indigenous. Therefore, the number of Indigenous deaths registered in 2001 is an underestimate of the actual number. [c] The proportion of homicides in the Indigenous population is derived by dividing the number of Indigenous homicides by total Indigenous deaths during 1999–2001. The proportion of homicides in the non-Indigenous population is derived by dividing the number of non-Indigenous homicides by total non-Indigenous deaths during 1999–2001. [d] The proportion of Indigenous suicide deaths in Tasmania was based on very low numbers.

Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p.3.41

While more males than females end their own lives in both groups, the rates for Indigenous males are far higher than for their non-Indigenous counterparts. It is the more tragic that this is the cause of death for so many young Indigenous people.



Source: ABS and AIHW (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, p 196

Short Generations

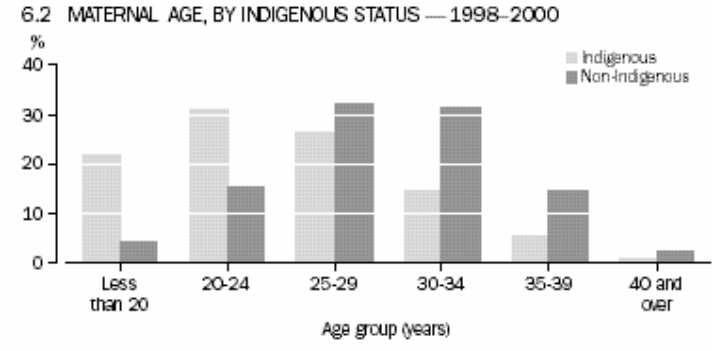
Marge and Fred, Donna and Sam are not likely to have the same sense of a 'life' as their non-Indigenous friends. It is as though their generations have been squashed into a short lifespan. Sam and Donna's grandparents are likely to be relatively young if they are still alive – about 45 years of age. However it is not likely that they will see their grandchildren celebrate their 18th birthdays. Marge and Fred like many of their Indigenous friends and family are young parents – under twenty when Sam was born – and their own parents are relatively young. This apparent youthfulness is circumscribed by the fact that life is cut short for all Indigenous people by about 20 years.

Sam and Donna are likely to have to live with death many times in their young lives. Dealing with grief, and the sense of loss that accompanies the death of a close friend or family member, are common experiences that they sometimes find difficult to understand.

The result of factors like those described earlier, about the life expectancy of Indigenous Australians, is that there are great differences between the overall age profile of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, as the next graph shows:

Source: ABS and AIHW (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, p.16

The generations of Indigenous Australians are shorter than for non-Indigenous Australians. The next graph shows that, on average, Indigenous women become mothers much earlier than non-Indigenous women. It should be remembered that this has been the case for quite some time – Indigenous women also become grandmothers and great-grandmothers at a younger age than their non-Indigenous counterparts.

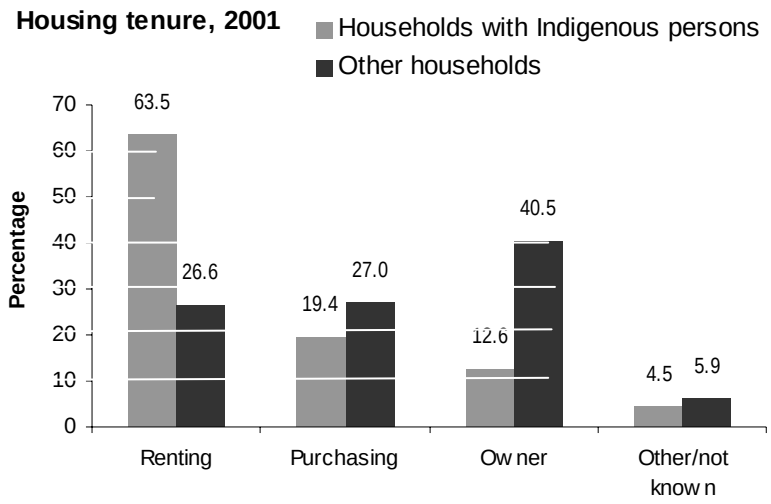


Source: ABS and AIHW (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, p 123

Housing

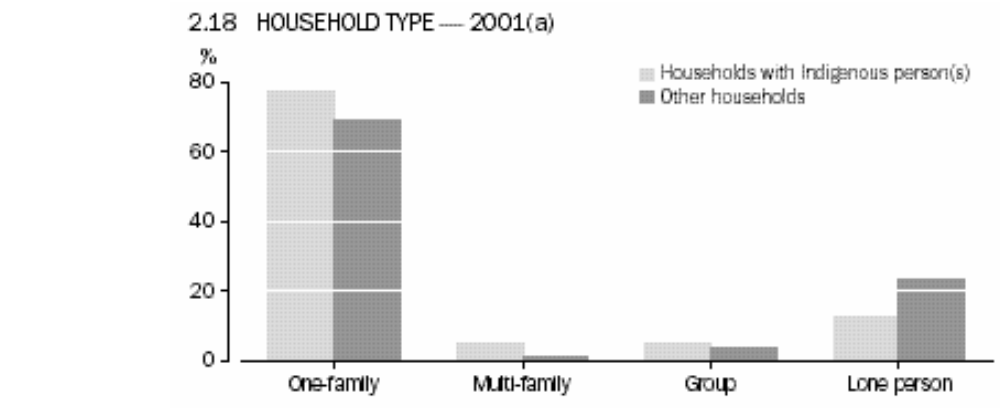
Marge and Fred are renting their home. They are unlikely to be able to buy their own home unless their employment and financial situation improves. Fred's cousin Don lives close by and alone. Sam and Donna share a bedroom that was previously a dining room that Fred converted for them. However because they live in a regional area their housing is of a much higher standard and less cramped than members of their family who live in a remote area of Australia. Sam and Donna often find it hard to find a space to 'be' in the house and this problem is not likely to improve as they grow older. Twenty per cent of Indigenous people in Australia live in overcrowded conditions.

The following graph shows "housing tenure" for 2001:



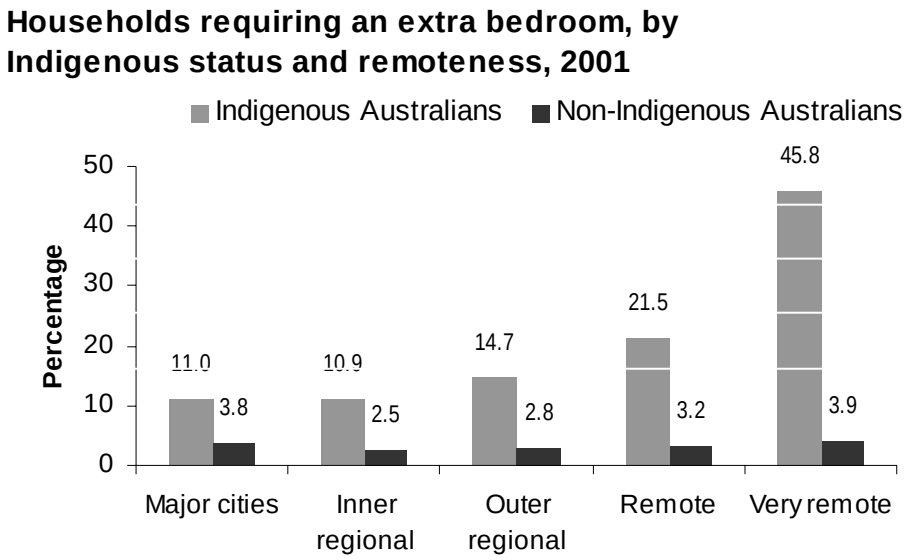
Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Indigenous Australians appear to live in different kinds of households than non-Indigenous Australians. In both groups, most live in one-family households, though slightly more Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people do so. Slightly more Indigenous people live in multi-family households. A big difference is that about 25% of non-Indigenous people live alone, compared with about 15% of Indigenous people.



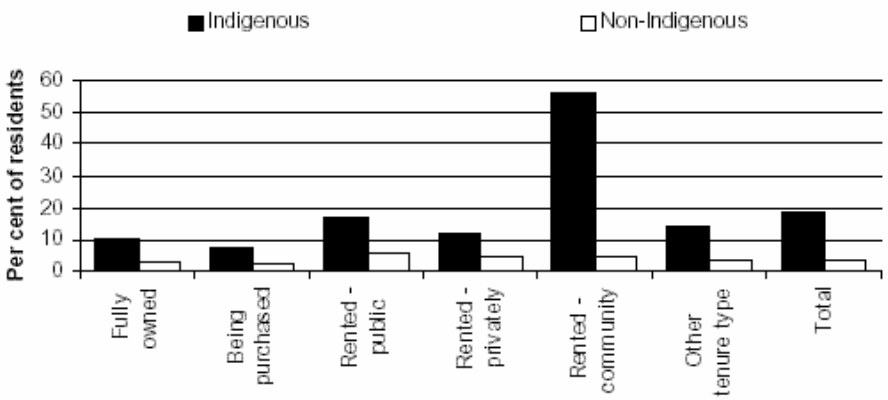
Source: ABS and AIHW (2003) The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, p.29

More Indigenous than non-Indigenous Australians live in households requiring an extra bedroom. The next table and graph show, by location, how many households require an extra bedroom.



Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Figure 10.3.4 **People living in overcrowded households by housing tenure, 2001**[a, b]



[a] The Indigenous status categories for this chart are based on responses to the Indigenous status question by usual residents of each household who were counted in the household on Census night. They are defined as follows: Indigenous — people in households with at least one Torres Strait Islander and/or Aboriginal resident; non-Indigenous — people in households without Indigenous residents and with at least one non-Indigenous resident. [b] Being purchased includes being purchased under a rent/buy scheme. Rented privately includes rented from a private landlord not in the same household, rented from a real estate agent, rented from an employer, rented from an 'other landlord', landlord type not stated, and being occupied rent free. Other tenure type includes being occupied under a life tenure scheme, other tenure type and tenure type not stated.

Source: SCRGSP (2003): Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p.10.27

Justice

Sam and Donna are fortunate that they are not amongst the children of Indigenous families who are victims of child abuse. In Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia, Indigenous children are approximately 8 times more likely to be victims of these crimes than their non-Indigenous friends. Nationally 20 out of every 1,000 Indigenous children are on care and protection orders. Sam and Donna are likely to know Indigenous children who are in this horrific situation and the impact on their extended lives through their communities is likely to be stark and difficult for them.

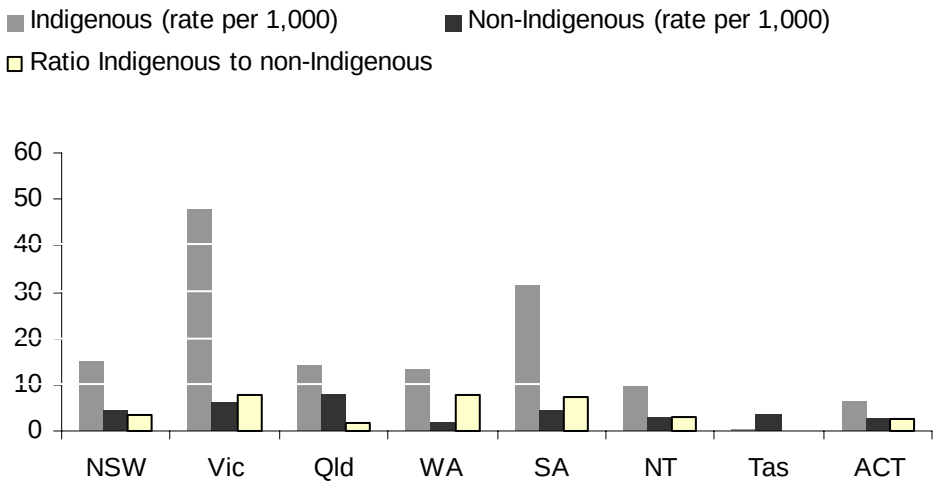
The number of children who are the subject of substantiated claims of child abuse differs markedly between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations of Australia. The following table and graph show the rates of substantiations by Indigenous status and state/territory, 2001-2. It may be the case that there are also marked differences between states/territories in their processes or practices of substantiation.

Rate of children the subject of substantiations: by Indigenous status and state / territory, 2001-02

State/Territory	*Indigenous (rate per 1,000)*	*Non-Indigenous (rate per 1,000)*	*Indigenous to Non-Indigenous Ratio*
NSW	***15.3***	***4.3***	***3.6***
Vic	***48.1***	***6.1***	***7.9***
Qld	***14.3***	***7.9***	***1.8***
WA	***13.5***	***1.7***	***7.9***
SA	***31.6***	***4.4***	***7.2***
NT	***9.7***	***3.2***	***3.0***
Tas	***0.3***	***2.6***	***0.2***
ACT	***6.5***	***2.6***	***2.5***

Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Rate of children the subject of substantiations: by Indigenous status and state / territory, 2001-02



Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

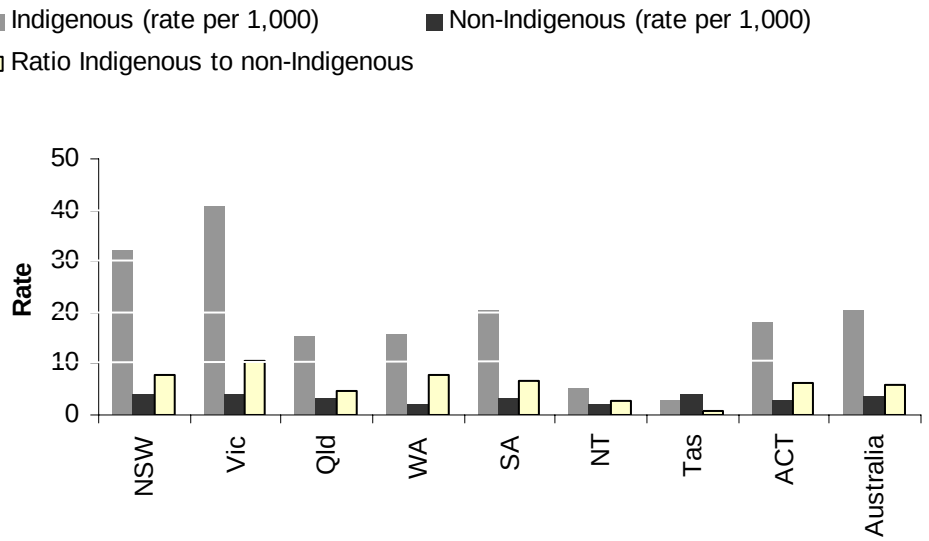
The rate of children on care and protection orders – being taken into the care of the state, also differs markedly between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

Rate of children on care and protection orders: by Indigenous status and state / territory, 2001-02

State/Territory	*Indigenous (rate per 1,000)*	*Non-Indigenous (rate per 1,000)*	*Indigenous to Non-Indigenous Ratio*
NSW	***31.9***	***4.0***	***8.0***
Vic	***40.6***	***3.9***	***10.4***
Qld	***15.1***	***3.3***	***4.6***
WA	***15.7***	***2.0***	***7.9***
SA	***20.3***	***3.1***	***6.5***
NT	***5.2***	***1.9***	***2.7***
Tas	***2.8***	***4.0***	***0.7***
ACT	***18.1***	***2.9***	***6.2***
Nationally	***20.5***	***3.5***	***5.9***

Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Rate of children on care and protection orders: by Indigenous status and state / territory, 2001-02



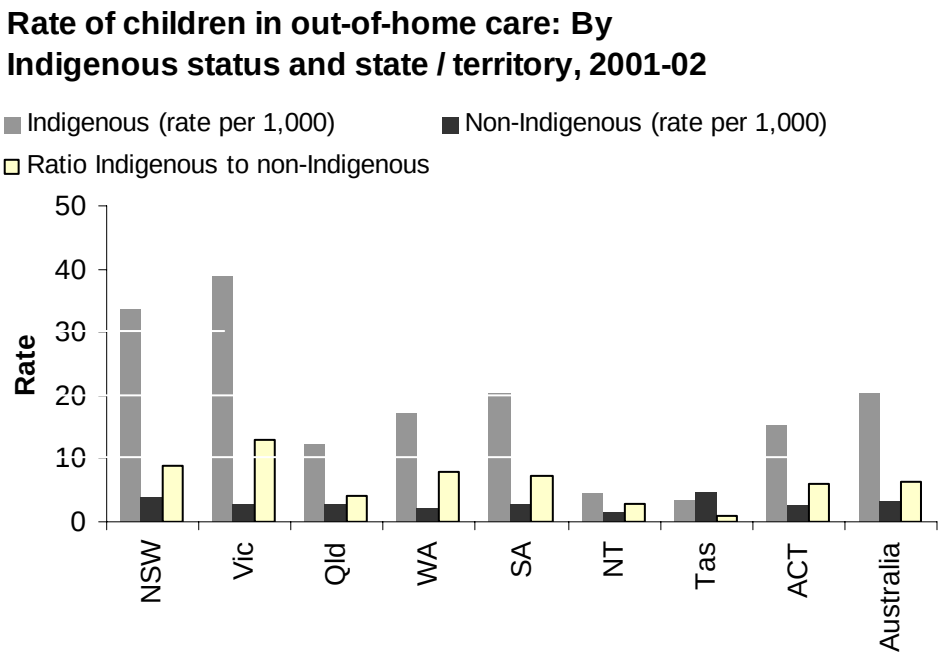
Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Many more Indigenous than non-Indigenous children are taken from their families to be looked after in out-of-home care. Again, the figures differ markedly by state or territory, so the figures may reflect differences in policies and practices in the different jurisdictions.

Rate of children in out-of-home care: By Indigenous status and state / territory, 2001-02

State/Territory	*Indigenous (rate per 1,000)*	*Non-Indigenous (rate per 1,000)*	*Indigenous to Non-Indigenous Ratio*
NSW	***33.5***	***3.8***	***8.8***
Vic	***39.0***	***3.0***	***13.0***
Qld	***12.2***	***2.9***	***4.2***
WA	***17.1***	***2.2***	***7.8***
SA	***20.2***	***2.8***	***7.2***
NT	***4.4***	***1.6***	***2.8***
Tas	***3.6***	***4.6***	***0.8***
ACT	***15.3***	***2.5***	***6.1***
Nationally	***20.1***	***3.2***	***6.3***

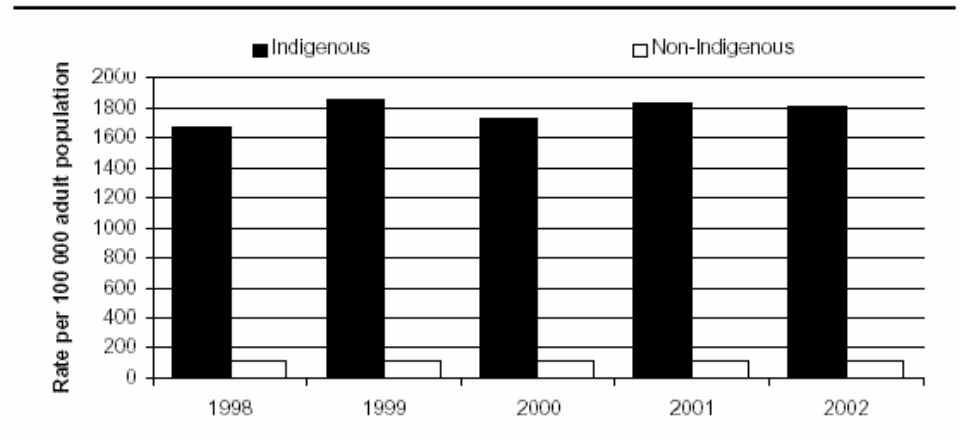
Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia



Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

It is not unusual for this young family to experience periods in which relatives or friends are in gaol. Fred's father Bill has spent three periods of his life in prison: once as a juvenile and twice as an adult. In 2002, there were 1,800 Indigenous people in prison per 100,000 of the Indigenous population and about ten times as many Indigenous males were in prison as females. Sam and Donna have come in contact with lots of families where a father, brother, uncle or cousin is incarcerated for periods of time. This makes for lots of problems at home, particularly the kinds of emotional, physical and financial stresses associated with visiting family members in prison. Sam and Donna's older cousin Peter is 15 years old and he is amongst those juveniles held in detention. In terms of national statistics, he was 22 times more likely to end up in detention than any of his non-Indigenous friends. When he is released his parents are not sure that he will want to go back to school. Peter's sister Susan, who is 13, is less likely to encounter the criminal justice system but she still has a much higher chance of this than any of her non-Indigenous friends.
The rates of imprisonment of Indigenous people are very substantially higher for Indigenous Australians, and have been for many years:

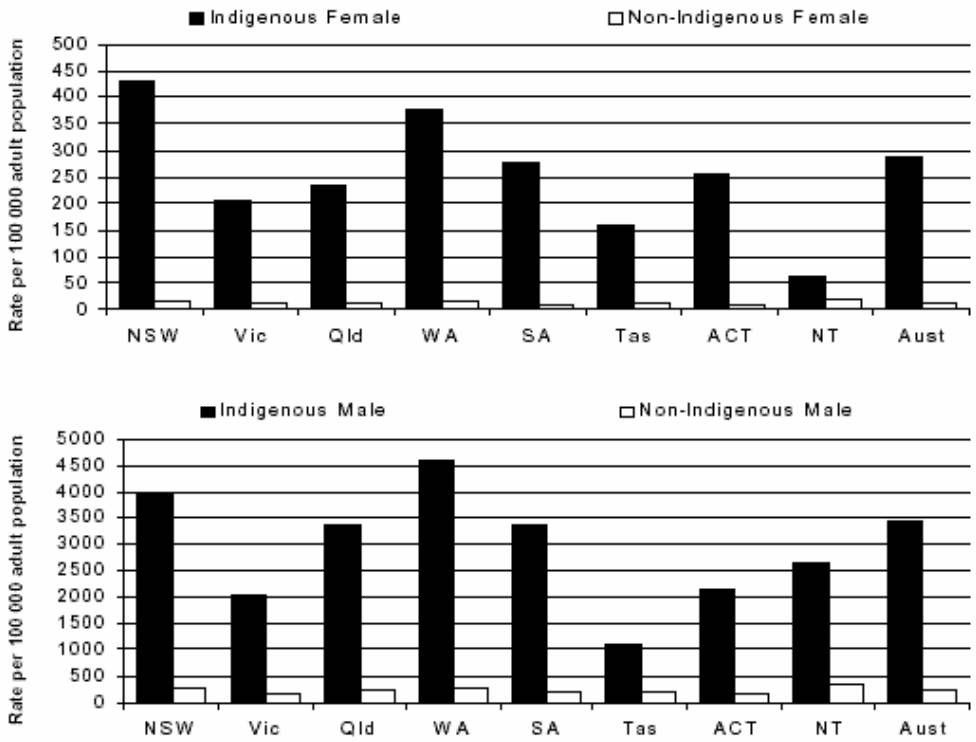
Figure 3.12.1 **Rate of imprisonment at 30 June each year**



Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p 3.59

Rates of imprisonment also vary widely between states and territories, suggesting that the problems and issues for Indigenous people may differ, as may the practices of police and courts in the different jurisdictions.

Figure 3.12.2 **Rate of imprisonment at 30 June 2002**[a, b]

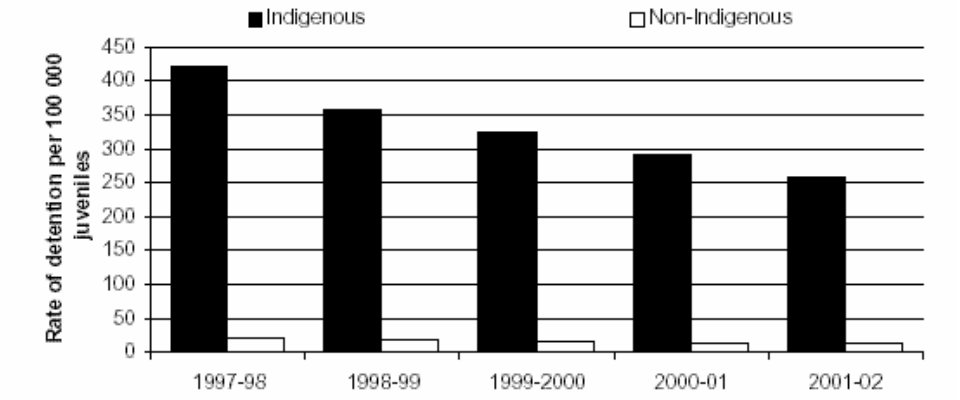


[a] Data for NSW exclude ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. [b] Data for the ACT include ACT prisoners held in the ACT as well as ACT prisoners held in NSW.

Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p 3.60

But it is not just adults who are in trouble with the law. The juvenile detention rates of Indigenous young people are also disproportionately high.

Figure 3.12.4 **Rate of detention, per 100 000 juveniles, aged 10–17 years**[a, b]



[a] Data not available from Tasmania for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people for these years. [b] All data are taken from the census count at 30 June of the relevant financial year.

Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p 3.62

Rates of juvenile detention also vary significantly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction:

Figure 3.12.5 **Rate of detention, per 100 000 male juveniles, aged 10–17 years as at 30 June 2002**[a, b]

[a] Data not available from Tasmania for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. [b] In Queensland and Victoria a juvenile is classified as being aged between 10–16 years of age (at the age of 17 the person is considered as an adult for custody purposes).

Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p 3.63

Employment

Fred has been in and out of work since the age of 15 when he left school. Currently he is working part time as a gardener's assistant and he is relieved that he is not one of the 27% of his Indigenous age group who are unemployed. Thirty-eight per cent of Indigenous people work part time like Fred. Fred is interested in gardening but he finds study almost impossible and he remains relatively unskilled. He has done a couple of Certificate 1 courses at the local TAFE but he didn't finish them and he can't seem to get any further as his literacy levels are quite low and he finds the classes don't suit his way of learning. Marge works part time as a cleaner but this job is likely to finish soon as the business has been sold. She doesn't quite know when the work will dry up and this makes planning anything difficult. Fred and Marge are considering moving some time soon, if they have the money, as unemployment rates are lower in the major cities or in the remote areas. However, this would mean moving Sam who has formed strong friendships with some children at the local pre-school and they hope that he can carry these friendships forward into his first year at school. Leaving family and community would be heart breaking.

Sam and Donna's cousin Peter who is currently in a Juvenile Detention Centre will probably be looking for work when he is released but none of the family is too optimistic about his chances. Thirty-one per cent of Indigenous Australians between 15 and 17 years of age are out of work and the family knows that his record will count against him with almost every employer.

This year, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission reported that

> Indigenous people employed in 2001 had the following characteristics:
>
> - 93% were employees, with four per cent self-employed and two per cent employers;
> - 55% worked in the private sector and 23% in government;
> - 52% were full time and 38% part time;
> - 60% worked in low skill occupations, 21% in medium skill occupations and 15% in high skill occupations;
> - 29% reported having a non-school qualification.
>
> In 2001, 18% of all Indigenous people who were classified as employed were engaged in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). The CDEP Scheme enables participants to exchange unemployment benefits for opportunities to undertake work and training in activities managed by local Indigenous community organisations. Compared with all Indigenous people who were employed, Indigenous people identified as CDEP participants were:

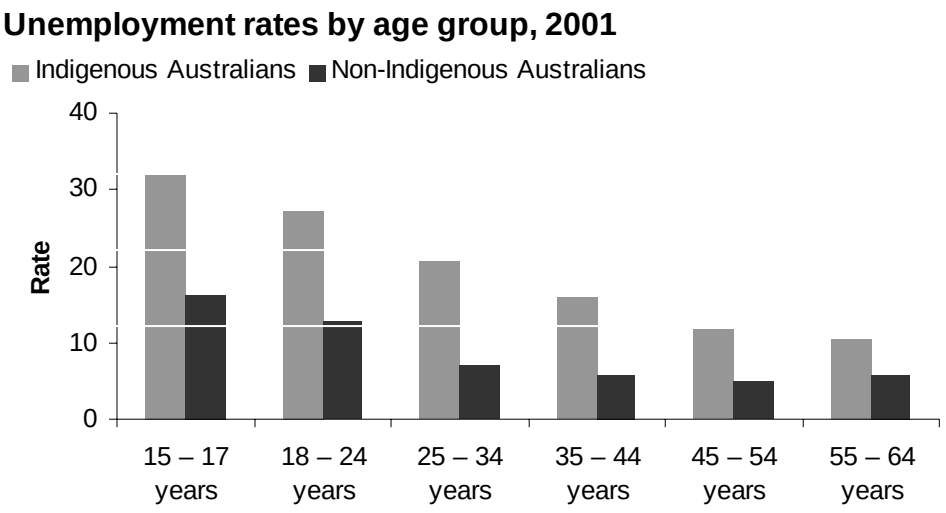
- twice as likely to work part time (74% compared with 38%);
- more likely to report working in a low skilled occupation (79% compared with 60%); and
- one third as likely to report having a non-school qualification (9% compared with 29%) (HREOC, 2004)

Indigenous Australians of working age have much higher unemployment rates than their non-Indigenous counterparts.

Unemployment rates by age groups, 2001

	Indigenous Australians	*Non-Indigenous Australians*
15 – 17 years	31.8	16.3
18 – 24 years	27.3	12.8
25 – 34 years	20.7	7.1
35 – 44 years	16	5.7
45 – 54 years	11.7	4.9
55 – 64 years	10.4	5.7

Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

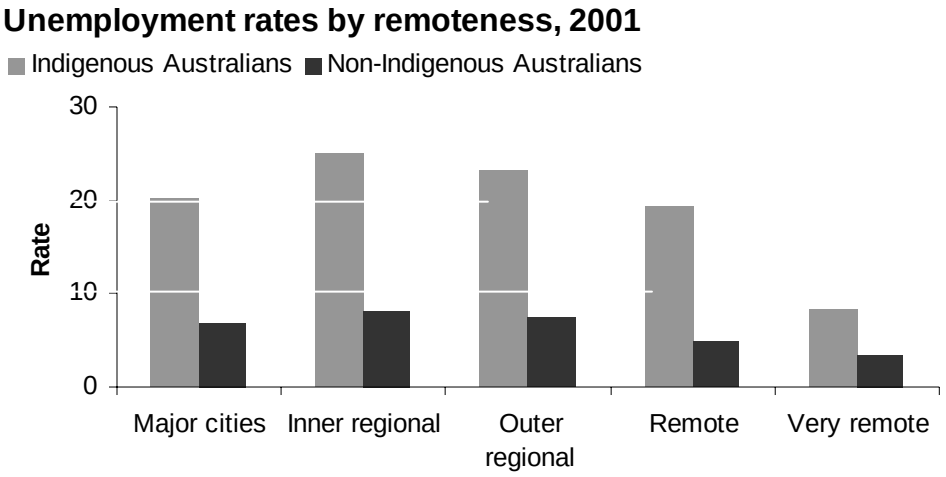


Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Unemployment rates by remoteness, 2001

	Indigenous Australians	*Non-Indigenous Australians*
Major cities	***20.1***	***6.9***
Inner regional	***25.0***	***8.1***
Outer regional	***23.1***	***7.4***
Remote	***19.2***	***4.9***
Very remote	***8.3***	***3.5***

Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia



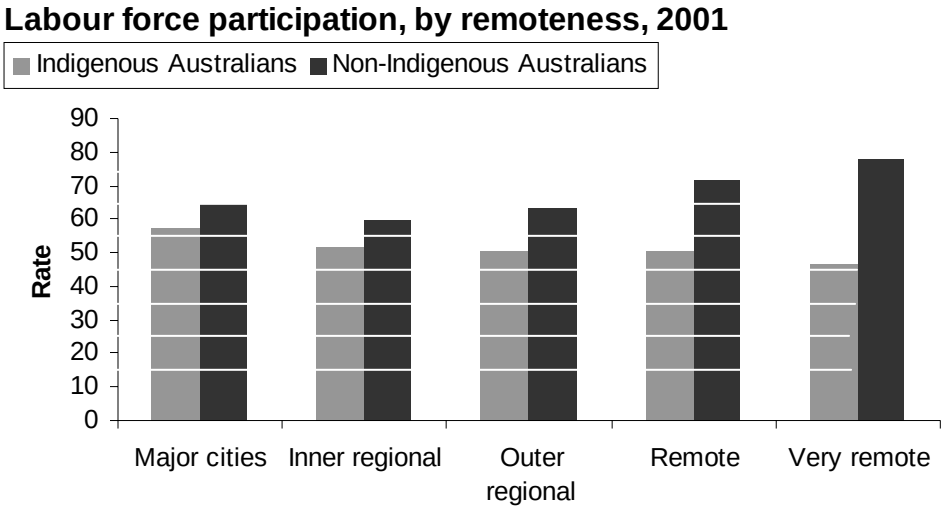
Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

The following table and graph show the opposite side of the coin from unemployment – participation in the labour force. We should note, however, that indigenous people participating in Community Development Employment programs (CDEPs) are counted as 'employed' in these figures.

Labour force participation by remoteness, 2001

	Indigenous Australians	*Non-Indigenous Australians*
Major cities	***57.3***	***64.3***
Inner regional	***52.0***	***59.9***
Outer regional	***50.7***	***63.3***
Remote	***50.5***	***71.8***
Very remote	***46.2***	***78.1***

Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

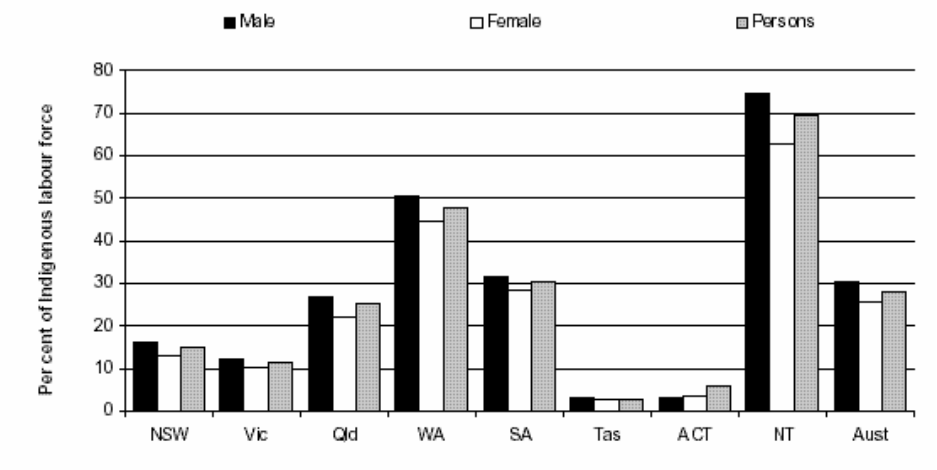


Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Fred's brother John is working part time with the Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) team who run a lawn cutting and rubbish removal business. He is also receiving some training in the maintenance of lawn mowers. He would like to start his own business but the odds are against him. Only 4 per cent of Indigenous people are self-employed. John works with quite a few members of his community in the CDEP team and this program accounts for about 30% of the Indigenous employment in this regional centre.

The following graph shows CDEP participation by state/territory:

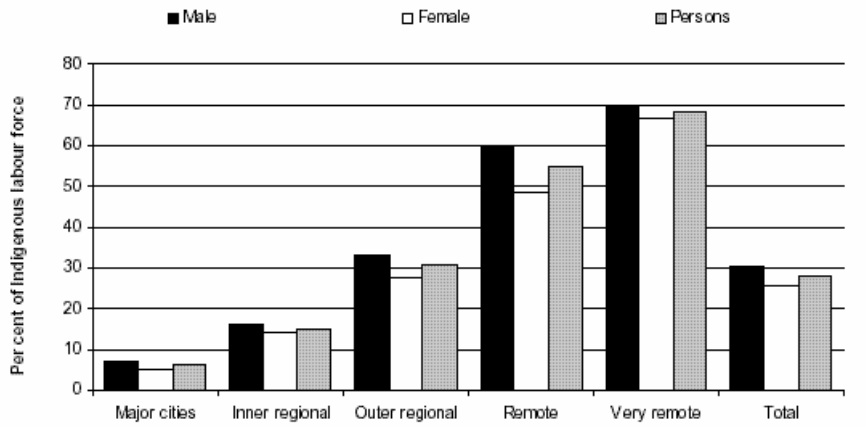
Figure 11.2.1 **CDEP participation, 2003**



Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p.11.11

The next shows CDEP participation by remoteness:

Figure 11.2.2 **CDEP participation, 2003**



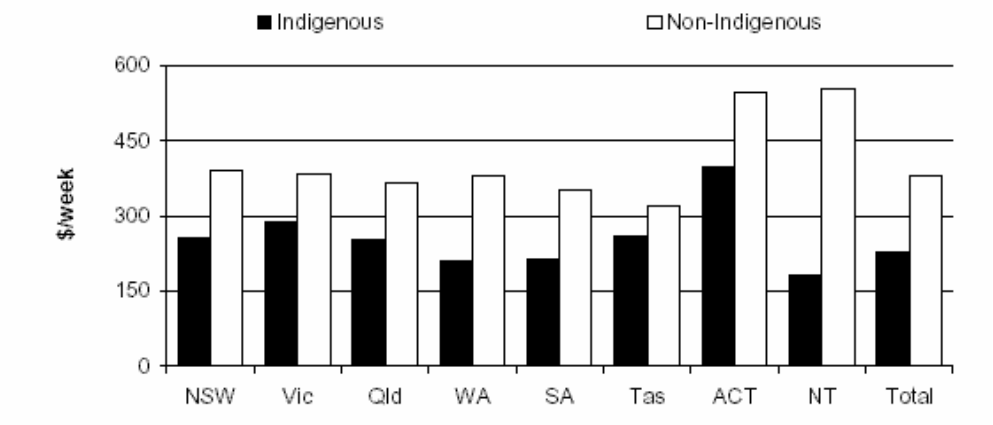
Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p.11.12

Income

Money is always a problem with the family. Fred and Marge are not very good money managers and often run out of money before the next pay packet comes in. Part-time work and uncertain hours make budgeting and managing a family very difficult even before they come to terms with the relatively low wages that they are paid. Nearly 30% of Indigenous people earn between $120 and $199 gross per week and Fred and Marge's combined income per week, in a good week, could be about $350. Food and rent take a big chunk of this income (in 2001, their rent was $105 in a regional area). After rent, they have about $245 to meet all

their expenses. They are beginning to worry about how they are going to find the money for Sam's school uniform and Donna's pre-school fees next year when Marge's part time work dries up. Many of their Indigenous friends and family members are in the same situation. Because Marge works at night and Fred likes a drink, the children are often given money to buy their tea from the corner shop. Donna has put on a lot of weight just recently and Sam eats lollies in preference to other foods. Sam's cousin is a diabetic and his uncle died from a diabetes related illness two years ago.
Around Australia, Indigenous people earn significantly less each week than non-Indigenous people. On the basis of the following graph, Fred and Marge are thinking of moving to Canberra.

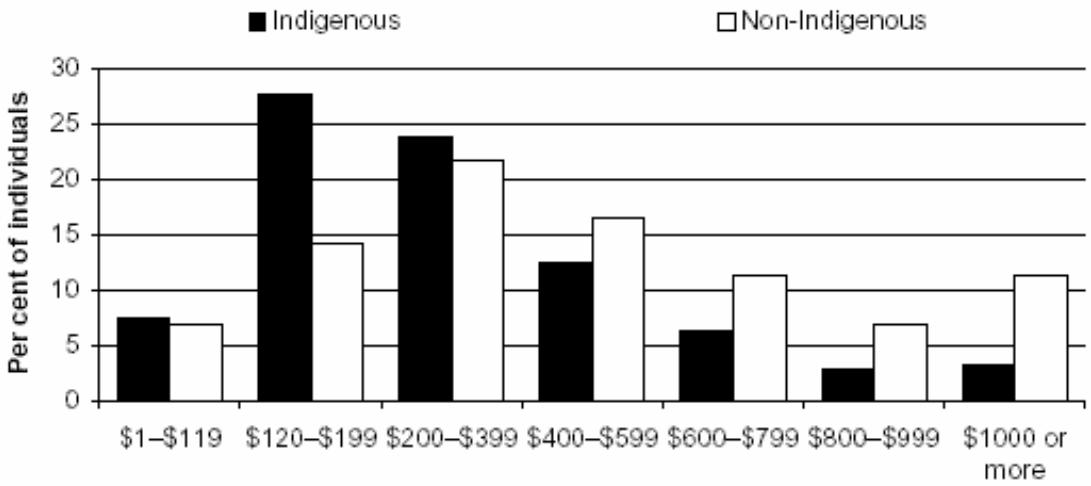
Figure 3.6.3 **Median gross weekly individual income, 2001**



Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators, 2003, p 3.29

The picture becomes still clearer when the weekly incomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers are compared: a greater proportion of Indigenous people earn less than non-Indigenous people.

Figure 3.6.4 **Gross weekly individual income ranges, 2001**



Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators, 2003, p 3.30

Education

Fred and Marge both left school at Year 10 and quite a lot of their friends in more remote areas left school in Year 7 and Year 8. There aren't many members of their community who went to Year 12. Only 17 % of Indigenous students make it to Year 12 or its equivalent. This is a stark contrast to the 40% of non-Indigenous students who are in education or training at this level. Fred and Marge began secondary school with their Indigenous friends but only 36% of them were likely to stay until Year 12. Seventy five per cent of non-Indigenous students who were in Year 7 with Fred finished their HSC. Indigenous students generally didn't score too well in these exams.

Fred and Marge don't have any qualifications as their attendance in Year 10 meant that the Certificate could not be awarded. Most of the Indigenous children they come into contact with now are more regular in their attendance at school. Fred has tried a number of TAFE courses but these did not help with employment and he didn't complete them. Fred and Marge are amongst the 72% of Indigenous people with no qualifications at all.

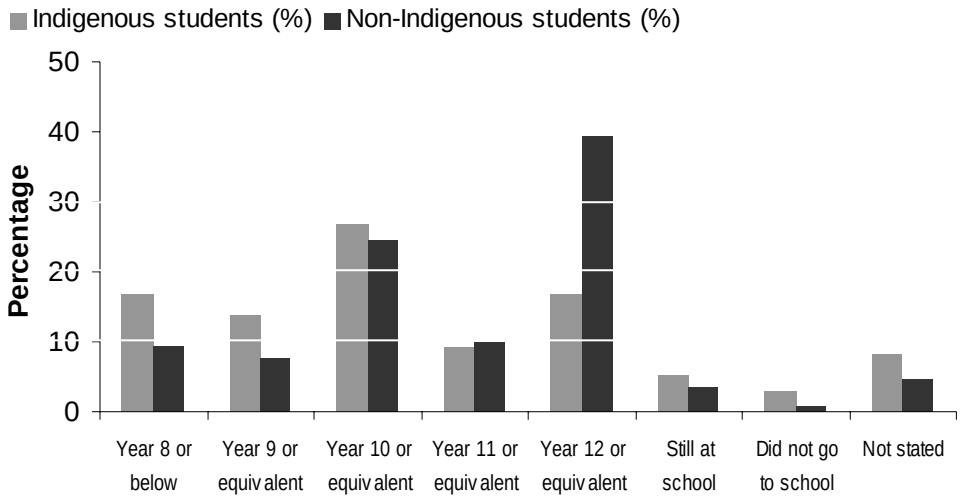
Fred and Marge hope that Sam and Donna will have more education than they did, but they recognise that their chances of going to university are quite slim. Getting there and then keeping them there are two different issues. Indigenous students have much higher University attrition rates than their non-Indigenous friends. If Sam and Donna don't make it to Year 12 Fred and Marge hope that they can go to TAFE and join the 10% of Indigenous people who have a Certificate and this may help them find work.

Highest level of schooling completed, 2001

	Indigenous students (%)	*Non-Indigenous students (%)*
Year 8 or below	***16.8***	***9.4***
Year 9 or equivalent	***13.8***	***7.6***
Year 10 or equivalent	***27.0***	***24.5***
Year 11 or equivalent	***9.2***	***9.9***
Year 12 or equivalent	***16.8***	***39.5***
Still at school	***5.1***	***3.5***
Did not go to school	***3.0***	***1.0***
Not stated	***8.4***	***4.6***

Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Highest level of schooling completed, 2001

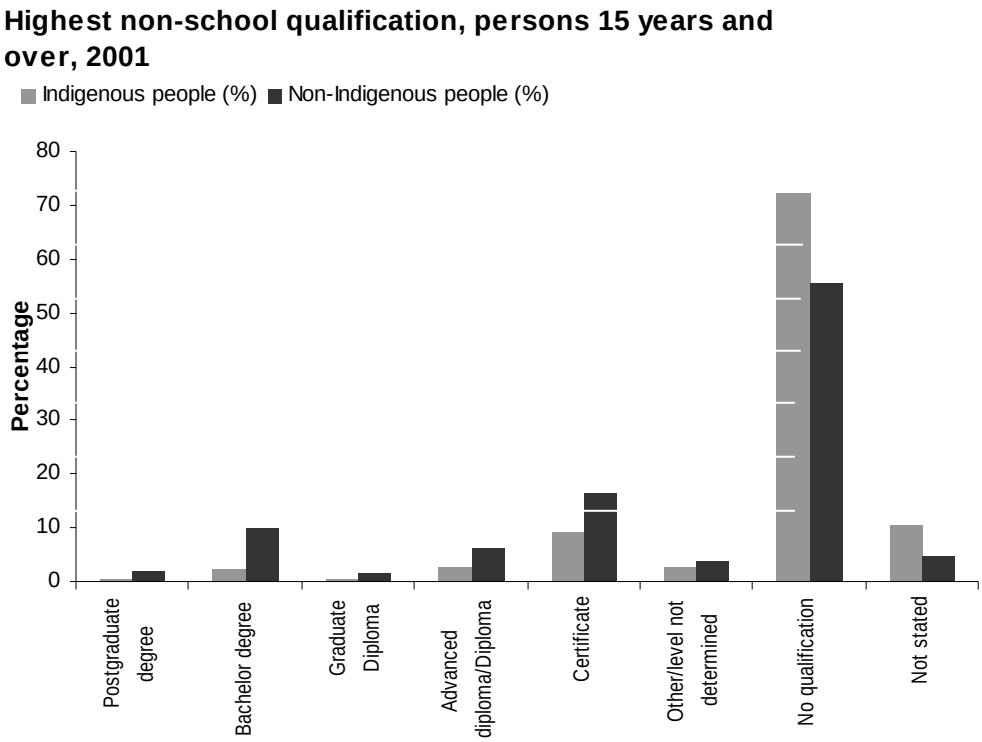


Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

Highest non-school qualification, Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over, 2001

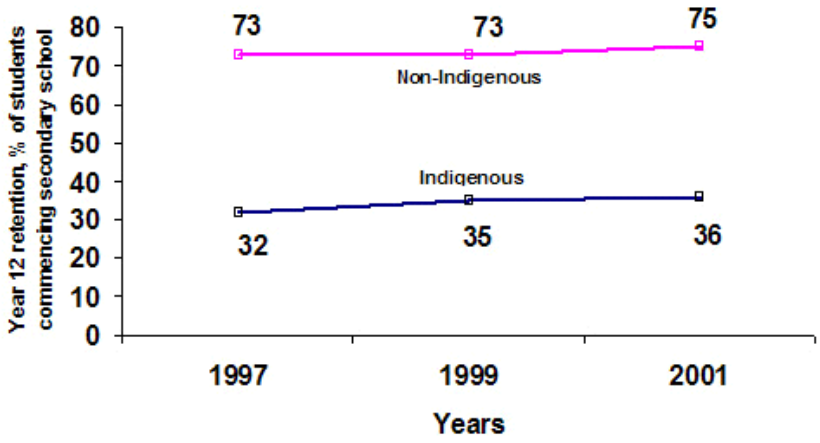
	Indigenous people (%)	*Non-Indigenous people (%)*
Postgraduate degree	***0.28***	***1.91***
Bachelor degree	***2.26***	***10.23***
Graduate Diploma	***0.36***	***1.44***
Advanced diploma/Diploma	***2.49***	***6.29***
Certificate	***9.38***	***16.43***
Other/level not determined	***2.76***	***3.56***
No qualification	***72.14***	***55.30***
Not stated	***10.33***	***4.84***

Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia



Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

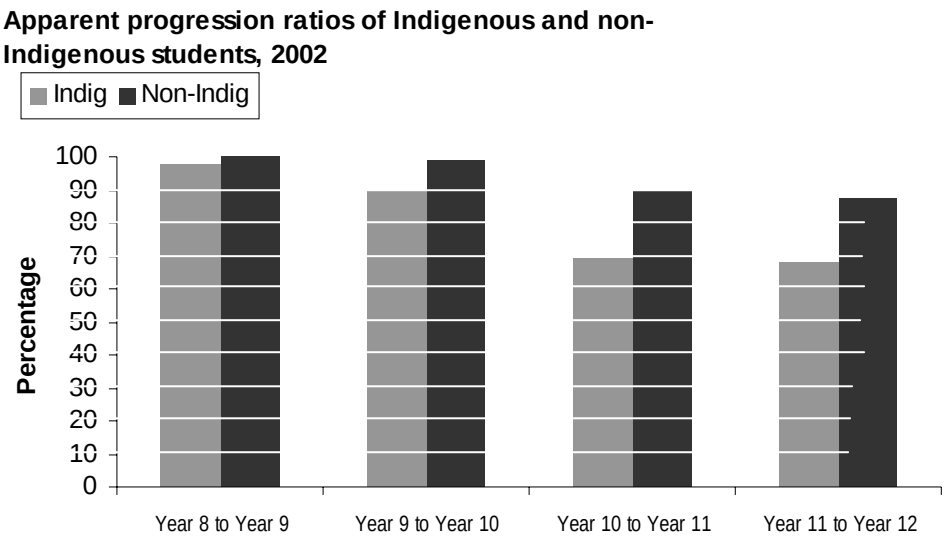
Apparent year 12 retention rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from commencement of secondary school



Source: HREOC (2004) A Statistical Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

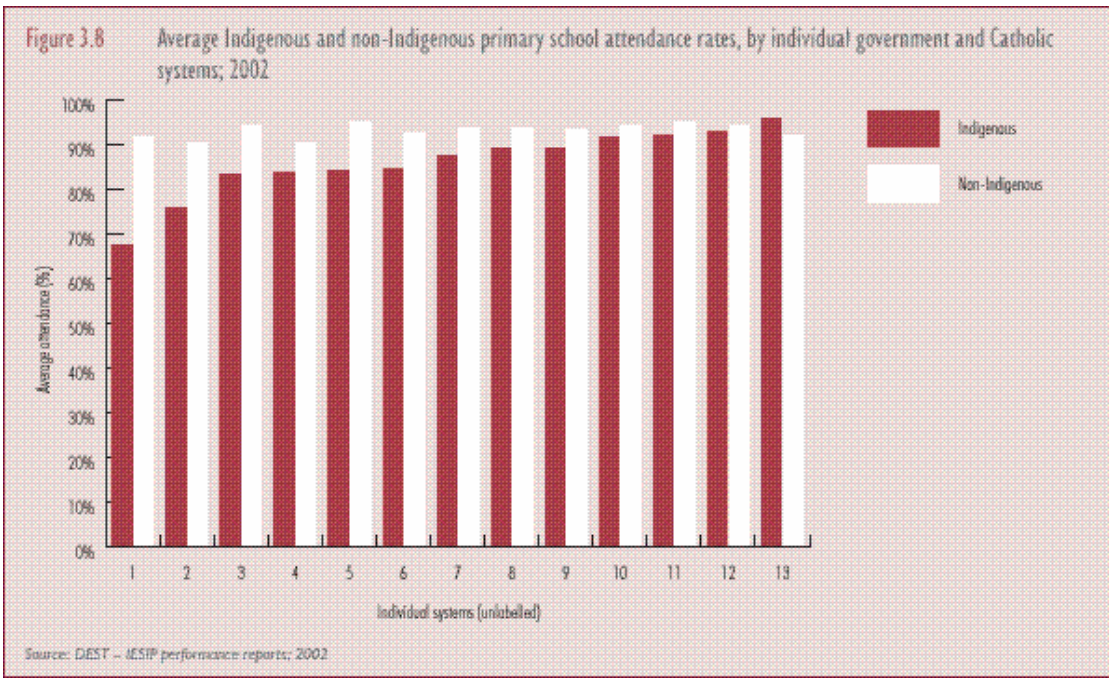
Apparent grade progression ratios of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, Australia, 1999-2002 (percentages)								
	Year 8 to Year 9		*Year 9 to Year 10*		*Year 10 to Year 11*		*Year 11 to Year 12*	
Year	*Indig*	*Non-Indig*	*Indig*	*Non-Indig*	*Indig*	*Non-Indig*	*Indig*	*Non-Indig*
1999	*92.7*	*99.8*	*86.3*	*98.2*	*67.3*	*88.6*	*66.4*	*85.7*
2000	*94.2*	*99.8*	*88.4*	*98.1*	*65.4*	*88.1*	*65.0*	*84.6*
2001	*96.1*	*99.8*	*89.7*	*98.6*	*67.6*	*89.4*	*66.6*	*86.5*
2002	*97.5*	*99.7*	*89.6*	*98.6*	*69.0*	*90.0*	*67.8*	*87.1*

Source: DEST (2002) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, p.41.



Source: DEST (2002) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, p.41.

Overall primary school attendance rates by unspecified individual government and Catholic education systems, 2002, average attendance (percentage)



Source: DEST (2002) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, p 43

Overall secondary school attendance rates by unspecified individual government and Catholic education systems, 2002, average attendance (percentage)

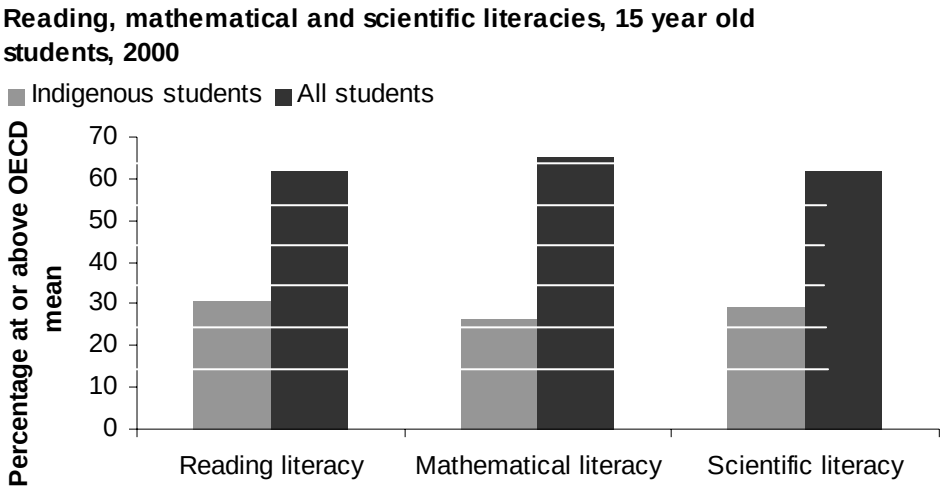
Source: DEST (2002) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, p 43

Overall, the educational attainment of Indigenous Australians is well below that of non-Indigenous Australians. The DEST (2002) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training gives much data attesting to this sad conclusion. We present the following table and graph as one indication of the relative educational achievement of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous people – the rate of 15 year olds meeting or exceeding OECD means for reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. The 'gaps' between the achievements of the two groups are unmistakeable.

Percentage of 15 year old students achieving at or above the OECD mean for reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy, by Indigenous and All student groups, PISA, 2000

	Reading literacy	*Mathematical literacy*	*Scientific literacy*
Indigenous students	*30.7*	*26.2*	*29.1*
	± 3.1	*± 4.9*	*± 4.1*
All students	*61.8*	*65.4*	*61.8*
	± 1.4	*± 1.6*	*± 1.9*

Source: DEST (2002) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, p.32

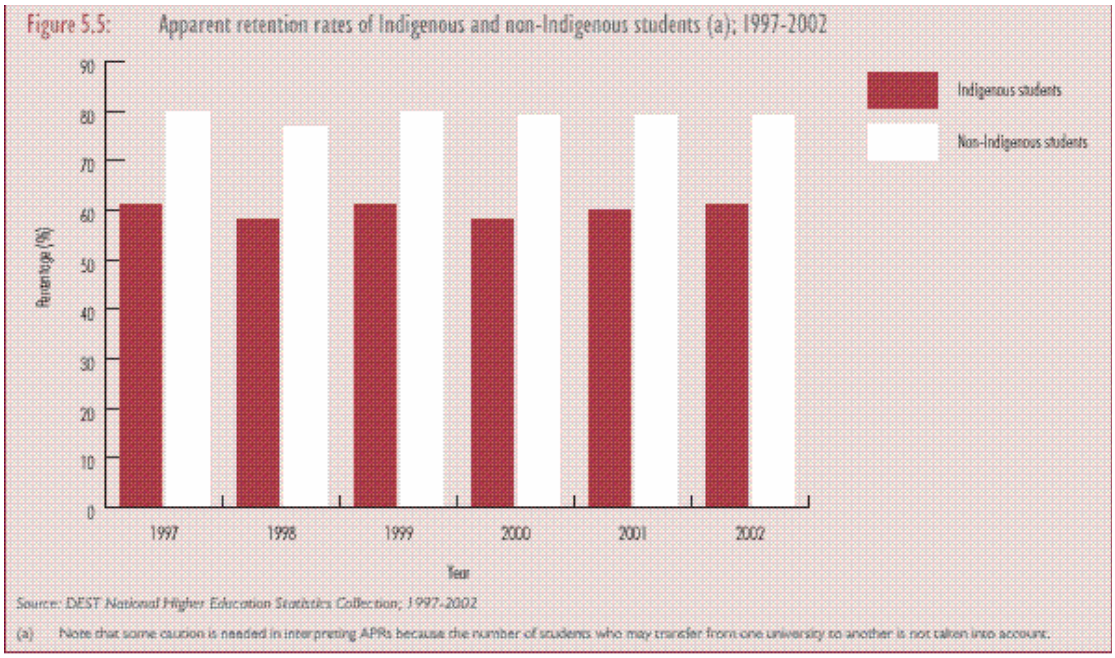


Source: DEST (2002) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, p.32

Participation rates of Indigenous students in higher education, 1997-2002

Source: DEST (2002) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, p 77

Retention rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in higher education, 1997-2002



Source: DEST (2002) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, p 78

What Is To Be Done?

Doing something about the social and educational problems confronted by many Indigenous Australians requires action *outside* education as well as *within* it.

Outside Education

Fred and Marge, Sam and Donna are the human family faces of the statistics presented above. Behind the figures there are real lives being lived in sometimes humiliating and often difficult circumstances. When Sam and Donna come to school they bring with them the weight of these statistics translated into behaviours and

attitudes and states of health and well being that require attention and understanding. Whilst Sam and Donna may not experience the force of all the indicators of disadvantage, their lives will have been touched by others who have. Their personal and community relationships and their growing up have been played out against a backdrop of ill health, poor housing, low incomes, high levels of incarceration, uncertain employment and relatively low levels of education and training.

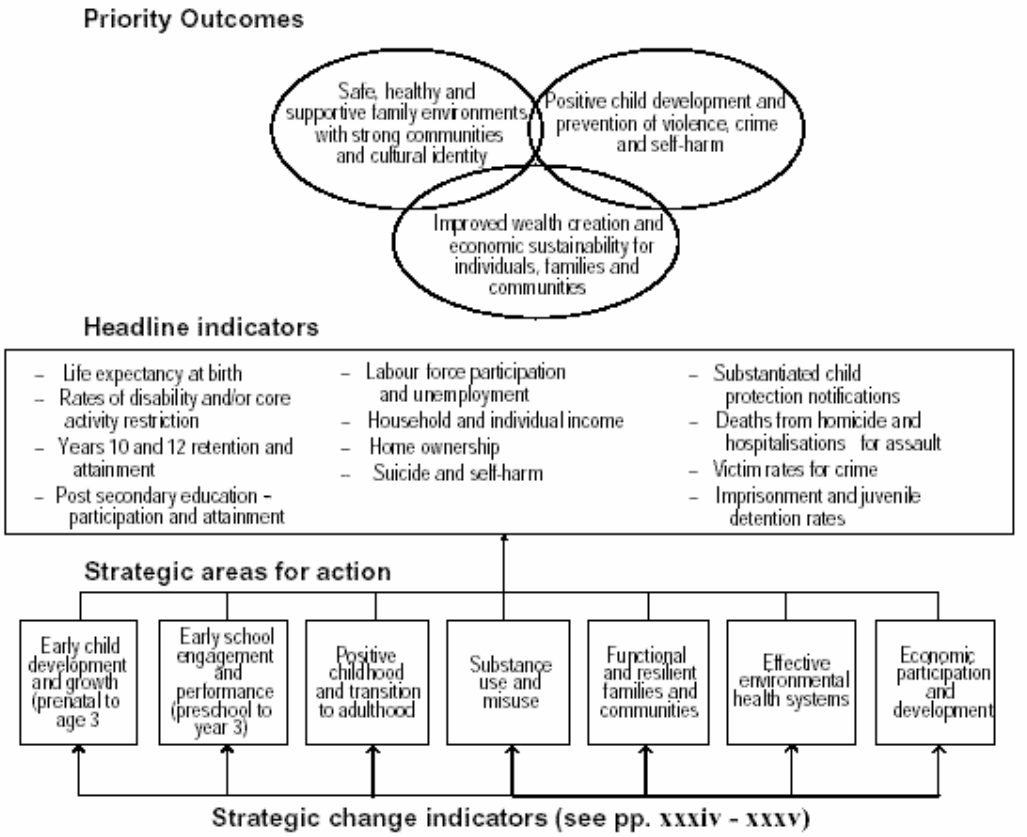
The range and depth of problems confronting Indigenous people in Australia means that no single measure will be effective in isolation. For instance, policies and practices designed to reduce the incidence of child abuse in Indigenous communities whilst laudable in intention fail to practically take account of the multiplicity of disadvantage that the families may be living with. Poor overall health, young parents, problems with substance abuse, unemployment and many other factors coalesce like a whirlpool to suck under the ties of decency and community tradition which gave the communities their fabric and their strength.

In these contexts 'whole of government approaches' have been suggested as the way to address these multiple problems. The danger is with such initiatives that what was once the problem of one department becomes the problem of all or more likely none-"not mine, not yours, not anyone's". 'Whole of government approaches' can sometimes also mean that while the struggle to communicate between departments has been overcome the casualty then becomes the communication between these newly formed bureaucratic partnerships and the Indigenous communities themselves.

The private and multi faceted disadvantage that Indigenous people experience requires solutions that are based and delivered by mutually cooperating departments and agencies. These solutions must be worked out, refined and evaluated where the problems exist: inside the communities themselves.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has recognised the multi-causality of outcomes (Productivity Commission, 2003) for Indigenous people in a recent document, published by the Productivity Commission, in which a whole of government strategy has been proposed to address the issues across the board. COAG has conceptualised the problem and its solutions in the following way:

Figure 1 The framework



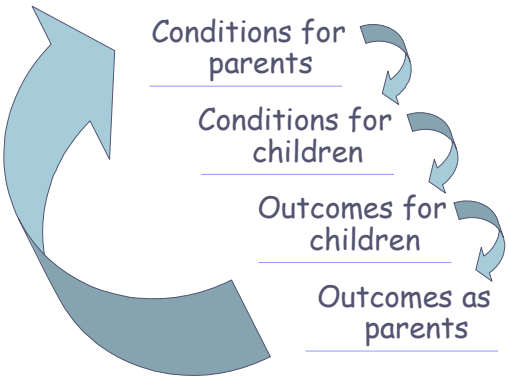
Source: SCRGSP (2003) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, p.XXI.

The Reproduction of Inequalities

Around the world, relative disadvantage is 'inherited' – that is, the children of those suffering disadvantage, especially in communities with 'deep needs', generally have to live with the consequences of the disadvantages of their parents. This was shown by Connell, White and Johnstone (1991) in their analysis of

Australia's Disadvantaged Schools Program, and more recently by Groundwater-Smith and Kemmis (in press) in their meta-evaluation of the NSW Priority Action Schools Program (a program delivering between $100,000 and $400,000 to each of seventy-four schools in communities in the deepest need in NSW). It is especially true for Indigenous people in Australia and most particularly for Indigenous communities in deep need.

The schema accompanying this paragraph aims to depict relative disadvantage – and advantage – cascading across generations. It suggests that the conditions of life for parents are the environments in which children live, creating particular kinds of conditions of life for children. Disadvantaged conditions frequently, though not always, lead to poorer outcomes for children on a range of measures – including life expectancy, economic well-being, health and education. And when those children become parents in their turn, they may, though not always, create the same kinds of conditions of life for their children.



The table below summarises some of the conditions of life for Indigenous people like our family Fred and Marge and children Sam and Donna. It shows some of the likely consequences for Sam and Donna of the conditions of life of their parents Fred and Marge, across a range of the areas we described earlier.

Conditions for parents	Conditions for children
➲Short generations	➲Parents with less experience
➲Lower life expectancy	➲Recurring experience of loss
➲Poorer health	➲School absences, obstacles to learning and development
➲Poorer housing conditions	➲ Poorer study conditions
➲Higher rates of child abuse, domestic violence	➲ Coming to school traumatised
➲Higher rates of imprisonment	➲ Absent parents, less community social control
➲Higher unemployment	➲ Weaker work knowledge and networks
➲Lower family income	➲ Recurring experience of financial need
➲Less formal education	➲ Restricted family experience of formal schooling

The intergenerational reproduction of disadvantage

With interventions, these likelihoods can change. The reproduction of disadvantage is not an iron cage of determination. Fred and Marge can change their own conditions of life, and they can change the conditions of life for their children. But they may not be able to do it alone. They may need all the help their family and community can give, and all the help their society – our society – can give. Interventions of the kind outlined in the COAG framework might help them – as long as the framework is not just fine words in a policy, and as long as the programs to realise the framework reach down into the community where Fred and Marge live. What will be needed to change the lives of Fred and Marge, and Sam and Donna, is a whole-of-government effort, if it will indeed produce better coordination across services.

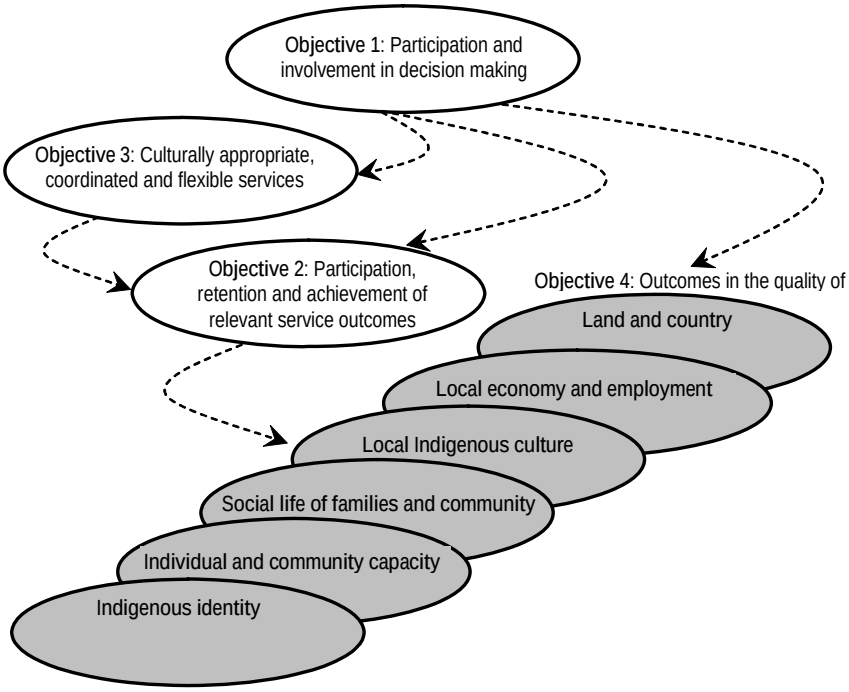
Even more needed are local *community-based responses*. When people work together in communities, and as communities, and when service-providers work with the communities they serve to meet their needs, changes can be made. Many Indigenous communities around Australia are making the kinds of changes needed – from dealing with problems of alcohol and substance abuse, to improving community hygiene and health, to community economic development, and improved control of young people by their elders.

Inside Education

In our 2003 study of *Mid-Term Review of "Partners in a Learning Culture"*, Australia's National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Indigenous People, we discovered that Indigenous people want some very clear things from education and training (Kemmis, Atkinson, M., Brennan and Atkinson, C., in press):
"… Indigenous clients of VET require training of *particular kinds* and *particular forms of delivery* appropriate for their own particular individual, social, cultural and economic needs, interests and circumstances. They want training that will

- help secure and strengthen Indigenous identity;
- help to maintain and develop capability – both the capability of individuals and the capacities of particular communities;
- help to maintain and develop the social arrangements and social groupings – including family life – that sustain Indigenous society in particular communities and circumstances;
- help in the maintenance and development of Indigenous culture in particular communities – including maintenance and development of languages, systems of belief, and a wide variety of cultural practices central to being an Indigenous person and community in this or that particular place and time;
- assist in maintaining and developing participation in the economy – including training in skills that lead to valued work and careers – and in the economic development of communities; and
- assist in maintaining and developing care for and obligations to country, and to nature and the environment in particular localities" (pp.135-6).

It is clear, however, that in most places in Australia they are not yet getting the kind of education and training that achieves these things.
Arguably, these things are needed in every domain of service provision to Indigenous Australians, as indicated in the picture below – which uses a general form of the four objectives of *Partners in a Learning Culture* to describe the priorities for improved services:



What Indigenous people want: improved services to produce improved outcomes for Indigenous people

Achieving these four objectives – Indigenous participation and involvement in decision-making; culturally-appropriate, coordinated and flexible services; improved participation and achievement in service outcomes; and coordinated improvements in all six areas of outcomes that Indigenous people have identified – requires significant efforts from every service provider. It almost certainly requires substantial and significant changes to the ways we now do things. We will need to be driven not only by the kinds of concerns *internal* to the services we provide, but also to guide our work by criteria *external* to our particular service. We will need to keep our eye on the big picture, not just "stick to our own knitting".

In 1897, the French sociologist Émile Durkheim wrote his pioneering work *Le Suicide: Étude de sociologie*. In it, he argued that suicide was not just the result of a particular individual's private state of mind, but that it was the almost inevitable manifestation of a kind of social crisis that occurs when people no longer feel themselves to be part of the fabric of their society. But the crisis is *social*, not just one experienced by the particular individual. The *anomie* that the victim experiences has causes in the decay of the social fabric that gives lives meaning and significance to each of us in relation to others. The tragic rates of suicide being witnessed in Australian Indigenous communities today are the consequence of just such a decay in the social fabric. The kinds of factors we identified as impinging on the lives of Fred and Marge and Sam and Donna sometimes do reach the point where life seems not worth living, where the good things of life will be forever unattainable, where life will in any case be short, and where one will be a companion to friends who also suffer.

In 1897, it was argued that the high rate of suicide in France could be addressed by better education. Durkheim argued strenuously that education alone could not solve the problem. One might say that no service acting alone can solve the problem. Of the educational 'solution', Durkheim wrote:

> But this is to ascribe to education a power it lacks. It is only the image and reflection of society. It imitates and reproduces the latter in an abbreviated form; it does not create it. Education is healthy when people themselves are in a healthy state; but it becomes corrupt with them, being unable to modify itself… The strongest wills cannot elicit non-existent forces from nothingness, and the shocks of experience constantly dissipate these facile illusions. Besides, even though through some incomprehensible miracle a pedagogical system were constituted in opposition to the social system, this very antagonism would rob it of all effect… Education, therefore, can be reformed only if society itself is reformed. To do that, the evil from which it suffers must be attacked at its source (Spaulding and Simpson translation, pp.372-3).

The evils that late nineteenth century France suffered from, in Durkheim's view, were an economic system that made some wealthy and impoverished others, and a social system that maintained and reproduced inequalities. The spectacular transformations that are producing our new world economic and social orders, powered by the ICT revolution, and resulting in globalisation, privatisation and new forms of cultural imperialism, are producing new waves of suicide – for non-Indigenous Australians (especially young men) but even more for Indigenous Australians (especially young men). We hold more hope than Durkheim did that education can help with this new wave of self-inflicted harm and loss of lives. But we agree with him that education alone cannot solve the problem any more than better welfare services, better housing, less Indigenous unemployment, or improved justice services. All are needed, and still more is needed – more is required from all of us. We will return to this shortly. Before we do, we want to briefly discuss community-based solutions. We do not want to ask more of communities than they can give, nor take an approach that ends by blaming the victims of inequality and disadvantage. On the contrary, we believe that within communities we can find what British cultural theorist Raymond Williams (1983) called "resources for a journey of hope".

Community-based Solutions

Arguably, the view of improved outcomes we have advocated applies not only to education but to each of the fields of policy and practice we mentioned earlier. Agencies in each field need to be working in ways that pay strict attention to these five 'anchors' of individual and community life – across the rows in the following table. And they need to work together locally in ways that are coherent and complementary across the whole column in relation to each 'anchor' of individual and community life. But initiatives in each field and in relation to each of these 'anchors' will be hampered or undermined if the oversight of the whole matrix is not grounded in the commitment of the local community – in line with principles of community self-management and community self-determination.

	Secure and strengthen Indigenous identity	*Maintain and develop individual and community capacity*	*Maintain and develop social arrangements to strengthen families and communities*	*Maintain and develop local Indigenous culture*	*Maintain and develop local economy and economic participation (employment)*	*Maintain and develop care for and obligations to country*
1. Education						
2. Health						
3. Welfare and family						
4. Housing						
5. Employment						
6. Justice						
7. Culture and land						

In each field, the relevant agencies will have greater responsibilities for supporting the maintenance and development of some 'anchors' (columns) than others. But all agencies need to be working on the same 'map', and with a secure sense that they are working in ways the local community advises – especially the old people whose responsibility it is to sustain the community as a whole.

Community Adversity and Resilience: Collective Efficacy

In March this year, Tony Vinson (2004) published the results of his study Community Adversity and Resilience: The distribution of social disadvantage in Victoria and New South Wales and the mediating role of social cohesion (Richmond, Victoria: Jesuit Social Services), showing that in both these states there has been a concentration of disadvantage over the last four years, so that fewer postcodes account for the highest incidence of disadvantage as measured by a composite of many factors of disadvantage. He was also able to measure the degree of social cohesion in different communities. He writes:

> While the degree of disadvantage of a locality may limit the opportunities of its residents, some communities burdened by disadvantage appear more resilient than others in overcoming adversities. Some of the earliest sociological theorising was about variations in the quality of the social bonds between people and the sentiments and other social resources that they share including trust, reciprocity and a common identity. In today's parlance, these 'assets' have come to be known by terms like *social capital* and *social cohesion*. The research into 'place effects' … as well as the practical experience in a number of fields including community work, indicate the influence of aspects of local social climate over and beyond the individual and household attributes of people living in an area. However the research to-date, while of increasing sophistication, has afforded glimpses rather than a clear vision of the underlying nature of these locality differences.
>
> What we have is a bundle of qualities – affinity, shared identity, reciprocity, trust, informal social control, and willingness to act for the good of the group, to name a few – that are thought to be linked to some broader underlying factor or factors. One researcher to have probed the structure of the influences at play is Sampson's (1997) work on collective efficacy. …. Sampson satisfied himself that social cohesion (involving measures of how closely people are connected and the degree of trust between them) and social control (people's willingness to intervene to control young people's behaviour) were closely associated across neighbourhoods. …. The results for social cohesion and social control waxed and waned together, that is, they were significantly positively correlated. Sampson felt justified in concluding that they were aspects of the same thing and devised the term collective efficacy to signify that communality (p.76).

For the postcodes for which social cohesion data were available in Vinson's study (for a number of postcodes in Victoria), it became apparent that the most disadvantaged communities were not always the ones with the lowest social cohesion. Indeed, there was a striking difference between urban and rural communities in their degree of social cohesion.

	URBAN	*RURAL*
Low social cohesion (N = 83)	*79 (47.6%)*	*4 (3.6%)*
Medium social cohesion (N = 120)	*72 (43.4%)*	*48 (43.2%)*
High social cohesion (N = 74)	*15 (9.0%)*	*59 (53.2%)*
	166 (100.0%)	*111 (100.0%)*

Location of low, medium and high social cohesion postcodes. Source: Vinson, T. (2004), p.79.

As Table 1 shows, while about half of urban postcodes (47.6%) had low social cohesion, only 3.6% of rural communities did. By contrast; while only 9% of urban postcodes had high social cohesion, over half (53.2%) of rural postcodes did.

This data does not entitle us to draw the conclusion that high social cohesion is to be found in most places in the bush, and low social cohesion in most places in urban areas. The data are broad aggregates, and we should remember that 'high social cohesion' is a *relative* term here, not an *absolute* measure (that is, 'high social cohesion' means 'higher on the social cohesion *measure* than other localities', not that the communities are in fact made up of people closely connected to one another, and linked by bonds of trust and reciprocity). But the data does suggest that there may be some truth to the general view that people in rural communities may be more inclined to have to work together in the face of adversity, that they may have to rely more on one another, and that, though sometimes conservative and inclined to favour the social status quo, they may share values to a greater extent than do people in the more cosmopolitan settings of our larger cities.

It is not clear that this rosy picture extends to relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the bush, however. Vinson's data were not analysed along this dimension. One could imagine that there might be a greater sense of communality, connectedness, trust and reciprocity *within* Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in rural Australia than *between* them.

Nevertheless, the idea of collective efficacy resonates with the argument that *some* groups of people in rural Australia have been better able to respond resiliently and effectively to adversity than others. Some of these have been Indigenous communities, and some non-Indigenous. But where the community faces too much adversity, and when the community as a whole loses confidence in its capacity to cope with its circumstances, it can tip over the edge into crisis and low social cohesion. This is happening in some parts of rural Australia as services shrink away from smaller towns, leaving people without adequate health, welfare, education and financial services. And it is happening in some Indigenous communities challenged by poverty and lack of services. In these places, it is necessary to go to substantial lengths to find and build resources of hope that give a community the confidence and resilience to build its own future. And, of course, in some of these communities, the external odds of distance, travel costs, lack of services, poverty, ill-health and social unrest are sufficiently great that it is difficult for community members to muster the combined effort, organisation and sheer physical energy to mount a campaign against impending or present crisis.

The crises they face are not theirs alone, of course. Many of the crises they face have been constructed by physical, social, economic, environmental and cultural circumstances beyond their control, or by policies, programs and practices that do not adequately recognise or comprehend their circumstances, or by policies, programs and practices that divert adequate services and support away from them and towards others. We are all connected in these crises, but it remains true that many who benefit by such maldistribution remain relatively silent about the advantage it unfairly bestows on them, and, sadly, that many who are the victims of the maldistribution remain stoically silent as if their own personal resilience and image of self-sufficiency *should* be enough to carry them through. Tragedy is made every day in Australia by this unholy conspiracy of silence between the modest quiet of the well-to-do and those who do their suffering stoically.

Building Collective Efficacy in, with and for Indigenous Communities

In Murrin Bridge, near Lake Cargelligo in New South Wales, the Indigenous community has built a successful winery that has just produced its third vintage. Community members have done training in viticulture, in building and construction, and in painting and decorating. They have built their collective skills to support their collective economic development. They are making a significant difference in their human and community possibilities, and they may yet change the pattern of likelihoods that will enable to escape the reproduction of disadvantage they previously endured. But the community recognises the fragility of its progress. Some people in the community need to undertake administrative and managerial training to run the enterprise; they also need people who can handle the book-keeping and finances of the operation. And they need to continue to broaden and strengthen community commitment to the enterprise.

This is the story in many successful Indigenous community developments around Australia. Success breeds success, but it also creates new areas in which success is needed. Keeping this all under coordinated community control is no easy task. It is no easy task for a community acting alone. Help is needed from beyond the community – funding, training, education, improved health and social services.

Similarly, in Cherbourg in Queensland, Indigenous Principal Chris Sarra has begun to make substantial changes to school attendance and achievement. He argues that those who teach in the school must have *high expectations* of Indigenous children and young people. He is making a difference, but he, too, acknowledges that the changes are slow, the gains are fragile, and the community must back its own commitment to collective capacity-building if the lives of Cherbourg's young Indigenous people are to be ones with a different pattern of likelihoods than the ones we have described for Indigenous people across Australia, based on national and state/territory averages.

What we believe is *most* needed, however, is not just improved services and community-based solutions. What is most needed is something almost invisible, more subtle, more gentle and more human than good services and stronger community organisation. It is like the air we breathe, the water we drink. It is the kind of communication between people that occurs whenever we are genuinely committed to *mutual respect, mutual understanding, and consensus about what needs to be done in the real circumstances in which we find ourselves*. This kind of communication happens all the time when people make practical decisions together. Often, however, it is often done too hastily, or without sufficient attention. Sometimes we do not really ensure that conversation partners, within a community or between communities, are being genuinely respectful of each other (in both directions). Sometimes we do not ensure that we really do understand each others' points of view. Sometimes we do not really ensure that our consensus about what to do is based on a genuinely-shared commitment, a genuinely-shared sense of what is really possible, and a genuine belief that we can all live with the consequences of our decisions about what we will do. Without ensuring these things, we cannot be sure that we are acting together.

We emphasise this because we believe that a change of intra- and inter-cultural attitudes and practices is desperately needed to achieve the kind of communication on which collective efficacy and collective capacity-building are based. They cannot be achieved by technical means alone. It is not just a matter of techniques and strategies and policies – it is a matter of achieving a sea-change in our intra-cultural and inter-cultural communications and connections in Australia.

Conclusion

We have shown that many Indigenous communities are highly vulnerable. Their members are at risk of ill health, low educational attainment, low quality housing, child abuse, violence and substance abuse in far greater proportions than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Many communities have lost the capacity to organize their own survival and they are either at the brink of, or waterlogged by a negative spirals of compounded disadvantage. The figures presented in this paper represent a national disgrace. Under these conditions 'service delivery' alone, no matter how well intentioned or well coordinated is not the solution because the problem belongs to all of us. We cannot salve our consciences by relegating responsibility to governments and organizations.

Many Australians are ignorant of the problems described in this paper. Many are indifferent to the problems while others are disinclined to help those who seem not to be able to help themselves. These attitudes are all part of the problem, not reasonable responses to it. What we need now is something much more constructive – a form of 'responsible reconciliation' that requires each of us to do what we can when we can. The shop attendant who serves the non-Indigenous person in preference to the Indigenous customer needs to be held to account by those who feel that such treatment is discriminatory. This is not a task to be put off for another day when the situation is quieter or less compromising. It is a job for here and now, and for everyone who holds the dignity of humanity to be an important cornerstone of our society.

In our short European history in Australia, it took only a few generations of work to produce the inherited disadvantage that Indigenous people now live with. This work led to the living of lives similar to those of Fred and Marge, Donna and Sam described in this paper. Responsible reconciliation requires us to recognize the damage, to now work towards its repair, and to accept the job as being one for all us.

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From Conference Resolution To Project Implementation :
ABCDE - A Strategy For The Revitalisation Of A Rural Community

Murray Lake, David Platt and Grant Draper

Introduction

This conference, with its theme of *Working Together, Staying Vital* and its emphasis on working together with communities for the betterment of schools and their communities, continues a tradition that has underpinned the work of both District High Schools and SPERA.

District High Schools are a distinctive feature of rural education. They are special places, they are good models. This is widely acknowledged by those who are or have worked in them. They are not merely 'way stations' for a state provided service. Rather, their contribution is seen to be intertwined with;

> *… aspects of community life – cultural, sporting, organisational, informational and environmental contributions and participation in ceremonial occasions that celebrate the identity and unity of the community.* (NSW Dept of Education & Training, 2001).

There are, of course, limitations associated with these schools and these are acknowledged but these are far outweighed by the advantages or, more correctly, the latent advantages.

Communities have also been a focus over the two decades of SPERA's existence. This can best be seen by looking back over past themes for SPERA conferences.

1987 *Working Together: Rural Communities and Education*
1988 *Rural Communities Determining their Futures*
1991 *Rural Education and Local Development*
1994 *The Rural Community and its School: In Partnership for the Future*

For SPERA, school and community partnerships have been a constant theme, it must remain so and, indeed, this has been, to a large extent, a distinctive feature that has differentiated SPERA from other education associations.

Community partnerships has also been a theme in many of the education reports over the last 30 years-The Karmel Report, Schools Commission Reports, Beazley Report and, much more recently, the HREOC reports. Indeed, it is within the section on School-Community Partnerships that HREOC recommends that;

> *MCEETYA should establish a Rural Communities Taskforce to provide a higher profile to school community partnership*

And from the MCEETYA taskforce, *the National Framework for Rural and Remote Education.* The essential enablers for the provision of quality education for rural and remote dwellers was encapsulated in the acronym PRIME, that is, Personnel, Relevant curriculum, Information and communication technologies, Multiple modes of delivery, Environments formed through effective community relationships and partnerships, and Resourcing.

It is the 'E' that is most relevant to us at this conference. It involves*…close consultation with communities…the development of partnerships...building effective community relationships….*

There are sound benefits to be had from an environment based on partnerships and effective community relationships. Recent research argues that school-community partnerships can lead to sound and practical outcomes, namely it;

- ***provides training that meets the need of both students and the community generally;***
- improves school retention;
- increases the retention of youth in rural communities;
- encourages positive environmental outcomes; and,
- creates cultural and recreational benefits from sharing physical resources.

While these outcomes are important, within the context of this conference it is even more significant to note that the same researchers claim that partnerships lead to increased individual and community capacity to influence their futures

Education and Local Development

From one perspective, education is not concerned with local development. Its mandate has to do with the education of students and the provision of educational services. While this is accepted as a somewhat limited view of education, it is it is arguably the case that education and the provision of educational services has an observably direct effect on the local community, on its confidence and, as a result of that confidence, on the quality of life of its members.

To this extent education is, indeed, a critical component in local development.

In this regard the future of communities

> *… is directly related to the ability of the schools to harness, develop and nurture human capital and engage in productive capacity building.*

There is also increasing recognition that the providers of education, alone, cannot deliver the fullest range of service that rural dwellers expect and, indeed, to which they are entitled. A collaborative approach to overcoming the difficulties encountered in providing quality education is required and is essential if there is to be an increase in the effectiveness of the services delivered.

Partnerships are required, partnerships are what makes it all work and it is partnerships that lead to improved educational outcomes as well as increased viability and sustainability of towns themselves and, ultimately, to the enhancement and enrichment of the quality of life and opportunities presently experienced in rural communities in Australia.

Rural Advantage

The approach adopted in the current project runs counter to the conventional wisdom associated with rural schools and rural communities. A common theme running through much of the literature and evident in major enquires and reports on rural education is that of rural disadvantage. The matrix of factors that give rise to this disadvantage is well documented and is acknowledged.

There is also widespread acceptance of the fact that the rural situation, *per se*, involves disadvantage. For some, the above may well be a sustainable position. It is inevitably so if based on an urban bias and viewed from an urban perspective. But it is not a view that should go unchallenged or accepted as a generalisation.

Less widely recognised and acknowledged are the advantages associated with rural living. Those advantages are substantial and are increasingly sought. As evidence of this, some areas have experienced a rural turnaround. Population outflow has been stemmed and reversed. And while the difficulties must be acknowledged and addressed, a greater recognition of the advantages of rural living has the potential to minimise, if not obviate, some of the negative aspects of rural life.

This, to a large extent, is what lies behind Nachtigal's notion of 'rural reality'. Nachtigal (19820 maintains that;

> *Accepting rural reality means moving from a generic public policy of school improvement to a more differentiated policy, one that allows and assists rural schools and rural communities to build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. Accepting rural reality means creating public policy that values and accommodates rural cultures and rural schools, rather than trying to reshape those institutions into a likeness of larger schools and communities*

This is a perspective that is consistent with the project being undertaken at Lake Grace and with the ABCDE approach that has been adopted in that project.

The Lake Grace Project

This conference session will provide an overview of the establishment and operation of a current project that involves a working partnership between a small rural community in Western Australia and its school. Three phases will be addressed, namely:

- the Genesis of the Project;
- the Approach: Asset Based Community Development Through Education (ABCDE); and,

- Community Assets Inventory Project 2004: Lake Grace district High School.

The Genesis of the Project

The current project has its genesis in a number events and decisions, all with a community focus.

1. In 1996 a collaborative forum, held at Cunderdin, entitled *An Advocacy for Rural and Remote Education: Building for the Future,* recommended that a body be established that …. *would collaborate with local communities... act as a lobbyist and develop a network of local lobby groups... be owned by local communities.*
2. The body established, the *Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (RREAC)* had strong representation from rural and remote communities.
3. The strategic plan produced by RREAC, *Country Roads: Pathways to Better Education and Training for Rural and Remote Western Australia 2000- 2003,* placed strong emphasis on community partnerships.
4. In 2003 a conference at Muresk sought *To Create a Collaborative Framework that places Education at the Centre of Activities that Revitalise Rural and Remote Communities throughout Western Australia.*
5. **That conference recommended that RREAC *Establish a working party of relevant stakeholders to develop an Asset Based Community Development through Education strategy.***
6. **In 2003 Curtin and Edith Cowan Universities conducted a forum at Joondalup that advocated the ABCD approach to community development.**
7. **In 2004 the working party, with Curtin's involvement, approached the school and the Shire at Lake Grace to seek their involvement in an ABCDE project in their town. The response from both was immediate and positive.**

From that first meeting, a community reference group has been established, several meetings have been held with the shire and the school, workshops have been conducted with school staff, students from Years 1-10 have begun the process of mapping community and school asset.

The Approach: Asset-Based Community Development through Education (ABCDE)

Schools and Communities Working Together: Building partnerships with what we **have**, not what we think we **need**.

1. Long term vision for community health and well-being
   - Building partnerships for mutual benefit
   - Developing sustained relationships
   - Sharing assets and resources
   - Focusing on existing local community capacity
   - Enhancing teaching and learning
   - Developing active citizens for the future
2. Needs vs. Assets : Breaking the cycle
   Each time a person uses his or her capacity, the community is stronger and the person more powerful…stronger communities are basically places where the capacities of local residents are identified, valued and used. (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993)
3. A needs-based approach
   - People seen as problems, not solutions
   - Funding is directed to service providers
   - Leaders can be conditioned to think negatively
   - Relies on outside expertise

- Focuses on individuals, not community
- Works towards survival, not change and development
- Focuses on what is here – residents, workers, organisations, etc.

4. An asset-based approach
   - Seeks internal solutions – local problem solving capabilities
   - Outside resources are sought only to complement existing local assets
   - Driven by relationships
   - Affirms and builds upon local work

5. Education: Unlocking the real potential
   We are shut up in schools and college recitation rooms for ten or fifteen years, and come out at last with a bellyful of words and do not know a thing. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

6. A classroom-based approach to teaching and learning
   - Teacher as expert
   - Student as receiver of knowledge
   - Constrained by traditional uses of time and space
   - Teaching and learning happens only in 'school time'
   - School building is for students and teachers (and maybe parents)
   - There is a clear beginning and finite end to the learning process

7. A community-based approach to teaching and learning
   - Internships, practicum experiences, work experiences, service-learning, civic engagement, community action research
   - Teachers and students as co-learners
   - Challenges conventional uses of time and space
   - Teaching and learning happens continually
   - School building is accessed by whole community
   - Learning happens on a life-long continuum

8. Connecting school and community - building partnerships for mutual benefit: A practical approach
   - Identify and mobilise community and school assets
   - Identify and mobilise human capacities
   - Create a shared vision
   - Build core relationships
   - Work to develop trust
   - Be open to transformation

9. Measuring progress - successful partnerships are
   - Founded on a shared vision and clearly articulated values
   - Mutually beneficial: they satisfy both unique self-interests as well as shared interests
   - Composed of interpersonal relationships based on trust and mutual respect
   - Multi-dimensional: they involve the participation of multiple sectors that act in the service of a complex problem
   - Clearly organised and led with dynamism
   - Integrated into the mission and support systems of the partnering institutions
   - Sustained by a "partnership process" for communication, decision-making, and the initiation of change
   - Evaluated regularly with a focus on both methods and outcomes - *Campus Compact 2000*

10. Principles of good practice in community-based learning – Community-based learning:
    - Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good
    - Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect on their experience
    - Articulates clear goals for everyone involved
    - Allows for those with needs to define those needs
    - Clarifies the responsibilities of each individual and organisation involved
    - Expects genuine, active and sustained organisational commitment
    - Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition and evaluation to meet goals
    - Ensures that the time commitment is flexible, appropriate and in the best interests of all involved
    - Is committed to participation by and with diverse populations - *Campus Compact 2003*

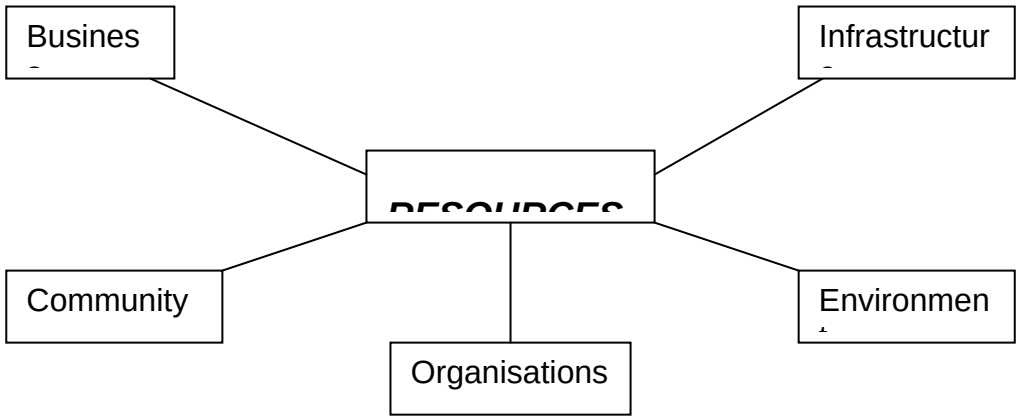
11. Additional Resources
    www.servicelearning.org - National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
    www.compact.org - Campus Compact
    www.nsee.org - National Society for Experiential Education
    www.uws.edu.au/about/adminorg/devint/ord/aucea/ - Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA)
    www.northwester.edu/ipr/abcd.html - ABCD Institute
    www-personal.ksu.edu/~rcled - The rural clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development
    www.nylc.org - National Youth Leadership Conference, link to 'Pathways' for model programs
    www.leaderschools.org - schools in US identified through Learn and Serve as having excellent service-learning and partnership programs

The Action: Community Assets Inventory Project 2004

- Lake Grace invited to become the trial country community to undertake a project to re-invigorate our community and to foster school/community partnerships.
- The concept of an inventory of community assets identified as a positive first step to addressing typical wheatbelt community problems; declining population, limited opportunities and appeal to young people, limited facilities, etc.
- School volunteers to lead the first stage by conducting an assets inventory of community resources for the newly formed reference group.
- School devotes a School Development Day to understanding.
  What the school/community partnership means?
- What models have been used elsewhere – USA?
- How to we go about the process in our local context?

Asset Mapping: A Whole School Approach

What evolved through the discussions was a process where the resources of our community would be identified through an assets inventory. Resources were broken down into a number of categories.



The assets inventory is the first stage of the enterprising concept towards a greater vision incorporating;

- Integrated whole of Community Planning
- Ongoing collaboration between all facets of our community; Shire, Health, Education, Business and Organisations, etc.

The Future

Several events, in the short term, have been planned:

June 8th	Students will report on the asset mapping progress to the Community Reference Group
June 22nd	Students will report to the wider community at a forum
August 6th	A visiting academic will meet with the school and the community to provide an international perspective on the project.
August 13th	The Lake Grace ABCDE project will be officially launched.

And the future beyond that? It is still evolving but the current thinking is that:

1. from the June 22nd meeting it will be possible to synergise community and school assets into one or more projects that will go some way to providing longer term sustainability that is, and has always been, seen as important to the project;
2. the Lake Grace District High School and its community, becomes a resource available to other schools and communities who are interested in pursuing the ABCDE approach to revitalisation – a hub and spoke approach?
3. Perhaps other hubs throughout the state?

Conclusion

While the project is in its early developmental stage, it is already clear that its success, and it will be successful, is dependent on a number of factors, namely;

- ***a sense of 'community',***
- ***the 'energy' evident in the community***
- ***ownership by the school and the community***
- ***an approach that focuses on community and school assets rather than liabilities and deficiencies.***
- ***the organic and developmental nature of the project***
- ***leadership from within the school; and, of course,***
- ***partnerships between a wide range of stakeholders.***

Partnerships are what make it all work, vital partnerships that, as a minimum, involve trust, mutual care, a shared vision and responsibility, partnerships between schools, businesses, industry and the wider community, partnerships that revitalise the community and build an increased sense of ownership and valuing of its school. This underpins and is fundamental to the Lake Grace project.

Creating Magnificent Schools And Productive Futures -Ways Forward For Rural Education

Dr John Edwards
Managing Director, Edwards Explorations
and Bill Martin

Abstract

This day has been designed to open our minds to innovative ways forward for rural education. The mental models we each carry about education and learning, and about the issues we face in rural Australia, will be challenged. We will be introduced to a powerful process for creating magnificent schools that has produced award-winning results. The day will be experiential and interactive, and each of us will leave with a set of clear, effective strategies we can use to invigorate our professional practice, our schools and our communities.

Session 1: Mental Models for Creating Magnificent Schools

Beliefs that bog us down and get us nowhere – how do we identify these, challenge them, and replace them with productive mental models? Shifting from band-aid fixes to deep root cause solutions. Overcoming the myth of busy-ness. How does learning happen – what are students really thinking whilst teachers are teaching?

Using what we know – most organisations hardly scratch the surface of what their workers know, schools are no different. How can we tap the rich potential already in our schools?

Making change work brilliantly – common flawed beliefs about change lead to most change being ineffective. Here we will explore well researched models of change that work in the real world. We will learn why things get worse before we get better and how to hold our nerve.

Session 2: Leadership, Classroom Realities and Making Meaning

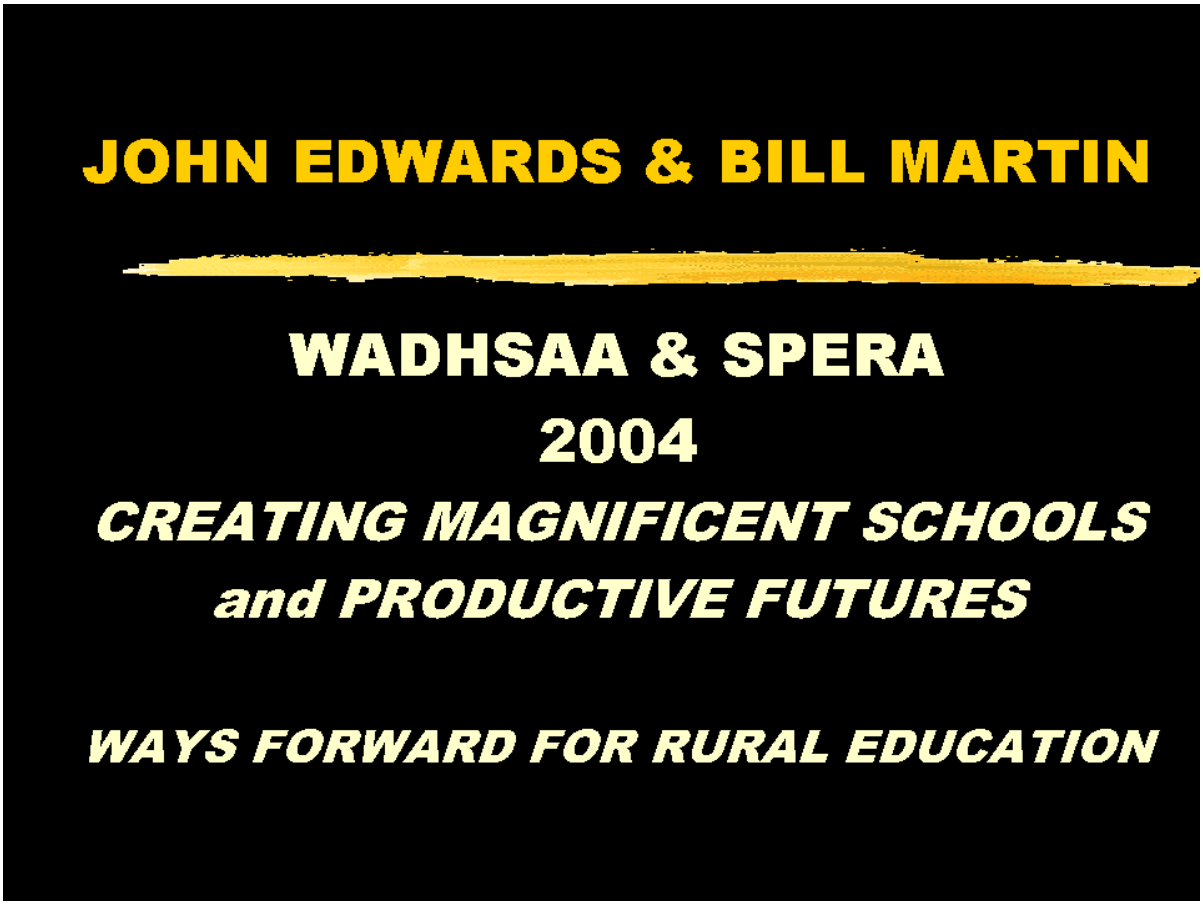
Leadership – the key roles of the leader, leadership in adversity, why most schools are over-managed and under-led, making hard decisions, why we don't walk our talk – and learning what to do about that, knowing how to put our energy and resources into areas of maximum leverage.

Session 3: Systems Thinking and Growing Your Staff

Let's not die wishing we had done it – let's create magnificent schools. Here we will be taken step-by-step through a process that produces schools that everyone wants to work at and nobody wants to leave, and we will experience key aspects of the process.

Session 4: Generative Thinking and Action Planning

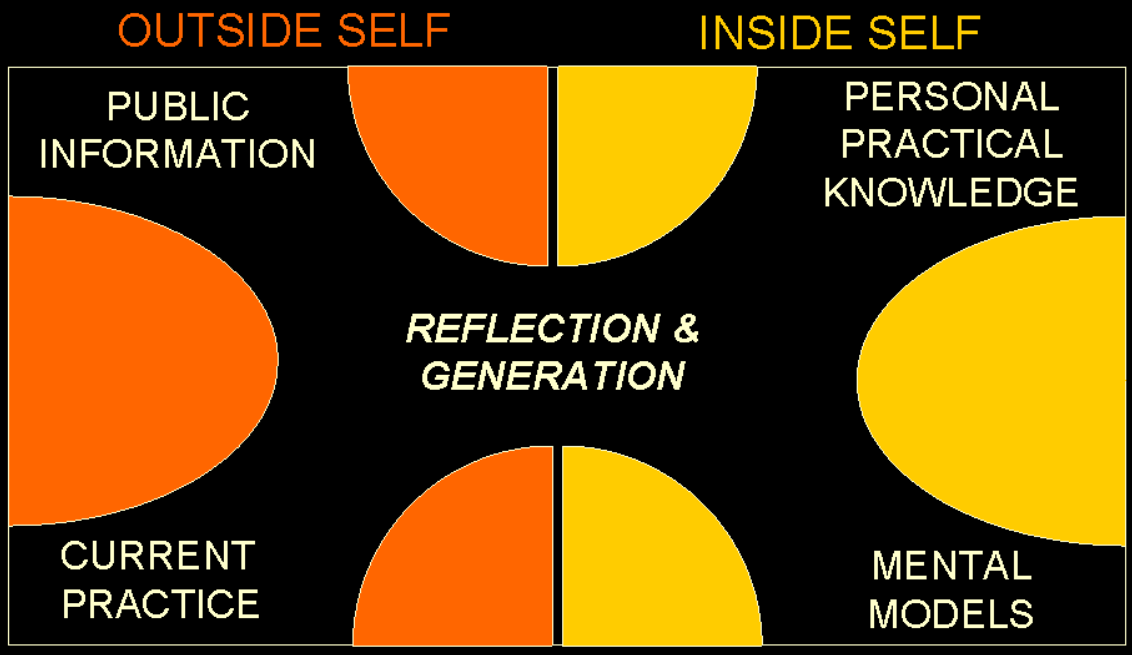
A thinking repertoire for innovation – we will be helped to take off our thinking blinkers and start to develop a rich repertoire of thinking strategies essential for the creation of new ways forward. If we keep doing and thinking what we have always done, then we will get what we have always got. And who wants that?


JOHN EDWARDS & BILL MARTIN
WADHSAA & SPERA
2004
CREATING MAGNIFICENT SCHOOLS
and PRODUCTIVE FUTURES
WAYS FORWARD FOR RURAL EDUCATION

THE THREE MAJOR SOURCES OF STRESS IN OUR LIVES

- Having to make a large number of decisions with serious consequences for error.
- Having no real sense of personal power or efficacy.
- Having no idea of how well or poorly you are doing.

BUTLER MODEL



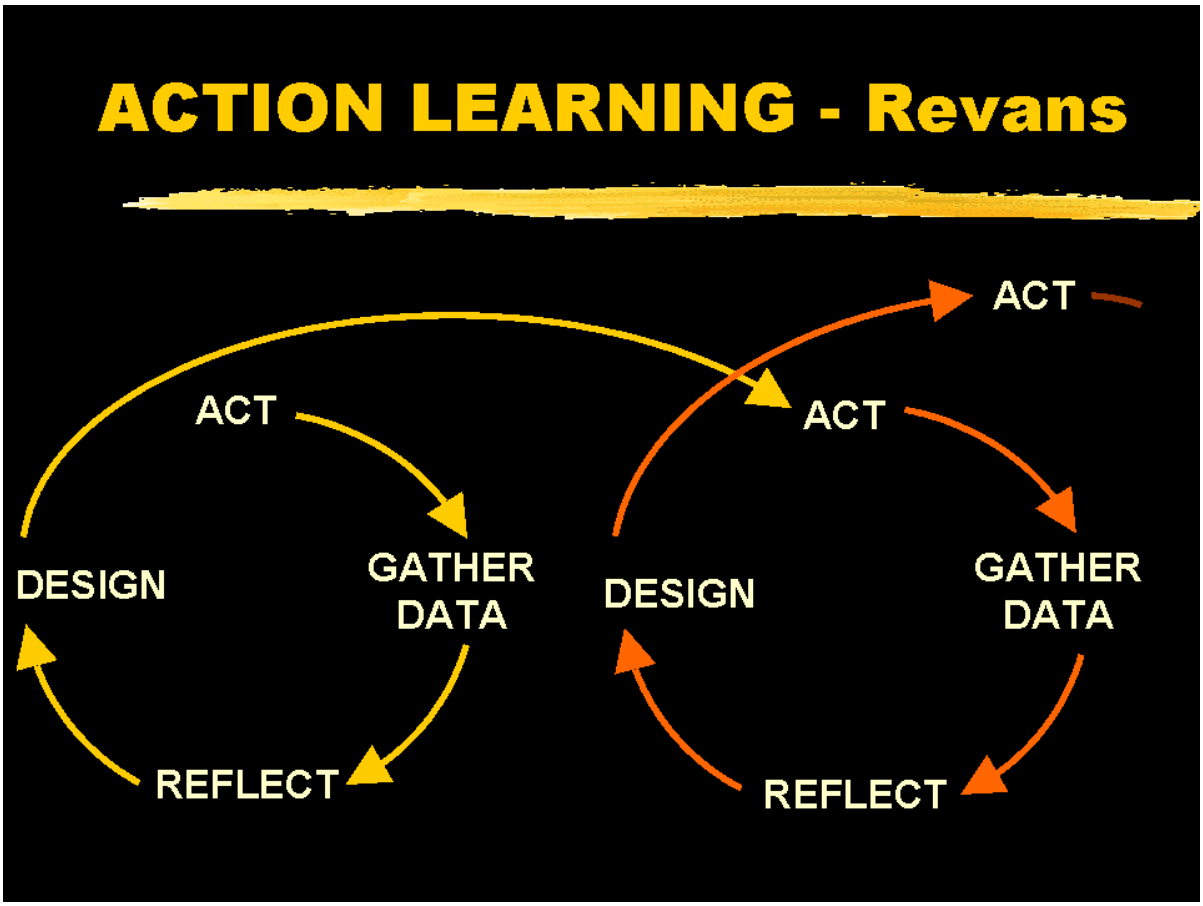
BRUNER - REFLECTION

If one fails to develop any sense of reflective intervention in the information one encounters, one operates continually from the outside in - information controls you.

If you develop a sense of self premised on your ability to penetrate information for your own uses, and you share and negotiate the results, then you become a member of the culture-creating community.

PERSONAL PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE - PPK

- The knowledge from which you drive performance
- Comes from your actions and your reflections
- Must switch on reflection
- Unique to you
- Has a character recognisably different from knowing “about” things

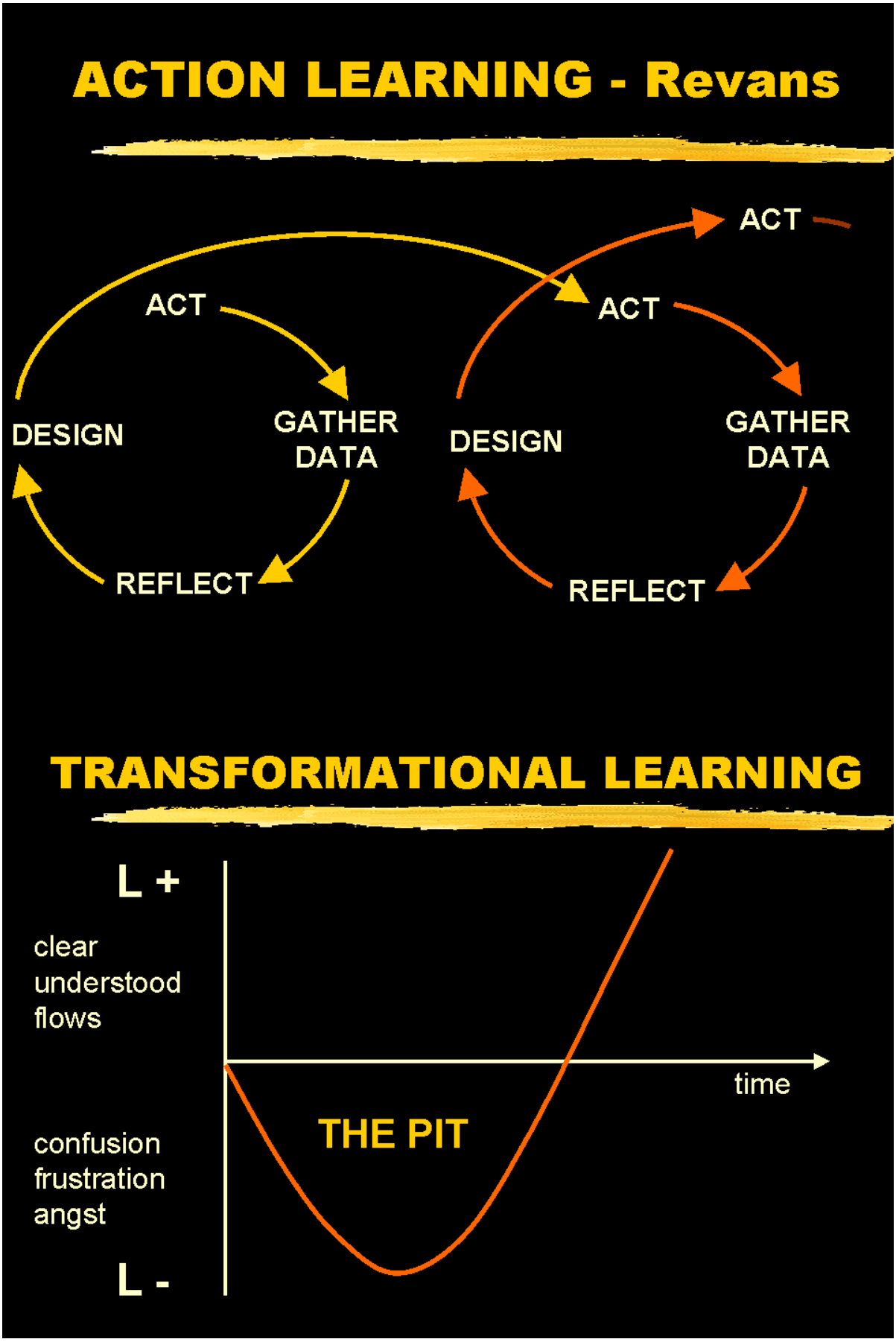

ACTION LEARNING - Revans
ACT
ACT
ACT
DESIGN
GATHER DATA
DESIGN
GATHER DATA
REFLECT
REFLECT

WALLBESSER - EVALUATION

- Evaluation is gathering information for decision-makers.

YOU THEN ASK 3 QUESTIONS:

- Who are the decision-makers?
- What are the decisions they want to (have to) make?
- What will convince them one way or the other?


ACTION LEARNING - Revans
ACT
ACT
ACT
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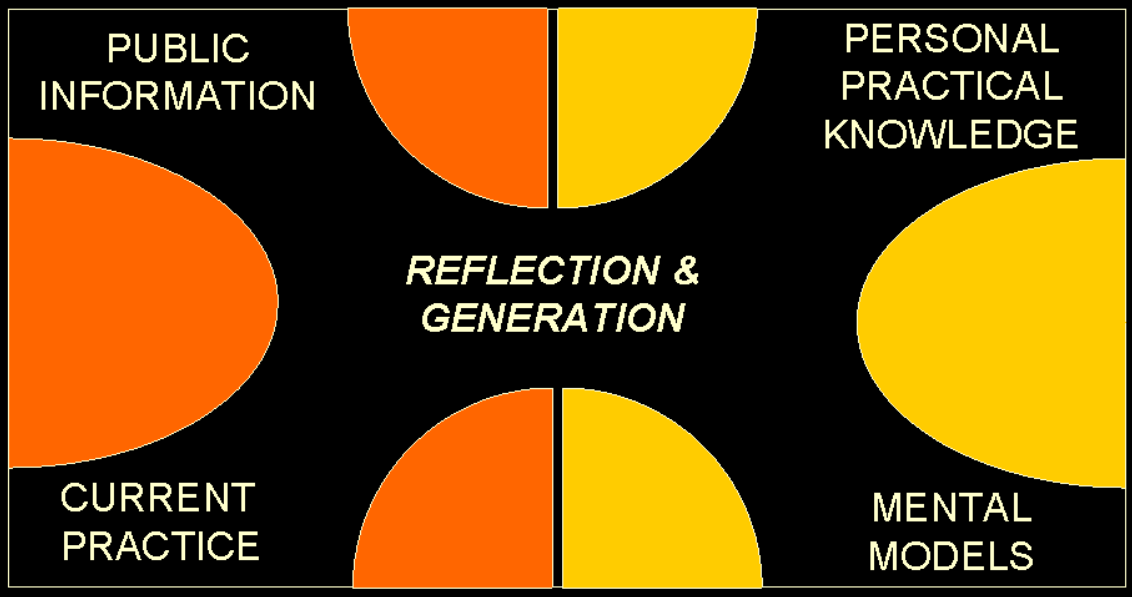
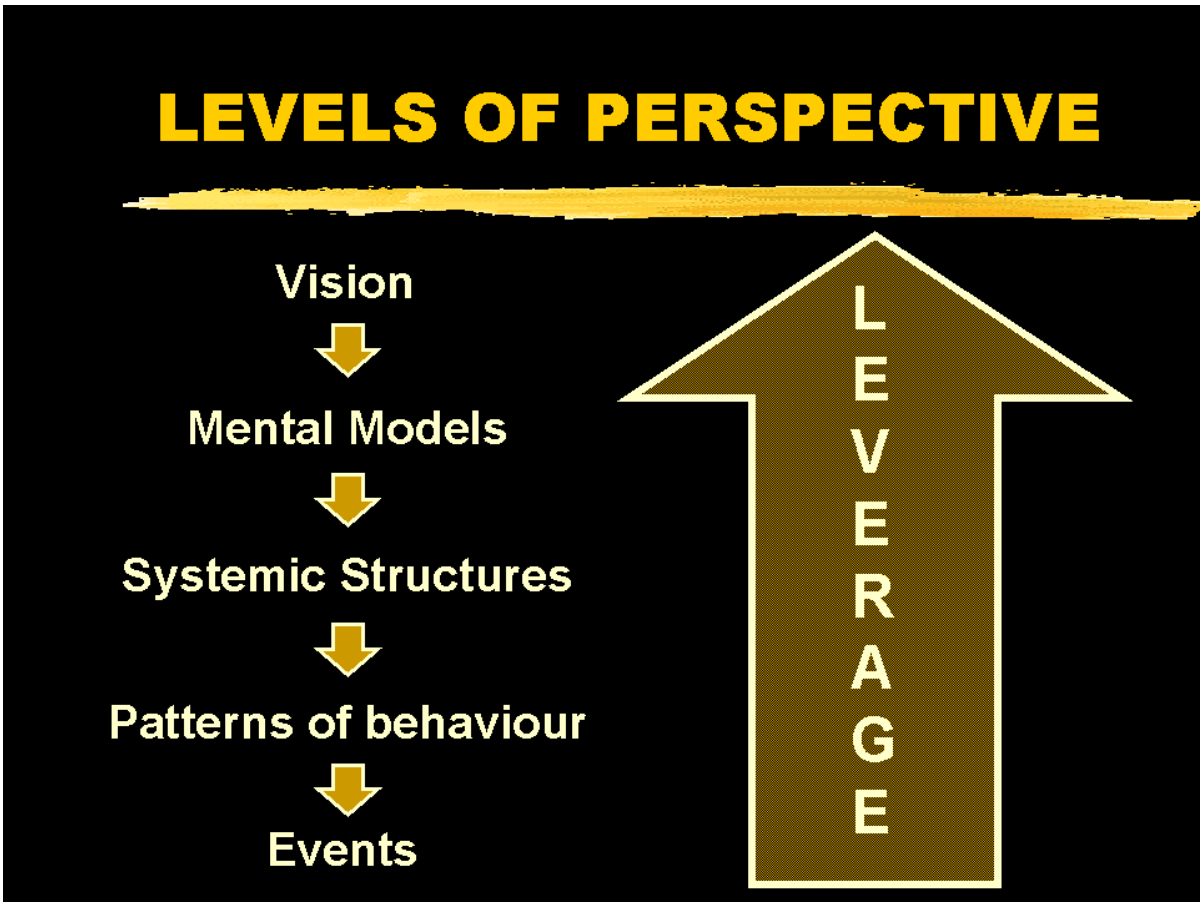
GATHER DATA
DESIGN
GATHER DATA
REFLECT
REFLECT
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING
L +
clear
understood
flows
time
THE PIT
confusion
frustration
angst
L -

BUTLER MODEL



KOTTER - VISION

- Shared vision prevents conflict and non-stop meetings, allowing people to work more autonomously while still working interdependently.
- Without a vision to guide decision making, every tiny decision can become an interminable debate.


LEVELS OF PERSPECTIVE
Vision
Mental Models
Systemic Structures
Patterns of behaviour
Events
LEVERAGE

MENTAL MODEL - LEADERSHIP

- Long term
- Focus on culture and vision
- Defines the future
- Aligns people with the vision
- Inspires people to make it happen despite obstacles

(John Kotter)

MENTAL MODEL - MANAGEMENT

- Immediate future
- Focus on structure and systems
- Planning, budgeting, organising, staffing, controlling, and problem solving

(John Kotter)

MENTAL MODEL - PROACTIVITY

VISION

↑

Structural Tension

↓

CURRENT REALITY

Creative Tension

Focus on what we want to create

Reactive Tension

Focus on how we feel and on getting rid of bad feelings

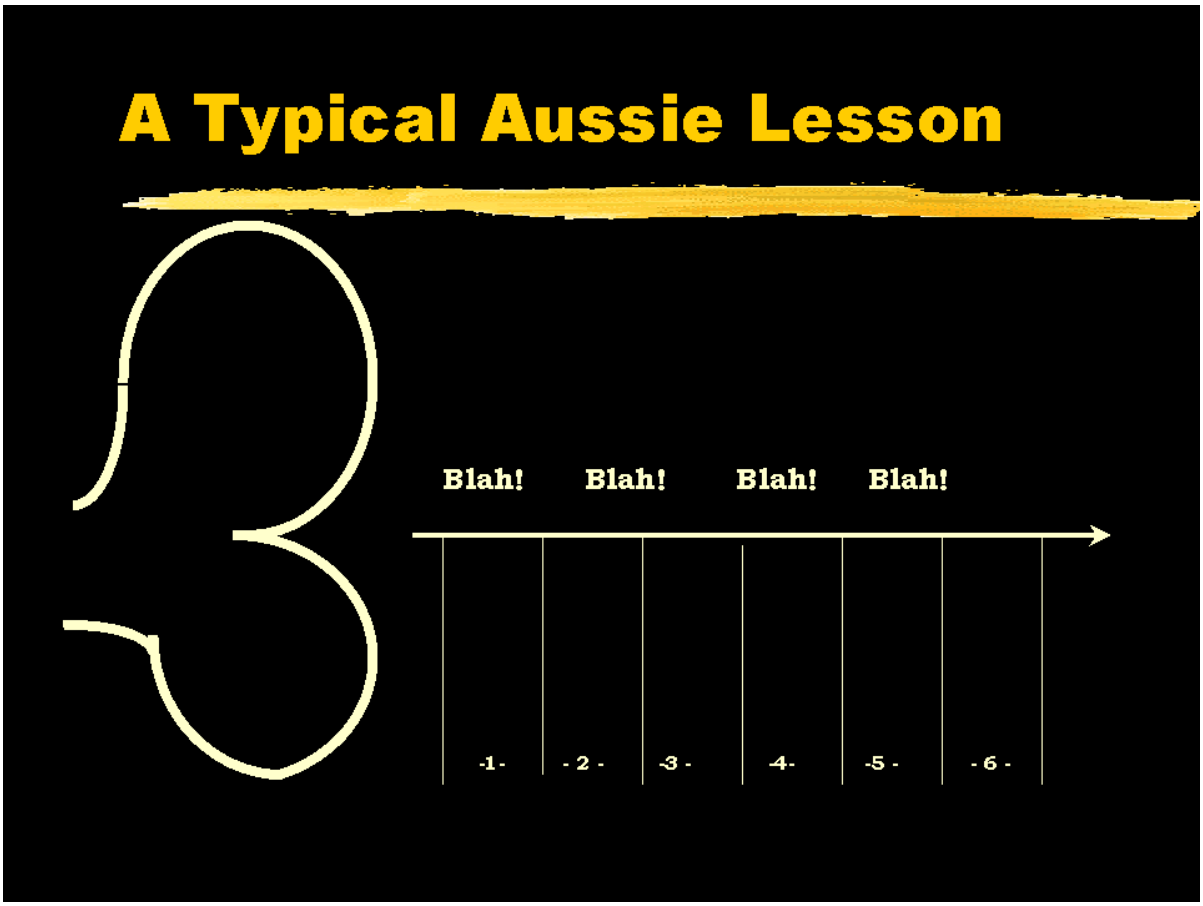
(Robert Fritz)

BILL MARTIN - SHARED VISION PROCESS

- Inquiry Probes
- Shared Vision
- Research Plan
- Task Identification, Sequencing
- Long Term Plan
- Stewardship Conferences
- Implementation - Action Learning Spirals

In-Class Thinking

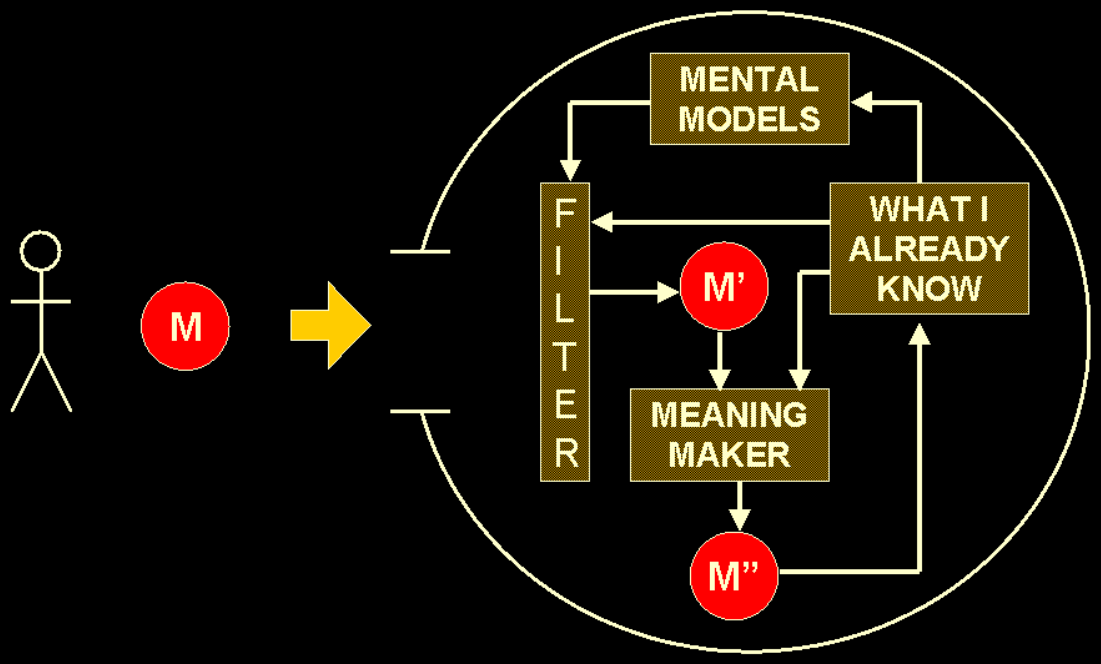
YVONNE: "There's just bits and pieces of it that do sink in,but most of it just kind of doesn't register. I do usually get the important bits, 'cause you just learn to kind of half listen and half not listen, just in case he does ask you a question, and you just learn to do it, 'cause there's always his voice there."


A Typical Aussie Lesson
Blah!
Blah!
Blah!
Blah!
-1-
- 2 -
-3 -
-4-
-5 -
- 6 -

TRANSMISSION MODEL

The single greatest determiner of what a person is able to learn is my ability to skilfully craft the message, transmit it, and lodge it in the learner.

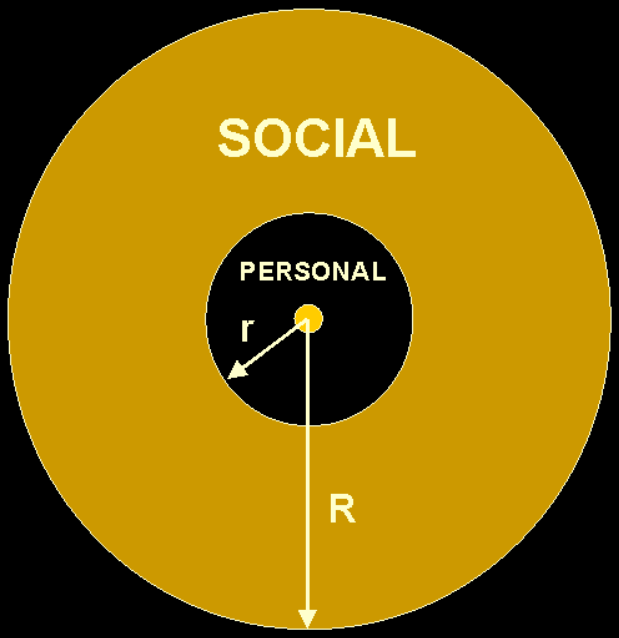
MENTAL MODEL - CONSTRUCTIVISM



DAVID AUSUBEL

"The single greatest determiner of what a person is able to learn is what they already know."

VYGOTSKY
SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM



LEADERSHIP ROLES

- MODEL
- ARTICULATE
- TEACH

LEADERS ALIGN THEIR PEOPLE

- ONE VOICE
- ONE MIND

PRACTICE FIELDS - Schein

- If everyone is fully engaged in doing the everyday work, they are likely to become maladaptive as the context changes - you must set up practice fields.
- Practice fields provide time and space for groups to test new behaviours, allow themselves to make errors, and turn information into knowledge through action learning.
- If they are successful, for a time they will be working differently to the rest of us - we must support them in this.
- Two types of fields: Structural - Pedagogical

CHRIS ARGYRIS

ESPOUSED THEORY

Talk theory - what I say that I do.

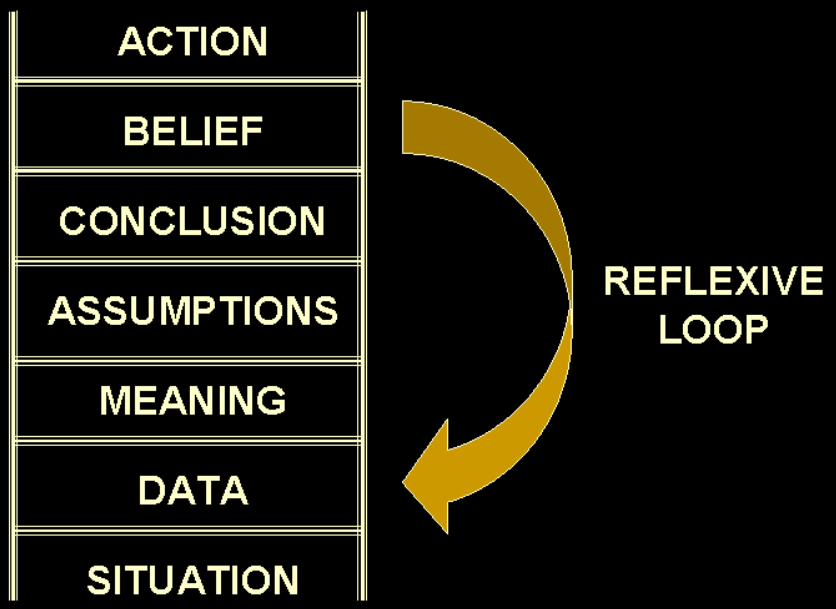
THEORY-IN-USE

Walk theory - what I actually do.

DYSFUNCTIONAL MENTAL MODEL

- What I observe are THE FACTS.
- What I know is THE TRUTH.
- And any reasonable person would see what I see and know the truth as I know it.

MENTAL MODEL - LADDER OF INFERENCE



CARL ROGERS - 1

"Through my experience I've found that there is one main obstacle to communication: people's tendency to *evaluate*. Fortunately , I've also discovered that if people can learn to *listen* with understanding, they can mitigate their evaluative impulses and greatly improve their communication with others."

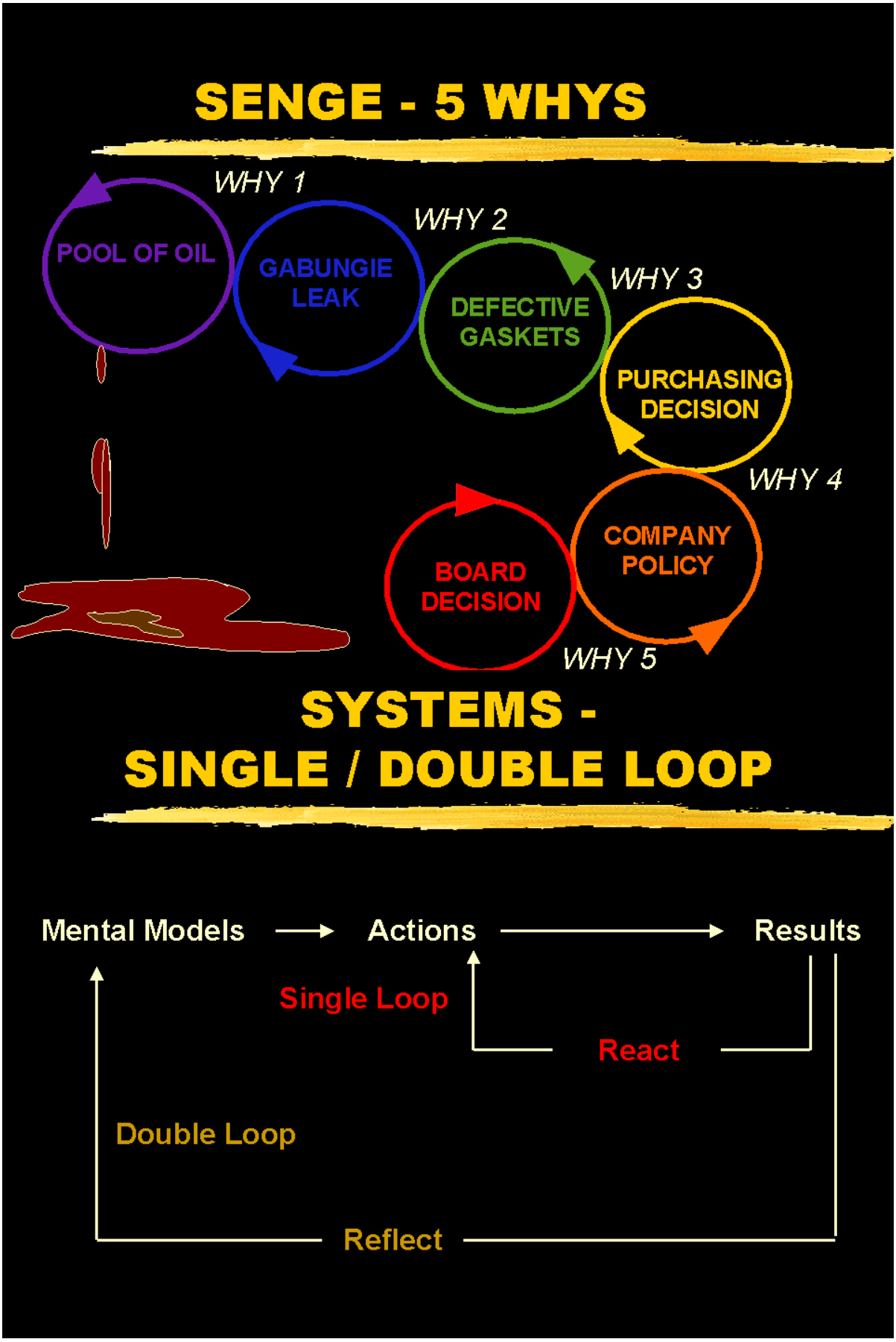
CARL ROGERS - 2

"We can achieve real communication and avoid this evaluative tendency when we listen with understanding. This means seeing the expressed idea from the other person's point of view, sensing how it feels to the person, achieving his or her frame of reference about the subject being discussed."

FACILITATIVE QUESTIONING

- Help the person to find their OWN insights into their OWN issues.
- Focus totally on the person being questioned - LISTEN to them.
- Ask questions to genuinely try to understand what they are saying.
- Keep out your own agendas - do not try to “fix” the person or give them your answers.
- Have total respect for the person being questioned.

(Edwards & Butler 1994)


SENGE - 5 WHYS
WHY 1
POOL OF OIL
GABUNGIE LEAK
WHY 2
DEFECTIVE GASKETS
WHY 3
PURCHASING DECISION
WHY 4
COMPANY POLICY
BOARD DECISION
WHY 5
SYSTEMS - SINGLE / DOUBLE LOOP
Mental Models
Actions
Results
Single Loop
React
Double Loop
Reflect

SYSTEMS: STORY CHARACTERS

Vision

Mental Models

Systemic Structures

Patterns of behaviour

Events

LEVERAGE

LATERAL THINKING

- Logical thinking
- Critical thinking

Lateral thinking is
GENERATIVE THINKING

Lateral thinking is
INTELLECTUAL SNAPSHOTS

DEFINE THE PROBLEM

- Never accept one definition.
- Ask:

"What is the real problem?"

- Always generate at least three definitions of the problem.
- Trim your list.
- Generate multiple solutions.

PO - PROVOCATIVE OPERATION

- PO introduces a creative pause.
- What to do in the creative pause?

RANDOM INPUT

- Randomly input a word, concept or object.
- Associate this with your topic.
- Draw characteristics from the input to generate insights into your topic.

ANALYSIS OF MY LIFE AS A TEACHER

12 hours per week at home

↓

48 hours per month

LESSON PREPARATION	STUDENTS (marking, diagnostic work, planning for individuals and groups)
10 minutes per lesson	9 minutes per child per month (for 160 students)

JOB ANALYSIS OF TEACHING

How much time each week, outside the classroom, should a teacher spend on:

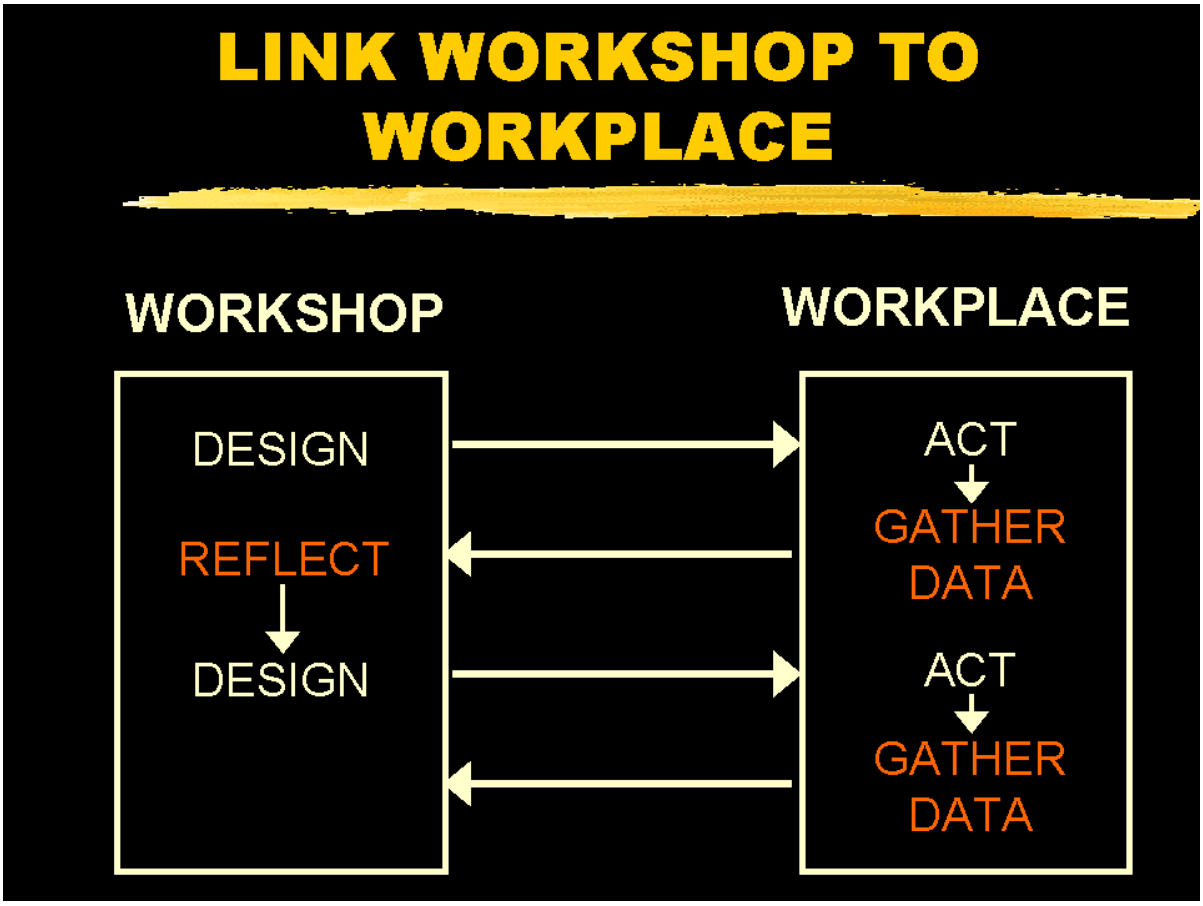
- Marking one student's work in their subject?
- Planning for /thinking about each individual student?
- Giving feedback to one student and/or their parents?
- Preparing each lesson?
- Extra-curricular activities?
- Keeping up-to-date through professional reading?

DATA BASE FOR JOB REALITY

HOURS	Principals %	Students %	You %
Over 1,000	27	13	
500 to 1,000	30	27	
200 to 500	20	32	
100 to 200	12	20	
50 to 100	5	6	
Under 50	6	2	

CHRIS ARGYRIS

"One of the central findings of our research is that people reason differently when they think about a problem simply to understand it than when they intend to take action."


LINK WORKSHOP TO WORKPLACE
WORKSHOP
WORKPLACE
DESIGN
REFLECT
DESIGN
ACT
GATHER DATA
ACT
GATHER DATA

KRISHNAMURTI

I think you should put these questions to yourself, not occasionally, but every day. Find out. Listen to everything, to the birds, to that cow calling. Learn about everything in yourself, because if you learn from yourself about yourself, then you will not be a second-hand human being.

So you should, if I may suggest, from now on, find out how to live entirely differently and that is going to be difficult, for I am afraid most of us like to find an easier way of living. We like to repeat and follow what other people say, what other people do, because it is the easiest way to live - to conform to the old pattern or to a new pattern.

KRISHNAMURTI

We have to find out what it means never to conform and what it means to live without fear. This is your life, and nobody is going to teach you, no book, no guru. You have to learn from yourself, not from books.

There is a great deal to learn about yourself. It is an endless thing, it is a fascinating thing, and when you learn about yourself from yourself, out of that learning wisdom comes. Then you can live a most extraordinary, happy, beautiful life.

Facilitative questioning

Facilitative questioning is a way of questioning to help a person take a deeper look at their beliefs, values and assumptions. It is almost impossible to look deeply at these aspects on your own, as you cannot get sufficiently outside yourself. Your beliefs, values and assumptions are embedded in your thinking. They are what you think with, so you need the help of another to reveal them. Having colleagues, friends or partners who are willing and able to use this skill will provide powerful opportunities for you to grow yourself. Facilitative questioning is one of the most deeply respectful things you can do for another person.

Reflection is a central skill for professional growth and learning. Facilitative questioning (FQ) is one way to help a learner turn on their reflection.

The key elements in FQ are:

- Focus all of your attention on the person being questioned.
- Try to be aware of your own agendas and keep them out of the questioning.
- Your role is to help the other person to explore their own issues in their own ways.
- It is not your role to lead them to the solution you can see.
- Genuinely try to understand the other person.
- Ask questions to clarify what is being said.
- Have total respect for the other person and their ability to find their own answers to their own questions.

The aim of facilitative questioning is to help the person being questioned to reflect as powerfully as possible on:

- what they have done and not done;
- what they have learned;
- what they now plan to do as a result of this learning; and,
- their beliefs, values and assumptions.

It is vital that responsibility for learning, planning and action stays with the person being questioned. This empowers them in the learning process. It is not the questioner's responsibility to 'fix them up', come up with the best way forward, or make judgements. Your role is to provide a skilled 'sounding board'.

Choosing the environment

Find a place where you won't be disturbed. Allow enough time to do justice to the process. You need time to do the interview(s), give feedback and review how the process worked for all involved. The environment must be conducive to focus and concentration. This won't be possible if you are rushed or distracted. FQ is commonly done individually. However, particularly when learning the skill, it can also be done in groups – here one person can take major responsibility for the questioning, or the group can do the questioning. Others can then provide skilful feedback to the questioner or the person being questioned or both. Group size is probably best kept to a maximum of seven. Such groups provide a wider opportunity for sharing and learning, but intimacy suffers.

You need to negotiate the ethics of the process you will use, particularly in relation to confidentiality. You also need to look at how you will deal with feedback, with conflict, with time keeping, with roles if you have a group, and with the central issue of developing and maintaining trust.

If you are being questioned:

- This is not an interrogation process. You have the undivided attention of someone else to help **you** get **your** issues clear. This is the questioner's gift to you. They are not there to judge you.
- You have equal power in the interaction. If a line of questioning is not helping, say so. You may wish to discuss an alternative direction. If you are getting into areas that you don't wish to discuss, say so. Your privacy is important. If questions are really helping you get things clearer in your own mind, tell the questioner. Feedback helps.
- Take time to really think and reflect before answering. Don't allow the questioner to rush you.
- If it is a problem you are dealing with, try to state it very clearly with some background information to help the questioner's understanding.
- Try to be as open and honest as possible. This process can make a real contribution to your learning and professional growth.

If you are the questioner:

- This process involves trust and respect. Please honour the trust that has been placed in you.
- Utterly respect where the person being questioned is at in their life, and their ability to come up with their own answers. They have made decisions in the context they are in, with the information and knowledge they have, acting from the beliefs, values and assumptions that their life experience has created. They are the meaning maker in their own experience. If you take over that role by believing that you can 'see what should be done' and steering the questions that way, or by coming up with solutions, or by 'fixing them up', you are preventing them from learning from their experiences and hindering their meaning-making. You are also telling them that you don't think they have the ability to manage their own life. Even if they try to get you to take responsibility, please resist while using this skill. Stick to the contract.
- Initially ask questions that establish a clear picture for you of what the person wishes to process. If it is a problem, ask them to state the problem as clearly as possible and maybe ask a few further questions to flesh out the details. If it is for review and planning ask what they had planned to do and what they actually did.
- Listen carefully to all replies. Try to base the next question on what has been said and not formulate it too much before the person has finished speaking. Pauses while you work out a suitable question seem much longer and more uncomfortable to you than to the other person.
- Try to use open questions that encourage the person to go deeper and really examine their beliefs, values and assumptions. This is where the real leverage and learning is for them.

- Hold within yourself an attitude of really seeking to listen and understand. You are not there just to positively reinforce. You are there in a dance of understanding, 'staying' with them, providing some resistance for them to push against in their struggle to make meaning.

Here are some questions and question beginnings. As you practise, or observe others in practice, collect other questions and question stems that work for you. You only develop skill in FQ by repeated practice and feedback. Try some of these:

Tell me about…?
Can you elaborate a bit on…?
Could you give me an example of that…?
So you find…?
And then what happened…?
How did you feel about…?
How has that changed…?
So what does that mean for you?
I'm not clear what you mean, could you run over it again?
Could you flesh that out for me?
So what I hear you saying is…have I got that right?
In what way did that…?
Can you think of other examples of where this has happened?
Is there any other way you could interpret that?
What might have led you to see the situation that way?
So what things seem to be getting in the way?
What does that tell you about yourself and the way you learn (or the way you see things)?
What assumption(s) do you think you are making there?
What was your role in this?
How might you change this to something more likely to work for you?
In what way(s) did that impact on you?
What might you do differently?
What have you learned from this?
How does this relate to the plan(s) you made?

Some background experience with FQ

We have found that if you get your 'mental set' right suitable questions emerge. Be clear that you are trying to genuinely understand the other person and to help them understand themselves. By doing this the questions come more easily. Keeping your own ego and own agenda out of the way is usually a difficult skill to learn.

It is important to stay with people in this process. If you are using FQ for review and planning and the person says that they have done nothing, then do not leave it there, ask: "Fine. Tell me about the nothing that you did", and later, maybe, "Does this happen often to you? You plan and nothing happens? Or was this time different?"

Inaction involves decisions just as much as action, it also reveals beliefs, values and assumptions and is therefore part of deeper learning. Your aim is to help them process what they have done or not done.

Sometimes it helps to paraphrase back to the person what you think you heard. Be careful when doing this that you do not 'take over' the meaning. This is particularly important when there is a power imbalance. Always check that you have got it accurate, and if not, ask them to clarify where you misinterpreted. Always accept their interpretation.

Developing facilitative questioning skills requires regular practice with feedback. You can practise FQ in pairs, or in a group of three using one person as a recorder, observer and coach, as outlined below.

Practising FQ

Get into a group of three. There are three roles. The questioner; the person being questioned; and a person to record (in the interviewee's journal) the beliefs, values and assumptions they 'heard' in the interview.

Each interview takes 6 minutes. Use the recorder as a timekeeper.

Then the recorder reads back to the interviewee what beliefs, values and assumptions they inferred from what was said in the interview. This takes 1 minute.

Once you have completed this feedback, have a short 3 minute discussion about the questioning. The questioner can talk about any difficulties they had and seek feedback from the person being questioned. Focus particularly on the types of questions that helped and those that did not. They can also receive feedback about whether they fell into the 'fix them up' trap. The recorder/observer/coach can act as mediator for this discussion, watching the time and adding any comments of their own.

This takes a total of 10 minutes. You then rotate the roles.

By doing this three times each person tries each role, with feedback, and the whole process takes 30 minutes.

The state of rural education in pre-service teacher education courses

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Abstract

Since the 1980's there have been many Australian federal and state government reports, studies and reviews on rural teacher education. These documents have focused on the continuum from the preparation of prospective teachers for appointment in rural communities and their schools through to the enhancement of professional practice by continued professional development programs for rural and remote teachers.

Collectively these inquiries have indicated that the preparation of teachers for rural school appointments requires specific attention being devoted to the exploration of a range of social, cultural, geographical, historical, political, and service access issues that define the difference in working and living in rural contexts compared to other locations.

One project that is currently being undertaken is the ARC Linkages Project, *Productive partnerships for teaching quality* research project (Green, et al, 2002), which is a collaborative project between Charles Sturt University, the University of New England and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. The project seeks to identify successful practices for building rural teacher and community capacity, and appropriately preparing and retaining teachers for rural schools within New South Wales.

As part of this project, an examination of the current 'state of the art' in preparing pre-service teachers for a rural appointment was undertaken. A profile of the rural focus contained within the respective primary and secondary pre-service teacher education courses for each University's Faculty of Education within New South Wales was developed through close examination of their public course documentation available in their respective university handbooks.

This presentation will explore the recommendations from the policy and research documents that informed this analysis as well as reporting on the state of rural pre-service preparation in universities.

Introduction

Staffing rural schools is an integral operational aspect of all departments of education and training across Australia. Given the high demographic concentrations of Australia's population living in large urban cities and along the maritime fringes, rural locations are often represented as being geographically isolated with few intra-structures to support a quality life style in these areas. In education, the preparation of prospective teachers for rural appointments most typically happens in urban settings (Gibson and King, 1998).

However, over the last quarter of a century, at the policy level there has been a recognition that rural staffing, especially 'difficult to staff schools and locations', is an emergent priority issue. During this timeframe, a number of Australian federal and state government reports, research studies and commissioned reviews have been conducted on rural teacher education. Internationally, similar recognition of the difficulty in staffing rural schools in Canadian provinces, American states and the United Kingdom has occurred.

The Australian inquiries have focused on diverse aspects of rural teacher education including the preparation of prospective teachers for appointment in rural communities and their schools through to the enhancement of professional practice by continued professional development programs for rural and remote teachers.

In this paper, rural pre-service teacher education is the focus. In summary, the recommendations from these inquiries have indicated that the preparation of teachers for rural school appointments requires specific attention being devoted to the exploration of a range of social, cultural, geographical, historical, political, and service access issues that define the difference in working and living in rural contexts compared to other locations.

The ARC Linkages Project, *Productive partnerships for teaching quality* research project (Green et al, 2002), seeks to identify successful practices for building rural teacher and community capacity, and appropriately preparing and retaining teachers for rural schools within New South Wales. This project is a joint project between Charles Sturt university, University of New England and the industry partner, the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. More specifically, it is envisaged that through the set of twenty-four (24) case studies that constitute the major component of this ARC project, recommendations and guidelines will be identified which will define the range of rural, placed based experiences pre-service students need as integral features of their studies to prepare them to accept an appointment in a rural location.

As a first step in this ARC project, Australian literature on the essential attributes of a rural pre-service teacher education course was examined. From this initial survey, a further more detailed analysis was conducted which yielded two categories of relevant literature. Firstly, literature that synthesised the outcomes of federal or state level inquiries, and secondly, the writings of researchers, often working in pre-service courses preparing teachers for rural appointments. A third stage emerged that focused on a reconnaissance of the current 'state of art' in rural pre-service teacher education in New South Wales through examining the handbook documentation available from each of the 11 major universities offering teacher education courses.

Methodology

The approach adopted for this analysis of the literature included a) analysing Australian national and state-level policy documents pertaining to rural education, and b) scrutinising of all eleven NSW university pre-service teacher education course documentation.

Document analyses

Australian national and NSW state-level reports addressing aspects of rural pre-service teacher education were identified and formed the focus of this literature synthesis. The six major reports examined were:

- *Schooling in rural Australia* report (CSC, 1988);
- *National inquiry into rural and remote education* (HREOC, 2000);
- *Towards a national education and training strategy for rural Australia* (National Board of Employment, Education and Training, 1991);
- *Listening and responding. A review of education in rural New South Wales* (Rawlinson, 1983);
- *Quality Matters: Revitalising teaching: Critical times, critical choices* (Ramsey, 2000); and,
- *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in New South Wales*. (Vinson, 2002(a), 2002(b), 2002(c)).

University courses

Each Faculty of Education within New South Wales that offered pre-service teacher education courses was identified. An analysis of the rural focus contained within the respective primary and secondary education courses was conducted through close examination of their respective university handbooks.

Specifically, this analysis addressed three focus questions that were informed by the analysis of the literature. The focus questions were:

1. Did the course include any specific subject or subject(s) on or about rural education?
2. If a course did include a rural education subject or subjects, what was the status of the subject(s) within the course structure: Compulsory or optional?
3. Did the course include a rural practice teaching experience as a compulsory or optional component of the course?

Selected Research on Pre-Service Rural Teacher Education

Studies going back to the Turney, Sinclair and Cairns (1980) research on isolated teachers in New South Wales who were portrayed as teachers who 'did not want to be there', the work of McSwan and Duck (1988) with teachers in remote north-west Queensland, the research by Crowther and Kale (1987) on rural and remote teachers working in the Northern Territory schools, the Tomlinson (1994) review of teachers and teaching conditions in rural Western Australia through to the recent *National inquiry into rural and remote education* (HREOC, 2000) and two New South Wales inquiries (Ramsey, 2000; Vinson, 2002(a), 2002(b), 2002(c)) into educational provision provide a comprehensive and longitudinal depiction of the issues surrounding rural pre-service teacher education.

Boylan and Hemmings (1992) along with Yarrow, Ballantyre, Hansford, Herschell and Millwater (1998, 1999) and Yarrow, Herschell and Millwater (1999) reported on the positive attitudinal changes towards a rural appointment resulting from pre-service students completing a rural or remote practice teaching experience. Additionally, Yarrow, Herschell and Millwater (1999) identified that rural oriented preparatory courses needed to include teaching strategies for multi-age classrooms, a sentiment echoed by Lake (1986), McSwan and Duck (1988) and Clarke (1990), developing an understanding of and a sensitivity to the cultural differences, values and mores that exist in country towns, appreciating and utilising the nature and extent of community involvement in school life, and participating in rural practice teaching experiences which were also recommended by Gibson (1994).

A more recent American review of empirically based research was conducted by Allen (2003) on teacher education. As part of this review, the question of placed-based teacher education courses for rural and remote locations was specifically examined. Allen (2003) concluded that very little rigorous American empirically-based research that

‘addresses the needs of teachers in rural schools’ (p.7) existed. By contrast, the Australian literature, not consulted by Allen’s review (2003) does offer some guidance that would benefit course designers in the American faculties of education.

National Inquiries into Rural Teacher Education

Arguably, the first national review of rural education was the Federal Government’s *Schooling in Rural Australia* report conduced by the Commonwealth Schools Commission (CSC, 1988). This report presented a national perspective on many aspects of rural education including specific attention to the preparation of teachers for rural appointments.

In this section of the literature review, three seminal national-perspective, policy documents were identified. The recommendations from each document are discussed below and the relevant implications for rural teacher education identified.

1. Schooling in rural Australia

One primary objective of the *Schooling in rural Australia* report (CSC, 1988) focused upon ‘identifying the needs and issues relating to the curriculum, school structures, staffing and other resources’ (p. 21).

This report focused on three fundamentals for rural teacher education: a) preparation for rural teaching; b) recruitment of teacher for rural schools; and, c) support for teachers in rural areas.

Specifically the report did not offer much in the way in which pre-service courses should be designed to prepare teachers for rural appointments. Rather, it made the generalisation that pre-service teachers ‘...are not adequately prepared for rural teaching’ (p. 141).

2. Towards a national education and training strategy for rural Australia

The National Board of Employment, Education and Training (1991) described the disparity in participation and completion rates in secondary and post-secondary education for rural and urban Australians. This policy document sought implementation strategies that would improve participation rates for rural Australians within the broader socio-economic and employment related fabric of Australian society. Within this framework, this report did explore pre-service teacher education issue of preparation for rural appointments. This national document identified a series of attributes for inclusion in pre-service teacher education courses for rural teachers that the report argued would redress the lower rural participation rates. These pre-service course inclusions were defined as:

> rural practicums (including financial support during the period of practicum for accommodation, and recompense for wages lost through giving up part-time or casual work in metropolitan areas); special units in teaching/living in rural communities; and the development of teacher education courses specifically for teaching in remote traditional Aboriginal communities (p. 47).

3. National inquiry into rural and remote education

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s *National inquiry into rural and remote education* (HREOC, 2000) had as one of its major focuses pre-service teacher education along with school staffing matters, and the provision of professional development opportunities for rural and remote teachers. The context within which the HREOC Inquiry operated focused on developing strategies ‘to enhance the desirability of country postings’ (p. 41).

An important outcome from the focus on the pre-service preparation of teachers for rural and remote appointments, the HREOC Inquiry found that ‘most teacher training does not adequately equip new recruits with the skills and knowledge needed for teaching in rural and remote Australia’ (p. 43). Consequently, The HREOC Inquiry developed two recommendations (Recommendation 5.9 and Recommendation 5.10) that provided indicative content that should be essential inclusions in pre-service teacher education courses. Specifically, the HREOC report stated:

> All teacher training institutions should require undergraduates to study a module on teaching in rural and remote communities, offer all students an option to undertake a fully funded practical placement (teaching experience) in a rural or remote school and assist rural and remote communities in the direct recruitment of new graduates for their schools. (Recommendation 5.9a)
>
> All education providers should develop rural and remote school recruitment strategies at teacher education institutions and provide information, resources and support for rural and remote recruits prior to the commencement of the position. (Recommendation 5.10)

New South Wales Inquiries into Rural Teacher Education

Three New South Wales specific state level inquiries into rural teacher education were identified as having specific relevance to the ARC Linkages Project, *Productive partnerships for teaching quality* research project. These state reports were:

1. Listening and responding: A review of education in rural New South Wales

The *Listening and responding* review was the first comprehensive review of rural education undertaken in New South Wales (Rawlinson, 1983). The review's terms of reference included an examination of the staffing of rural schools. As part of this review, the preparation, recruitment and induction of newly graduated teachers, and the professional development of rural teachers were investigated.

The analysis of the pre-service teacher education courses found: '...teachers were given no special pre-service training, pre-appointment induction to prepare them for a first [rural] appointment...' (p. 56). The review noted that some tertiary institutions offered an elective subject addressing teaching in rural schools, and that some institutions also permitted their students to undertake a rural practice teaching experience.

No detailed analyses of what constituent knowledges, topics nor experiences were included in the review's analyses of these elective subjects which reduces the value of the review's contribution to the *Productive partnerships in quality teaching* ARC Linkages research project (Green, et al., 2002) and to rural pre-service teacher preparation more generally. This review made the general recommendation that teacher education institutions '…provide in their training programmes courses which prepare interested students for service in rural schools, including experiences in a small rural context' (Recommendation 6.2, p.61).

2. Quality matters: Revitalising teaching: Critical times, critical choices

The *Quality matters* review (Ramsey, 2000) was established with a broad charter to examine initial teacher training through to the professional learnings of existing teachers. The review proposed a reform agenda for teacher education as a New South Wales state wide program. A number of broad, state-wide features were embedded within the proposed reform agenda. These included:

- establishing close connections and productive partnerships between teacher education institutions and the schools and the teaching profession;
- placing the professional experience program at the centre of the teacher education course;
- providing targeted incentives to prospective teacher education students from remote and rural communities as recruitment strategies for these courses; and,
- the implementation of a standards based system of accreditation of teacher education courses.

These state-wide recommendations create a holistic vision for teachers, teacher education and the profession moving into the first decade of the third millennium. Turning more specifically to the rural teacher education focus of this paper, the recommendations and policy implications of the *Quality matters* review are somewhat disappointing. The review proposed a state wide structural framework that supported a diversity of initial teacher education courses. Within this diversity, each institution can determine what areas of specific focus eg, secondary science, rural primary, etc. the institution would concentrate upon. Delving deeper into this framework, there is a paucity of specific recommendations about the preparation of rural teacher education students. The *Quality matters* review noted that the New South Wales regional universities had 'a significant role to play in pre-service teacher education' (p.53) especially in teacher preparation for regional and rural communities.

3. Inquiry into the provision of public education in New South Wales

The most recent review of education in New South Wales, *Inquiry into the provision of public education in New South Wales*, (Vinson, 2002(a), 2002(b), 2002(c)) initiated by parent and teacher organisations involved in public education, was given broad terms of reference to examine the purposes, values, resources and structures required to sustain and enhance public education.

Embedded across each of the three reports from the Inquiry and specifically addressed in *Chapter 11: Teacher Education* of the Third Report (Vinson, 2002(c)), are critical outcomes focussing on what are the appropriate range of preparatory experiences for pre-service tertiary students who seek a rural appointment. It was disappointing to note that *Chapter 7: Rural and Remote Education* in the Second Report (Vinson, 2002(b)) did not raise nor discuss in any substantive way the pre-service preparation of rural teachers. Chapter 7 focussed on processes for recruitment of teachers, supporting professional development for teachers, and enhancing the educational programs offered in schools for their students in the rural and remote locations within New South Wales.

The discussion of the professional preparation of teachers within the Inquiry focussed on identifying the range of essential experiences that should be included in all tertiary based teacher preparation courses. The discussion in *Chapter 7: Rural and Remote Education* and *Chapter 11: Teacher Education* also failed to recognise the importance of place as an essential determinant in the design of pre-service courses. As Bryden and Boylan (2004) argue place, or location, significantly impacts on the provision of quality of teaching and learning experiences for students. Without an overt consideration of placed-based education as part of a pre-service education course, prospective teachers will not be fully nor adequately prepared to teach in rural and remote schools.

Returning to the Inquiry's analysis of key components for inclusion in all pre-service course the following attributes were identified in Chapter 11:

- classroom management strategies;
- developing a critical and reflective perspective;
- integrating practice teaching experiences overtly with the range of other learning experiences inherent in other subjects studied. Also the inclusion of an extended internship program as the culmination of practice teaching; and,
- knowledge of school settings and organisational structure.

Collectively these pre-service course attributes are summarised in Recommendation 11.2 of the Third Report (Vinson, 2002(c)) (p. 102).

The model of rural teacher preparation known as the challenge-deficit framework (Ankrah-Dove, 1982) was applied to the Vinson review to analyse the content and intent of Chapter 11, the review's focus is predominantly on the 'deficits' or disadvantages inherent in rural locations using educational, social, economic and service access instances to support the deficit orientation. From this orientation, Chapter 7 then explored the development of compensatory programs as the only way to solve many of the issues raised.

Watson and Hatton (1995) caution educational planners and administrators on the duality of incentive schemes and compensatory programs. Their caution is a timely reminder to the purpose of the Vinson report. They warn that these staff recruitment incentives can lead to increasing turnover rather than increasing staffing stability. They stated: 'incentives are not very effective in improving the quality of teaching', and 'the deficit approach is usually a response to some urgent need and often implies short term expediency.' Ankrah-Dove's (1982) challenge model rather 'requires longer term planning and emphasis upon the qualitative implications of staffing decisions, not just the quantitative concern to fill all vacancies'. At the pre-service course level the *Beyond the Line* program (NSWDET, 2000) is one such challenge initiative and strategy that involves a partnership between the tertiary teacher education institutions and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training that is beginning to show positive rural recruitment benefits (Boylan and Wallace, 2002).

Surveying the Pre-service Scene

The final aspect of this paper examines the current state of the art in pre-service teacher education courses within New South Wales and their overt focus on preparation of students for rural appointments. The earlier research by Gibson and King (1998) who conducted an Australian national survey of 27 universities to document the level of pre-service preparation provided for prospective rural teachers provided a useful foundation for the analysis of courses within New South Wales. The Gibson and King (1998) study can be construed as an extension of Gibson's (1994) earlier research with a small sample of rural Queensland beginning teachers (N=24) who identified the following deficiencies in their preparation for a rural school. These deficiencies in their preparatory courses included:

- pedagogy of multi-age classes and multi-age group strategies;
- curriculum organisation and planning;
- strategies in managing lower grade students in multi-grade classes;
- rural classroom organisation and small school administrative responsibilities;
- accessing appropriate and or sufficient resources;
- effective time management strategies;
- strategies for engaging in successful community interaction;
- developing an understanding of community dynamics that influence the teaching-learning environment;
- strategies for dealing with value clashes;
- isolation;
- developing supportive communication and interaction networks with colleagues, consultants, support groups or friends; and,
- teaching experiences in rural schools and their communities.

Gibson and King (1998) suggested that there existed and still does exist a need for further research into the nature of pre-service education courses purporting to prepare teachers for rural locations. Gibson and King (1998) reported that one problematic issue that evolved from their survey was to develop a definition of what a 'rural focus' within a preparatory course meant. The authors generated a four tier level of definition of this problematic concept that facilitated a productive analysis of the responding university's pre-service courses. This grounded definition categorised the 27 universities as:

- universities that included a full semester long rural education subject linked with a rural practicum experience;
- universities where a rural education topic existed within a general education, curriculum or instruction subject;
- universities that offered an elective subject on rural education; or,
- universities that had no focus on rural education within their pre-service courses.

Further they noted that in some universities, a rural practicum experience was a compulsory. Gibson and King (1998) concluded that, as an overall estimate, 91% of Australian universities claimed to have some rural focus in their pre-service courses. They also reported that 45% of all universities included a compulsory student involvement in rural issues. Finally, Gibson and King (1998) reported that only 12% of all universities reported they included a compulsory rural practicum experience as part of their course. This finding suggests that the percentage of universities that require students in their pre-service course to undertake both a compulsory rural education subject plus a compulsory rural practicum and successfully complete both aspects as a graduation requirement is at best 12% and may well be much lower.

Yarrow, Herschell and Millwater (1999) perhaps best summed up the preparation received by Queensland pre-service teachers for rural appointments succinctly this way: '[it was] sparse, lacking in cohesion, and in many cases non-existent'. (p. 1). The earlier research of Watson (1988) found a similar situation with graduate teachers in New South Wales and Western Australia when he reported that 88% and 84% respectively received no rural education training in their pre-service teacher education courses.

As a consequence of this literature synthesis, the eleven major teacher education institutions in New South Wales were surveyed during 2002 with the specific purpose to identify:

- whether the pre-service course included an identifiable subject on rural education;
- what was its status of this subject within the course; and ,
- whether the course included a rural practice teaching experience and what its status was.

In the following tables, the results of this document analysis process based on the reported course information contained within each of the 11 university's handbooks are presented.

In Table 1 the analysis of whether a semester-long subject in rural education is offered within each of the three main types of pre-service teacher education course and its status within the course is presented.

Table 1
Profile of NSW teacher education courses

	Concurrent Primary Course		Concurrent Secondary Course [1]		End-on Secondary Course [2]	
Institution	Rural subject offering	Status of rural subject	Rural subject offering	Status of rural subject	Rural subject offering	Status of rural subject
CSU	Yes	Compulsory	Yes	Compulsory	Yes	Elective
UNE	No	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A
SCU	No	N/A	No	N/A	Yes	Elective
U New	No	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A
U Woll	No	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A
Syd U	No	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A
UNSW	-	-	No	N/A	No	N/A
MU	No	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A
UWS	No	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A
ACU	No	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A
UTS	No	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A

Key:

CSU	Charles Sturt University	Syd U	Sydney University
UNE	University of New England	UNSW	University of New South Wales
SCU	Southern Cross University	MU	Macquarie University
U New	University of Newcastle	UWS	University of Western Sydney
U Woll	University of Wollongong	ACU	Australian Catholic University
UTS	University of Technology Sydney		

1. = the work of Mr. Greg Burnett, Research Assistant Armidale, is acknowledged in collation of this information.
2 .= the work of Mr. Matti Novak, Research Assistant Bathurst, is acknowledged in collation of this information.

Table 2 reports on whether the students in their respective pre-service courses are able to engage in a rural practice teaching experience and what the status of this experience is within courses.

Table 2
Rural practice teaching experience in NSW teacher education courses

	Concurrent Primary Course	Concurrent Secondary Course [1]	End-on Secondary Course [2]
Institution	Rural practice teaching experience	Rural practice teaching experience	Rural practice teaching experience
CSU	Optional	Optional	Optional
UNE	Optional	Optional	Optional
SCU	Optional	Optional	Optional
U New	Optional	Optional	Optional
U Woll	Optional	Optional	Optional
Syd U	Optional	Optional	Optional
UNSW	-	Optional	Optional
MU	Optional	Optional	Optional
UWS	Optional	Optional	Optional
ACU	Optional	Optional	Optional
UTS	Optional	Optional	Optional

Key:

CSU	Charles Sturt University	Syd U	Sydney University
UNE	University of New England	UNSW	University of New South Wales
SCU	Southern Cross University	MU	Macquarie University
U New	University of Newcastle	UWS	University of Western Sydney
U Woll	University of Wollongong	ACU	Australian Catholic University
UTS	University of Technology Sydney		

1. = the work of Mr. Greg Burnett, Research Assistant Armidale, is acknowledged in collation of this information.
2 .= the work of Mr. Matti Novak, Research Assistant Bathurst, is acknowledged in collation of this information.

From these tables, the current 'state of art' with preparing teachers for rural appointments and the study of rural education course work in pre-service teacher education courses in New South Wales is characterised as sparse and quite poor. This finding provides additional support for Yarrow, Ballantyre, Hansford, Herschell and Millwater (1999) claim that while rural pre-service teacher education is a concern to faculties of education, little effort in providing a 'unified or cohesive response' (p. 2) has eventuated. Only Charles Sturt University offered, at least, one rural education subject across all of its pre-service primary and secondary education courses. Southern Cross University offered an elective as part of its one year end-on the secondary Graduate Diploma in Education level. A closer examination of the offerings revealed the status of the subject was often optional which meant the students chose it as an elective in their chosen course. What this analysis did not reveal was the percentage of each intake who selected the optional rural education subject, nor did this analysis seek to identify if some components of other subjects addressed issues associated with rural teaching through being embedded in general education, pedagogy, or curriculum related subjects.

Conclusion

The paper has critically examined the recommendations from international, Australian and state based literature on key inclusions in a pre-service rural teacher education course. This analysis has yielded some productive suggestions for the content and field experiences required to successfully prepare prospective students for rural appointments.

Additionally, this paper set to identify what the current 'state of art' with the level of formal study and field experience inclusions designed to produce prospective teachers for rural appointments was within the eleven (11) university based pre-service teacher education courses in New South Wales. Generally, the current situation can best be described as piece meal. Few pre-service courses gave formal attention to rural education subjects and most universities offered a rural practice teaching placement as an optional element within their course. Collectively, these findings suggest that rural education is not a priority issue in most education faculties in New South Wales.

The challenge rural organisations like the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) and the Western Australian District High Schools Administrators Association (WADHSAA) face is how to promote the importance of placed based rural teacher education and to ensure that the elements revealed through the literature synthesis reported in this paper are implemented.

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Infusing pedagogy into place based education

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Abstract

The movement towards standards based curricula, coupled with regular assessment regimes of student learning, creates a set of values and beliefs about what is important in education. The more education is standardised, the less room there is for providing education on local language, culture, history, and environment. The importance of community for rural locales as they address issues of falling populations, especially with their youth, takes on a central role. Teachers and the school, as an essential ingredient within a rural community, have a critical part to play in affirming the value of place. This understanding of place promotes a sense of individual and community self worth, supports new local development strategies. It also helps to infuse quality teaching and learning experiences that celebrate how a study of local history, culture, language, traditions and dynamics within a community can address common rural myths and challenges into a mandated curriculum.

Importance of Place

Youth out-migration and falling population levels remain a key concern for many remote rural areas of Scotland and Australia, not to mention other OECD countries.

The implementation of standards based school curricula and related regular tests of performance have received strong political support in recent Australian, UK and US educational policy. The political imperative was to set national standards and thus ensure that employers and institutions of higher and further education would know what a child had been taught, and assure parents that there is a base level of academic achievement and competence that all children reach. Coupled with this standards based focus has been a rhetoric of quality pedagogy, stated minimal professional standards for teachers to gain accreditation and employment, and evidence based quantitative data on student academic performance. Yet this standards based policy is, in fact, adversely affecting rural students who believe that by leaving their school and community they will seek and gain employment opportunities in the far-off bigger cities.

However, there are particular disadvantages of such policies for children living in rural areas, and these disadvantages ultimately impact negatively on the economic and social viability of rural places.

In a recent paper for the International Rural Network conference in Inverness, Dr Finlay Macleod, an educationist and film-maker based in the gaelic-speaking outer Hebrides of Scotland, said the institution of *the school* "arrived here, in our community, speaking the English language, offering pieces of information whose frame of reference had no contact with the day-to-day life of the community, or its youngsters" (Macleod, 2003). In that brief sentence, Macleod summed up the experience of countless children from what are now, or were, 'minority' cultures and from rural places around the world, and not just Australia and Scotland.

There is a growing realisation that the more education is standardized, the less room there is for providing education on local language, culture, history, and environment. And this, in turn, means that children growing up either reject education, or they reject their home place and its culture as being inevitably 'second rate'. For many rural children 'exit' is the choice.

Paul Gruchow, an author, editor and conservationist from rural Minnesota, wrote an account of his own rural education. He said:

> *"Nothing in my education prepared me to believe, or encouraged me to expect, that there was any reason to be interested in my own place. If I hoped to amount to anything, I understood, I had better take the first road out of town as fast as I could. And like so many of my classmates, I did." (Gruchow, 1995 cited in Nachtigal and Hass, 2000)*

Where exceptions to this policy and its practice are found, they are often highly lauded. For example, as part of the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's (HREOC) National inquiry into rural and remote education, the *'School Communities'* publication (HREOC, 2000) focused on Indigenous families living in remote areas. *School Communities* celebrated through a range of case studies community empowering strategies that were locally developed, responsive to identified needs, and focused on improving the relevance of school education. Successful programs included:

- the establishment of joint inter-agency committees to coordinate services to cater for 'at-risk' students and their families in the communities of Walgett and Bourke in New South Wales;
- developing culturally appropriate schools where Indigenous languages, culture and traditional learning are central to the learnings for the students in Barramundi School in Western Australia;
- creating self governing independent community schools that respond directly to local community needs such as Wulungarra Community School in Western Australia, Giant Steps School in Tasmania and the Young and Powerful School in New South Wales; and,
- government initiated programs for training Indigenous people to become classroom assistants to the teacher through to training to become qualified teachers. (HREOC, 2000)

More recently, the Rural Teacher Education Project (Green, et al., 2002) in New South Wales seeks to focus on quality teaching and learning practices occurring in the three rural administrative regions of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. The focus of this project is on schools as sites of 'value adding' to the educational outcomes achieved by students and uses case studies as the means to document and disseminate what can be achieved. At this stage, 24 case studies are planned with a projected completion by the end of 2004.

One of the reasons why young people (especially males) in rural Connemara Ireland opt out of formal education is that "school considered to be irrelevant to future" (McGarth, 2000) while in the UK, Walton argues that "many of the young people who fail to achieve their potential within the education system feel alienated by the structure and content of the National Curriculum." (Walton, 2000:72)

Paul Nachtigal and Toni Hass (2000:20), the original directors of the Rural School and Community Trust in the USA, argue:

> *"Cultural history is empowering. In order for rural students to invest in their rural place, they need to believe their rural place has value… Education that is place-based sings regional folk songs, reads local authors, documents ethnic histories, records the stories of community elders and view local citizens as unique and precious resources."*

The failure to recognise 'place' in formal schooling is *dis*-empowering. It sends a signal that local culture, identity, history, etc is somehow less worthy than that of a more abstract or distant world or urban-based life experiences.

Just as with the individuals who comprise it, a community requires a strong sense of identity and self-worth if it is to be or become self-empowered and 'take charge' of its present and future. This sense of identity and place is formed during childhood and youth. The failure of standards based curricula and schooling to respond to or reflect this need has serious consequences not only for individuals, but also for the future of *rural* places in particular.

Recent research in Scotland and Australia has demonstrated that the development of localities depends on several tangible and intangible factors and the inter-relationships between these (Bryden & Dawe 1999; Terluin & Post, 2000; HREOC, 2000; Bryden et al 2001; Green, et al., 2002; Bryden & Hart, 2004). In particular, and among other things:

- rural communities are increasingly having to rely on their own initiative and resources to improve their economic conditions and quality of life; an important pre-condition is a sense of local identity and self-confidence;
- new kinds of economic activity in rural places beyond the 'commuting belt' to larger towns and cities are increasingly linked with *local* culture and environment;
- the quantity and quality of human resources are becoming more important issues for the development of rural places in the face of ageing populations and the related issue of youth out-migration; and,
- the demographics of rural places are now such that the maintenance of rural populations requires a net inward migration of people. This, in turn, requires new forms of employment, but also high quality of life including attention of manifestations of local culture (visual and performing arts, for example) and the quality of the environment, health care, schooling etc.

If these research findings are robust, and we believe they are, then they have important implications for our educational systems. It is not accidental that New Zealand, has deliberately rejected national curricula and testing. Those of us who are concerned about the future of rural places in Scotland and Australia should take a leaf from the New Zealand approach and argue for a much larger component of *local* learning within our formal schooling systems than seems to be allowed by processes of national standardisation. In Australia, there are some indicators that there is a move away from the highly prescriptive standards based curricula notably occurring in Queensland with the New Basics program and in particular the Rich Tasks that form an integral and synthesising educational experience for students (Herschell, 2001)

In Scotland, we can point to some initiatives that reflect the gap in 'place based' learning such as the only Gaelic-medium training college on the Isle of Skye (Sabhal Mor Ostaig), and the Feisean Movement, started by a priest on the

island of Barra who was worried that his community was dying and that the young people were leaving. The movement is targeted at young people in the area who are brought together for three or four days at a time and taught traditional music, dance and storytelling by established dancers, musicians and singers. There is also a special traditional music secondary school at Plokton in Wester Ross (Dix & MacGilliosa, 2003; Fyfe, et al., 2003). However, they are far from being the 'norm'. We need to make them so.

Learning that is contextualised, place-based and experiential, that grapples with the 'real' issues in pupils' own place as opposed to more abstract mandated learnings through prescribed national or state curriculum and text books and a hierarchical knowledge system is a critical need for rural people and places. Although such issues are much sharper when dealing with the dilemmas of aboriginal or minority culture education (Barnhardt, et al., 2000; HREOC, 2000; Ruttan, 2000; Macleod, 2003) they also apply in the rural areas. We believe that the changes in rural areas, and the evidence recent research on how rural communities can better 'take charge' of their own development, raise the importance of this issue to the highest level.

Rural children and youth – today more than ever - need 'contextualised and place-based learning', and rural areas that ensure that they get it will do better economically and socially than they would otherwise. Not only does this give them a sense of self-worth, and an interest in learning and its application, but it provides them with a more positive view of their own culture, historical origins and place and hence a greater tendency to remain or return there. Additionally, these situated or place based learnings equip them with the local knowledge resources to be more effective in the 'new rural economy' and in processes of local empowerment.

Situated Pedagogy

The need to reconsider pedagogy in ways that acknowledge that place-based education is an essential, critical and fundamental determinant of the quality of teaching and learning that happens regularly in rural schools has been overlooked in educational literature. What has been clearly established from the literature within the effective schools tradition is that the elemental ingredient for enhancing student learning outcomes is the teacher (Hill and Rowe, 1998). Further, as Ladwig, King, Gore, and Luke (2003) argue pedagogy does not occur is a vacuum, it is context bound by community, curriculum, and organisational practices.

One significant attempt to address this omission has occurred as part of the Rural Teacher Education Project (Green, et al., 2002) which is designed to examine outstanding educational practices occurring in all eleven (11) rural school districts of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training that operated in 2003. Through this project, a new theoretical model to identify and analyse the importance of place as a determinant of successful educational practice was generated to explain the issues and challenges of teaching in rural places such as New South Wales.

This model, known as the *Situated Pedagogies* model, was developed by McConaghy (2002) and is shown below:

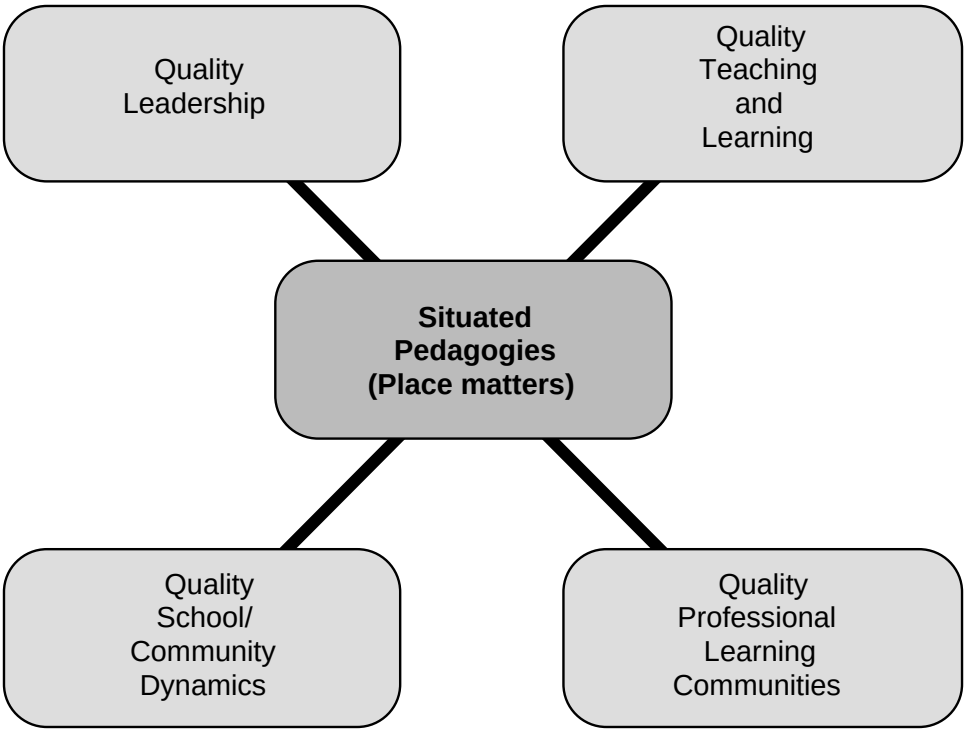

Figure 1 – Situated Pedagogies Model

The Situated Pedagogies model draws upon recent research traditions based on the outcomes from the Wisconsin studies (Newmann, et al., 1996), the Education Queensland's School Reform Longitudinal Study (Luke, et al., 2000; Lingard, et al., 2002) and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training's Productive Pedagogies research (Gore, et al., 2001; NSWDET, 2003). The Newmann research developed a model called *'Authentic Pedagogy'* which identified hallmarks of quality teaching practices that included team teaching, extended learning periods, visionary leadership, small school/class sizes and supportive external agencies. Extending from the Newmann research, the Education Queensland research recognised how the changing social, economic, technological and contemporary conditions affected student learning and developed a '*Productive Pedagogies*' model. This model was based on the 24 case studies and surveys of students and teachers that sought to include these new changing conditions or contexts as significant influences on the quality of pedagogy. There were four domains in this model: namely, intellectual quality; relevance; supportive classroom environment; and, the recognition of difference. Within these domains twenty (20) classroom strategies for improving student learning outcomes were identified (Herschell, 2001). More recently, in the New South Wales education context, the Productive Pedagogies model has been adapted and modified to reflect the contexts of education in New South Wales. This model focuses more explicitly teachers' attention on pedagogy by exploring the 'underlying dimensions of pedagogy' (NSWDET, 2003:7) by raising the emphasis on quality teaching and learning practices. The New South Wales adaptation of the Productive Pedagogies model has three dimensions: namely, intellectual quality; quality learning environments; and, significance, which have been expanded into eighteen (18) classroom strategies for improving student learning outcomes.

Both the Authentic Pedagogy model and the Queensland and New South Wales Productive Pedagogy models offer important contributions to understanding schooling in rural NSW but, with these models, there are significant limitations. The implications in the New South Wales adaptation suggest that there exists a set of 'general characteristics of pedagogy' (NSWDET, 2003:7) that are applicable in all educational settings without recognition of differing contexts and conditions that are most often linked to placed based influences. The 'new times' that the Queensland model sought to address are not experienced in the same ways by all people. The Authentic Pedagogy model assumes that there are generic teachers teaching in generic contexts. In this paper, we argue that people in rural communities in New South Wales or in Scotland, for example, experience globalisation, social changes and technological change in different and unique ways compared with their urban counterparts.

The Situated Pedagogies model represents a new theoretical extension and dimension to these earlier paradigms in which the centrality of place, or location, as a determinant of the quality of the teaching and learning is affirmed in a fundamental way.

At the centre of the Situated Pedagogies model is the notion the location or contexts of place is a critical determinant for the quality of learning outcomes. It acknowledges the importance that rural communities have in affecting directly the teaching-learning continuum and the achievement of learning outcomes. More specifically, the model identifies the four contributing elements that impact on and define quality place-based pedagogy.

Each element of the model is discussed below with a view to identifying and making explicit the key characteristics of that element that assist and promote the achievement of outstanding students learning outcomes in the rural school. As a starting point, the relevant existing literature and pedagogy models have been used to inform and explicate situated teaching and learning practices. As the Rural Teacher Education Project enters its summative, synthesising phase in 2004 / 2005 further amplification of the four elements of the Situated Pedagogies model, described below, may need to be re-considered and refined.

Quality Leadership

Quality Leadership is an essential element in the model. This element can be characterised by the 'situatedness of quality leadership' (McConaghy, 2002).

This element, *Quality Leadership*, reflects the need for the school principal to exercise a strong, effective and productive role in working towards the improvement of learning outcomes. The principal's role can be described as central and critical in successful, high performing schools. The principal's leadership ensured that the commitment to quality teaching and achieving high student learning outcomes were constantly part of the school's normal operational program. The impact of place affects this element. Physical, geographical, social, community and technological factors influence the way in which a rural school leader has to operate. Challenges associated with addressing the 'tyranny of distance' (Blainey, 1966) in supporting staff professionally and personally to achieve the best learning outcomes in and for their students are determined by the place in which the school and its staff are situated. Another central role for the principal is that of facilitator - the person who supports staff in the implementation of the school's vision, commitment to quality teaching and learning and curriculum interpretation to local, place-based contexts. The interaction between where the school is located and its ability to achieve its teaching and learning goals depends on the strategies the leader employs to strengthen the relationship between the school, its place and the community on one hand and the infusion of place into the curriculum as a valued component of the teaching and learning program.

For an exemplary rural school to be successful, the school leader demonstrates both effective, focussed and successful instructional and administrative leadership. Some of the hallmarks of this quality school leadership include:

- leaders who are proactive in their approach to the management of the school;
- leaders who recognise and seek assistance when and where needed;
- leaders who support advocate strongly for a high quality instructional program;
- leaders who establish and maintain a supportive learning environment;
- leaders who appreciate the important of professional development and growth for the staff.
- contexts where leadership roles are assumed by the most appropriate person - including teachers, parents, students, and community members;
- leaders who have high levels of knowledge, respect, and responsiveness to the school community;
- school leaders who expect and hold staff accountable for challenging all students with a rigorous, culturally relevant curriculum and for demonstrating high expectations for each student; and,
- school leaders who ensure that adequate financial, material and programming resources are provided to ensure each student can achieve the learning outcomes (Newmann, et al., 1996; National Study of School Education, 1999; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2001; Lingard, et al., 2002; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002).

In summary, *quality leadership* strengthens the development and operation of the whole school and the interplay between place with its rural contexts and leadership cannot be under-estimated.

Quality Teaching and Learning

This element focuses on three essential and interrelated components of the teaching-learning continuum that impact on achieving high student learning outcomes. The three key sub-elements are: curriculum; pedagogy; and monitoring success.

The interrelated nature of the design and implementation of the *curriculum* is deliberately linked to *pedagogy* to highlight and reflect the intimate understandings and skills required and to *monitoring success* to gather the data based

evidence often mandated by educational systems and authorities to demonstrate achievement of student learning outcomes.

1. Curriculum

In the Situated Pedagogies model, place assumes a central permeating influential force. Decisions about what is taught, how it is taught and when it is taught are guided by the environmental, social and community related factors. Here the curriculum serves the learner located within their community as a means to understanding who we are, where we have come from, and what our future direction will be as well as celebrating the richness and uniqueness of their place along with its cultural traditions. This focus on place within the curriculum will re-empower rural youth to value their local culture, history, and identity.

Some of the essential attributes of the teacher's understanding of the curriculum are reflected when the teacher develops and implements:

- a curriculum that is academically challenging;
- a curriculum that engages with the learner;
- a curriculum that sets high expectations for all learners; and,
- a curriculum that is based on high learning outcomes standards. (Newmann, et al., 1996; National Study of School Education, 1999; Geiser and Berman, 2000; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2001; Lingard, et al., 2002; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002; NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003).

2. Pedagogy

The pedagogy employed to deliver the curriculum puts place as the focus and its diversity helps teachers select and employ the strategies and practices that sustain the beliefs and values about their place and community. Some of the key pedagogical strategies and practices used by teachers to promote effective and successful student learning outcomes incorporate how place interacts with:

- thorough planning and preparation of lessons;
- a strong focus on achieving learning outcomes;
- effective classroom management techniques;
- providing well focussed and purposeful instruction that is relevant and sugnificant to the learner;
- using effective teaching strategies;
- providing effective and timely diagnosis and feedback on attainment levels for learning outcomes; and
- creating classroom environments that are supportive and recognise individual and cultural differences. (Newmann, et al., 1996; National Study of School Education, 1999; Geiser and Berman, 2000; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2001; Lingard, et al., 2002; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002; NSW Department of Education and Training 2003)

3. Monitoring success

The third component of the Situated Pedagogies model, Monitoring success, describes the focus of the school on ensuring that all its efforts, programs and practices are directed towards improving student learning outcomes and performance. Typically, the performance criteria are a set of benchmark standards-based assessment tasks, such as those that currently operate in New South Wales: the Basic Skills Testing program in Years 3 and 5, the ELLA literacy testing in Years 7 and 8, the SNAP numeracy testing in Years 7 and 8, and the external examinations held at the end of Year 10: the School Certificate; and at the end of Year 12, the Higher School Certificate. The successful rural school uses these forms of data as part of the continuing process of examining and re-examining the curriculum and the pedagogical practices used to achieve high student learning outcomes. Place becomes a consideration when student performances are monitored to ensure an equitable standard of performance is achieved. The inter-related network between monitoring success, the curriculum and the pedagogical strategies used in its delivery create opportunities to maintain the strengths, seek alternate and improved ways to achieve successful learning outcomes, and re-affirm the value of place as part of the learning experiences in the curriculum.

Attributes commonly linked with successful practice for this element include:

- gathering documented evidence of success;
- maintaining high levels of collaboration and communication between all parties;
- focussing on assessment of student learning;
- careful monitoring of student progress by teaching staff;
- continual monitoring student progress;
- focussing on academic standards and relevant assessment practices; and,

- using assessment data to cater for all learners (Newmann, et al., 1996; National Study of School Education, 1999; Geiser and Berman, 2000; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2001; Lingard, et al., 2002; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002; NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003).

In summary, the *Quality Teaching and Learning* element of the model forcefully defines the importance of the teacher in interpreting the standard-based curriculum documents in ways that are sensitive to and valuing of the place in which the school is located, together with the selection and use of appropriate and effective place related or situated teaching strategies that recognise and meet the needs of the learner as well as generating accurate data driven evidence of student performance.

Quality School-Community Dynamics

This element of the Situated Pedagogies model, *Quality School-Community Dynamics*, defines the manner in which the rural school seeks to engage both the parents of their students and the broader community into the educational program of the school. The relationship is regarded as a dynamic partnership with all participants working towards providing the best learning experiences for the students to ensure high levels of success both in the designated curriculum and also in becoming valued community member who can make a contribution to society.

Effective rural school practices that promote this quality school-community dynamic include:

- developing family, school and community partnerships;
- seeking high level of family, parent and community involvement;
- developing a proactive approach to community relations; and,
- seeking to enhance and develop the local community (Newmann, et al., 1996; National Study of School Education, 1999; Geiser and Berman, 2000; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2001; Lingard, et al., 2002; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002; and NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003).

In summary, where schools are achieving outstanding student learning outcomes, there exists a positive *Quality School-Community Dynamic* relationship between parents, community and the school. The social, cultural, historical, political, economic and technological aspects of the community and its rural geographicplace facilitate all parties working collaboratively towards one goal – the best outcomes for their students through using the local resources and facilities as relevant, significant and real-world learning experiences.

Quality Professional Learning Communities

This fourth element of the Situated Pedagogies model, *Quality Professional Learning Communities*, consists of two fundamental components which are: i) the creation and nurturing of the learning community; and, ii) the provision of professional development.

In each component, the influence of place is important. Place can and does act as a determinant and potential limitation on access and participation in quality professional learning communities in some remote rural places. However, in exemplary rural schools, these oft-held, negative perceptions about place and access are used advantageously in creative, new and/or innovative ways to meet the challenges of access and participation in quality learning communities. It is through the creative responses generated by the school leaders and the staff to these challenges that place becomes a real positive in nurturing learning communities in rural schools.

1. Learning community

The Learning Community is reflected in the rural school's culture and its beliefs about learners and the learning process. Staff and students work towards creating an environment within which small classes with flexible group arrangements can be established to support the specific needs of learners. The school becomes a centre for learning and provides a safe, orderly and healthy environment for its students. Inside the classrooms, students are given maximal time on learning related tasks and experiences with teachers who were committed to enhancing the learning outcomes for all students.

Specific attributes of the learning community that promote effective and successful learning outcomes include:

- creating a supportive learning environment;
- providing a supportive organisational structure;
- emphasising that school is a place of learning;
- establishing a safe and orderly school environment;
- creating academically heterogeneous classes;
- employing flexible in-class groupings;
- ensuring small class sizes are created;
- maximising learning time;
- creating communities of learning; and
- focussing on time for quality learning (Newmann, et al., 1996; National Study of School Education, 1999; Geiser and Berman, 2000**;** Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2001; Lingard, et al., 2002; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002; Trimble, 2002; and NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003).

2. Professional development

Professional development has been identified as an important attribute found in successful schools. The need to provide appropriate, timely and well focussed professional support to the staff within any school is essential. In rural places, it is teachers' access to and participation in professional development programs that has been clearly linked to teacher retention. Where schools and staff are able to plan and participate in regular professional development programs, they are more likely to remain. (Boylan and McSwan, 1998)

The professional development program implemented in a school serves at least two key functions in the Situated Pedagogies model:

- to develop and sustain teacher commitment to student learning within the school; and,
- to assist the staff and their school in working towards becoming an exemplary and outstanding placed based site where excellent student learning outcomes are achieved.

One key feature for successful professional development identified in the literature was locally developed programs designed to meet the needs of the school, its individual teachers and the community within which the school was located. Two specific features of successful place–based professional development programs that operate within quality professional learning communities include:

- implementation of a focused professional development targeting improvement in student learning outcomes; and,
- creating and supporting a culture of continuous improvement and learning for members of the school community. (Newmann, et al., 1996; National Study of School Education, 1999; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2001; Lingard, et al., 2002; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002)

In summary, successful student learning outcomes are achieved in schools where a productive *Quality Professional Learning Community* is created, nurtured and maintained. Staff are continually being supported to access professional development programs that seek to enhance the quality of education being provided by the school.

Conclusion

The competing tensions between following standards based curricula, monitoring student learning, and implementing a pedagogy that values and engages with local language, culture, history, geography, social communities, technologies, and environment often place teachers between a rock and a hard place. It has been argued that the more education is standardised, there is less room for providing a place-based education.

Given the current demographic changes, economic sustainability and social conditions in many rural places in both Australia and Scotland, as well as elsewhere, rural communities are under real threat.

Teachers and the local school form one of stable life-lines within a rural community, and can play a critical role in affirming the value of the place and its contexts.

Pedagogy and how it is manifested in rural schools provides an essential vehicle to arrest the changing contexts many rural places are currently experiencing. Up to now the importance of place based pedagogy has been overlooked in educational literature. Pedagogy is context or situation bound by community, curriculum, and organisational practices. Through the Rural Teacher Education Project, a new theoretical model to identify and analyse the importance of place as a determinant of successful educational practice has been generated. This model, known as the *Situated Pedagogies* model, has been developed to address the omission identified in the literature and to help interpret and explain the issues and challenges of teaching in rural places such as in Scotland and New South Wales.

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My Kid Doesn't Dob

Tony Beswick
Principal, Corrigin District High School

Abstract

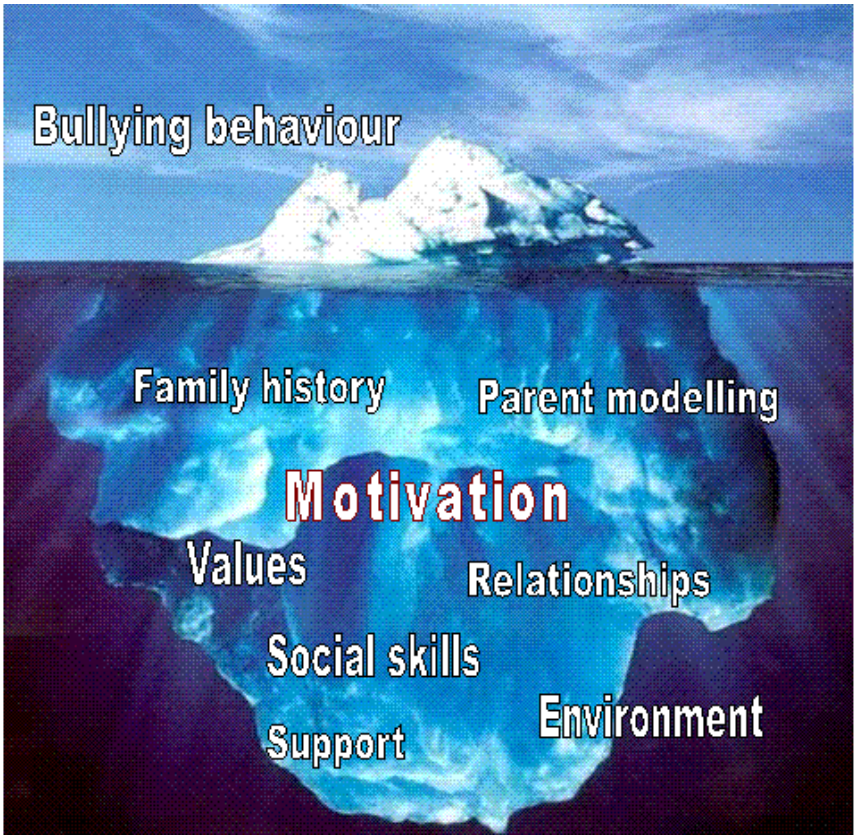
Parents do not want their children to be brought up as "wusses" who are unable to stick up for themselves, especially in this competitive world; however, they want any bullying stopped. Changing the patterns of bullying in a school is about changing the culture of the school. It is also about changing parents and students' perception of the great Australian tradition of not dobbing on your mates. Getting the parents to see another side of bullying and its impact takes some time and you need the whole school community behind the change. Corrigin District High School has gone down the route of examining bullying behaviour in the school and empowering students to significantly reduce the tyranny of bullying. Workshop based presentation with participants discussing school practices.

- 11% of students (one in nine) in Western Australian primary and secondary schools as being bullied in the previous six months

  Zubrick et. al Australian child health survey: education, health and competence. Perth, WA: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997.

- Students aged 8 –18 years suggests that approximately one in six school children are bullied at least once a week

  Rigby K. *The Peer Relations Questionnaire Technical Manual*. Point Lonsdale, VIC: The Professional Reading Guide, 1998.



"A student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more of other students."

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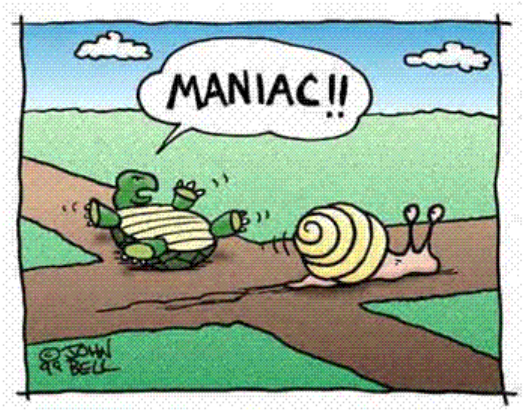
"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I want I choose it to mean – neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master – that's all."

Lewis Carroll, (Through the Looking-Glass)



- What is the definition of bullying in your school?

Is this what a victim sees?

"Why yes, now you mention it, I suppose I am an ugly, bald headed little runt!"

"Bullying involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + (typically) repetition + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim."

Rigby, K. (2002). *New Perspectives on Bullying*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. London.

School Definition

Black cat, white cat

Whole School - Community

- ***Educational programs***

  Policy creation

  Parent and teacher workshops

  Wall of Friendship

- ***Anti-bullying program***

  BUZ

- ***Curriculum***

  You Can Do It

Changing the Culture

- **Dob** *verb (t)* **(dobbed, dobbing)** *Colloquial* 1. to betray (someone), as by reporting a misdemeanour. … 3. **dob in, a.** to report (someone) for a misdemeanour… 4. **dob on**, to inform against; betray.

- **Dobber** *noun* Colloquial an informer; telltale.

Macquarie Dictionary Third Edition 1998.

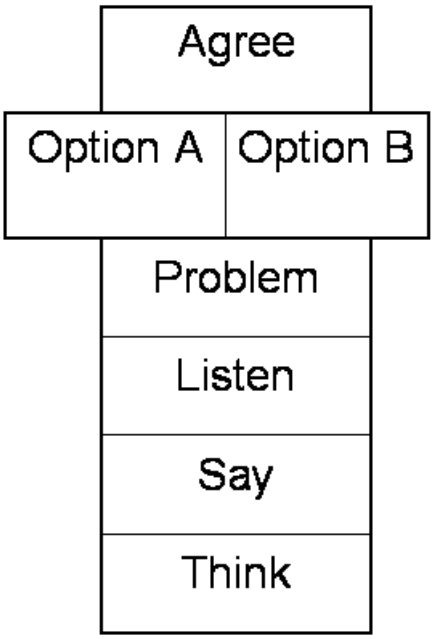
Change in the culture?

- Immigration Dob-In Line
- **Pay whistleblowers to dob in corporate crooks**
- **How to "dob in" a tobacco company**
- **Draft minutes of Whistle Blowers Australia – Annual Report.**
- **Tip-offs Anonymous** - Accountants
- Dob in a Boss rally 6th December
- **WA COMMUNITY CALLED TO DOB IN BURGLARS**
- Dob in your friends to win a prize

What can we do to help solve the problem of bullying?

Hopscotch Method

Think – What is happening?
Say – How you both feel about what has happened.
Listen – to each other.
Problem – work out what the real problem is.
Option A or B – come up with some ideas to fix the problem.
Agree – on the best option to solve the problem.
Celebrate – forgive each other, get over it and play it again.



What strategies does your school have to address bullying?

- ***Educational programs***

  (improving staff and community awareness)

- ***Anti-bullying programs***

  (behaviour management and anti-bullying policies.)

- ***Curriculum***

  (group-based and individual student programs)

Learning Phase Curriculum Strategies

- RAP / Aussie Optimism
- Heart Masters
- Different kids different classrooms – social and emotional skills
- Cooperative learning
- Group problem-solving
- Friendship Groups

Individual Strategies

- Restitution
- No Blame Approach
- Shared Concern (Pikas)
- Chaplaincy
- Rules and consequences

Success of Corrigin Programs

- There was open communication about bullying – caring ethos
- Responses to bullying were adapted
- Assertiveness and peer support were encouraged
- Teaching of social skills
- Parents ringing the school quickly
- Chaplaincy

What the Literature Indicates

- Whole-School works
- Begin in the early years
- More helpful in children protecting themselves from bullies than stopping the bullies
- Problem-solving approaches may be at least as effective as punitive methods

Rigby 2002

A Classroom Without Walls – 'live' e-Learning with Centra 7 ™

Enver Malkic
Open Learning Support Manager
Open Access College

The Open Access College has been judged as providing world best practice in delivering its curriculum of distance education to students using satellites and *virtual classroom* software called **Centra 7** ™. Centra's e-learning and e-training software has a complete set of capabilities for live, collaborative learning. This includes audio, video and data sharing, breakout rooms, real-time feedback, online surveys and evaluation, web mustering, text chat and support for the delivery of rich multimedia content. More information can be found at www.centra.com.

An independent evaluation conducted in 2002 made the following key findings:

- virtual classroom strengthens relationships and improves social presence;
- virtual classroom strengthens student autonomy and initiative and supports cooperation and collaboration;
- the use of 'breakout rooms' strongly supports child driven learning;
- virtual classroom allows ease of interaction and will impact positively on the student's acquisition of knowledge;
- virtual classroom provides learning in ways not possible using HF radio; and,
- students enjoy their lessons and are motivated to participate and learn.

Students and teachers now log-in each day to a personal homepage on their computer and enter their *virtual classroom*. They communicate with each other using voice coming over the internet and a 'live' video camera where they can show their teacher and classmates models they have built, posters they have drawn etc. They also interact with the rich online content developed by the teachers and students and write and draw together on a shared electronic whiteboard, in breakout rooms, shared applications and web pages. Instant feedback is given to students doing oral presentations, with other students and teachers able to act like a live audience by posting clapping, smiling and giving 'yes' or 'no' icons to encourage students along. As in real-life classrooms, students can now work in small groups for exercises such as brainstorming and the teacher can 'move' between groups to check on their progress. It is really empowering students and teachers allowing them to access and use the vast resources of the World Wide Web within lessons. Students then use their own knowledge, resources and interests to take a topic and follow it through in depth with the information they collect. Suddenly long division, cooking, science experiments, webquests and PE can all be taught much more effectively and for the first time activities are full of fun, opportunity and social engagement.

For more information, please contact the Open Access College.
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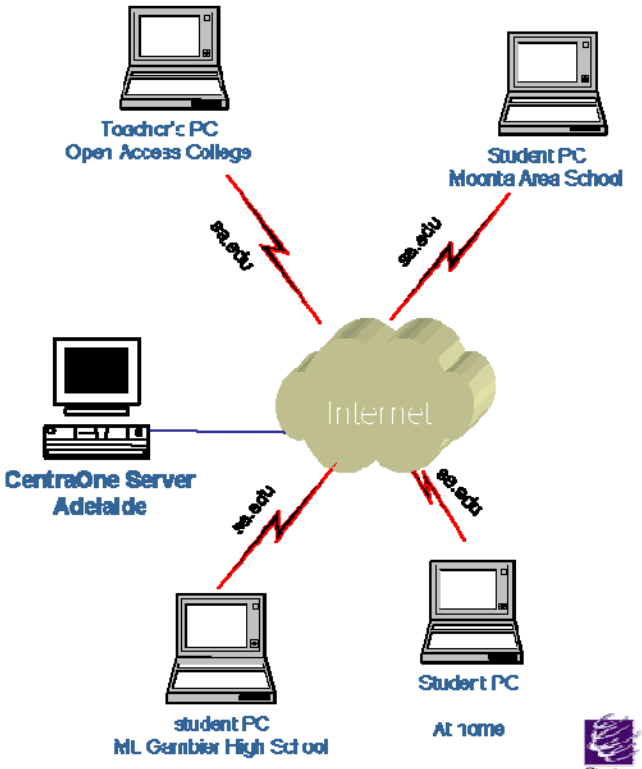
  → 'private' discussions in break-outs
- multi-point video → social presence
- application sharing → show/interact with content
- whiteboards → FAQ, student input, concept development
- breakout rooms → private discussions, small group work
- online tests → evaluation and reporting
- short surveys → hold interest
- web mustering → content and direction
- multimedia → rich content
- record and playback → missed sessions

CentraOne Symposium

Web-based software to provide the tools and facilities to conduct online classes, presentations and meetings

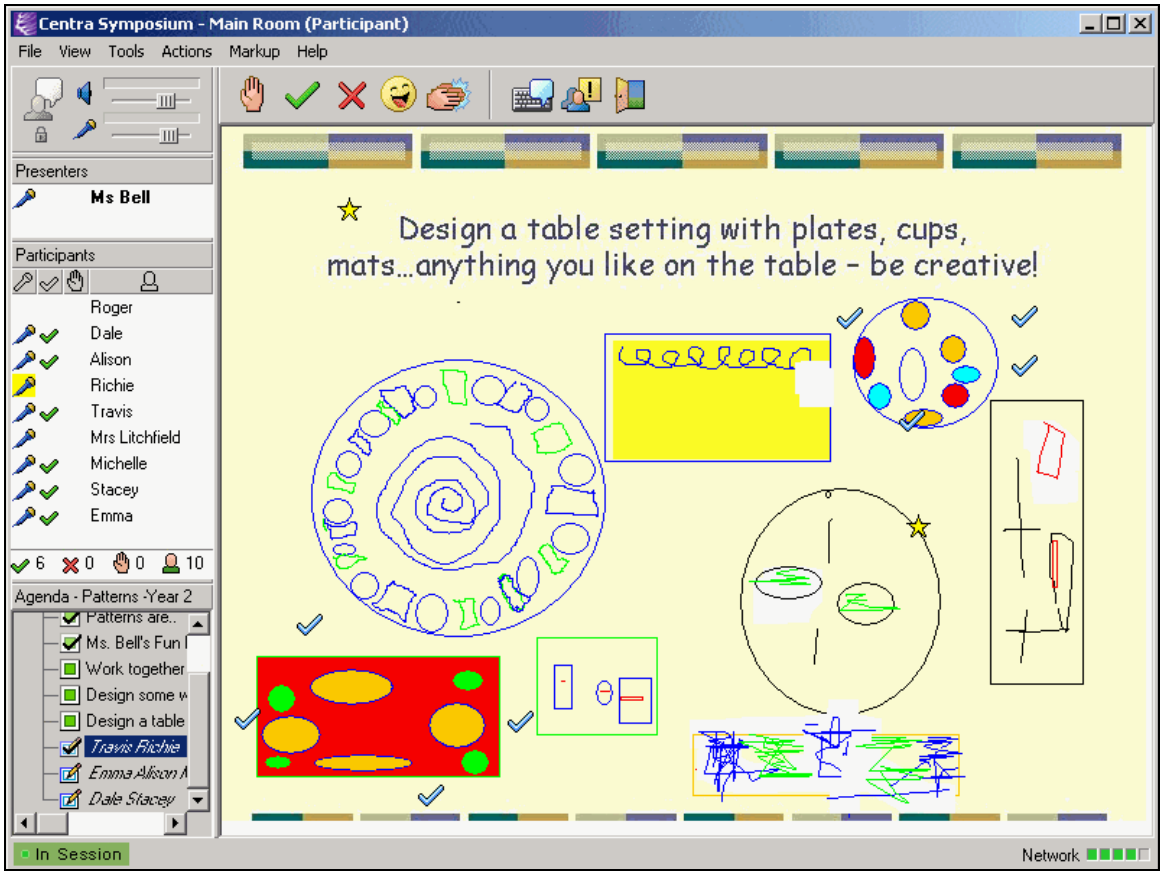


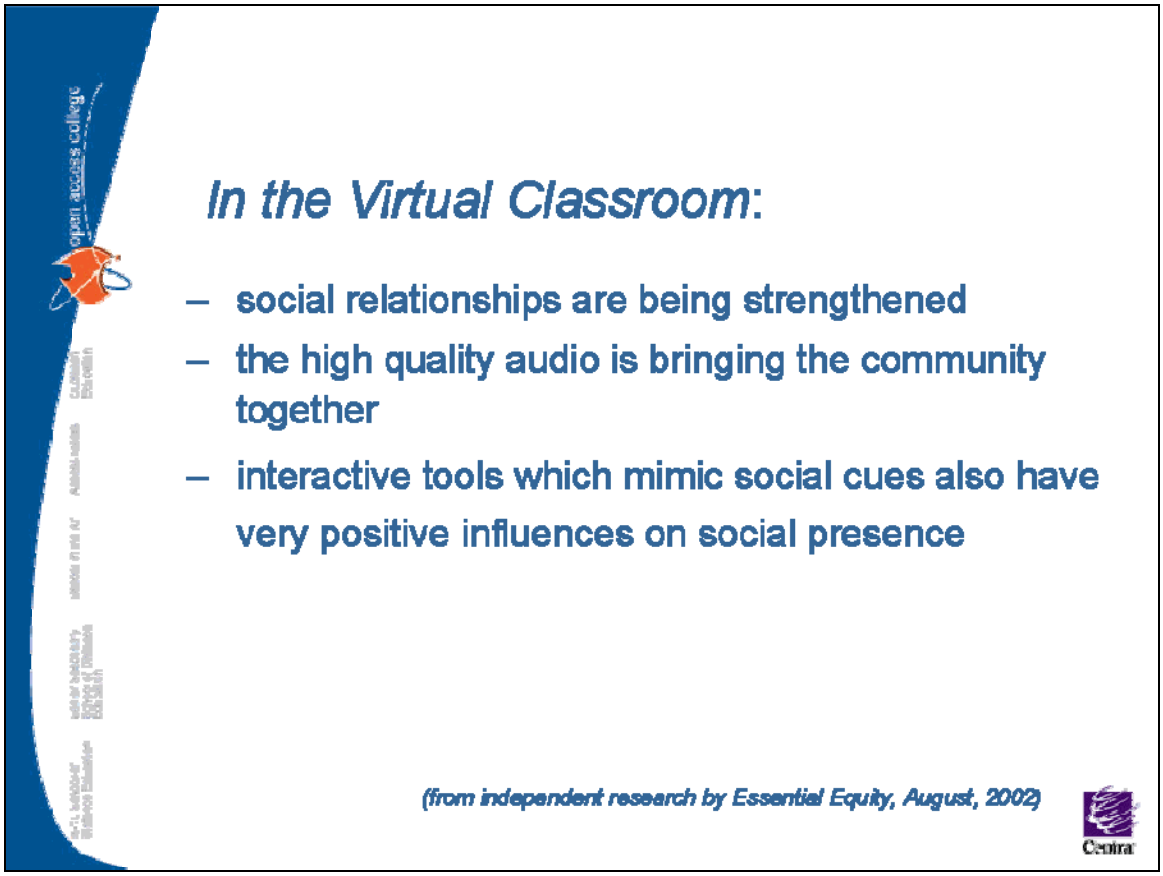
open access college

System requirements

Minimum	Recommended
Windows 98, NT 4.0 (SP4+), Win 2000 Prof, XP Internet Explorer 5.x, 6.x, Netscape 4.5x,4.7x,7.x CPU : P350 MHz 128MB RAM 40MB free hard disk space sound card, speakers, microphone 800x600,	Win 2000 Prof, XP Internet Explorer 6.0+ CPU : P500+ MHz Memory : 256+ MB RAM 200+ MB free hard disk space (for content and recordings) Headset 16 bit colour or higher 128 kbps+ network connection to Internet
Monitor : 16 bit colors 28.8 kbps modem connection to Internet	Video camera that supports VFW interface
Mouse	Graphics tablet
Printer (optional)	Printer

Centra


Centra Symposium - Main Room (Participant)
File View Tools Actions Markup Help
Presenters
Ms Bell
Participants
Roger
Dale
Alison
Richie
Travis
Mrs Litchfield
Michelle
Stacey
Emma
Agenda - Patterns -Year 2
Patterns are..
Ms. Bell's Fun
Work together
Design some w
Design a table
Travis Richie
Emma Alison
Dale Stacey
Design a table setting with plates, cups, mats...anything you like on the table - be creative!
In Session
Network


open access college
In the Virtual Classroom:
– social relationships are being strengthened
– the high quality audio is bringing the community together
– interactive tools which mimic social cues also have very positive influences on social presence
(from independent research by Essential Equity, August, 2002)
Centra

In the Virtual Classroom:

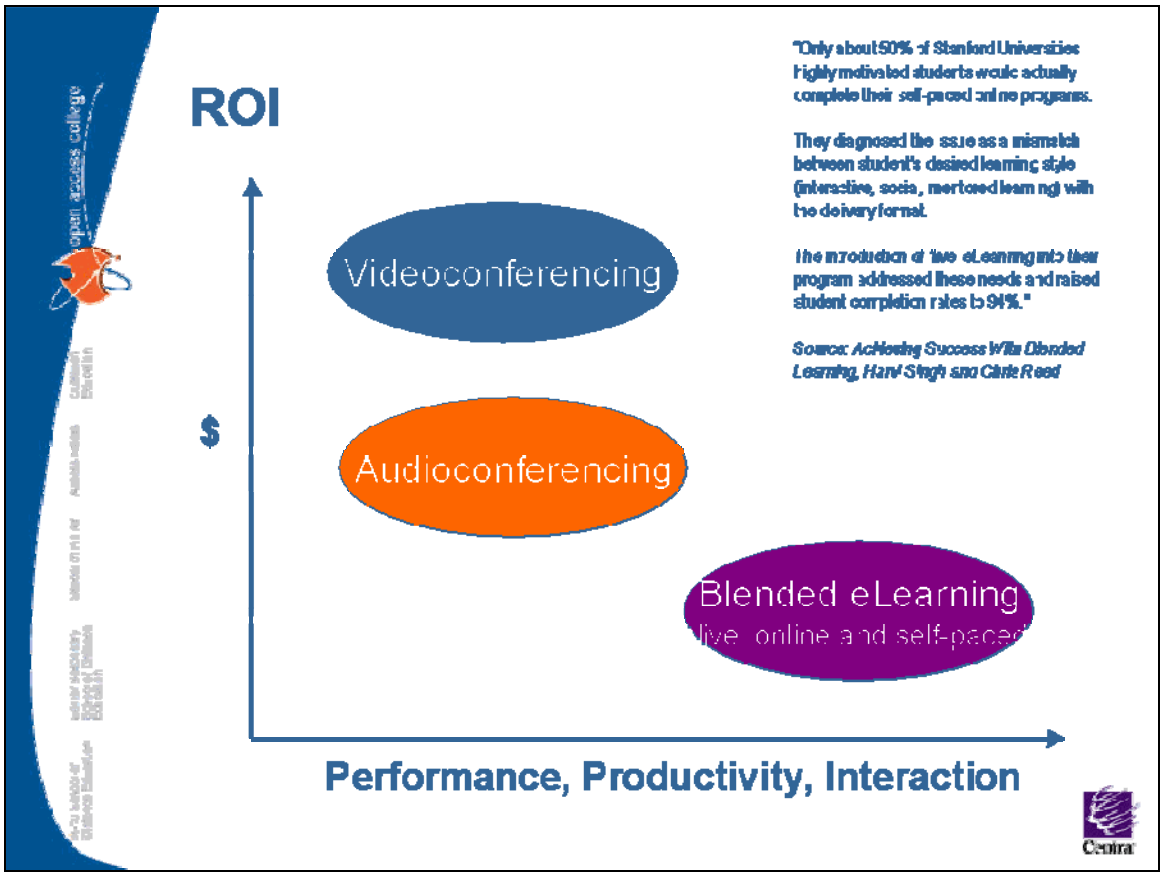
- 'break-out rooms' supports 'child-driven learning'
- group dynamics are evolving in 'break-out' rooms
- more formative assessment is occurring
- both student autonomy and initiative is encouraged
- social negotiation and mediation is more likely to occur
- students are interacting more easily, encouraging social scaffolding, which will eventually impact on students' acquisition of knowledge

(from independent research by Essential Equity, August, 2002)

In the Virtual Classroom:

- the video and brilliant audio enables a greater degree of social presence, allowing teachers to know more about what their students are thinking and feeling
- there is an increase in students' motivation and performance
- a more intimate, respectful and sharing environment is developing
- students' have freedom to be in control and direct their own learning

(from independent research by Essential Equity, August, 2002)


ROI
"Only about 50% of Stanford University's highly motivated students would actually complete their self-paced online programs.
They diagnosed the issue as a mismatch between student's desired learning style (interactive, social, mentored learning) with the delivery format.
The introduction of 'live' eLearning into their program addressed these needs and raised student completion rates to 94%."
Source: Achieving Success With Blended Learning, Harvi Singh and Clark Reed
Videoconferencing
Audioconferencing
Blended eLearning
live, online and self-paced
$
Performance, Productivity, Interaction
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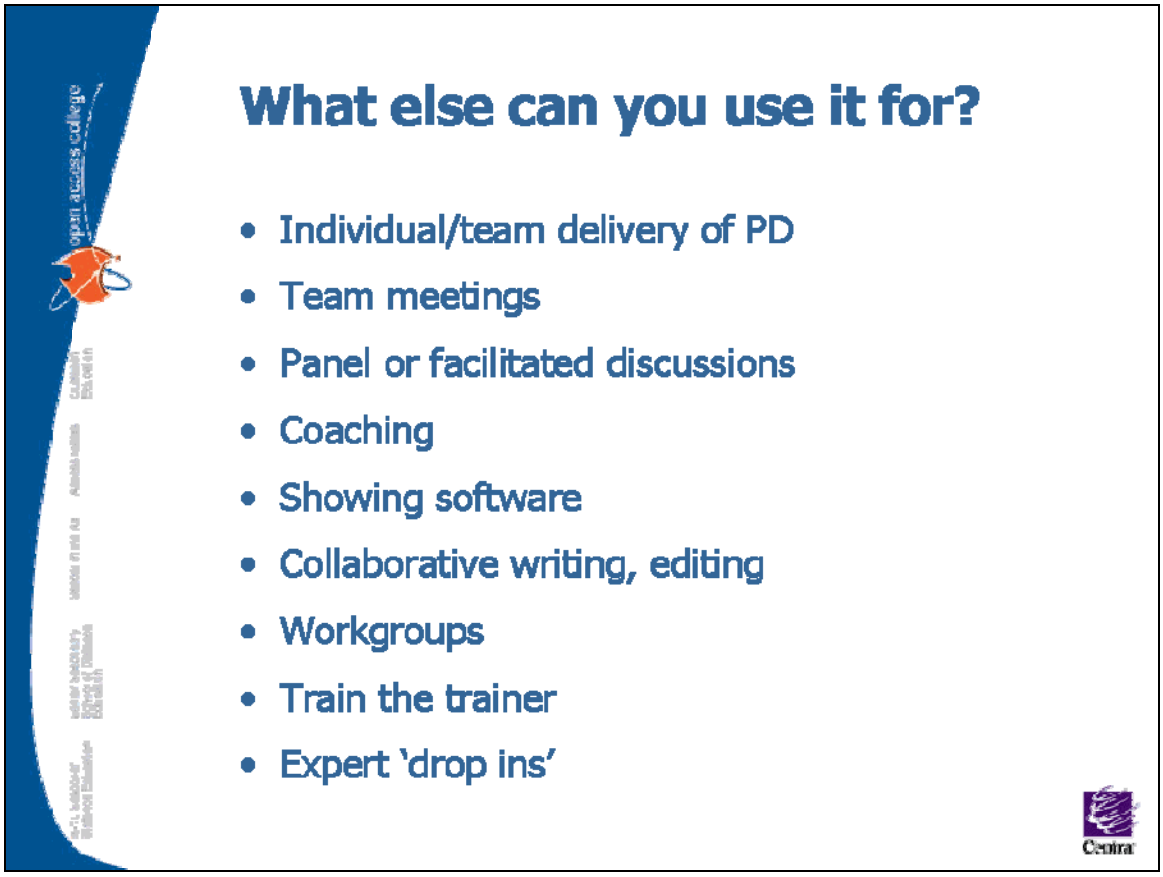

What else can you use it for?
• Individual/team delivery of PD
• Team meetings
• Panel or facilitated discussions
• Coaching
• Showing software
• Collaborative writing, editing
• Workgroups
• Train the trainer
• Expert 'drop ins'
open access college
Centra

Professional Development

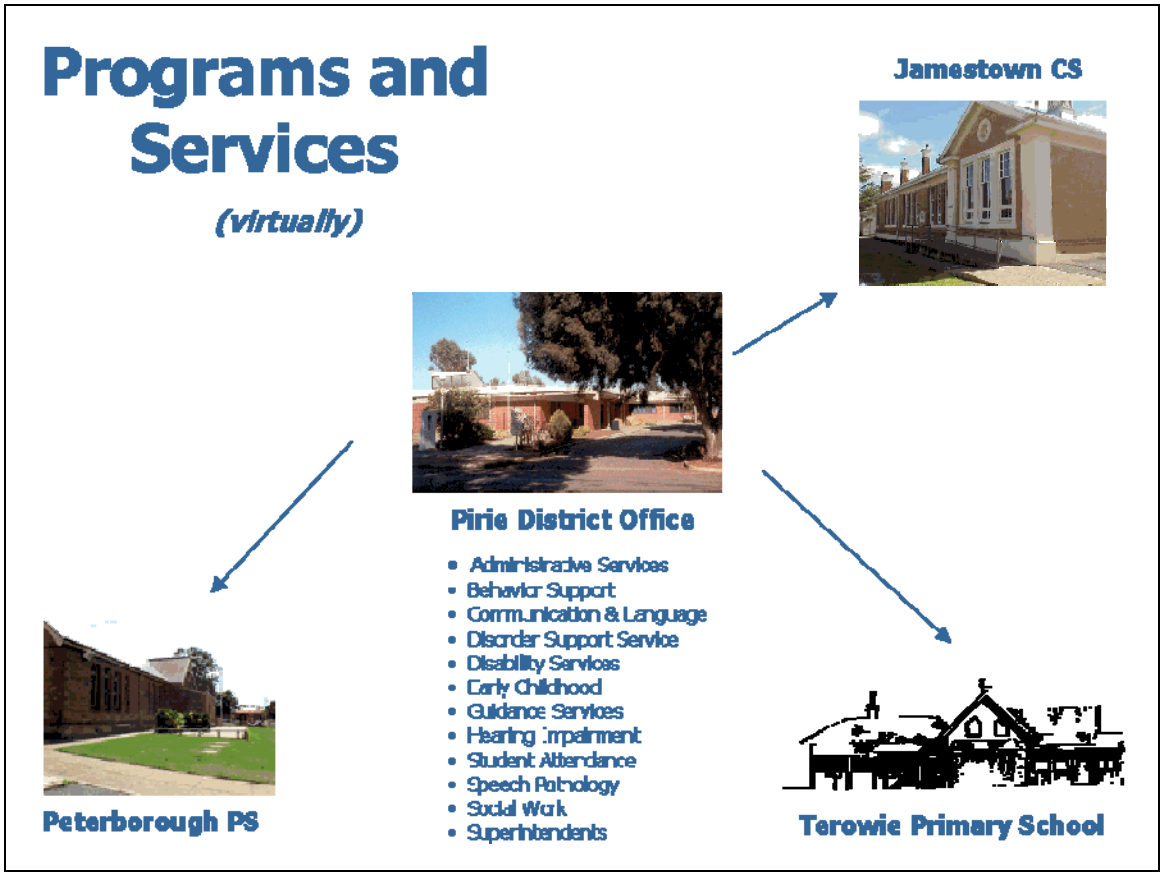
(virtually)

TSoF or T&D

Tradewinds Hotel, Fremantle

- Country teachers and SSO's stay at school for PD&T
- Reduce travel, facilities and telecommunication costs
- Reach more teachers
- Replicate typical face to face PD&T including interaction
- Record sessions for later use to leverage value
- Empower a broader base to share knowledge and skills
- Offer PD&T to country teachers more frequently

Kulin District High School


Programs and Services
(virtually)
Jamestown CS
Pirie District Office
Administrative Services
Behavior Support
Communication & Language
Disorder Support Service
Disability Services
Early Childhood
Guidance Services
Hearing Impairment
Student Attendance
Speech Pathology
Social Work
Superintendents
Peterborough PS
Terowie Primary School

Internet Safety for Rural Communities

Jane Marquard
Australian Broadcasting Authority

News Release 25/9/2003: ABA Launches 'Net Detectives" Internet Safety Game

Australian children can now learn how to chat safely on the Internet, with the Australian launch today of Net Detectives by the Australian Broadcasting Authority. The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator the Hon. Richard Alston, will formally launch the initiative at International Grammar School, Ultimo.

Originally developed by the United Kingdom based Internet safety body Childnet International in partnership with a number of other community bodies, Net Detectives uses the Internet itself to teach young people key Internet safety messages – especially those related to use of Internet chat rooms. The ABA, by agreement with Childnet, has adapted the activity for use in Australian schools, as part of its program of activities to educate the community about Internet safety.

"With more and more families going online all the time, and chat rooms being particularly popular amongst young people, it's important to understand how to manage the potential risks associated with this activity. In particular, the ABA is concerned children may experience contact from people who are not who they say they are," said ABA Chairman Professor David Flint.

Nigel Williams, Chief Executive of Childnet, who will attend today's launch, said, "Net Detectives has proved very successful in Europe and won two prestigious awards. We are delighted to work with the ABA to provide an additional fun way of communicating internet safety to Australian children."

Teams of children from IGS, Green Point Christian College, Kincumber Public School, Woodport Public School, and The Coast Christian School on the Central Coast, and Oatley Public School in southern Sydney will participate in the launch. They will play the role of Mr Saunders, a teacher who learns that one of his pupils, Sarah Walker, appears to be being bullied. Guided by a series of clues, children work in teams to solve the mystery of what is concerning Sarah, and why. Along the way they learn some important tips for chatting safely online.

The activity will be managed by a group of Internet safety experts, including representatives of the Internet industry and education, law enforcement and child welfare bodies, who will deliver clues and respond to questions from the virtual 'control room'.

The key messages of Net Detectives are:

- parents should monitor their children's use of the Internet, particularly chat rooms;
- vhildren should never give out personal information when they're chatting online; and,
- if children want to meet face-to-face someone that they have chatted with, they should always take a parent with them.

The ABA would like to thank the International Grammar School Principal, Ms Kerrie Murphy, for assisting the ABA with the launch of Net Detectives.

Schools and other bodies who are interested in participating in future Net Detectives activities should send an email to net-detectives@aba.gov.au.

Backgrounder

Net Detectives
The Net Detectives activity has been developed by United Kingdom based body Childnet International, in co-operation with other community bodies, and is pitched at young people in the upper primary school to lower secondary school age range. It uses the Internet itself to teach young people key Internet safety messages – especially those related to use of Internet chat rooms. The Australian Broadcasting Authority, by agreement with Childnet, has adapted the activity for use in Australian schools.

The launch of Net Detectives in Australia will take place on 25 September 2003 at International Grammar School, 4-8 Kelly Street, Ultimo. Five teams of children from IGS will participate in the event. The launch also will involve teams of children from Green Point Christian College, Kincumber Public School, Woodport Public School, Oatley Public School and The Coast Christian College.

The activity will run from 9.30 am to 11.30 am. The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts will formally launch the activity at approximately 10.20 am.

The activity will be managed by a group of experts, representing law enforcement, education and child welfare bodies, and the Internet industry, in a virtual 'control room', which will be located adjacent to the area in which the IGS children will be located. Further information about each of the experts is provided below. Students try and solve the scenario with the help of their teachers who are briefed beforehand. All schools have to register before taking part.

Also in attendance at the launch will be Mr Nigel Williams, Executive Director of Childnet International, Professor David Flint, ABA chairman, Ms Karyn Hart, Chair of Net Alert.

When playing the game, students assume the role of a teacher who investigates bullying activity taking place at a school. It becomes apparent that the activity has links to the Internet – and could have been avoided if some basic Internet safety rules had been followed!

Experts
Experts sit in the Control Room and send out messages including information and tasks. They also respond to any questions from participants. The experts listed below will participate in the launch.

- Ms Keren Skyring, Primary Teacher-Librarian, International Grammar School.
- Ms Gillian Calvert, New South Wales Commissioner for Children and Young People.
- Ms Sasah Carrel, Manager Regulatory Policy, Telstra Retail and member of the Internet Industry Association's Online Content Virtual Taskforce.
- Ms Kaaren Koomen, Group Manager Multimedia and Regulatory Policy, Singtel Optus, Deputy Chair of the Internet Industry Association and Board Member of Net Alert.
- Senior Constable Russell Ng, Child Exploitation Internet Unit, Child Protection Sex Crime Squad, New South Wales Police Service.
- Ms Mary-Jane Salier, General Counsel, OzEmail.

The ABA and the Internet
The ABA administers Australia's co-regulatory scheme for Internet content, established under Schedule 5 to the Broadcasting Services Act 1992. As part of the scheme, the ABA provides advice and assistance to families about a range of Internet safety matters, primarily through its Internet safety web site for families, www.cybersmartkids.com.au and related printed resources.

Because of the vast and global nature of the Internet, awareness and education are seen as essential components of a strategy to manage the potential risks associated with some aspects of the Internet. The ABA works with international Internet safety bodies such as Childnet International to raise awareness of Internet safety issues and provide parents with information that helps them supervise their children's Internet usage. Further information about the ABA's role in relation to the Internet is available at www.aba.gov.au/internet.

Internet chat:
Internet chat rooms are popular with young people and Internet chat is often used by children and teenagers, in conjunction with mobile phone text messaging and email, to make and stay in touch with friends, plan social activities and even do homework!

Of particular concern to the ABA and other Internet safety experts is that children may encounter in chat rooms people who aren't who they say they are. The ABA recognises that safety in chat rooms is a key aspect of Internet safety generally, and the ABA's Internet safety resources and activities include components directed specifically at chat:

- The ABA's Internet safety web site for families, www.cybersmartkids.com.au sets out a range of chat safety tips.
- The same information is available in printed form in the ABA's brochure titled 'Tips to help you chat safely' – copies of the brochure are being distributed through a number of schools and community bodies, and are available from the ABA free of charge.
- Following the Australian launch of Net Detectives on 25 September 2003, the ABA intends to run additional events based on this activity as part of its program of community education activities.

International Grammar School
International Grammar School, located at 4-8 Kelly Street Ultimo, opened on February 3, 1984 with the unique educational objective of providing bilingual education from Preschool onwards, coupled with the promotion of internationalism, music and racial tolerance. IGS was proudly founded with a mandate for bilingual education from Preschool to Year 12.

The ABA approached IGS to assist with the launch of Net Detectives to help emphasise the global nature of Internet safety issues. The school also has excellent technology facilities.

More information about IGS is available on the school's web site at www.igs.nsw.edu.au.

Childnet International
Childnet International is a registered charity set up in 1996 with the mission to work in partnership with others around the world to help make the Internet a great and safe place for children. The vision of the organisation is to ensure that all those involved in developing, producing, controlling, using and regulating international telecommunications (current and future) recognise and implement policies and programmes which prioritise the rights of children so that their interests are both promoted and protected.

The ABA has worked with Childnet on a range if Internet safety matters since 1997. Childnet Executive Director Nigel Williams, who is visiting Australia, will speak at the launch and Childnet representatives from the UK will assist the ABA in managing the activity.

Further information about Childnet is available on its web site at www.childnet-int.org.

Internet Safety Awareness

The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA)
The ABA is an independent federal statutory authority with responsibility for the regulation of broadcasting and Internet content. The ABA's responsibilities in relation to Internet content include:

- investigating complaints about Internet content;
- raising community awareness about Internet safety issues;
- monitoring the operation of industry codes of practice; and
- supporting activities such as conducting research on Internet trends and liaison with relevant overseas bodies.

To raise awareness about Internet safety the ABA provides information enabling parents, carers and teachers to maximise the many benefits of the Internet while minimising and managing the potential risks associated with its use.

Cybersmartkids
The ABA's Cybersmart Kids website, located at www.cybersmartkids.com.au provides a range of Internet safety resources for schools and families. To complement the website the ABA has produced brochures containing key Internet safety information. These brochures are included in this information pack and contain:

- General Internet safety tips (green);
- Advice on choosing a filter (purple);
- Tips for dealing with spam (pink);
- Tips for safe use of Internet chat (red); and,
- Information about the Cybersmart Kids website and a poster (blue).

The pack also contains a fact sheet explaining how to make a complaint about Internet content.

The Cybersmart Kids materials are designed to appeal to children, especially those in the 8-14 age group who are most likely to be 'at risk' on the Internet. In developing the brochures, the ABA has been responsive to the results of its research into families' use of the Internet and the information needs of families in relation to Internet safety.

Other activities
In addition, through its international contacts, the ABA has identified innovative programs developed for use within a classroom environment, which present exciting opportunities to impart an Internet safety message, including:

- a play on Internet chat danger, involving a near-miss situation that arises when a teenager arranges to meet a stranger she has met in a chat room; and
- an on-line game in which teams of school children compete to solve a mystery and in the process learn how to be safe on the Internet.

The ABA is exploring options to bring these initiatives to Australian schools and families.

Net Detectives – Information for teachers

Net Detectives is an online activity which promotes Internet safety for young people.

Net Detectives uses the medium to teach young people about the medium. Teams engage in a role play scenario with messages on how to be Internet savvy. The activity is designed specifically for use in the school environment, and is pitched at young people in the upper primary school to lower secondary school age range.

The activity is being introduced to Australia by the Australian Broadcasting Authority, working in partnership with UK agency Childnet International.

How the activity works
The activity connects young people, working in teams online and connected via a website, with experts in an online control room. Participants in the control room may include the ABA and Childnet International, teachers, local police and child advocates.

Participating teams assume the role of a teacher as they work through an unfolding scenario. The scenario is fictional but realistic, involving a girl's experience of meeting someone in real life she has previously only met in a chat room. Clues relating to the scenario are sent out periodically from the control room. Teams work co-operatively, interrogating the data before them, and posting questions or theories about what is happening. Teachers provide guidance for students and lead the discussion on Internet safety that follows.

The online activity lasts up to 2 hours. Suggestions for follow-up activities, which re-iterate the safety message, will be provided.

Preparing for the game
Schools need computers with Internet access. Schools can field a number of teams. The ideal team size is 3-5 players – the number of people who can fit comfortably around a computer.

Teachers have to register teams in advance to take part in the activity. A short online training course will be conducted prior to the event.

On the day of the event, teams enter the "action area" – an interactive area of the web site which looks and feels like an internet chat room or bulletin board – for the start of the exercise.

There is no facility for student teams to communicate directly with each other and all messages posted are moderated and approved by the Control Room before being posted for other participants to read.

Is your school interested in participating?
The ABA is seeking expressions of interest from schools throughout Australia who may be interested in participating in a Net Detectives activity. The event will be piloted in September 2003 with further events in 2003 and 2004.

Follow the Dream:
A Secondary Aspirations Strategy for Aboriginal Students

Doug Melville
Consultant, Retention and Participation Project
Department of Education and Training, Western Australia

The Concept

The concept focuses on secondary-aged Aboriginal students previously having attained success at primary school and wishing to complete Year 12 with a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) or Tertiary Education Ranking (TER) for entry into Tertiary and Further Education (TAFE) or University studies.

The Department of Education and Training's "Plan for Government Schools 2004-2007"states a clear vision for government school education in Western Australia.

> "We want all students in our schools to achieve the highest standards of learning possible so that they are equipped to deal effectively with the opportunities and challenges they encounter in a changing world. We want them to be enthusiastic about learning, in safe and supportive learning environments. We want motivated and capable teachers and school leaders, who feel valued and supported in their work."

The "Follow the Dream" strategy links to the strategic direction of the Department of Education and Training (DET) by addressing the following:

- "Creating the Vision" Aboriginal Education Strategy Key Focus Area 1 (Retention and Participation), seeking to increase retention of Aboriginal students to Year 12; and
- responding to the recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry that call for direct support to Aboriginal students.

The most significant theme of the DET plan is a very clear focus on high standards of student achievement. The "Follow the Dream" strategy will enable a high standard of achievement for Aboriginal students.

The Outcome

A total of 56 schools (36 government and 20 non-government) have access to the "Follow the Dream" strategy with a minimum enrolment of 520 Aboriginal students and with total numbers being approximately 1,000 Aboriginal students.

Key targets seek a Year 12 graduation profile of at least 100 Aboriginal students per year by 2008 gaining a Tertiary Entrance Rank that will allow immediate entry to University, TAFE or employment and 1,000 Aboriginal students achieving a Western Australian Certificate of Education by 2008.

Strategy

The strategy promotes working partnerships by combining significant industry, cross agency and community collaboration to fully implement the program.

It emulates similar aspiration strategies such as the Gumala Mirnuwarni Program in Roebourne/Karratha. Current programs reflecting this aspirations ethos are supported by the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation (G(P)FF). The intention of the DET is to further the partnership with the Foundation allowing for a significant expansion of the aspiration ethos.

The aspirations strategy incorporating relevant local initiatives is being established at a number of senior high schools/colleges in metropolitan and regional Western Australia.

The strategy involves the identification of Aboriginal students achieving at or above the Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (WALNA) Benchmarks in Year 7. These students will be provided with the opportunity to voluntarily join the program in Year 8 at participating secondary schools and receive comprehensive cross agency personal development support designed to assure success throughout Years 8 to 12.

Program Sites for the strategy will usually be a government school however students involved in the program will not be exclusive to these schools and may involve students from nearby non-government sites.

The Partners

The "Follow the Dream" strategy is an interagency approach overseen by DET in partnership with the following agencies:

1. The Australian Government's Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST): Community consultation and school profiling will occur to ascertain community support and program implications. This will be undertaken through the Working Together for Indigenous Youth (WTIY) strategy. DEST will also provide tutoring and funding coordination through the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS) and Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS);
2. Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation: Offering program management and industry support;
3. Smith Family: Facilitating family support processes;
4. Industry and Service Organisations: Providing financial and employment opportunities through the G(P)FF;
5. The University of WA: through the established Year 10 and Year 12 Seminar Program; and,
6. The WA Government's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) through participation, sponsorship and employment opportunities for students graduation Year 12.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Secondary graduation of an increased number of Aboriginal students achieving a TER score resulting in University entrance or WACE allowing TAFE entrance.
- Improved literacy and numeracy levels.
- High-level achievement in education becomes the norm rather than exception in the Aboriginal Community.
- Comprehensive pastoral care program for secondary aged Aboriginal students.
- Improved retention rates.
- Community pride in excellence.
- Increased employment opportunities.
- Functional and reciprocal partnerships established to enhance education outcomes.
- Engagement of Aboriginal people in education through employment and support.

Research

It is assumed that outcomes for each aspirant site will vary according to specific influences within the school and the community. Edith Cowan University has been contracted to conduct research into the effectiveness of the strategy at each site.

The outcomes expected from this research are listed below.

- Statistics indicating student achievement, retention, graduation and student satisfaction.
- A set of factors that influence attainment of Aboriginal students.

- A set of strategies leading to student attainment.
- Case studies that will guide future planning.
- Report on the validity of the “Follow the Dream” strategy from the school’s viewpoint.

Governance

Central

The program will be governed through a Central Reference Committee comprising of members from the partners within this program.

The Central Steering Committee will provide advice on program directions, effectiveness and review the implementation of the program.

Local

At the local level a Steering Committee will oversee the operations of the local Strategy and comprise representation from:

- the District Director (or representative);
- Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation;
- school principals;
- industry and other partners; and
- community.

The strategy fosters a working partnership with a local commitment and ownership of the program. Without the input of all partners the program would not be successful.

Program Coordinators will be employed by the Department of Education and Training and be responsible for the operational aspects as directed by the Steering Committee.

Program Coordination

DET, through the Aboriginal Education Directorate and in concert with the G(P)FF will program manage both the viability and establishment of all current and future sites as well as providing programs with ongoing site support, strategy documentation and guidance.

G(P)FF played a key role in brokering and coordinating elements of the strategy at Karratha, Tom Price and Hedland Senior High Schools. The Foundation continues to play a key role in program management of the strategy and in coordinating industry liaison and support across Western Australia.

On behalf of partners, G(P)FF will be the agency negotiating industry support. This industry support is vital for the success of the program. DET will liaise with DEST to arrange agreements pertaining to VEGAS and ATAS programs to support the program.

Support from the Smith Family for program members is extended to their school aged siblings and a Red Cross Program facilitates access to part-time work for members. Additional support to the program is provided by District Education Offices and schools.

Program coordination is achieved in three phases over a timeline that varies according to the relevant local initiatives at specific sites.

Phase 1: Establishment

Once nominated for the “Follow the Dream” program, a coordinator will facilitate consultation with the local Aboriginal community, schools, industry and service providers to ascertain the viability of a local program. The key aspect of Phase 1 is building working partnerships between stakeholders

that convey the depth of local commitment and ownership of the program. In order to proceed with the program, there must be agreement between partners on the future success of the program.

A Steering Committee is formulated with representation from the working partnership and it has the task of developing an intervention plan for prospective students and a risk management plan for the program.

Phase 2: Consolidation

Coordination of the local partnership for implementation of the plans and establishment of a performance framework to enable the program to proceed successfully and develop mechanisms to sustain the program in the long term.

Ongoing Operational Phase

The Steering Committee will appoint a full-time Senior (Level 3) Program Coordinator, who will be responsible for all operational aspects of the Strategy on site.

The coordinator will liaise with the school to identify students, who can volunteer for the strategy commencing Year 8, and if selected students enter the strategy through a written agreement with identifiable targets.

Intensive support ensures successful progress by students.

Support includes:

- daily after school tutorial classes;
- trained mentors meeting with the students at least once every week;
- access to a School Resource Centre/Library or study facility incorporating a progressive and comprehensive leadership/study skill program from Year 8 to 12;
- tertiary motivational programs;
- a five-year integrated leadership study skills;
- personal development program that would include weekend camps;
- family/home support via Smith Family; and,
- vocational education assistance and the opportunity to access part-time work in Years 10 to 12 via the Red Cross "First Steps Program".

The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation

This Foundation is a WA-based, private philanthropic organisation established to increase the opportunities of Aboriginal students.

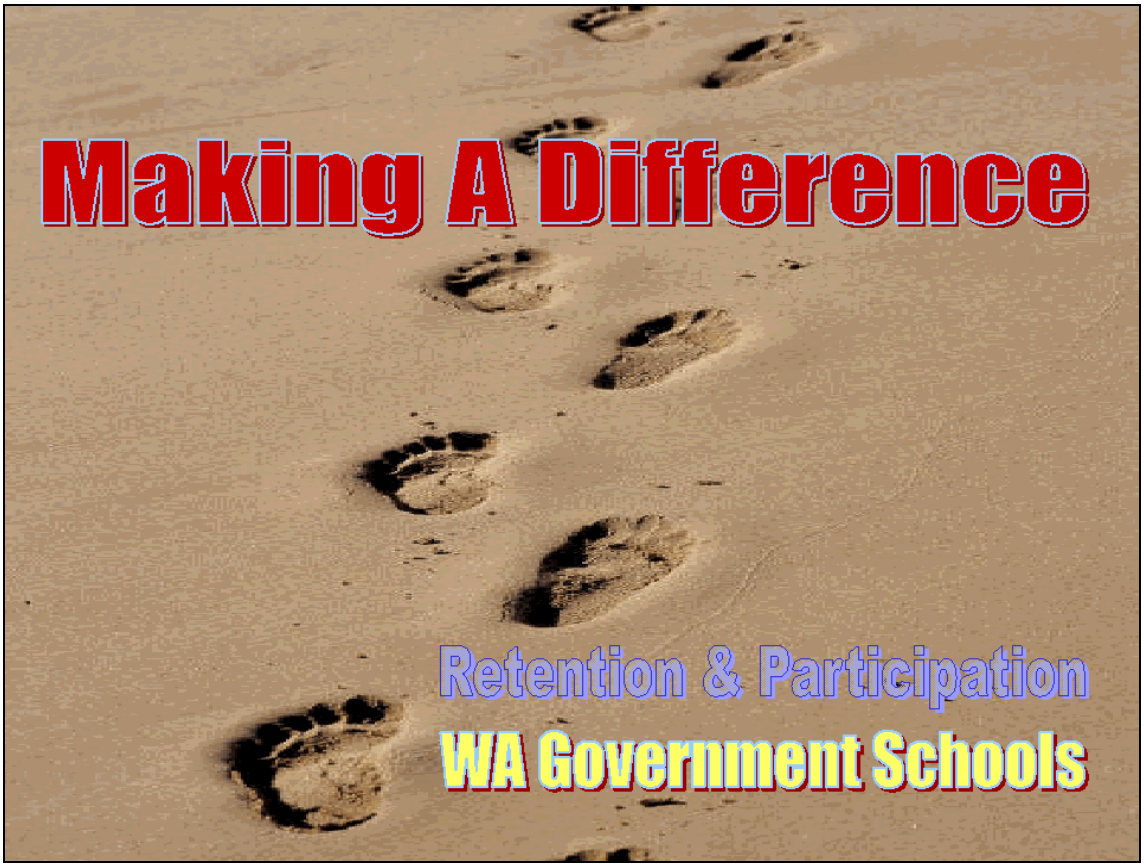
The Foundation supports an enrichment program to encourage students to successfully complete secondary schooling, and make the transition to tertiary education.

The Foundation works with the education sector and Aboriginal communities to support Aboriginal students.

It has successfully implemented programs in north-west Western Australia.

Students are recommended for the program by their educators, family and community. While selection is not always based on academic performance, firm criteria apply, including strong family support and independent recommendations. A compact between the students, their parents/guardians, schools, mentors and project sponsors commits each party to make every effort

for the participants to succeed. Within the three years in which the Karratha project has been operating, it has achieved a 98 per cent student retention rate.



Western Australia

- The Department of Education and Training Western Australia comprises of 14 Education Districts. A total of 18,042 full-time Aboriginal students attend government schools in these Districts (Semester 2 2003 Census)

Creating The Vision: Key Focus Areas

- Access & Participation
- Conductive Hearing Loss
- Attendance
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Culturally Inclusive Curricula
- Aboriginal Employment & Professional Employment

8. Parent & Community Participation
9. Cross Portfolio and Intersectoral Collaboration

Follow the Dream:

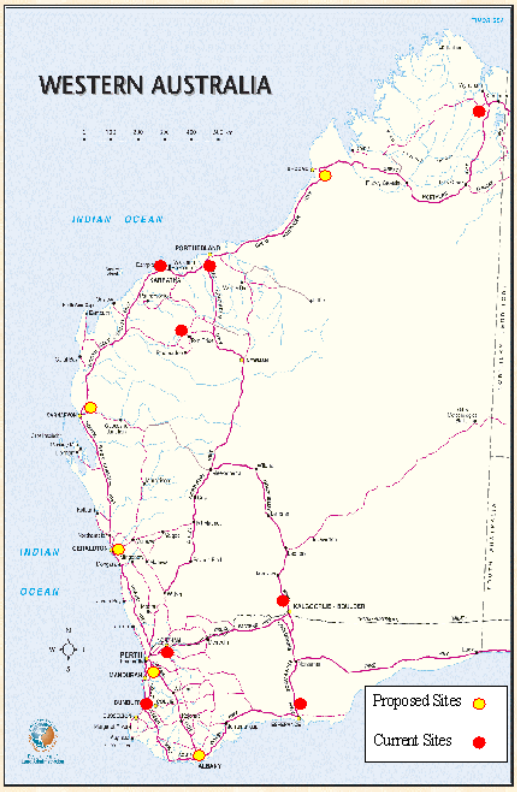
A Secondary Aspirations Strategy for Aboriginal Students

Aboriginal Education Training and Services Directorate

Department of Education & Training WA

Presentation Contents

- Map Overview of Sites
- Rationale – Follow the Dream
- Concept
- Strategy
- Anticipated Outcomes
- Research
- Program Governance
- Achievements to date

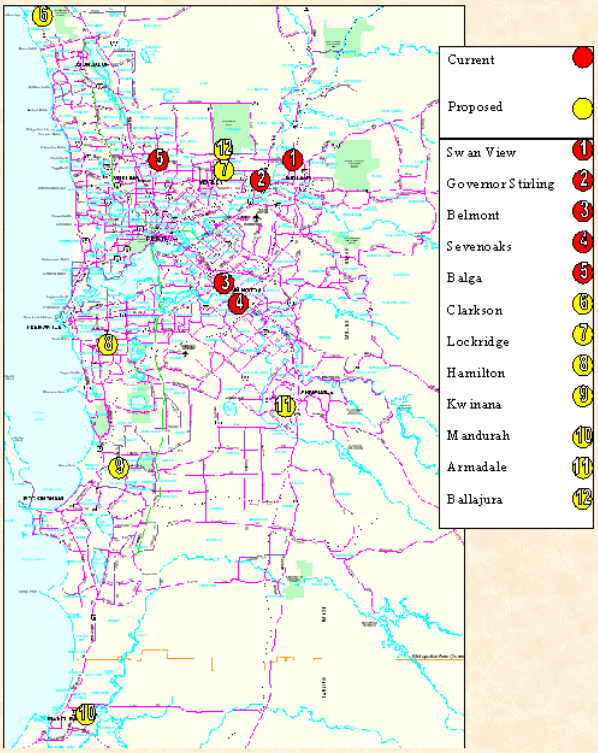


Country Locations

- Kununurra
- Hedland
- Karratha
- Tom Price
- Kalgoorlie
- Esperance
- Bunbury
- Northam
- Katanning

Proposed Sites

- Broome
- Carnarvon
- Geraldton
- Mandurah
- Albany



Perth Metropolitan

- Belmont
- Sevenoaks
- Governor Stirling
- Swan View
- Balga

Proposed Sites

- Armadale
- Kwinana
- Hamilton
- Lockridge
- Clarkson

The Concept: *Follow the Dream Program*

Focus

Secondary-aged Aboriginal students having attained success at primary school and wish to complete Year 12 with a;

* Tertiary Education Ranking (TER) for entry into University or TAFE
* Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE).

The strategy also responds to the recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry that call for **greater retention** of Aboriginal students to Year 12.

Aim - Target

Approximately 56 schools access the **"Follow the Dream"** Strategy.

(Minimum enrolment of 520 Aboriginal students to possibly 1,000 Aboriginal students.)

Target graduation profile:

At least 100 Aboriginal students yearly by 2008 with gaining a Tertiary Entrance Result (TER) allowing direct entry to University.

Average Attendance Rates: Primary/Secondary

ESTABLISHED TARGET	Baseline Data	2001 target	2002 target	2003 target	2004 target
a) Indigenous primary students	84.1%	Target = 88.2% Outcome = 71.4%	Target = 90.2% Outcome = 84%	Target = 92.2% Outcome = 82.4%	94.2%
b) Indigenous secondary students to Year 10	76.4%	Target = 79.8% Outcome = 73.4%	Target = 81.8% Outcome = 74.0%	Target = 83.8% Outcome = 69.0%	85.8%
c) Non-Indigenous primary students	95.2%	Outcome = 95.0%	Outcome = 94.8%	Outcome = 94.9%	Report Outcome
d) Non-Indigenous secondary students to Year 10	94.7%	Outcome = 91.5%	Outcome = 91.2%	Outcome = 91.1%	Report Outcome

Source: DETWA: IESIP **"2003 Performance Report"**

Apparent Retention of Indigenous Students

ESTABLISHED TARGET	Baseline Data	2001 Target	2002 Target	2003 Target	2004 Target
a) Indigenous	84.1% 988/1,175	Target = 86.8% Outcome = 84.9%	Target = 90.1%% Outcome = 85.5%	Target = 93.3% Outcome = 93.2% (1,229/1,319)	96.6%
b) Non-Indigenous	99.4% 17,027/17,130	Outcome = 100.1%	Outcome = 99.6%	Outcome = 99.0% (16,342/16,514)	Report Outcome

Source: DETWA: IESIP "2003 Performance Report"

Apparent Retention of Indigenous students from Year 10-Year 12

ESTABLISHED TARGET	Baseline Data 2000	2001 Target	2002 Target	2003 Target	2004 Target
a) Indigenous	26.9% 230/854 students	Target = 25.6% Outcome = 21.1%	Target = 28.0% Outcome = 24.3% (240/988)	Target = 30.4% Outcome = 25.5% (247/969)	32.9%
b) Non-Indigenous	63.3% 10,797/17,059	Outcome = 63.8% (10,915/17,100)	Outcome = 65.9% (11,222/17,027)	Outcome = 99.0% (11,246/17,160)	Report Outcome

Source: DETWA: IESIP "2003 Performance Report"

Indigenous Year 12's who achieve Year 12 Certificate (WACE) who commence Year 11

ESTABLISHED TARGET	Baseline Data	2001 Target	2002 Target	2003 Target	2004 Target
a) Indigenous	19.1% (117/613)	Target = 21.0% Outcome = 18.4% (122/664)	Target = 23.0% Outcome = 22.6% (156/690)	Target = 25.0% Outcome = 19.9% (144/725)	27%
• Non-Indigenous	55.4% (17,027/17,130)	Outcome = 56% (9,176/16,374)	Outcome = 58.2% (9,564/16,426)	Outcome = 57.2% (9,608/16,796)	Report Outcome

Source: DETWA: IESIP "2003 Performance Report"

Indigenous Year 12's who achieve a TER at or above minimum level for entry into a public university in WA

ESTABLISHED TARGET	Baseline Data	2001 Target	2002 Target	2003 Target	2004 Target
a) Indigenous	4.8% (11/230)	Target = 7.0% Outcome = 7.5% (15/201)	Target = 9.0% Outcome = 7.5% (18/240)	Target = 11.0% Outcome = 7.3% (18/247)	Target 13%
• Non-Indigenous	36% (4,251/11,819)	Outcome = 34.4% (4,118/11,986)	Outcome = 33.8% (4,181/12,388)	Outcome = 36.1% (4,179/11,589)	Report Outcome

Source: DETWA: IESIP "2003 Performance Report"

Follow the Dream Strategy

Implementation

3 Phases

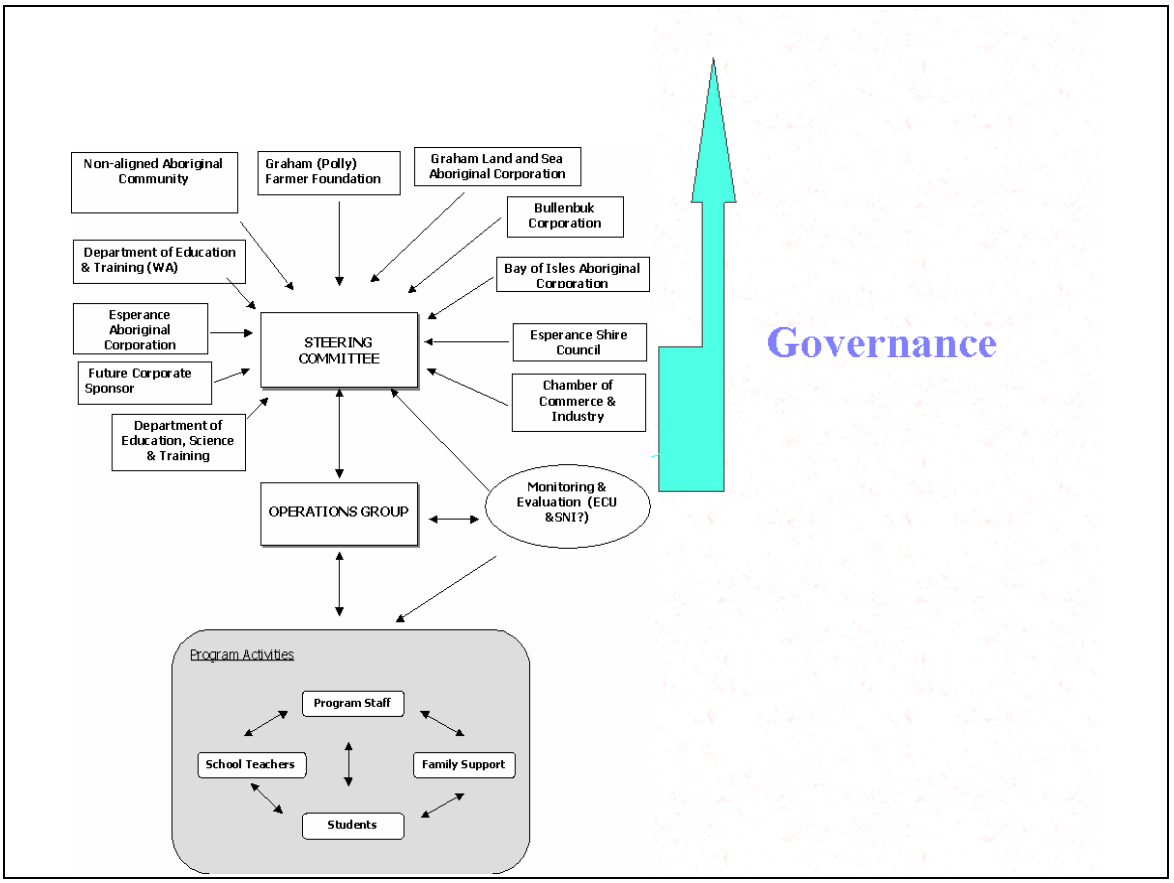
1. **Developmental**
2. **Establishment**
3. **Operational**

The "Follow the Dream" Strategy

The strategy emulates the best available National aspiration strategies and incorporates additional unique local elements

Aboriginal students who achieve at or above the Literacy and Numeracy (WALNA) Benchmark, demonstrate success in secondary school or have the capacity for success are possible applicants

Students apply for the program and receive comprehensive cross agency personal development support designed to assure success.



Research

It is assumed that outcomes for each aspirant site will vary according to specific influences within the school and the community, Edith Cowan University has been contracted to conduct research into the effectiveness of the strategy at each site.

The outcomes expected from this research are:

- Statistics indicating student achievement, retention, graduation and student satisfaction.
- A set of factors that influence attainment of Aboriginal students
- A set of strategies leading to student attainment
- Case studies that will guide future planning
- Report on the validity of the "Follow the Dream" strategy from the school's viewpoint.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Improved literacy and numeracy levels.
- High-level achievement in education becomes the norm rather than exception for Aboriginal students.
- Comprehensive pastoral care program for secondary aged Aboriginal students.

Cont'd

Anticipated Outcomes

- Improved retention rates.
- Increased employment opportunities.
- Community pride in excellence.
- Functional and reciprocal partnerships established to enhance education outcomes.
- Engagement of Aboriginal people in education through employment and support.

STRATEGY HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- 14 sites + 10 new proposed for 2004
- Karratha – Within 3 years of operation, 98% retention rate achieved.
- Site specific operations reflecting local needs.
- Interagency collaboration.
- Changing school culture and mindset – Aboriginal students do succeed in supportive environments.
- Longitudinal Research.
- Extension of cultural awareness training – students, teachers parent/community participation.

What is rural? A discussion with an American rural educator

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Abstract

What lessons can we learn from one another when discussing teacher preparation, curriculum development and "place-based education" as these topics pertain to rural education and its improvement? "Rural" has several connotations, depending upon where an individual resides. This paper examines the nature of rural areas in the United States (Idaho, Montana and Alaska), comparing and contrasting "rural" definitions, challenges and examples of curricula, teacher preparation and expectations. Examples of curricula specific to rural Alaskan schools are used to demonstrate the nature of "place-based education" efforts. The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, a nationally funded effort, has been very successful in identifying student needs in rural areas, developing curriculum and establishing cultural and "place-based education" experiences in five designated regions of the state.

The examples of Alaskan efforts are compared to similar efforts being made in other rural states, both American and Australian. Finally, a brief description of the United States' "No Child Left Behind" law and its impact on rural education efforts is presented.

What Is Rural?

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2004) provides the following definition for rural: "of or relating to the country, country people or life, or agriculture." Another online resource, Encyclopedia Brittanica (2004), provides a more in-depth definition, adding society to rural: "society in which there is a low ratio of inhabitants to open land and in which the most important economic activities are the production of foodstuffs, fibres, and raw materials." Certainly, those who grew up or live in rural areas agree with the depictions of country life and the low ratio of inhabitants provided and often choose rural living because of those qualities. For the purpose of this paper and in an attempt to separate degrees of rural habitation, I offer the following definitions:

Country = rural areas that are accessible by road, but are fairly distant from population centers including small towns .

Remote = rural areas that accessible only by plane or boat. Villages or local population centers are key to this category.

Rural = generally areas with low population densities and primarily agricultural or harvesting (fishing, trapping) activities supporting the population.

Small town = rural areas with incorporated population centers that are accessible by road.

Suburban = former rural areas that are close to major population centers.

Rural Montana

I had the pleasure of teaching in two rural schools in Montana, both part of the Yellowstone County Schools district. My first assignment was at Canyon Creek School, a K-8 institution at that time, nestled off a frontage road, bordered by barley fields on the north and east and by houses with large yards on the south and west sides. The sounds of traffic from the nearby four lane highway reminded us that we were in the country, but not too far away from the bright lights and excitement of Billings, Montana's largest city. Probably 50% of the students rode buses to school while the others were within walking distance. Recent data from Canyon Creek School can be found in Table 1. (Great Schools.Net, 2004)

My second assignment was at Morin School, a country school surrounded by prairie grass and fenced pastures or hayfields. Morin is a K-6 school (See Table 1) where all students, except those with bike or horse riding distance, travel by bus to and from school. The majority of parents are farmers or ranchers, although some commute the 20 miles to Billings where they are employed. At both Canyon Creek School and Morin School, the curriculum is designed to prepare students to enter their grades 7-12 in larger Billings schools. For some, the transition from small class sizes and small campuses to large campuses housing more students in one classroom than the entire population of their rural school was very difficult. However, anecdotal data supports overall success for these rural prepared students in their upper grade experiences.

Rural Idaho

As a graduate student in northern Idaho, I had the good fortune to work in several rural schools, providing teacher workshops, student science activities in after school or evening programs and supervising student teachers. Pierce and Deary schools (See Table 1) are typical of those schools I visited. Both were in small towns where agriculture and logging were the mainstay for employment. Most students were schooled in these small towns from K-12 grades and enjoyed the benefits of small class sizes and fairly stable communities. These schools were on the road system and not far from major population areas in both Idaho and Washington state. Three institutions of higher education were within 50 miles of each school, so those students who went on to college were never far from home or sometimes commuted daily to attend classes.

Rural Alaska

I have lived in Alaska for almost 10 years and have been afforded the opportunity to travel to several remote and other rural locations throughout the state. The depiction below, taken from the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (2004) description of rural Alaska, gives a clear picture of the vastness of the land and the rural nature that a small population enables it to stay that way.

> By most any standards, nearly all of the 586,000 square miles and 245 communities that make up the state of Alaska would be classified as "rural." Approximately 40% of the 553,600 people living in Alaska are spread out in 240 small, isolated communities ranging in size from 25 to 5000, with the remaining 60% concentrated in a handful of "urban" centers (1990 Census). Anchorage, with nearly 50% of the total population, is the only truly metropolitan area in the state. Of the rural communities, over 200 are remote, predominantly Native (Aleut, Eskimo and Indian) villages in which 70% of the 86,300 Alaska Natives live. The Alaska Department of Labor estimates the Native population will grow to 108,700 by the year 2000. The vast majority of the Native people in rural Alaska continue to rely on subsistence hunting and fishing, coupled with a slowly evolving cash-based economy, for a significant portion of their livelihood, since few permanent jobs exist in most communities.
>
> According to a 1990 survey, the percentage of people living in "poverty" in rural communities in Alaska ranges from 15% to 57%, with the average income in the $7,000 to $15,000 range. (Rural Systemic Initiative, 2004)

"Rural" in Alaska takes on a whole new meaning, when compared to Montana and Idaho. The cultural aspects of remote communities (See Table 1) necessitate education that is meaningful and "place-based". Examples of what the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative planned to accomplish, and has shown a good level of success in achieving, follow.

Table 1: Rural school examples from Montana, Idaho and Alaska in the United States.

School Location	**Socioeconomic Status**	**Population/Ethnicity**	**Rural Classification**
Canyon Creek (P-6) Billings, MT	19% - reduced or free lunch	209 97% Caucasian	Suburban

Morin School (K-6) Yellowstone County, MT	N/A	41 51% Caucasian 49% Am. Indian	Country
Pierce Elementary (K-6) Pierce, ID	53%- reduced or free lunch	51 90% Caucasian	Small Town
Deary School (4-12) Deary, ID	38%- reduced or free lunch	205 99% Caucasian	Small Town
Twin Hills School (K-8) Twin Hills, AK	75 %- reduced or free lunch	12 100% AK Native	Remote Village
Unalakleet School (P-12) Unalakleet, AK	52 %- reduced or free lunch	203 100% AK Native	Remote Village
Buckland School (P-12) Buckland, AK	87%- reduced or free lunch	168 100% AK Native	Remote Village
Girdwood School (K-8) Girdwood, AK	30%- reduced or free lunch	145 88% Caucasian	Small Town/Suburban
Chiniak School (K-12) Chiniak, AK	N/A	18 100% Caucasian	Country

(Additional information is available at http://www.greatschools.net.)

Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (ARSI) was funded by the National Science Foundation and The Rural School and Community Trust Fund (formally Annenberg Rural Challenge). The selected major initiatives include these five: 1) Native Ways of Knowing and Teaching; 2) Culturally Aligned Curriculum Adaptations; 3) Indigenous Science Knowledge Base; 4) Elders and Cultural Camps; and 5) Village Science Applications (Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, 2004). The state was divided into five language/cultural regions: Inupiat, Athabaskan, Southeast, Aleut, and Yup'ik. Each region selected educators and elders to determine how to best address each of the five initiatives and began working toward meeting the challenge. Because elders are an important part of every rural native community in Alaska, their indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing and teaching were immediately employed to meet the goals of the ARSI. Success was almost immediate and a ripple effect was noticed in classrooms as efforts were expanded from developing elder and subsistence camps to eventual Elders-in-residence programs as described below.

> Elders and subsistence camps are an important part of Native life throughout Alaska. One of the strategies that is proving most successful in connecting the school curriculum to students' lives in culturally and educationally meaningful ways is through the involvement of Native Elders as teachers and the real-world setting of a subsistence camp environment as the classroom. The resources at this site promote the establishment of Elders-in-Residence programs in schools and the use of subsistence camps as learning environments that engage students (and teachers) in inquiry-based activities under the guidance of local experts. (Elders and Cultural Camps, 2004)

Additional efforts to improve rural education, making it more culturally and rurally meaningful to students while involving entire communities is exemplified in the Alaska Native/Rural Challenge (AN/RC).

The Alaska Native/Rural Challenge consists of a partnership between the Annenberg Rural Challenge (Foundation) and the Alaska Federation of Natives, in cooperation with the schools in rural Alaska and the University of Alaska, to initiate a major educational reform effort that shifts the cultural and educational focus in schools from teaching about the local culture to teaching in the culture. The aim of AN/RC is to re-orient the schools to use the indigenous knowledge systems, ways of knowing and world views as the foundation for teaching all subject matter (including the Western-oriented curriculum), moving from the local to a global perspective. In addition, AN/RC has developed several national initiatives that extend the experience gained in Alaska and contribute to the broader Annenberg Rural Challenge effort.

The overall project is organized into the following major initiatives, with an emphasis on curricular areas related to language arts and social studies:

Oral Tradition as Education (regional)
Language/Cultural Immersion Camps (regional)
ANCSA and the Subsistence Economy (regional)
Living in Place
Reclaiming Tribal Histories (regional)
Alaska Native Knowledge Network/Curriculum Unit (statewide)
Native American/Rural Education Network (national) (Alaska Native/Rural Challenge, 2004)

An example of schools providing opportunities for students to learn and practice subsistence activities was recently reported in the Anchorage Daily News, titled, "Subsistence Classes in Russian Mission: Learning Old Ways" (Gay, 2004). Pictured and discussed are students involved in trapping and skinning beavers, a winter activity that is incorporated into the school curriculum. Russian Mission School Principal Mike Hull says, "We're getting the kids out so they learn the subsistence skills, so thy have that confidence" (Gay, 2004, p. A-6). After students are involved in these and other activities, including a fall camp attended by the entire population in the seventh and eighth grades, the outdoor experiences are turned into themes that are incorporated into the school curriculum. Students relate these experiences to geography, mathematics and science. They share their stories and reports within the community and are planning to share presentations in other areas of the state. The effects of these efforts are best summed up by a parent, Simeon Askoak, "I've seen (changes) even in my own boy. He's looking forward to going to school every day now. Before that, I honestly thought he would be dropping out of school." (Gay, 2004, p. A-7)

The challenges that many rural schools face, keeping students actively engaged in their learning and in school long enough to complete their high school education, can be addressed by place-based education efforts as suggested above. Not just in Alaska, but in other rural communities where specific lifestyles or livelihoods lend themselves to curriculum inclusion, similar successes can be realized. The necessary players in these endeavors are school officials, teachers, parents, community members and students. There are other challenges to be met by school administrators, teachers and teacher educators in order to promote and sustain place-based education efforts.

School Administrator Challenges

Communities with strong leaders are the best places to live. These leaders have vision and are trusted by their fellow community members. In rural learning communities, where the school is often the center of attention, principals become the designated "keepers of the vision" and facilitators of all endeavors to improve educational efforts. Administrators are often required to find the money that will enable projects, engage community members to become involved and finally staff their schools with teachers to engage students in the activities that are expected to improve educational efforts. In addition, administrators must assure the local, state and federal authorities that standards are being met and that the educational goals of

those authorities are being realized. However, without equally strong and committed community members, the first in line being teachers in the school, improvement and systemic change will not become a reality. Not only must teachers who share the vision, but those who understand the rigors of systemic change implementation, be employed.

Teacher Challenges

Teachers are on the front line in any battles that occur within schools, whether curricular, budgetary or human resource related. They are the heartbeat of the school, the pulse of all that is good or bad. In terms of place-based education, teachers are the individuals responsible for implementation, monitoring and assessment of activities that are suggested or mandated by administrators, local, state and federal agencies and community members. Hence, without them, curriculum is not delivered and the authorities and community members are not pleased. Teachers involved in systemic change, especially related to place-based education, must be active and committed community members—part of the stake holder group in the rural community. For those teachers invested with family members employed in the community and children enrolled in the school, place-based education planning and involvement incorporates their own ideas and concerns for family members. Those who are opposed to place-based education efforts, or are threatened by the increased workload that often accompanies initiation and implementation of systemic change, can either attempt to incorporate changes in the plans or may choose to not be involved. Those teachers who do not support systemic change efforts may become disillusioned, often voluntarily releasing themselves from the rural school community. However, with additional professional development and training, those teachers threatened by increased workloads can learn about the benefits afforded themselves, their families and community members when place-based education is implemented. The professional development opportunities and teacher training that sustain and prepare teachers for rural assignments are the key components for assuring support of place-based education efforts by teachers.

Teacher Educator Challenges

I have been fortunate again in my educational endeavors to be a part of teacher preparation and professional development in Montana, Idaho and Alaska. I have facilitated teacher training that revolves around environmental and conservation efforts, conducted summer science curriculum training workshops and presented examples of hands-on/minds-on science and mathematics activities at local, state and national conferences. In addition, I continue to teach in a K-8 Teacher Preparation Program and a Master of Arts in Teaching Program with K-8 certification at Alaska Pacific University. The highlight of my teacher preparation efforts has been supervising preservice teachers in rural practicum and student teaching/internship experiences.

The rural experiences gained by those who are preparing to enter the teaching profession have value that cannot be over emphasized. In the United States, rural and inner city teaching positions are those that are the most difficult to fill and keep filled. Before teachers can commit to investing their energy and becoming active rural learning community members, they need to experience the realities of rural living and teaching. Colleagues at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, have shared with me their rural practicum endeavors that involve a weeklong trek to rural schools and communities in the state. I think we are in agreement that providing opportunities for preservice teachers to experience rural life allows informed decisions to be made regarding job placement after certification. After a preservice teacher successfully completes a weeklong practicum in a remote village or a fifteen-week student teaching placement/internship in a rural school, he or she can immediately determine if securing rural teaching employment is a feasible goal. Especially when exposed to place-based education efforts, prospective rural school employees are potential informed supporters of those efforts and bring added value to the rural school involved.

No Child Left Behind

The question might arise, "So what does No Child Left Behind have anything to do with placed-based or rural education?" In actuality, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is now the law of the land in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) and is playing havoc with rural education in particular and education throughout the United States in general. The contentious mandates of NCLB include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) All teachers and teacher aides must be "highly qualified." This requires teachers to have degrees in the subject areas they teach and teacher aides to have at least two years of college credits or an Associate of Arts degree. In rural schools where teachers often teach in several subject areas and teacher aides are difficult to find because of small population bases, the requirements will eliminate both in short order. Perhaps the 2006 deadline for compliance will allow some of the efforts to test the flexibility and interpretation of the law to be successful. 2) Students in grades three, five, eight and ten, as an aggregate population in each school, must show Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in the reading, writing, and mathematics or have their schools labeled as "low performing." With test results published in state reports, local newspapers and readily available online, rural schools are especially susceptible to being inaccurately judged by test scores alone. What would happen if the school has one- third grader and the score of that child caused the school to be labeled as "low performing?" Everyone would know who caused the failure, and there may not be another third grader in the school for several years, meaning that there would not be a chance to improve AYP in that grade. Who would be damaged more, the school or the student? Perhaps the last mandate I have selected to share might provide a solution. 3) Parents with children in schools that do not meet AYP and consequently are classified as "low performing" may enroll their child in a higher performing school within their district. The district is responsible for transportation costs involved in meeting the parents' wishes. In rural Alaska, the nearest school in any district may be 50 miles away by plane. Try explaining to the district how they will afford transporting a child between villages twice a day for 189 days each year. However, if your small rural school is low performing, everyone could just move their children to another school and leave the failing third grader behind.

I have not fairly represented the NCLB goals and aspirations to improve accountability, strengthen teaching and provide equal opportunities for all children to learn. However, as discussed above, the mandates do open a Pandora's Box of questions and dilemmas that will be faced by many schools, especially those that are rural. In terms of place-based education efforts, because the test scores that are used to measure AYP are the result of standardized tests, many of the standards and benefits of active learning that students achieve are not measured or recognized. The danger is that these "high stakes tests" will erode efforts to make rural learning meaningful and relevant and reverse the improved student attitudes and satisfaction they gain through place-based education experiences. There is a real and present danger that teachers will teach only to the test and students will lose their interest in continuing their educational pursuits.

Closing Thoughts

Whether a child is part of a rural, country, remote, small town or suburban learning community, her/his needs are different than those of urban-schooled students, as are the opportunities available for education. Place-based education examples from the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative provide students with curriculum that addresses some of the cultural and subsistence needs in remote areas. In country, small town and suburban areas in the states of Idaho and Montana, emphasis is placed on preparing students for transition to urban schools. In the SPERA Volume 13 of Education in Rural Australia, (Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia, 2003) several examples of current place-based rural education efforts are highlighted. Unlike the ARSI statewide initiatives, these endeavors are homegrown and funded locally. Evidence of community support at all levels,

students, parents, teachers and administrators, and plans for continued implementation are provided. The award guidelines established by SPERA recognize place-based education as playing a pivotal role in sustaining and improving rural education. (Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia, 2003, p. 75)

> The 2003 Australia Rural Education Award is awarded to an individual, institution, organisation or industry for a practical project or achievement which opens up educational opportunities for rural people and demonstrates a commitment towards advancing the positive aspects of rural education.
>
> The Australian Rural Education Award:
>
> > Acknowledges excellence in rural education.
> > Recognises the achievements of an individual or group in a rural community.
> > Endorses a positive image of rural education.
> > Demonstrates a creative approach to meeting the educational needs of rural people.

Rural educators in the United States and those in Australia can learn much from each other regarding establishing and sustaining place-based education, be it local or systemic. The ideas and examples provided here can serve as springboards for discussion and planning. However, in order to make these educational efforts sustainable, community support, administrative guidance, teacher direction and active student participation are necessary. In addition, teacher preparation programs must provide opportunities for preservice teachers to experience place-based education efforts, so that they will be prepared to fill the roles of educators and innovators when their rural placements are secured.

Residents in rural areas are there because they want to be there. The benefits of country, small town and remote living are many. The danger of eroding the educational excellence and relevance of schools in rural areas by mandating standardization, mandating unrealistic credential expectations for educators and their aides and penalizing schools that do not meet unrealistic annual yearly progress is present in the United States in the No Child Left Behind law. I trust that rural Australian educators, parents and students will not allow their government to decimate all that is good about place-based education, but will continue to support and promote place-based education efforts throughout rural Australia.

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Student Council Virtues Project

Sarah Pendlebury and Kane Benson
Kulin District High School

Abstract
In today's society we often hear people saying that no one has any manners or values any more and that people have lost their common decency. The student council at Kulin DHS have begun to run a program across the whole school, K-10, to address this very concern.

This program is the Virtues project, founded by three concerned individuals who, researching the world's sacred texts found that at the heart of all spiritual traditions are virtues, described as the essence of human spirit and the content of our character. These virtues tie in closely to the values in the Curriculum framework and reflect the school's priority area of social skills. The student council feel that it is important to have a program such as the virtues project in the school because "rather than just learning 'school work' it is helping us develop into a whole person by teaching us how to treat people and how we should be treated by others as well".

In the program there are fifty-two virtues. The student council decided to focus on one virtue per fortnight and chose twenty virtues to cover over the year that they felt were most appropriate for our school. Each fortnight the student councillors distribute information on the chosen virtue to the teachers who then incorporate the virtue into their programs. The student council have also involved the community in the virtues project. In accordance with the current virtue they place posters up at prominent points around the town and also write a column in the school newsletter. The student councillors, working together with the teachers and other students are creating a climate of caring and character across the school and into the community.

The workshop would take the format of a presentation, planned and run by the student council and teachers at Kulin DHS.

KULIN DHS STUDENT COUNCIL VIRTUES PROJECT

Agenda

Welcome

What is the Virtues Project?

How has KDHS implemented the project:

Across the whole school?

In individual classrooms?

What hurdles have we faced?

What benefits have we found?

WHAT IS THE VIRTUES PROJECT?

Brief Overview

- Worldwide project founded in 1991 by three concerned individuals who wanted to counteract the rising violence among youth and families.
- Through research they discovered 52 virtues at the heart of the world's sacred texts.
- Virtues are described as the essence of the human spirit and the content of our character.
- Project offers programs, trainings and materials to all sorts of agencies to help create a culture of character.
- Educators guide – written specifically for schools.

The Five Strategies of the Virtues Project

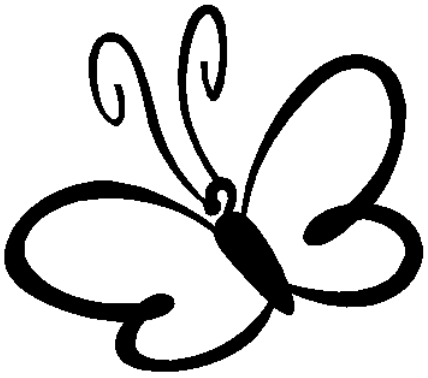
- Speak the Language of the Virtues
- Recognise Teachable Moments
- Set Clear Boundaries
- Honour the Spirit
- Offer Spiritual Companioning

1. Speak the Language of the Virtues

- The way we speak and the words we use have great power
- Words have the power to break a heart or inspire a dream
- Teachers and caregivers have power to shape a child's sense of self, merely by the words they use about that child
- The language of virtues is about bringing out the best in children and ourselves, it allows us to replace shaming and blaming language with personal responsibility and respect
- Speaking the language of the virtues allows us to awaken the virtues in every child and reinforce emerging virtues

The Three Elements of Virtues Language

- ACKNOWLEDGE- or praise them for a virtue they have practised
- GUIDE – or prepare them to practise a virtue
- CORRECT – or remind them when they have done something wrong or failed to practise a virtue



2. Recognise Teachable Moments

- Everyday many 'teachable moments' occur
- These are moments in which students can be helped to master their virtues and understand the meaning behind them
- Recognising teachable moments is a way to refocus behaviour on a virtue that is needed

3. Set Clear Boundaries

- Establishing boundaries based on virtues helps create safe havens where students feel free to learn and teachers feel free to teach
- Clear boundaries are like a fence of safety, within which there is freedom
- A student who breaks through the boundary and subsequently meets the consequences is reinvited back into the safety of the boundaries
- Virtues based boundaries focus on respect and restorative justice

4. Honour the Spirit

- Spirit can be defined by:
  "essential quality",
  "animating principle",
  "life, will, thought"
- We need to respect the dignity of each person
- Make time for reflection, reverence and beauty
- Foster the school spirit
- See the potential in every child – look for their virtues
- Model virtues you expect children to practise
- Share stories
- Have ceremonies to celebrate special events

5. Offer Spiritual Companioning

- Spiritual Companioning is a counselling approach
- It involves being deeply present and answering 'cup emptying' questions which allow someone to get to the heart of the matter
- It is not about giving quick solutions
- It is about listening so that the one being heard can hear themselves and find their own clarity

IS NOT	IS
A fix	Walk along
A rescue	Respect
Curing	Caring Presence
Advice	Listening
Sympathy	Compassionate Detachment
Telling	Asking
Victim-based	Virtues-based

Why did KDHS Choose to Implement the Virtues Project?

- Analysis of data showed that there was a need to address the issues of bullying and behaviour management
- There was a need for a whole school approach to implement the Values from the Curriculum Framework – this was identified as a school priority

How has Kulin DHS Implemented the Virtues Project?

- In an initiative aimed at providing the student council with more responsibility and input into the school they were offered the role of running the virtues project
- Student Council has initiated many ideas across the Whole School
- Teachers have incorporated Virtues into their everyday classroom programmes

Student Council Whole School Approach

Whole School Approach

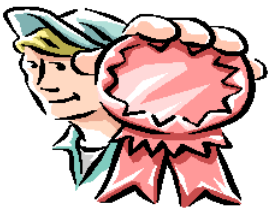
Getting Started

- The Student Council chose to focus on one virtue across the whole school each fortnight
- We collaboratively selected 20 of the 52 virtues to focus on throughout the year
- With each new virtue there are a number of jobs that need to be completed by the student councillors
- A roster was drawn up to ensure these jobs were completed

KULIN HOCKEY CLUB

Whole School Approach

Virtues Activity Day



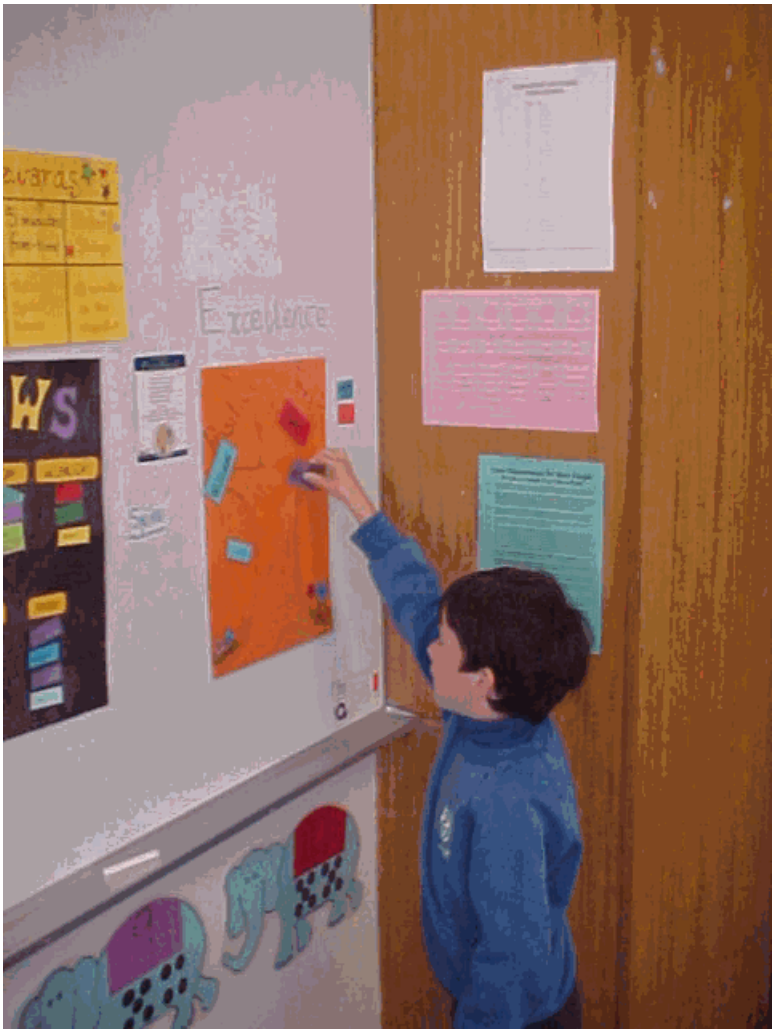
- A fun virtues morning is in the process of being planned for the last day of term
- The session will be run by the high school students and the primary school students will participate in all the activities

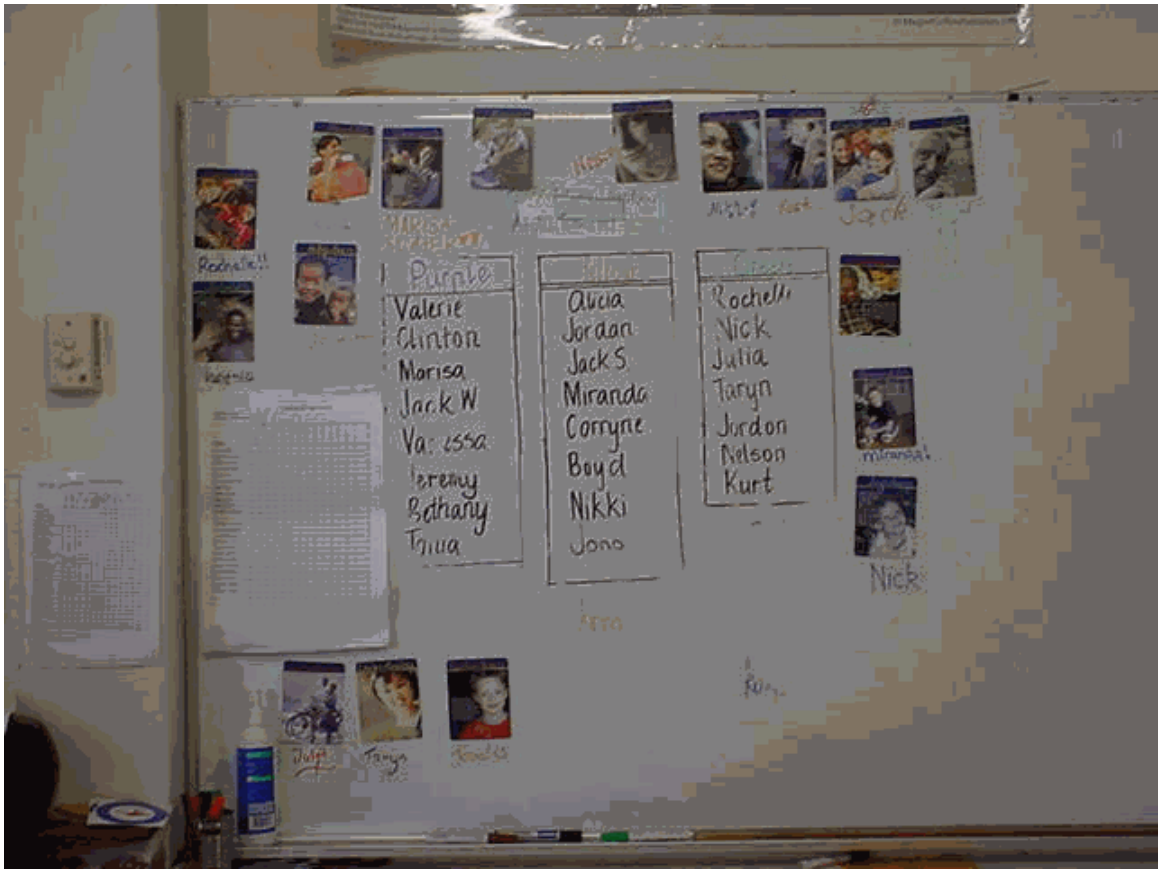
Whole School Approach

Survey - What Makes a Good Teacher

- Student council conducted a survey with students from across the whole school
- The student council then discussed and collated the results
- These results were presented at a Staff meeting by our student council teacher
- The results have also been included in the performance management process for every staff member

Virtues in Individual Classes




Purple
Valerie
Clinton
Morisa
Jack W
Jeremy
Bethany
Tonia
Alicia
Jordan
Jack S
Miranda
Corryne
Boyd
Nikki
Jono
Rochelle
Nick
Julia
Taryn
Jordon
Nelson
Kurt
Nick

Ben Robins
Jacob Ryan
Harley Palmer
Lukas Evans

DEWALT

What Hurdles Have We Faced?

TIME!

HURDLES

- Finding enough time to spend together as a student council to successfully implement all the strategies without taking kids out of classes
- Meeting deadlines- each fortnight brings more jobs!

STRATEGIES WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO TRY TO OVERCOME THE HURDLES

- Student Council Meeting every Wednesday during silent reading
- Withdrawing only two student councillors for specific jobs and rotating this system
- Developing and redeveloping a detailed roster for the specific jobs

What Hurdles Have We Faced?

TIME!

HURDLES

- As teachers finding space in already full timetables for specific virtues activities- especially in the high school

STRATEGIES WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO TRY TO OVERCOME THE HURDLES

- Setting aside silent reading twice a week in the high school for specific virtues activities
- Integrating the virtues into existing programmes

What Hurdles Have We Faced?

COMMITMENT & MOMENTUM

HURDLES

- Receiving 100% commitment from all teachers
- Student Councillors having the appropriate skills to take on the additional leadership

STRATEGIES WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO TRY TO OVERCOME THE HURDLES

- Implemented weekly meetings with two student councillors, one primary and one secondary teacher and the admin team
- At each primary and secondary meeting each staff member is required to share how they have been implementing virtues in their classroom
- Virtues has become part of the performance management process
- Support from Student Council Teacher

What Benefits Have We Found?

- Teachers have found that since implementing the virtues project they are using positive language a lot more in their classrooms
- Teachers have observed children are reflecting on their own behaviour more and linking it to the virtues
- Children feel that they have positive things to strive towards in relation to behaviour
- Student Council has greater input and responsibility in the school

Linking the Technologies

Kate Haddow and Salli Thomas
Katherine School of the Air

Katherine School of the Air is located in Katherine, a small rural town (approx 12 000) in the north of the Northern Territory. Katherine is 320kms south of Darwin and is at the cross roads of the Stuart and Victoria Highways. It serves a flourishing tourist industry, pastoral industry and airforce base.

Katherine School of the Air is the largest classroom in the world. Our Territory based students are spread across 800,000 square kilometres of the Northern Territory. These along with students travelling around Australia in cars and caravans, living across the world in places such as Bali, Kupang, Vanuatu, Germany, New Guinea, yachts in the Mediterranean and Timor Sea as well as a student backpacking around the world with his freelance journalist father. Katherine School of the Air caters for 250 – 300 remote and isolated primary students. Our students are Pre-School to Year 7 (ages 4 – 14ish). These students live in a wide range of locations, fishing villages, small aboriginal communities, stations, small aboriginal families groups in their own homelands, travelling around Australia, in yachts and expatriate Territorians living and working overseas.

Along with the varied localities, our Home Tutors come with a wide diversity of skills and understandings. As the Home Tutor is the key to the successful delivery of Distance Education we need to be vary aware of each Tutors abilities. Tutors can be trained teachers or professionals, mothers who run a home business or station while tutoring their students, paid tutors who usually have completed high school education, mothers who have incomplete schooling, tutors who are ESL (English as a Second Language) working with students who are ESL.

Since 1991 – 2004 KSA has taught their students in geographical clusters. A teacher was responsible for 15 – 18 students who lived in the same area. The students in a cluster would be in all year levels of the school. Students in one family would have the same teacher, this made things much easier for the home tutor as students worked with an individual belongings that allowed topics to be matched. All children in a family would have the same style of spelling program, students could often work on the same unit at the same time, allowing them to share and bounce ideas just like the classroom, by working on the same topic, make things easier for the Home Tutor.

Our challenges are many and varied. Unlike many Distance Education centres that use a predominantly Set based program, we run a modular program. We use print based materials which are written by KSA teachers for our specific conditions and needs. Units of work which are language based often with Science, SOSE, The Arts or Technology and Design outcomes covered form the basis of the program. This is supported by modules of phonics, grammar, handwriting, health and PE, spelling journals, reading comprehension activities, WA maths materials, maths extension units. These materials can be mixed and matched to meet a student's developmental level, tutor level and time available to the family.

The print based materials are supported by whole school events such as school camp, minischool, inschool and swim school. These events cater for team and group work, sporting, art, music, drama and technology and design aspects that are better covered face to face. These events also provide an opportunity for teachers to observe student's skills in the writing or reading process first hand. The print based materials are also supported by kits – hands on activities with all the equipment to meet specific outcomes in areas such as maths, science and technology and design.

The school has traditionally used HF radio as its main medium for communication delivery and interaction. Oral Language and Health outcomes are predominantly meet through HF radio sessions. With an increase of ESL students, with ESL tutors at the school there has been an increase in the use of HF radio to specifically target these groups. In reality these students while termed ESL are really EFL students (English as a Foreign Language) as they only speak English when they are on the radio to their teacher or when the teacher visits their home. This increase of HF radio is the opposite to most distance education centres across Australia, where HF radio is being turned off in favour of the clearer satellite technology.

Since the Government push for all people to have phone service equity there has been a huge increase in the number of our families with telephone communication. We now only have about ten families with out telephone access (not including overseas families). This has enabled KSA to deliver telephone lessons to up to four locations simultaneously using phone system conferencing facilities and a bit of ingenuity. This has been of particular significance to our ESL students, once again creating another opportunity to interact in English with their teachers and peers.

As phone installations have increased and the cost of technologies gone down, more families have added fax machines to their repertoire of communication tools. Faxes have predominantly been used for sending out information for events and before radio lessons and for sending in pieces of work for real time teacher feedback.

However since the insurgence of computers in homes and the advent of email, faxes are being used less than in the past.

About 3 years ago we only had 8% of our families with computers and internet access. As a school we were very keen to pursue the use of this technology, but found it very difficult with so few families able to access it. In this period of time the gap between those with the technology and those without was huge. Telstra embarked on a major roll out campaign and the numbers of families with access to the internet increased. The use of email for instant communication started to increase. Home Tutors could email in with questions and get their answers, students emailed work in for their teacher to look at and respond to in real time.

Then in 2003, the NT Government, the NSW Government along with Optus put in place an Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) trial in the Territory and New South Wales. For the Territory, this involved the setup of studios in Alice Springs and Darwin and the rollout of equipment to family homes and community schools across the Territory. The equipment for each receiving family includes a compaq harddrive and all relevant software, 17”monitor, graphics tablet, digital camera, headset or microphone, CD burner, printer, scanner, modem, satellite dish, associated cabling and decoder and full installation with alignment.

For Katherine School of the Air this meant that many more families had internet access. This has opened up access to the delivery of online courses to our students using Janison Toolbox and brought with it more changes. Students can see each other’s work in real time, they can discuss topics via forums or chats, link to specific sites that show or demonstrate. It has allowed teachers to link students to internet sites that provide information and visuals that supplement tasks and enhance outcomes in a way that print based materials never have.

Along with the internet access came the IDL lessons that the provided equipment was purpose built to handle. 4 or 5 KSA teachers travel to Darwin each week to deliver 2 and a half days of IDL lessons to all our students. The studio in Darwin transmits the video footage of the teacher in the studio so can be used for things such as demonstrating science lessons or art techniques, reading picture books, delivering plays, teaching finger rhymes, invited guests. The studio also facilitates the sharing of applications on the computer, so the teacher can hand control over to any student and they add to the page on screen and all students can see what is happening. Of equal importance is all students being able to hear each other through clear audio, so discussions ans sharingn can so easily happen. This technology added another whole dimension to our ability to deliver purposeful, meaningful material to our students.

It was the introduction of all this technology that brought our school to a point of chaos. The very technology that should be improving our delivery had arrived so fast the school was not ready to cope. One teacher was responsible for delivering the print based materials to their students, two different teachers planned and delivered HF radio lessons to the students, another group of two or three teachers planned and delivered the IDL lessons, while another teacher planned and supported the online course material. Our school had all of a sudden embraced the technology but had become very disjointed and fragmented. Teachers were stressed and having difficulty reporting on students, Home Tutors were confused and students did not know who their teacher was.

The teachers, the senior staff, the parents and home tutors took a long hard look at ourself as an organisation and began the process of restructuring the school to match the capabilities of the technologies, ensuring that each technology was used in as the optimum delivery tool for curriculum.

We disbanded the clusters and regrouped the students into peer levels. Year 6/7, 4/5, 2/3, Trans/1, Preschool and high needs ESL. Each peer group has 4 teachers and each of those teachers and their group of students also belongs to a regional group – North West, North East, South East, South West. These regional groups are to facilitate the discussions about family groups within the region to support them when there is more than one student in the family, to try and keep the continuity of multiage units of work and programming.

It was now the responsibility of each peer level teaching team to get together and plan all aspects of the curriculum for all students in their peer level. The teachers got together at the beginning of the year and looked at all the methods of delivery and all the technologies available to deliver the curriculum frameworks and work matching outcomes against the best method of delivery. The teachers who are working with the students are now planning and delivering the HF radio lessons, planning and in most cases, delivering the IDL lessons, planning and delivering the print based materials, planning and delivering activities for minischool and inschool. These teachers are assessing the students work and are able to maximise learning opportunities.

To help facilitate this major change we have and continue to have many frank and honest conversations at all levels of our school community. We brought in support from the Departments’ People and Learning Branch (HR) to facilitate discussions and practices to support staff working in teams. This is continuing. We have had three senior staff work through 12 month leadership development courses with the department and look to encourage more senior staff to do

the same this year. We have and continue to communicate with parents, tutors and students every step and change along the way and encourage there questions and feedback.

These have been the hard yards, setting up the structures to enable us to 'Link the Technologies' and what is it actually achieving for students? And how is it having an impact on outcomes?

Teachers are actively combining the technologies when they plan deliver and support families. Some examples of this are presented below:

- Students participate in lessons on IDL and are set tasks to follow up to assist the teachers assess their understanding of the lesson. These follow up tasks are often emailed in the teachers within hours of completion of the IDL lesson, providing teachers with valuable information. In turn, the teacher will then respond to the student via email or phone and then show the student's work to the rest of the class on the next IDL lesson. Within a few hours a teacher has delivered a lesson, observed the student work, given feedback to students and made and assessed student understanding of a topic in readiness for future planning. Add a day to this and students have been shown other students work. So within 24 hours teachers and students have achieved what up until a few months ago would take about two months.
- Students watch ttn (today the news – 10 network) on TV and the teachers watch at the same time. Immediately after the lesson, the teachers use the online environment and upload questions relating that week's episode. The questions are a mix of recall, substantiated opinion and higher order interaction. The student's responses to the questions are uploaded onto the online environment using forums, files and memos. Students can view their peer's responses immediately they have been uploaded. This all happens within 2 or 3 hours of viewing the show. In the past, KSA recorded the show on video and it was mailed out with questions, responses were sent back to the teacher. This process took about 1 month.
- Students participate in an online lesson brainstorming and preparing for a set task. After completing the task, students enter the online environment and upload their piece of work. A deadline for uploading has been placed and after the deadline, students view the work of the child in the upload list below their piece of work, edit their work and offer feedback on their writing style. Students then upload the piece of work they editied by a deadline and the peer who's work they looked at can read their comments, make decisions about recommendations and upload their final piece for the teacher to see. They are also encourage to respond via email to their critical peer thanking them for their support. This total process of writing, peer editing and final drafting occurs over a period of 1 week. In the past to even contemplate this style of activity would have taken 3 months – a far too drawn out process to be effective.
- An online environment has been created for Year 6/7 students, 4/5 students and one is in the process for 2/3 students. These environments can facilitate a whole range of sharing and are only restricted by the imagination of the teachers or students suggesting ideas. The sharing of photos of students, pets and home locations leads to developing friendships. Students working on the same paper based unit of work that has a large item art/craft piece as an outcome can photograph the work and upload it to share with their peers working on the same task. Teachers can put information up for parents and Home Tutors to access that relates to the current learning tasks. This saves lots of duplication. Students can participate in class room quizzes through the secure chatroom.
- Students who can now see each others work can now experiment with presentation ideas that students in conventional classrooms take for granted.
- KSA formed a team to enter Tournament of the Minds. This is a collaborative thinking challenge for talented students in upper primary. The use of HF radio to read pieces of work for the whole team, then the online environment for students to share in joint story writing and editing tasks.
- Our ESL teachers use the phones to link 4 locations together to deliver ILLs lessons (Intensive Language Lessons) to indigenous students. These lessons provide clear modelling and practice of Standard Australian spoken English. It enables teachers to reach more than one group of students at a time. These are vital as many indigenous students only hear and speak full sentences on these lessons.
- Our school council has instigated an online environment for council meeting paperwork – minutes agendas, financial reports, principals reports etc. This has lead to better informed councillors and more effective meetings.
- Our Parent/Home Tutor group is now instigating the use of an online environment to share thoughts, questions and ideas for all parents and tutors.

Parent/Home Tutor feedback on these technologies is great. Our school culture is one where Parents/Home Tutors happily feedback the negative and the positive. We hear about the equipment failures and the difficulties in grasping the new technology, and are running inservices for Tutors at Inschool to assist. We hear about presentation styles and support teachers to observe others and develop their own clear pedagogically sound style. Most importantly we hear about the values of the interaction. How parents are thrilled that their students have looked at peers' work online and decided that they need to improve theirs before they could show it. What a difference a change in audience can make!

We hear about the value of clear audio and observe that students are able to answer in full sentences without us having to guess at what they may be saying. We hear about the developing of relationships between teachers and students, because of the technology links and we hear about the immediacy of the technology, the diminishing of the time barrier that has stood with distance.

What the Future Holds?

To date, the supply of IDL access has been restricted to those students supplied with the full computer set up. With the cost of the full set up for each family being about $12 000 we have only provided for families who are stable, with power and appropriate living quarters within the Northern Territory. Our next step is to open up access to all KSA students living within the satellite footprint with a powerful enough computer running XP/2000 or above with broadband internet access. It will be the families responsibility to purchase and install the dish to align with the appropriate satellite. (We are able to supply directions and degrees.) KSA will supply the DVB access card and students in places such as Kupang and New Guinea will be able to join their peers in real time. For some of these families who have been with KSA for 6 or more years this will open access and interaction that none of us ever dreamed of. We also are adding electronic whiteboard technology to our repertoire. Teaching sequences can be done on the whiteboard and screenshots taken of each step along the way. These can be placed in powerpoint or word documents and either burned on CDs and mailed out or uploaded onto the online environment.

We have high ideals and still have a way to go to achieve all of these ideals. Teachers who have worked in isolation with their own cluster group, are now working as part of two teams, many Parents/Home Tutors have to deal with more than one teacher. The goal posts keep changing as the technologies improve and are added to. The key to our success in the future is the ability to be flexible, look at the technologies and how they can genuinely enhance student outcomes, do not assume the first solution is the best, reframe, keep looking and work as a team with a shared vision.

Nurturing Innovation in Rural Education

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Abstract

This paper shares the current 'work in progress', of the Priority Country Area Program's Central Area Management Committee. This committee of educators and community representatives has been working for many years to develop and support a culture of innovation in the rural school communities in the Central Queensland region. The Committee's work highlights significant factors and challenges that need to be considered in establishing an educational environment that promotes innovation. The paper outlines a 'toolbox of strategies', which have evolved to support the development and implementation of 'fresh' innovative ideas. The importance that key individuals play in developing innovation is discussed, along with the need to plan for long-term project sustainability. A number of current projects are outlined as examples of the type of initiatives that have been implemented.

Introduction

The Priority Country Area Program (PCAP) is an inter-systemic education support program, which involves a partnership between the State, Catholic and Independent schooling authorities in Queensland. PCAP administers the majority of funding received by Queensland through the Australian Government funded Country Areas Program (CAP). Central PCAP is one of four PCAP Areas in Queensland and provides support to a region of approximately 11,000 students across 66 rural school communities in eight local government areas west of Rockhampton.

The Central PCAP Area Management Committee has, as a guiding principle, the belief that to foster and support innovative practice is critical if PCAP is to fulfil its obligation to "… enhance the educational outcomes for students in geographically isolated areas …" (DEST, 2003, p.89). In recent years the Central PCAP Committee has facilitated the implementation of a range of innovative projects. While the projects described in this paper are context specific, the processes are generic and therefore could be of use to others. It would be easy to dismiss some of the project possibilities based on PCAP's capacity as a funding source to support the implementation of the ideas. However, there are many avenues for innovative people to obtain funding and many ways to implement good ideas. Funding should be the last consideration in turning good ideas into exciting projects. Drive and commitment with a view to long-term sustainability would appear to be the essential requirements.

Since its establishment, the Central PCAP Area Committee has endeavoured to develop new and innovative projects. In the past this has been done through basic needs analysis processes to determine the areas of need that existed in the region. The committee members then used this information to develop a range of projects, which they believed provided their best response to address the identified needs.

While the committee-generated projects were worthwhile in their own right, they lacked an essential ingredient for success; specifically they lacked a sense of ownership by the school communities that they were intended to benefit. This lack of ownership was a direct result of not involving the people who would benefit from the project in the initiation and development phase. While the committee could see a need, and a specific project might have some sense of priority for committee members, it did not necessarily correlate with the priorities of the school communities. The Committee was operating in a cycle of annual projects that were being developed externally to the school communities they intended to benefit, and while usually welcomed as an added and worthwhile experience, they were only sustainable while they were organised by others. Therefore

the projects tended to last only for a short time and rarely for more than 12 months. The dilemmas and frustration created by this situation are the genesis of the project identification and facilitation processes currently used by Central PCAP.

Innovation

The Australian Government states that the Country Areas Programme should "remain innovative and dynamic, building on existing best practice and developing innovative approaches" (2003, p.89). The Central PCAP Area Committee in their Statement of Purpose indicate that "… the implementation of innovative local solutions to educational issues promotes enhanced learning outcomes for rural and remote students" (2000, p.4). The importance of innovation was reaffirmed by Dr Brendan Nelson, the Federal Minister for Education Science and Training, in a statement referring to the discussion paper titled "Young People, Schools and Innovation," when he commented that:

> The paper emphasises the need to develop an innovative capacity in students and a culture of innovation in Australian schools. These are crucial if Australia is to continue to unlock its potential as a nation which promotes and values the strength of its fresh ideas."
> (2003, p.1)

It is the premise of this paper that if innovation is important to the future of education in Australia, it is in fact even more important in rural and remote Australia, because of the unique challenges that create educational barriers for the students in these areas. Innovation leads to educational change. Innovation is about finding Dr Nelson's 'fresh ideas', creating new opportunities, trialing new approaches, and doing things that haven't been done before.

As the Central PCAP Area Committee's approach to innovative project development progressed, a number of significant factors and challenges have become apparent.

These factors are summarised in the following statements.

- It would appear that the majority of people are comfortable with their current practice and therefore they are reluctant to participate in new endeavours.
- The constraints of current practice and 'the known' severely hinder the ability of people to 'think outside the square'.
- The development and implementation of new ideas is time consuming. People in schools, both parents and educators, are often so busy in their daily lives that they do not have the time needed to get involved.
- New ideas involve risk. There is risk for those who put forward the idea, risk for those who support the idea and risk for those who fund the idea.
- Long-term sustainability of new projects needs to be considered in the initial planning stage. This is especially important if the project is started with 'seeding funds'.

Plowman, Ashkanasy, Gardiner and Letts comment that: "Innovation in rural towns is a result of both situation and of people. Some towns have a particular set of attributes that give them the edge." (2003, p.8). The work of the Central PCAP Area Committee suggests that in an educational context there is a set of attributes which create the right situation for innovation to occur. These attributes include:

- being tolerant;
- being supportive of new ideas;
- encouraging lateral thinking;
- providing communication processes that allow people to openly share and develop ideas without fear of ridicule; and
- creating a positive attitude to risk taking.

Strategies

It became increasingly obvious that if the committee was to succeed in developing sustainable innovative projects, then school communities needed to develop a strong sense of project ownership. For this to occur, the committee needed to implement different project identification and development strategies. There was nothing new or mystical in the strategies that were developed, in fact it was not until some years after this different approach was introduced, that a distinct set of strategies had become obvious. Essentially the committee, without consciously setting out to do so, had created a 'toolbox of strategies' that had the potential to achieve their goal. This 'toolbox of strategies', while created in a PCAP context, is not context specific. The potential exists for any community or organisation to use these strategies as a framework for initiating and developing innovative solutions with strong participant ownership.

Expression of Interest

Initially flyers were sent to key individuals and groups across the region outlining the Area Committee's commitment to fostering innovation and calling for 'Expressions of Interest'. The request also suggested that people who were interested in applying for support should contact PCAP staff and discuss their ideas before any work was done in submission preparation. This initial contact enabled those proposals that were truly innovative or had potential under the committee's criteria to be identified and appropriate advice and support provided. An opportunity also existed at this stage to redirect those ideas that did not fit the criteria to more appropriate sources of funding.

Submission Scanning

This strategy would appear to be specific to a submission based funding body such as PCAP. To access funds from PCAP, schools and organisations need to provide a submission for funding. When the committee met to consider submissions, new and innovative ideas were identified and these proposals were recommended for innovative funding and further development. For example, a technology support project initiated by a group of schools in one area led to the development of an area-wide initiative to train and support computer resource people across the region.

Focus Groups

It was apparent that some of the challenges or characteristics of certain sections of the Central PCAP client group made access to the program's resources and support more difficult. In 2003, focus groups were introduced as a new strategy to facilitate the involvement of P-10 schools (schools with enrolments from Pre-School to Year 10) and small primary schools. The focus groups provided an opportunity for parents, teachers, administrators and interested community members from the target school communities to meet and discuss the challenges they faced. These groups were then in a position to collectively brainstorm possible solutions, prioritise them and begin the initial stages of project development.

Project Explanation Sessions

Project explanation sessions were arranged, especially for some of the more involved and complex project ideas. These sessions provided an opportunity for project developers to outline and expand on their project descriptions, thereby providing committee members and other interested people with the opportunity to ask questions and develop a better understanding of the proposed project.

Ideas Development Workshops

Ideas development workshops have evolved as a means of enhancing and developing project ideas that have already been put forward. In the situation where a project had been partially developed, the Ideas Development Workshops were used as a strategy to include other interested people in the development phase. This provided an opportunity to ensure that the final project took into account a wide range of opinions, and gauged the level of interest from other school communities in any future expansion plans. It also maximised the project's potential to meet regional needs and expectations. Ideas Development Workshops can also be conducted as a 'think tank' for identifying new project possibilities. 'Think tank' workshops provide an opportunity to engage people in an open discussion and establish a forum for reflection and discussion of a wide range of possible project ideas.

Identifying Key Individuals

One of the outcomes of the Central PCAP focus on innovation has been to acknowledge the importance of key individuals. While almost all people at some time have new ideas, many do not take their ideas and turn them into reality. Having new ideas and getting them developed and accepted by others is not a task that is taken on lightly; the level of commitment required can be daunting.

Key individuals are characterized by their willingness to:

- pursue their ideas regardless of funding;
- invest significant time and energy in their ideas;
- debate their ideas with others; and
- challenge complacency in themselves and others.

The number of people who stand out as key individuals in this process is small. There appears to be a number of factors which impact on this situation. Rural schools suffer high levels of staff turnover and many teachers are new to their profession. People who are new to teaching and those who are principals for the first time are often in survival mode, their working lives are too busy with day-to-day routines and they don't have time to reflect on the 'bigger picture' challenges that are impacting on their work. These factors are magnified in very small schools. Rural schools are also a stepping-stone for those moving ahead in their careers. Possibly all of these people have good ideas, but just simply do not have the spare energy or time to commit to their development and implementation. Vigilance and sensitivity are required to identify these significant people and provide an environment that encourages their contribution and supports the development and implementation of their ideas. By creating a supportive environment for these people, it might just be possible to keep them in rural schools for longer periods of time.

Project Sustainability

Many of the identified strategies provide opportunities for communication. This ensures that ideas are discussed and key people have opportunities to explain and ask questions, to clarify and develop. Then, when the time comes to make decisions they are made from a well informed basis, which in turn increases the chance for the project to be well implemented, successful and sustainable. These processes also have the capacity to enlist others who may have an interest or willingness to join the project. Developing a group sense of project ownership and responsibility appears to be one of the most important elements in making a project sustainable. PCAP's past experiences suggest that the storerooms of schools across Australia are littered with dusty resources from projects that ceased because the person who had the passion and drive left the school. As staff turnover in rural and remote schools is significant, any effort that is directed to establishing innovative solutions needs to involve as many people as possible. Project development needs to be 'transfer-proofed', and to do this there are a number of questions that need to be asked from the very start. They include:

- Who is the key person driving this project?
- What will happen to this project if this person leaves?
- What can be done to ensure project sustainability?

Projects

The following section of this paper provides an overview of the *ARC Project*, *myartclass.com*, and *Snagged*. These three projects are examples of what has been achieved by the Central PCAP Area Committee's approach to innovation.

Active Reflective Citizenship (ARC) Project

The ARC Project was originally titled the 'Community Learning and Healing Project', which in some ways is a better title to explain the initial concept behind ARC. The project idea was put forward by Paul Wood (Principal of Emerald State High School), who explained the initial motivation for the project in the following way:

> I have been involved in a variety of forums in which the level of real engagement of youth and their communities has been discussed. The discussion usually revolves around the negative opinions that students are disengaged, disrespectful, not trusting nor trustworthy. I believe that both federal and state governments are saying that education and training will play a critical role in all our futures. I think schools can be a real bed of innovation for this type of curriculum that allows youth to contribute in a real way to the social, economic and political democracies in their communities.
> (Wood, 2002)

The project aimed to make 'Active Citizenship' a part of the curriculum in order to engage young people and build a sense of belonging to and ownership of their community. By students undertaking real community work, the project aimed to break down the community perceptions about young people. In essence the project aimed to heal the gap that exists between the community and its young people.

In his initial proposal Wood states that the ARC project will:

> Engage, enrol and empower members of the community of Emerald to increase both the quantity and intensity of interactivity between Emerald State High School, the various primary schools in the district, the university and TAFE, industry and employer organisations, other government agencies, community organisations including Emerald Shire Council, old people's homes, Rotary, Lions etc…
> Emerald State High School will lead this project by having members of its student body enrol in courses of "Active Citizenship", in which they will be trained, and supported in going out into the community to perform real democratic activities.
> Activities would include:
>
> - tutoring in literacy, ICT, health and physical education etc in the primary schools;
> - working with other government agencies and shire council on community service projects;
> - working with community service organisations on community service projects;
> - working with artists on community development projects; and
> - working with the elderly on aspects of diversional therapy.
>
> (Wood, 2002)

The proposal was put forward in 2002 with a project explanation session at a PCAP hosted conference. This was followed by a Project Development Workshop to further develop the concept and involve other interested school communities. ARC commenced at Emerald High School in 2003 with a part-time project officer whose role was to make the community partnership links. In 2004 the project will continue to develop at Emerald High, with the school providing support to other schools in the area that wish to implement the concept.

My Art Class

The website www.myartclass.com has been developed from the drive and determination of Peter Gerke, the Visual Arts Teacher at Clermont State High School. From an original proposal received by PCAP in December 2002, myartclass.com has been developed and is now online.

> www.myartclass.com caters for Visual Art teachers and students by building networks of support and scaffolding through artistic ideas. The website offers the opportunity of sharing and inspiring by displaying students' artwork and tasks. …

> www.myartclass.com strives to publish and advocate all Visual Art applications and techniques that have been created by primary and secondary students and teachers with diverse multiliterate artistic focuses. This website will promote inspiration for remote and geographically isolated students and teachers and close the gap of physical distance. It will serve as a digital medium / exposé for students that study art in any registered educational institution in our ever changing global community, www.myartclass.com invites and encourages students to display their artworks on this site, irrelevant of their physical location.
> www.myartclass.com allows teachers to list class notes, assignment tasks, class activities, revision info, web links and relevant units of study that can be accessed by their students to enhance their study.
> (Gerke, 2004)

Snagged

"A new Australian play about growing up, leaving home …" (CQU Theatre-in-Education Company, 2003)

"Snagged" is the result of an ongoing partnership between PCAP and the Central Queensland University (CQU). The play resulted from discussions between PCAP and Howard Cassidy (CQU Drama Lecturer), in 2002. These discussions revolved around the issues encountered by young people who are finishing high school in small communities and are faced with the need to leave home to undertake further study or find employment. The play was developed by a PCAP funded 'Playwright-in-Residence' and involved students from Clermont State High School in the research and development phase.

> *Snagged* is a serious comedy about plans and dreams, now and the future … . It's a true to life play developed by Director Howard Cassidy, playwright Robert Kronk and Researcher Vivienne Watts in collaboration with rural high school students and Central Queensland University Bachelor of Performing Arts actors. …
> (Snagged) is focused on the issue of youth attrition from rural communities and aims to explore the reasons why young people leave and why and when they might return.
> (CQU Theatre-in-Education Company, 2003)

Snagged is not simply a theatrical performance. Following the performance, the students are involved in interactive workshops with the characters and actors to explore the issues raised. The university has been conducting research on the play and its impact on the students who have participated.

Conclusion

Innovation and the willingness to take risks are two critical factors which impact on the capacity to generate educational growth and improvement. Governments, educational systems, schools and communities need to be able to identify creative and innovative thinkers, the people with the 'fresh ideas'. They need to support their passion and drive, to take the risks necessary to effect change and growth in educational knowledge and practice.

A large percentage of the day-to-day activity in any field of endeavour is devoted to the routine business of getting the job done within the parameters of the current structure or work environment. Only a small percentage of our endeavours are critical to growth and change. It is this small percentage where our energies, our dilemmas and our challenges take place. As individuals within organisations and communities, we need to consciously direct our efforts beyond the routines, to take the risks and support the creative and innovative people who stand out from the crowd. These people and their ideas will find an outlet, whether it is actively supported or not, and they will find a way to achieve their ideas and dreams. The 'toolbox of strategies', outlined in this paper is simply one organisation's way of smoothing the journey, maximising the outcomes, and allowing the results to be shared more widely.

The challenge for those who are committed to making a change in rural education is to not get bogged down in the small things, to be an enabling force for innovative ideas, to be prepared to take some risks and make things happen.
"No army can withstand the strength of an idea whose time has come." Victor Hugo (1802-85)

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