Perspectives on Pedagogy and the Phases of Schooling

inside this issue:

Early Years and the Prep Years Implementation

Sustainability in Middle Years Reform

Senior Syllabus Development: a response to the proposed blueprint for syllabus development.
Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of Curriculum Matters for 2007. You will notice a new design, part of an identifying ‘look’ for materials such as Curriculum Updates and Curriculum e-News published from the Religious Education and Curriculum Services Directorate and aligned with other Brisbane Catholic Education publications.

The editions of Curriculum Matters this year are grouped broadly around the following topics: Phases of Learning; Standards including Teacher Standards and ICLT standards; Cultural Literacy and Understanding, and the final edition, Learning Management. An underlying thread for each edition will relate to one or all of these elements - pedagogy, assessment and reporting. As always your contributions to the topics are always welcome. Please contact me, or any member of the Editorial Team for information and advice about writing for Curriculum Matters.

This first edition has articles relating to the three phases of schooling – the early years, the middle years and the senior years, and some initiatives and classroom related research within the phases which may add to our common understandings about teaching and learning.

The term pedagogy means many things to many people. It may mean craft knowledge -‘the craft of teaching’, and include broader concepts that acknowledge influences such as beliefs, values and, most importantly, relationships between teachers and students. Pedagogical practice is important because as we know – it’s what makes the difference in how students learn.

‘The most powerful lever for reform is the transforming of teachers’ practice. Teachers have a professional responsibility to continually improve their knowledge and understanding about the craft of teaching and translate that knowledge into practice.’

The links between pedagogy and student achievement in terms of the roles and skills of lifelong learning and learner self determination in a knowledge and technological age is very much part of educational and public dialogue. The media and those representing various political stances, present in a variety of ways topics concerning professional teaching standards and standards in learning (performance payments is just one example). The profession itself is concerned with renewal of pedagogical and organisational strategies as a means to address student diversity and new demands on learning. Teacher pedagogy must adapt to take account of students’ increasing interaction with technology as student learning extends beyond traditional classroom walls and schooling hours.

An increasing amount of evidence shows that teachers ‘make a difference’ and that good teachers make a significant difference. ²

I would like to thank the contributors to this edition and I hope you find the articles of interest and worthy of adding to your professional discussions. I also hope that you will like the new look.

Fran Ralston - Editor
fralston@bne.catholic.edu.au

2 ibid
Early Years’: Engaging Learners; creating Meaning

Dr Pam Hanifin, Australian Catholic University

Featuring an example of a practical application by Sally Smith, St Rita’s School, Victoria Point

Pedagogy may be generally defined as the combination of theoretical knowledge, practical skills and repertoire of strategies that are required for effective teaching. It concerns the multi-dimensional nature of teaching and learning, connecting the ‘what, when, why and how’ of teaching with the ‘what, when, why and how’ of children’s learning. Effective teaching and learning is intrinsically tied to the provision of quality schooling. The question of how to best promote quality learning presents many challenges concerning new possibilities for early childhood pedagogy.

The view of the child as a capable learner, who brings diverse experiences to the classroom has shaped contemporary approaches to pedagogy (QSA, 2006). Socio-cultural theory, constructivism and brain-based research have significantly influenced support for holistic, integrated approaches that nurture and actively engage children in learning and that build foundations for their continuing success. It is, however, important to note that early childhood education is far, far more than a preparation for coping with what lies ahead in the next stage of schooling or the adult world. Childhood is characterised by growth and change; wonder, excitement and discovery. It is a journey to be experienced and enjoyed. There is the need to nurture and tap into the joy and spontaneity of children’s learning as they explore and investigate their world, imagine and create. Therefore, early years’ teachers consciously work in three time zones—making connections with the past, taking and using opportunities in the present, and laying foundations for the future.

Children learn through participating, interpreting and acting on their culturally and socially constructed worlds. Language and multi-sensory materials can mediate such action. Learning that is collaborative, interpretative and generative is embedded in diverse everyday interactions for a range of purposes within the social group of the classroom (Surman et al., 2006). Effective pedagogy supports social collaboration. It creates a positive emotional tone in the relationships between the child and the teacher; through respect for and acknowledgment of children’s efforts and constructed meanings. Young children need a sense of purpose, and structures and support to accept responsibility for their learning. This implies a pedagogy which offers diverse opportunities for children to take risks, revisit, reflect on and interpret their learning experiences.

Brain research highlights that children make meaning though connections and patterns rather than isolated skills or fragments of knowledge. They need to be active, not passive as they interact with their world on a multi-sensory level. Application of Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences can be used to offer opportunities for sharing, negotiating and making meaning.
In particular, dance, movement and music are powerful mediums as they can confront different ways of knowing and therefore different meanings (MacNaughton & Williams, 2004; Rettig, 2005).

Creative and imaginative experiences can provide rich windows of opportunity for children to dream, explore and visualise the thinking and interpretations of the world as they see it in a safe way. Parallel creative acts happen as adults support children’s ‘play,’ as they investigate, explore and experiment. ‘A dynamic model of creativity is one that results from the interaction between an individual, the domain or area they are working and the field that includes other individuals who have experience in the particular domain’ (White, 2006, p. 101).

Engaged children are curious, spontaneous, and creative. The challenge of learning is optimised as children experience knowledge and live the curriculum through engaged activity. This might be busy, play-based, messy, quiet and reflective, solitary or with others.

The learning environment is designed for children to be active and quiet, messy, noisy and reflective, social and alone. It is designed to accommodate much STUFF - loose parts: the raw material of discovery - by active hands and minds (Hirsh, 2004, p. 251).

Optimum holistic learning requires predictability and consistency through established routines, modeling and practice, real life experiences, inquiry and investigation, and play-based learning. These contexts are often interconnected through the day, week, term and year. Teaching in the early years is indeed a complex activity requiring a myriad of strategies. Effective pedagogy uses strategies such as scaffolding, guided participation and co-construction to support and challenge children as lifelong learners. This is emphasised in the following statement by Hedges: ‘The teaching techniques which accompany the constructs of scaffolding, guided participation, and co-construction imply a pro-active role for teachers in creating challenging learning environments and providing the appropriate teaching assistance at the right time to move children forward in their thinking’ (Hedges, 2000, p. 20).

Such is the visioning and theory behind contemporary approaches to pedagogy in the early years. Sally Smith from St Rita’s, Victoria Point continues the discussion with her reflection on her experience of a practical application of negotiated curriculum with Prep. Children.

A child initiated interest in Indians offered me the springboard to integrate the different strands of the Arts syllabus, particularly in exploring the beat and rhythm of music as well as problem solving opportunities. Also, the children were encouraged to work co-operatively and extend their social and oral skills.

The activities built on and from the group’s interest in Indians and Native American Indian Pow Wow music. The children decided that they would have a Pow Wow of their own and use this to dramatise a story that we had read previously. The children designed and prepared head gear, hair decorations, necklaces etc., ‘safe’ bows and arrows and a simulated camp fire. They made decisions, explored ideas, and solved problems as they interacted together. Some dilemmas included finding ways to stop the flopping down of feathers on headbands, the best materials to use, how to create drum ‘skins’ to give the right tone, how to make rhythms and keep the beat with the music, and how they might construct a teepee.

A group of children worked collaboratively to design and make a teepee. Many problem solving strategies were engaged as the children investigated different concepts in balance and design. I needed to be actively involved as a co-learner in this experience, moving between scaffolding through questioning, to co-constructing meaning with the children. The group then became engrossed in drawing plans of the construction once it was completed. This gave them the opportunity to express what they had learnt through recount and to come to a shared understanding. The children referred to the class plan when necessary and were able to work
co-operatively with others in preparing the room and negotiating how the Pow Wow space could be set up so that everyone could be involved. The Pow Wow was a great success. Every child was engaged and remained focused throughout the activity.

At times, teachers face tension resulting from the pedagogical paradox of potentially contradictory aims of schooling. These sometimes highlight discrepancy between economic rationalist decisions in terms of teacher/child ratios, resources, space, narrowly structured curriculum and ‘tests’, to the call for inquiry, discovery, negotiation and the co-construction of learning. The challenge lies in finding the balance, creating opportunities with the children and tapping into their world which can give teaching heart and soul. From this perspective, the following quotation offers direction and motivation.

The creative genius of a teacher is in the ability to find ways to interact with each child within the group according to each child’s needs, to stretch an attention span, to motivate a child to persist at a task or to provide opportunity to experiment with materials actively and autonomously (Briggs and Potter, 1999, p.178).

The strong message is the need for learning to ‘be alive,’ to have heart and soul, and be responsive to children’s interests, needs and capabilities. By letting go of tight control over the ‘what, when, & how’ of children’s learning, through a bit of risk taking and daring to engage in some playful learning ourselves, we may stay lively and engaged as teachers. Teachers do not need to pull back from creative pursuits, laughter and the absurd, but to embrace and use these as opportunities to connect with and to engage young learners.

References


The Prep Year begins in all Catholic Primary Schools.

In 2007, the first day of school was different, as young children come into prep classes for the first time in all Catholic Primary schools across the Archdiocese. Before this, there had been a trial period of 4 years across the state which had involved 5 Archdiocesan schools. This trial was complimented by an extensive period of planning involving many principals and early years teachers in partnership with staff from all directorates within Brisbane Catholic Education.

An Early Years Development Task Force lead by the Director of Religious Education and Curriculum was established to facilitate strategic planning for the introduction of a new non-compulsory year to primary schooling in 2007. All decisions regarding prep were consulted with this group of experienced educators.

The Task Force was involved in providing advice re:

› designing and planning buildings and playgrounds
› considering the installation of ICT programs and facilities
› organising a communications and marketing campaign
› planning the pathway for enrolling students to cater for all different learning needs and abilities,
› implementing the professional learning program
› the employment and organisation of staff.

Teaching and learning in prep is informed by the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines prepared by the Queensland Studies Authority which incorporate extensive Australian and international research. The dimensions of learning for success provide the foundation for the Early Learning Areas in these Guidelines. These are: Social and Personal Learning, Health and Physical Learning, Language Learning and Communication, Early Mathematical Understandings and Active Learning Processes.

The goal of the trial period was to build strong capacity in school to support early years philosophy and pedagogy through strategic and coordinated professional learning opportunities. This included familiarity with the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines and in 2007, trialling of the Early Years Religious Education Guidelines and support materials. An independent evaluation report by Professor Collette Taylor of QUT - 2004 Preparing for School, Trial Evaluation - Summary Report, outlined the success of the trial prep program in terms of student learning and engagement. Thus, with thorough preparation, the support of school staff and the enthusiasm of parents and children, the prep year has gotten off to a great start.

Looking to the future, Brisbane Catholic Education will continue to assist teachers and school leaders strengthen our early years approach. The extensive professional development program will be expanded and workshops of two days duration are planned for teachers across the early years to continue the focus on play-based, learner-centred pedagogy.

Religious Education Guidelines for the Early Years

“All young Catholics, throughout their school years should be provided with opportunities to participate in religious education suited to their ages and circumstances’ [Religious Education of School-Aged Catholics Policy].

Kerry Rush - Education Officer Religious Education Team, Maureen Truasheim - Education Officer Curriculum (Early Years), and others, have been preparing Guidelines for Religious Education for the Early Years and a suite of support materials. The draft of the Guidelines is currently being trialled and the published version will be available.
soon. The publication of Support Resources for Religious Education will follow during Semester 2, and professional learning centred on these materials will be provided for early years teachers during Term 3.

**What will the Guidelines look like?**

The Guidelines will include a discussion on the purpose of Religious Education generally and then specifically in the context of the early years and the nature of Religious Education in the Archdiocese. The classroom teaching of Religion is also discussed in the context of teaching religious literacy, the learning framework, roles for lifelong learners for early learners, and a curriculum decision making model. Early years teachers will find many similarities between the QSA Early Years Curriculum Guidelines and the Religious Education Guidelines for the Early Years.

Learning Statements and connections to the syllabus content will be outlined along with suggestions for planning, interacting, monitoring and assessment, and for reflecting. Early years teachers will find the guidelines and the associated support material an important and practical resource for this area and in this phase of learning.

**References**


**Transitions and stages of learning in schools: questions, answers and points for further discussion.**

**What is the essence of Prep/early years education?**

- Children learn through the five senses and construct deep understandings through their sensory pathways. By four, children have complex and interlinked knowledge bases about their world. Play based pedagogy encourages children to develop these knowledges and understandings in realistic and relevant ways.

- There are five key components to learning in the new Early Years Curriculum Guidelines. These are:

  a) Contexts for learning – which include activities based on investigations, play and play based learning, learning through real life situations, having routines and transitions, and focused learning and teaching activities. Learning is planned around a balance of these activities.

  b) Understanding children and how they learn

  c) Recognising the importance of partnerships in learning

  d) Using flexible learning environments

  e) The curriculum, which is organised into early learning areas that inform how teachers’ plan, monitor and assess children’s learning in prep. The five early learning areas are:

    o Social and Personal Learning

    o Health and Physical Learning

    o Language Learning and Communication

    o Early Mathematical Understandings

    o Active Learning Processes.
Curriculum Matters
Volume 6   Number 1   2007

What is the significance of ‘transitions’ in the prep year?

Successful transitions are important in all stages of life. In the prep year, they become an important element in the transitioning from home to school when:

- relationships are positive
- children are seen as capable
- diversity is acknowledged and valued
- information is shared
- children feel safe
- expectations are explicit
- programs build on prior knowledge.

You would of course be correct if you say that these points are important at all stages of schooling. Research affirms the critical importance for transition to be successful at this initial stage.

Are there any other implications that prep might have for schooling?

The prep year implementation has potential to affect some changes in schooling:

- Students will be 6 months older when they enter and exit compulsory phases of education
- Most students entering year 1 will have experienced full time schooling in the prep year with a child negotiated curriculum
- Students will engage in the planning, implementing, monitoring and reflecting on their own learning
- Students will be more self-directed, independent learners from day one of their compulsory school experience.

Early years to Middle Years: what are the basic differences and connections?

In terms of middle years of schooling, factors for success such as active inquiry based learning in flexible learning environments, the quality of relationships, being able to negotiate the curriculum for relevancy, and experiencing a learner centred pedagogy, are significant for effective learning. These factors may not be so different from those influencing learning success in the early years, but many students in the middle years are experiencing tremendous physical, emotional and social changes in their lives.

These changes often coincide with other changes including the relationships they have with others, a loss of opportunity to negotiate the curriculum, and a perceived lack of relevancy in the curriculum content and in pedagogy relating to how they learn. Isdale, Zipf and Harreveld refer to the experience of discontinuity between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices as well as pastoral care arrangements and timetabling – all of which combine to have a strong and potentially negative impact on adolescents’ engagement in learning. These changes may either herald or entrench a period of disengagement in learning for students. Much of the research reinforces the importance of having a focus on engaging the learner in the middle years of schooling. You are invited to read of a number of innovative initiatives teachers have established to encourage student engagement, student learning and ways of supporting students as they experience transitions in the middle years (Curriculum Matters Vol 2 and 4, 2005; Vol 5 No. 3, 2006; and the MYS produced Australian Journal of Middle Schooling: refer www.mysa.org.au).

Continuing Transitions

The transition from early years to middle years in school learning environments, from primary school to secondary school and into senior school, all provide challenges for those of us involved in education. Currently the role of year 10 as a year of transition has been explored in education forums. The QSA review of senior syllabuses recognised the challenge of making connections in learning in the syllabuses from the early years through to year 12. Connections are also important, along with provision of support, when students are experiencing multiple pathways as they ‘transition’ to post school and the world of work.

Partnerships which ensure smooth transitions and independent learning, which encourage the use of critical and creative thinking skills to problem solve,
which provide learning experiences in response to individual needs, and environments for working with peers – are important throughout schooling and develop lifelong learning skills which extend to the world beyond school.


3 Australian Journal Of Middle Schooling – refer to all editions.

A Model for Sustainability in Middle Schooling Reform.

This article presents a three phased model for effective and sustainable middle year’s reform and is an extract from a comprehensive article published in the Australian Journal of Middle Schooling Vol. 6, No. 2, November 2006. It was authored by Dr Donna Pendergast (Senior Lecturer and Program Director in Middle Schooling at the University of Queensland) and is printed here with the kind permission of the author and the Middle Years of Schooling Association (MYSA). The title of the complete article is Fast tracking middle schooling reform: a model for sustainability and it describes a project which observed practices, processes, strategies and structures that best promote lifelong learning and the development of life long learners in the middle years of schooling. The model itself was an unexpected outcome of the project and the article suggests its use as a tool for those undertaking reform in the middle years.

While middle schooling does not have one generic meaning, in the Australian context it is generally taken to mean a progressive approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (and sometimes organisational) practices that are responsive to the developmental needs of young learners in their societal context, and typically aged from approximately eleven-twelve to fourteen-fifteen years of age (Chadbourne & Pendergast, 2005). School systems around Australia have, to varying degrees, prioritised middle schooling reform in an attempt to achieve outcomes such as to re-engage learners; enhance higher order thinking outcomes; improve literacy and numeracy standards; and optimise lifelong learning attributes.

The project involved intensive case studies of twenty-five schools. A comprehensive report of the study has been produced which provides details regarding practices, processes, strategies and structures that have been used to: promote lifelong learning and the development of lifelong learners in the middle phase of schooling; develop curriculum and pedagogical initiatives that have proven to be successful in developing the characteristics of lifelong learners; and assist teachers to become managers of learning, and students to become successful learners (see Pendergast et al 2005). As an unexpected outcome of the project, the development of a three-phase model for effective and sustainable middle years reform was created. This paper documents the development of the model within the context of the larger project, and will suggest ways in which it will be useful as a tool for those undertaking reform in the middle years.

Development of the model

The development of the model was an unexpected outcome from this study. However, with data collected and analysis underway, it became apparent there were overlaps in process, in problems and in pathways. This was evident from the range of sources being utilised, developing richness, depth and consistency of the
material presented. Tables were constructed showing links across the key component areas, and ratings collected from schools were used to establish the potency of relationships. The model emerged using this information, combined with school reform principles.

**Key Findings**

It was found that a range of innovations were being undertaken in the schools that have commenced reform in both middle schooling and lifelong learning. Furthermore, there is a pattern in the way in which these innovations typically are implemented, and that progression of the innovations and sustaining of innovations proceeds in identifiable patterns, with some preferred pathways evident. Hence, a relationship between the likely innovation features and when they are attended to could be determined from the data, in the overall attempt to identify the practices and processes, strategies and structures to best promote lifelong learning in the middle years of schooling, and how to efficiently attend to the reforms across each of the aspects over a period of time.

**Three-phase model of change**

The three-phase model provides the general sequence in which reforming schools attend to particular core component changes in their reform initiatives, in an ideal situation.

![Figure 1. Three-phase model of core component changes in reforming schools](image)
As this figure indicates, there are three broad phases of any major school-based reform in the middle years: Initiation phase that typically occupies the first year or two; Development phase that typically consumes the next two to five years; and Consolidation phase that can last over a further five to ten years. The time periods associated with each of the three phases are indicative only, being based on the experience of the reforming schools investigated in this Project. But they do reinforce many other findings in the research literature attesting to the fact that schooling reform takes much more time than planners typically expect or allocate.

The arrows in Figure 1 indicate typical pathways that Project schools used to sustain their reforms and to progress from one phase to another. This pattern also suggests that some core change variables may be more critical in this trajectory, as some factors appear to connect more variables across two phases. For example, the formation of teacher teaming, the development of new models of innovative leadership and a focus on both social and academic outcomes for students appear most critical for progression from Initiation to Development phases. Enhanced pedagogies, especially the provision of greater intellectual challenge in classroom work, appears to be most critical for successful progression from the Development to Consolidation phases.

The full report expands on the main features of this broadly sequential model by which schools typically introduce a reform. Illustrative examples extracted from the full case-study reports for a range of the school sites surveyed are included in the full report. It is timely to note that schools case-studied in this project were chosen on the basis of information supplied by their system representatives, indicating that their orientation was towards encouraging and assisting students to acquire the habit of learning for life, and that innovations and reforms in the middle years of schooling, aimed at achieving that objective, were well underway. Most of these schools - whether primary, secondary or other types; whether State, Catholic or Independent; whether rural or city, wealthy or poor - were in the second (or Development) phase of implementation of their reforms. Some schools were still in the Initiation phase, or progressing from the Initiation to the Development phase. Relatively few schools were clearly progressing into, or fully operating in, the final or Consolidation phase.

Discussion and Summary

The model serves as a useful guide to schools for schools at any stage of middle schooling reform. In addition to the actual sequential model, with enablers for shifting from one phase to the next, it was typical for schools to experience a ‘dip’ in the reform process. The dip was often the result of predictable events, such as the loss of ‘champions’, changes to leadership, teacher team breakdown, failure to establish protocols for determining the efficacy of the reform process, all of which could be predicted from the list of key components in the model.

Importantly, the reform process can be less traumatic and achieved in the most expedient time typically when the following key factors are aligned and sustained:

- Team membership across several years;
- Congenial, philosophically-aligned dynamics among team members;
- Sensitive and sustained leadership;
- Early adoption and shared risk-taking among members who challenge each other to extend themselves;
- A strong emphasis on team problem-posing and problem-solving; and
- Effective use of research in evidence based planning.

This provides for what has been described in the report as optimal or ‘fast track’ conditions implementation.
Possible inhibitors of reform, as noted or suggested in the foregoing discussion and elaborated upon in the report (Pendergast et al. 2005), include:

- weak or inconsistent leadership;
- insufficient dispersal of leadership;
- poorly conceived or poorly expressed vision statement;
- uncooperative or non-supportive staff, inadequately trained staff;
- discontinuity of staff;
- rigid traditionalism among staff majority;
- failure to provide an appropriate support structure;
- failure to redirect and redefine the school culture;
- insufficient funding to provide essential equipment or to finance innovations;
- failure to align CPA;
- resistance from the community;
- dramatic upward or downward trends in student population;
- impatience and loss of enthusiasm resulting from slow progress in the process of renewal.

This model is the first of its kind. It has been developed from real school based reform grounded in the school reform, middle schooling and lifelong learning literature. While the model is not intended to be a formula for middle school reform, it has the potential to serve as a valuable guide and comparative base for schools undertaking reform and seeking direction, particularly with regard to key components, potential inhibitors and enablers, and the time lines involved. Importantly, while there is single, ‘right’ way to undertake reform in the middle years, typically there is progression through three phases that involve the systematic linking of many components of a school’s operation.

Dr Donna Pendergast
Senior Lecturer and Program Director
Middle Schooling
University of Queensland

References


Pedagogic Choice at Riverside Middle School, A Case Study

Val Faulkner
Lecturer in Education, CSESS, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia

The following extract is taken from Val’s article in the Australian Journal of Middle Schooling Vol.5, No. 2, October 2005. Her article is the outcome of an ethnographic study of the middle school at Riverside and this extract concentrates on the notion of ‘authentic’ pedagogic choice and the phases teachers pass through in order to achieve pedagogies that are ‘transformative’ and, what she calls more ‘in sync with progressivist D/d discourse of middle school reform’. This extract is printed with the kind permission of the author and MYSA. Please refer to the MYSA journal for the full article pp 12 – 17.

Introduction
The ongoing problematic encountered within the middle school movement is the issue of ‘how to change pedagogy’ and move it in line with the progressivist D/discourses of education. It is important at this point to illustrate how I use Gee’s notion of D/discourse (1990). Discourse (with a capital ‘D’) refers to social practices which amount to ‘ways of being in the world’. Discourse (with a lower-case ‘d’) refers to the language (saying, listening, reading, writing, viewing) components of a Discourse. Gee’s representation of the layers of discourse is communicated through the ‘big D, little d’ spelling of the word. Within the context of this discussion there is an attempt to determine the impact of Riverside’s progressivist approach to schooling (big ‘D’ Discourse of progressivism), and those social practices that focus on authentic pedagogical practice, that is the ways in which teachers engage with young adolescents within the classrooms (little ‘d’ discourse).

Riverside adopted the middle schooling reform initiative through their desire for young adolescents to be engaged with their learning – following a strong sense that engagement was the exception rather than the rule.

Concern for pedagogical choice, which represents those choices teachers make about language, action and semiotics when construing episodes of teaching, is key to the middle school reform movement.

Riverside found it necessary to develop a way of valuing shared ‘technical’ language focused on a process of realignment between pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It was for this purpose that the D/discourse of ‘teacher as researcher’ became an embedded aspect of their collegial practices.

The unique additional adaptation of the learning circle as an extension of the teaching teams at Riverside drew on the work of the Australian National Schools Network (2001). The focus of the collaborative discussion groups was on issues to do with teaching and learning. Within this shared social practice, involving the formalising of conversations and shared language and ideas, teachers were able to challenge, accept or modify those influences impacting on their professional knowledge. They were able to refine, filter and ‘thrash out’ the D/discourses surrounding pedagogic choice. This process of filtration occurred within and between the year level teaching teams, the Learning Circles and the homerooms. When teachers engaged in this act of filtering they chose which aspects of change they wished to embrace and those that they wished to disregard. The transformations that occurred, as a result of this filtering process, informed pedagogic decision making.
Authentic pedagogy or just ‘tricks of the trade’

Previous research has found that there are no tangible improvements in educational outcomes without the corresponding changes to classroom practices or pedagogy. One truism related to the issue of middle school reform is that unless school restructuring is guided by and focused on visions of student achievement and of instruction that is needed to produce that achievement, there is little point in restructuring at all. To assist in the articulation of such a vision it is important to gain an understanding of what ‘improved pedagogy’ may actually be. In developing this idea, it was necessary to draw on those criteria that encompass authentic pedagogy. Riverside policy documents made reference to the need to adopt a more ‘authentic pedagogy’ (Newmann et al., 1995) as a way of improving what happened in classrooms. Riverside Learning Circles argued at length over what authentic pedagogy ‘looked like’. Authentic pedagogy, according to Newmann et al. (1995) should strive for ‘quality’ and ‘variability’, should be linked to ‘student achievement’ and be ‘equitable’. Newmann and Associates suggest that there are four dimensions to achieving authentic pedagogy – higher-order thinking skills [explore main ideas of a topic or discipline thoroughly, explore connections and relationships across disciplines], depth of knowledge [extended conversational exchanges, building improved and shared understandings of the topics], connectedness to the world beyond the classroom [synthesize, generalise, explain, hypothesise, produce new meanings and understandings] and sustained and substantive conversation supportive of student achievement [connect substantive knowledge to public or personal issues]. A commitment to the notion of authentic pedagogy was outlined drawing on the work of Newmann et al. through the following statement found in the Hub Curriculum Document:

Learning needs to challenge student thinking, it requires students to not only gather information but also to analyse that data and synthesise it for meaningful application. Students need time to think, problem solve, and make decisions. When a large chunk of time is allocated, the students have ample time to work diligently at a task, get stuck, work through the struggle, and get unstuck. They have time to think creatively and critically. Infusing high order thinking into the lessons ensures the rigour and vigour necessary for students to make sense of the world and construct meaning in their own mind. (Riverside School, 1999:16)

Phases of pedagogic transformation

There can be no significant impact on pedagogic choice unless there is at the centre a change in attitude and focus by teachers. In the context of Riverside this involved a recontextualisation of pedagogic choices linked to the school’s ideology underpinning their chosen model of middle school. After ‘watching’ and ‘listening’ to a range of teacher participants there appeared to be a five-phase change process – maintenance, awareness, exploration, transition and transformation.

The initial phase involved teachers maintaining subject boundaries resulting from their knowledge of, and beliefs about, their discipline area. Another factor was a teacher’s understanding of the subject matter structure – how they taught the subject, or more specifically the content-specific orientations linked to the teaching of the discipline.

The second phase focused on a developing awareness of what middle schooling could ‘look like’ within the context of decision making about what happens in homerooms. It is within this phase that teachers recognised that there were problems in their chosen pedagogies, but linked student disengagement to broad social, economic or technological changes rather than curriculum, pedagogic or assessment choices. A second consideration within this phase was an awareness of the limiting nature of focusing only on a ‘school-based’ approach to literacy.

The third phase appeared to be where teachers explored new ideas and reform initiatives as a result of those dialogic partnerships formed amongst teaching teams and learning circles. It was during
this phase that debates took place focused on what authentic or productive pedagogies ‘looked like’.

The fourth phase tended to represent a period of transition. In this phase teachers were aligning with a school consensus focused on the need to engage in pedagogic change. There was a reframing of school goals focused on improved learning for young adolescents. This phase of transition was described as ‘occasions where teachers filtered through the range of ways of engaging students’.

In the team situation and through the learning circles that’s where your nitty-gritty decision making is made about the directions you are going to take and how you are going to achieve what you are hoping to achieve and linking it to all those things filtering down the conduit. [Chris]

Chris, however, was demonstrating a commitment to the continual refinement and reconceptualisation of the expanded vision of pedagogic decision making through her emphasis on adolescent literacies that moved beyond those literacy skills linked to a call for ‘back to basics’ and ‘literacy for workplace competence’. Her model of literacy was rich, meaning-based and multimodal with pedagogies that were authoritative, but connected with students’ own ways of thinking, reading and writing. The final phase, transformation, saw teachers in continual refinement and reconceptualisation of the expanded vision of pedagogic decision making based on a realignment between pedagogy, curriculum and assessment linked to the chosen model of middle schooling.

Figure 1, which is a representation of a continuum, focused on pedagogic change moving towards pedagogies that are more authentic, and therefore more in tune with Riverside’s approach to the middle years of schooling. I have paid particular attention to the area of English teaching within the secondary program.

**Figure 1 Overview of phases of pedagogic transformation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Transformation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this phase teachers assume maintenance of the old system. The key learning areas retain their boundaries. Teachers remain specialists within subject areas and maintain content-specific orientations to the teaching of English.</td>
<td>In this phase teachers recognise that focusing on ‘public’ school-based literacies is important, but, perhaps, limiting. Pedagogical ‘choices’ focused on the teaching of literacy are linked to a reduced version of what it means to be literate – reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, grammar. Unsure of the pedagogical implications of a more expanded vision of literacy.</td>
<td>In this phase teachers promote new ideas focused on changing pedagogies inclusive to both the ‘public’ and ‘private’ literacies of young adolescents. This is where debate focuses on appropriate and productive pedagogies. Awareness of the need to develop substantive and sustained conversations across a range of literacies – aural, oral text-based, hypertext, multimodal – but unsure of the implications. Beginning to experiment with an expanded repertoire of practices that is linked to an expanded vision of adolescent literacies.</td>
<td>In this phase teachers are developing a school consensus focused on pedagogic change. There is a reframing of school goals linked to improved learning for adolescents. There is a commitment to the notion adolescent literacies being inclusive of the ‘public’ and ‘private’ literacies of young adolescents. There is a commitment to adjust pedagogies to make them more ‘authentic’ or ‘productive’. Beginnings of those substantive and sustained conversations across a range of literacies. Pedagogic ‘choice’ focuses on social support. Pedagogy reflects teachers’ intellectual confidence when considering an expanded vision of adolescent literacies. Pedagogic ‘choice’ encourages higher-order thinking. Pedagogic ‘choice’ encourages the construction of knowledge rather than knowledge as ‘truth’.</td>
<td>In this phase teachers are involved in continual refinement and reconceptualisation of more authentic literacy pedagogy supporting an expanded vision of adolescent literacies inclusive of the ‘public’ and ‘private’ literacies of young adolescents. There is a commitment to ‘authentic’ pedagogies and an ability to articulate a notion of ‘authentic’ pedagogies. Sustained and substantive conversations focused on a range of literacies expanding and engaging in a communicative process. Depth of knowledge about those academic/curriculum literacies that move beyond ‘basic skills’. Connected to the world beyond the classroom incorporating those cultural/critical literacies as well as multimodal texts. Higher-order thinking skills applied to an expanded vision of adolescent literacies. Problematic knowledge linked to a range of literacies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

In developing a continuum linked to pedagogic transformation I am contending that wholesale connectedness to the reform initiative of middle schooling espoused by Riverside occurs over time with appropriate support. In Riverside’s case this support occurred at the micro-level of ‘teaching teams’, ‘Learning Circles’ and ‘classroom teacher’ and was inclusive of professional conversations focused on pedagogic choices. The question that was being debated within these forums was – What does authentic literacy pedagogy look like in the middle school and are authentic literacy practices constructed for adolescents within such a setting?

The pedagogic realities within the Middle School homerooms at Riverside continue to reflect the on-going tensions between management of behaviour; the control over the knowledge being taught and the counter hegemony focused on ‘social support’ and concern for the individual. This research suggests that teachers need to be supported along the continuum of pedagogic transformation in order to orientate their pedagogic choices towards those that are considered more authentic. The continuum focuses on the pace of literacy pedagogical transformation that occurs during the development, implementation and maintenance of a middle school reform initiative. This study also suggests that pedagogical transformation occurs over a period of time with teachers traversing a number of phases in a variety of ways, and that without the appropriate levels of support that movement will be considerably restricted, rendering the middle schooling initiative less effective.

References


Senior Secondary – Blueprints, Potentials, Problems and Possibilities: The BCE Response to the QSA Proposed Blueprint for Future Development of Senior Syllabuses.

What is the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) proposed blueprint for the future development of senior syllabuses?
The blueprint describes principles and proposals for the development of future syllabuses for the senior phase of learning. It followed a review into the QSA senior syllabuses. The outcome from the consultation process regarding the blueprint will be a recommendation regarding the form future syllabuses will take. The new QSA syllabuses for Years 11 and 12 are expected to be implemented in Queensland schools from 2008.

Why was this blueprint proposed?
A review of syllabuses for the senior phase of learning was initiated by QSA in June 2005 and found through their consultation and research that some of the current arrangements were not effective for equipping students to meet future challenges. A “clear and explicit framework is being sought for the development and evolution of syllabuses that set broad goals for, and allow sufficient flexibility in, implementation to cater for the various demands now made both by and on students” [Review of the syllabuses for the senior phase of learning – a snapshot of the proposed blueprint for the future development of syllabuses, July 2006.]

A number of significant reforms in education in the last few years have re-emphasized the importance of twelve years of schooling or its equivalent for all young people. These reforms have included the raising of the school leaving age; a new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), the impact of which will require an agreed amount of learning to set standards; a national initiative to achieve greater consistency in schooling and standards across Australia, and media concerns regarding content and standards in senior secondary curriculum. Further to this, QSA considered it was timely to consider what is needed to engage all students and encourage them to achieve to their potential.

Consultation on the blueprint was completed in December 2006. Through the consultation process, QSA asked for consideration to be given to their identified principles for the development of future syllabuses. These principles are: Coherence, Rigour, Flexibility and Connections; and to the four proposals associated with the principles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Proposals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Curriculum Frameworks in which existing QSA syllabuses are clustered into Fields of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigour</td>
<td>Future syllabus design that includes a clear rationale for the learning statements about what must be taught and assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Future syllabus design that opens up possibilities for different study patterns while still offering an integrated and focused program with clear directions in the learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>Future syllabus design that includes explicit advice and guidance connecting the learning in the senior phase with past learning in Prep to Year 10 and future learning in further education, training, work and adult life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What were the main points in the BCE response?

**Syllabuses need to cater for the diverse needs of all students.**

There was a consensus that syllabuses be developed to cater for the needs of all students in the senior secondary phase of learning. Currently syllabuses for QSA authority subjects in the senior years are based on a framework & syllabus design that stretches back 30 years or more. While there have been individual subject reviews every 5 years or so, the syllabuses remain largely unaltered over that period of time. Post-school pathways available to students during this time have increased considerably and many syllabuses remain suited to the needs of only the 30% or so of Year 12 students entering tertiary [university] study on completion of school. It was also thought that a shift in pedagogy is needed during the senior phase of learning in order to respond adequately to the diversity of students’ learning needs and post-school pathways.

**The BCE response recommended:**

That future syllabuses include a statement of generic beliefs about the learning process during the senior phase of learning, giving consideration as to the diversity of learners, their learning needs and appropriate pedagogy.

**The principles – coherence, rigour, flexibility & connections**

While the principles in and of themselves seem acceptable, those consulted indicated that the concept of ‘flexibility’ permeates each principle rather than remain a separate principle in itself.

Students often need to perceive and/or understand the relevance of their studies during this phase of learning in order to maintain motivation and perseverance. The BCE response noted that despite the acknowledgment that syllabuses need to cater for the range of needs that students in the senior phase now bring to the learning environment, the blueprint as proposed has been developed through a predominantly ‘academic lens’, with the potential of other design lenses [e.g. life-long learning skills] given little consideration. Students need to be able to see that theoretical learning is relevant and applicable to their needs.

Concern was expressed regarding the possibility of simply adding more choice for students at this level as a response to meeting diverse needs. It is believed this may be counter-productive, especially if appropriate...
guidance and counsel is not also available to students to assist them make appropriate choices. Currently many students experience a great deal of choice. The large number of subject & course changes initiated by students, especially during Year 11, may suggest that some students cannot manage the level of choice they currently enjoy. In developing a syllabus framework that incorporates more choice, the number of students who change subjects/courses can only increase, unless commensurate levels of guidance and counsel are provided.

A syllabus framework which results in increasing the subjects/courses available to students is likely to have significant impact on smaller schools which may not have the resources (human & capital) to facilitate such an increase within their own curriculum. The BCE response proposed that justice and equity are important considerations in any syllabus design framework that wishes to offer comparable access for all students.

The BCE response recommended:
- That the principle of ‘Flexibility’ be replaced with either the principle of ‘Justice’ or ‘Equity’
- That consideration be given to introducing ‘Relevance’ as a principle underpinning the development of future syllabuses
- That future syllabuses articulate the relationship(s) between conceptual learning and applied learning.

Some comments and concerns regarding the proposals associated with the principles.
Clarity regarding the concepts presented in the proposals associated with the principles is required.

Principle 1  Proposal 1
Coherence  Curriculum Frameworks in which existing QSA syllabuses are clustered into fields of learning.

Fields of learning
The BCE response seeks a clearer explanation of how a ‘field of learning’ is defined, how it will affect student choice of an appropriate ‘pathway’ in learning and how it contributes to ‘coherence’ as such. There were a number of questions raised including the relationship between fields of learning and the attainment of a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).

Whilst ‘freeing up’ student pathways is positive, it is unclear how this will actually occur: Are ‘fields of learning’ intended to reduce the number of subject choices available during this phase of learning and will ‘recasting’ 80+ subjects into fields actually change current practice re what is offered in schools?

Emerging Questions
Two questions arose - Is specialising in fields really providing flexibility, and is ‘locking into’ fields really a 21st century approach?

Principle 2  Proposal 2
Rigour  Future syllabuses design that includes a clear rationale for the learning statements about what must be taught and assessed.

There was certainly openness to the concept of future syllabus documents being more specific in terms of what is essential/mandatory. However, there remains a need for a degree of flexibility and choice to allow for local contexts.

The phrase - learning for the 21st century was introduced in this proposal and as its meaning is unclear; the BCE response indicated that further information is necessary.

The BCE response recommended:
- That future syllabus documents articulate explicitly what is meant by the phrase ‘learning for the 21st century’
- That future syllabus documents are produced in such a way that allows for updates and timely insertions of new learning directions in response to learning needs in the 21st century.
Principle 3  Proposal 3
Flexibility  Future syllabus design that opens up possibilities for different study patterns while still offering an integrated and focused program with clear directions in the learning.

An acknowledgement was made re the resource implications (human, capital & economic) for schools if the principle of flexibility is fully accepted. This may affect the range of courses/subjects schools are able to offer and students may find that changing courses along the way is not really possible.

In this proposal the concept of ‘broad and general’ learning for 70% of students is a very sound one along with the opportunity to broaden choices in theory (e.g. short courses/subjects). There are implications for school structure and organisation, along with an inevitable implication for up-skilling teachers in the senior phase of learning.

The BCE response noted that currently not all QSA syllabuses for the senior phase of learning connect well to the suite of QSA Years 1-10 KLA syllabuses. It was believed there would be significant benefit for students, teachers, parents and all stakeholders if genuine connections were made.

Students need a clearer understanding of where subjects & courses undertaken in the middle years phase of learning can ‘take them’, and how lower secondary subjects & courses ‘feed into’ the senior phase of learning. After many years of subject reviews, the clarity of where courses of study ‘take’ a student can become clouded.

The BCE response recommended:
- That future syllabus documents make explicit the connections within and between syllabuses across all phases of learning viz. early years, middle years and senior years
- That each future syllabus document contain a diagrammatic ‘map’ or representation indicating where/how the learning it promotes links with future learning in further education, training work & adult life.

Principle 4  Proposal 4
Connections  Future syllabus design that includes explicit advice and guidance connecting the learning in the senior phase with past learning in Prep to Year 10 and future learning in further education, training, work and adult life.

The BCE response noted that currently not all QSA syllabuses for the senior phase of learning connect well to the suite of QSA Years 1-10 KLA syllabuses. It was believed there would be significant benefit for students, teachers, parents and all stakeholders if genuine connections were made.

Students need a clearer understanding of where subjects & courses undertaken in the middle years phase of learning can ‘take them’, and how lower secondary subjects & courses ‘feed into’ the senior phase of learning. After many years of subject reviews, the clarity of where courses of study ‘take’ a student can become clouded.

The BCE response recommended:
- That future syllabus documents make explicit the connections within and between syllabuses across all phases of learning viz. early years, middle years and senior years
- That each future syllabus document contain a diagrammatic ‘map’ or representation indicating where/how the learning it promotes links with future learning in further education, training work & adult life.

Implications for Year 10, Years 1-10 syllabuses and transitions from middle years into the senior years of schooling.
Concerns were expressed that Year 10 may become another ‘holding’ year where students’ time is filled with ‘tasters’ of what lies ahead, and little in-depth learning is undertaken. Concerns were also expressed that some schools offer Year 10 students a ‘head start’ to senior phase of learning. Such a practice may disadvantage those students who are not academically or developmentally ready to commence ‘senior studies’ until the end of Year 10 or the beginning of Year 11. Current practice in many secondary schools is to conceptualise Year 10 as the springboard for the senior phase of learning e.g. Prep Maths A. There is need to recognise that this is occurring (and why it is occurring) and to accommodate this practice into future syllabus design.

It is constructive to think of Year 10 as a bridging year and a transition in every sense to further learning. It ought not to be considered a ‘smorgasbord year’ (as Year 8 sometimes is), but as one of consolidation.

The BCE response recommended:
That QSA publish specific advice and guidance as to the purpose of Year 10.
Implementation Issues
Grave concern was expressed concerning the capacity of QSA to provide the necessary professional learning & development for teachers regarding the framework & implementation of any new/revised syllabuses.

The BCE response recommended:
That QSA be sufficiently funded in order to provide adequate and accessible professional learning & development for teachers in any new syllabus design.

In relation to the proposals, it was recommended that future syllabus documents explicitly articulate the assumptions that underpin them.

Links with achievement of a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)
Concerns were expressed regarding the achievement of a QCE by as many students as possible when they complete senior schooling. It remains unclear as to how future syllabuses will support this outcome. Concerns were also expressed that some syllabuses are perceived to have more significant ‘status’ and/or ‘value’ than others.

The BCE response recommended:
That successful achievement in all future senior syllabuses contributes to the QCE.

That any framework for future syllabus development promotes consistency of ‘status’ and/or ‘value’ between individual syllabuses and subjects.

What now?
We are informed that a report will be made available from QSA with a framework proposal and that further consultation on this proposal will occur.

1 QSA website http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/syllabus_review/index.html
2 Review of the syllabuses for the senior phase of learning, July 2006
The Key Areas of focus for Religious Education and Curriculum Services in 2007

The Religious Education and Curriculum Professional Development Information Book 2007, outlines the Brisbane Catholic Education priorities and describes the support offered to school communities in their professional development associated with these priorities from staff of RE and Curriculum Services.

The archdiocesan theme of the year (Jesus, as part of the themes of Jesus, Communion and Mission that arose from the Synod in 2004) is referred to as the theological orientation to the work of providing support to school staff in areas of learning and teaching, evangelisation and spiritual formation of our communities.

The broader curriculum orientation to the provision of professional learning support is more heavily influenced by Government agendas and policies. This is monitored by activity and our participation in initiatives such as QCAR. With this we are working with QCEC and with governing bodies of Catholic Education across the state.

As part of the full range of their work, the RE team will be undertaking developmental work on a background document on the religious life of a school, incorporating areas including:

- prayer and liturgy, social service and Christian outreach programs
- prayer and reflection space, religious art and symbols, and
- spiritual and faith formation of students.

The trial and finalisation of the Religious Education support materials for Prep will continue in 2007 and the implementation of the Prep year as part of early years will have a focus on pedagogy.

There will be a continuing and further development of the processes associated with consistency of teacher judgment with a strong focus on ongoing internal CTJ practices.

In the secondary area, pedagogy is again a focus along with the area of multiple pathways for senior secondary years. Also in the secondary years, schools will be supported in implementing It’s Your Choice sexuality resource in the context of Personal and Social Developmental Education Guidelines. In the same context, the Bluearth HPE program will also be trialled in a number of primary schools.

A Student Learning Data unit will be developed which will influence schools and centre based people to be more educationally informed by data.

It is anticipated that in 2007 some work will commence on updating the Learning Framework, on looking at Learning Management and in consolidating our work on Curriculum Management.

The Religious Education Visitation Program with Religious Institute schools will continue as will the trial and refining of the CREDO process in order that it is aligned with any changes in the School Renewal Processes.

In partnership with school staff, our focus is upon improving the learning outcomes of students. The provision of quality professional learning opportunities is designed to support staff to towards that end.

Programmed professional development is supplemented by the work of Education Officers-Religious Education and Curriculum with school leadership and staff within the school context. The Religious Education and Curriculum Professional Development Information Book 2007 provides much more detail and an overview of professional development on a term by term basis plus details on members of both teams.

Damien Brennan
Director Religious Education & Curriculum Services
Brisbane Catholic Education
The QSITE annual conference will be held on July 4 to 6 at the Anglican Church Grammar School, East Brisbane. Tom March (of Webquest fame) is one of the featured keynotes.

The conference will be of interest to Primary and Secondary Teachers, Administrators, ICT Coordinators, Network Managers, Teacher-Librarians, and teacher support personnel. The conference will bring together educators from many sectors for sharing of ideas, teaching practices, designs for learning with ICT and for building networks.

Participants will:

* Hear stories from classrooms and have the time to network with colleagues
* Discover solutions to curriculum and networking issues in education
* Be exposed to the latest thinking and ideas around ICT in education.
* Participate in hands on sessions toward becoming more confident with software and classroom applications of ICT.

Conference Strands include the following:

* Girls and ICT / Engaging Boys using ICT
* Learning Technologies/e-Learning
* ICT in the Middle Phase
* ICT in the Early Phase
* IT in Industry
* School Networks
* Information Processing and Technology
* Information Technology Systems and Computer Studies

Find out more information or register today at www.qsite.edu.au/conf2007

QSTE Conference ‘Create IT, Communicate IT - Learning with ICTs’.

ASISTM/Smart State Sponsored Australian Space Station Design Competition (Secondary students)

This competition is an exiting industry simulation experience where students are asked to design a significant infrastructure development in space. The design challenges consider structural engineering, human factors, communications, food production, energy requirements and transportation. The project calls on problem solving skills, collaborative learning across a broad range of curriculum areas – especially Mathematics, Science and Technology. What is involved?

Teams of students getting involved in the Australian Space Design Competition need to spend approximately 30 hours per student over a two to three month period and outside of school hours to finish the qualifying activity which is a written proposal needed to make the finals. This will entail large and small group work as well as individual effort. Teachers and other support staff are required to coordinate the effort of the students and support them as they work through challenging technical, management and decision making issues. The project generally requires regular after-school meetings as well as the allocation of some all day efforts over the weekends or during school holidays.

Teams that make the Regional Finals attend a three day competition in late January 2008 (just prior to school starting). Winners earn a place in the International Space Settlement Design Competition held in Houston, Texas.

For more information: http://www.ausspacedesign.org.au/
An Inclusive ‘Orientation to Primary School’ Kit

Alley Wakefield
St Brendan’s Moorooka

St Brendan’s Catholic Primary School in Moorooka has approximately 150 students with close to 40% coming from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The school aims to create and nourish an inclusive, positive multicultural school community.

The Kit includes a ‘Welcome to Primary School’ section with a multilingual Orientation Guide CD and Orientation Day templates. It can be used with parents as a power point presentation and/or printed as a handbook for distribution. Templates are in English, Arabic, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Kirundi and each school can add their own visuals in order to adapt it for their school context. There is also a multilingual DVD in 7 languages (in the 6 languages mentioned previously with the addition of Dinka). This DVD introduces parents to those activities that typify daily school life and routines in order to help them prepare their children for entering school. Included on the DVD are topics such as:

- the first day
- nutrition
- homework, and
- communicating with the school.

This DVD can be a resource for parents at school or borrowed for families to watch together at home.

The material provides an understanding of the Australian system of education, and has information on a range of other subjects including:

- the use of interpreters
- suggestions for inclusive enrolment procedures, and
- a community referral guide for services that can support children and families from CALD backgrounds.

Promoting these services to new refugee and migrant families will help them understand and take advantage of opportunities in their new country. It will also establish links between community agencies and new resident groups for immediate and long-term benefits.

Karen Jeffery, the ESL teacher and the principal Paul Drewnial worked over a period of six months to develop this Inclusive Orientation Kit. It will be distributed to primary schools throughout the Brisbane Catholic Archdiocese to help school staff assist families from migrant and refugee families in Brisbane and surrounding areas.

Funding for the project was provided by Brisbane Catholic Education and the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, an initiative of the Australian Government, with additional donations from the Queensland Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT).