

Being Numerate

Quality Mathematics in the Middle Years Conference

The Quality Mathematics in the Middle Years national conference was held in Fremantle in April and was sponsored by DEST and the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT). The conference provided opportunities for teachers to present aspects of their work to systems level representatives and academics from each state and territory. Four Tasmanian educators presented at the conference. Ruth Court (Channel Assessment Support Leader) shared work being undertaken as part of the Scaffolding Numeracy in the Middle Years research project. Jan Fletcher, from Bowen Road Primary School, focused her presentation on classroom practices resulting from her involvement in the Being Numerate in the Middle Years project in 2004. David Hamlett and Sandy McShane from New Norfolk High School facilitated a session on the Essential Learnings Framework and its implications for mathematics in the middle years. Full conference proceedings are available from the AAMT (aamt.edu.au).



Picture: Ruth Court, David Hamlett, Jan Fletcher and Sandy McShane in Fremantle.

Being Numerate Professional Learning Program

The Being Numerate Professional Learning Program for 2005 has included teachers from all parts of the state and the high number of enrolments necessitated a second six day program being offered. The key focus for 2005 is assessing. Teachers have worked with the new support materials for Being Numerate (available at <http://tag.education.tas.gov.au/assessingresources/Beingnumeratesupport.doc>) and experienced a range of practical ideas to use in developing key conceptual understandings in mathematics.



Picture: Margaret Armsby and Marianne Kaczmarek (Lindisfarne North Primary School) engaged in a practical activity during the Being Numerate School Leaders program held in Hobart in May.

Being Numerate in The Middle Years Program

Schools involved in this targeted support program for the middle years are:

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bellerive Primary School | Mowbray Heights Primary School | Rosetta High School |
| Brooks High School | Mt Faulkner Primary School | Sorell School |
| Burnie High School | Parklands High School | Summerdale Primary School |
| Clarence High School | Prospect High School | |

Teachers involved in the six day professional learning program met for the second time in late July. They are examining key aspects of numeracy/mathematics for the middle years with a focus on concepts such as fractions, decimals, percentage, proportional reasoning and mental computation.

This program is a collaborative venture with the University of Tasmania. Dr Kim Beswick and Dr Jane Watson are working with the statewide numeracy support team to facilitate the professional learning and evaluate its effectiveness.

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Prep—Year 4 Literacy Intervention Trial

This Literacy Intervention Strategy is a series of six professional learning sessions and is facilitated by Reading Recovery teacher trainers.

The strategy is aimed at Prep to Year 4 teachers who have students requiring additional assistance in their classrooms. The sessions are designed to help teachers look more closely at how to adapt their classroom practice to better cater for these student's needs. It aims to give participants an introduction to, and understanding of:

- Reading and writing theory
- Assessment tasks; administration, analysis and teaching / learning implications
- Reading and writing strategic activities for individual and group instruction
- Book introductions for individual and group instruction.



Two groups of teachers from small schools were recently involved in the trial. Teachers from the following schools participated Molesworth PS, Westerway PS, Ouse PS, Maydena PS, Glenora DHS, Franklin PS, Glen Huon PS, Forest PS, Stanley PS, Edith Creek PS, Zeehan PS, Natone PS, Strahan PS and Rosebery DHS.

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Picture: Participants focussed on the work of Marie Clay.

Restart

The Restart initiative provides additional funding for nine teachers to work intensively in twelve schools with identified Year 7 students who would benefit from further support in literacy. The model of intervention is a small group approach with a focus on reading.

Reflection from Exeter High School

Restart is based on the Making a Difference (MAD) resource from Victoria. Over the year as the MAD approach became more familiar it became easy to implement. Working within the framework gave structure but each step of the program was able to be used in a flexible and creative way. It was rewarding to see how the use of scaffolding in the program also led to more risk taking and a deeper engagement with their work by the students. It has been common to hear comments on how much harder they are working in the group.

For all the Restart teachers around the state the beginning of term two has been a busy one, as the 2004 intake has finished and a new cohort begins the program. This is naturally a time for reflection. Because the Restart program had been new it had posed challenges in its implementation but at Exeter High School we found that it also led to many successes and not only the anticipated ones.

Frequent lessons in small groups meant that work could be targeted to the students' learning styles. To function well as a group we needed to work on group dynamics to develop trust and positive sharing. I used games regularly as they not only reinforced teaching points but also strengthened relationships within each group. By the end of the program all students had demonstrated varying levels of improvement in comprehension and greater confidence with reading.

I have been challenged and excited by the Restart program and am looking forward to building on my experiences with this new group. The program offers an effective means of supporting students who struggle with literacy, enhancing self esteem and confidence at all levels. The involvement of students has been seen as non-negotiable by all staff and so each student has seen the program valued.

The final seal of approval came to me in the school grounds. When catching up with previous students I was told how they missed Restart and even challenging students are relating in a far more natural and easy way.

At Exeter High School we are looking forward to building on these experiences and seeing this year's cohort develop further.

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Stepping Out at New Town High School

At New Town High School, Stepping Out is a significant part of a whole-school commitment to literacy. It is the major professional development resource that helps teachers to improve students' literacy outcomes. Sixty teachers have participated in the Writing and Reading/Viewing modules over the past three years. Stepping Out has provided a sound basis for staff to further develop their understanding of literacy. Since we started working with Stepping Out, fifteen teachers have also attended other literacy workshops, including the 5-8 Being Literate Program, and ALEA workshops on Visual Texts and Critical Literacy. We are also gaining experience with practical strategies that can make a difference to our students' success with literacy across the disciplines. In Art, for example, Peter Young has emphasised learning specialist vocabulary through word display and Cassandra Lovric has used student-created glossaries. In MDT, Neil Harris has taught the students to write reports using PowerPoint and concept-mapping software to bring together their visual and written literacy skills. In Music, Andrew Sweeney and Alison Cunningham have used the four resources model to enhance their teaching of music as a text and have used reflective writing strategies. In Science, Peter Tucker has worked on the creation of authentic texts of various kinds, including *Choice* – style product reviews and pop-up books.

In a large school with lots of projects on the go, it has been a challenge to find time for two days of dedicated whole-school literacy professional learning each year, but the need to support students' literacy learning has never been greater and the opportunity to be involved in such a powerful professional learning program was too good to miss.

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At New Town High School
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First Steps Second Edition (Reading)

First Steps Second Edition is a professional learning resource which provides a strategic whole-school approach to improving students' literacy outcomes. The resource is developed around four literacy strands: Reading, Viewing, Writing and Speaking and Listening. The second Edition has recently been released with other strands to follow. This Edition builds on the original First Steps resource by drawing upon contemporary research and developments in the field of literacy learning. Links between assessment and teaching are made clear and the resource provides teachers with many practical teaching procedures and activities.

The Tasmanian Education Department has supported a group of teachers to become First Steps Second Edition (Reading) Facilitators.

If your school is interested in accessing this resource, contact your Being Literate, Being Numerate Branch Leader to find out who can facilitate training in your cluster/branch.

Want more information? Contact:
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Do you need extra copies of the Being Literate Being Numerate Newsletter *Communicate*?
Download the latest issue from the literacy website:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/literacy/newsletter.htm>

Being Literate Being Numerate Newsletter



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National Literacy and Numeracy Week 2005

The Awards Ceremony

The National Literacy and Numeracy Week Awards Presentation Ceremony was held at the Hobart Town Hall on Wednesday 31 August. The Excellence and Highly Commended Awards were presented by The Honourable Paul Lennon, Premier of Tasmania and The Honourable Paula Wriedt, Minister for Education.

Congratulations to the following schools who received an award:

- Fairview Primary School.....(\$10,000 Excellence Award)
- Cambridge Primary School.....(\$5,000 Highly Commended Award)
- Stella Maris Primary School.....(\$5,000 Highly Commended Award)
- Hillcrest Primary School.....(\$5,000 Highly Commended Award)

Activity Grants

The Activity Grants were provided to individual schools (\$500) and clusters (\$1000) for school-based projects or activities with a literacy and/or numeracy focus. They are a state initiative designed to support schools to showcase their approaches and are undertaken to coincide with National Literacy and Numeracy Week. The judging committee was most impressed with the standard of literacy and numeracy initiatives outlined. The names of successful schools/clusters, along with the title of their submission and relevant dates have been posted on the literacy website. Funds are made available to individual schools/clusters as soon as the Activity Grant reports are received.

Schools receiving Activity Grants can be accessed at the following website:
<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/literacy/nlnw2005/eventsinitiatives/activitygrants.htm>

Read Aloud Summit

As part of the 2005 National Literacy and Numeracy Week celebrations, the Department of Education, Science and Training hosted Australia's first Read Aloud Summit in Sydney on 30 August and 1 September, 2005. The summit provided an opportunity to focus on the importance of reading aloud to very young children and the positive impact this has on both literacy and broader educational outcomes.

The Tasmanian Department of Education held a random draw to provide an opportunity for two teachers to attend the Read Aloud Summit. Accommodation, meals and teacher relief were included. Thank you to those people who supported this Tasmanian initiative.

The draw took place on August 8. Congratulations to Annette Parker and Margaret Luckman who were the fortunate recipients of this package.
<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/literacy/nlnw2005/eventsinitiatives/readaloud.htm>

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