

MAKING INTERVENTION WORK

IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVING
LITERACY LEARNING IN THE
MIDDLE YEARS



MAKING INTERVENTION WORK

**IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVING
LITERACY LEARNING IN THE
MIDDLE YEARS**

ISBN 0 7594 0366 X

COPYRIGHT

© State of Victoria, Department of Education & Training 2004

The Department of Education & Training welcomes any use of this publication within constraints of the Copyright Act 1968. Provided acknowledgment is made to the source, Victorian government and non-government schools are permitted to copy material freely for the purpose of teaching students in schools, or for communication with parents and others in the community. When a charge is authorised for supplying material, such charge shall be limited to direct costs only. When the material is sold for profit, then written authority must first be obtained.

Address copyright enquiries to the Manager, Copyright Services, Department of Education & Training, GPO Box 4367, Melbourne, Vic, 3001.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Author: Terry Weir

This resource has been developed by the Middle Years Strategy, School Programs Division, Department of Education and Training, Victoria 2003 with input from teachers and principals from schools involved in the *Restart* initiative. The time and energy given by those involved is much appreciated.

PROGRAM CONSULTANTS

Department of Education & Training:

Tony Cook, Acting General Manager, Student Learning Division

Ruth Crilly, Senior Policy Officer, Student Learning Division

Kim Hamilton, Senior Policy Officer, Student Learning Division

Contents

PREFACE	4
PART A: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	
1 Background	6
2 Methodology	6
3 Analysis Of case Studies	6
Organisational models	7
Issues relating to organisational choices	9
4 Strategies and programs for successful intervention	10
5 Support for <i>Restart</i>	12
6 Outcomes reported by schools	13
7 Summary of Findings	13
8 Outcomes of <i>Restart</i>	14
9 Further suggestions	14
Investigation of six schools in which students achieved only 35 per cent or less improvement from the restart program	
10 Recommendations	15
Part B: <i>RESTART</i> SCHOOLS CASE STUDIES	
Case Study 1	18
Case Study 2	19
Case Study 3	20
Case Study 4	22
Case Study 5	23
Case Study 6	24
Case Study 7	26
Case Study 8	27
Case Study 9	28
Case Study 10	30
Case Study 11	31
Case Study 12	32
Case Study 13	33
Case Study 14	35
Case Study 15	36
Case Study 16	38
Appendices	
Appendix 1 <i>Restart</i> Questionnaire	39
Appendix 2 Texts recommended by schools in the survey	42

PREFACE

Strong literacy and numeracy skills are the foundation for the future success of young people in preparing them to meet the challenges of the changing nature of work in our technological society. The *Restart* initiative provides additional funding for extra teachers in particular schools to deliver literacy intervention programs to improve literacy outcomes for identified students in Year 7 who have not achieved appropriate literacy skills.

An investigation of literacy intervention programs and strategies was carried out in the fourteen schools where 100 per cent of the *Restart* students showed significant improvement in the first year of implementation. This document aims to share the achievements and approaches schools implemented to improve literacy outcomes for their students.

With schools focussing on improving learning outcomes for 'at risk' students, educators are implementing many exciting initiatives designed to increase students' engagement with learning and enhance their sense of wellbeing and connectedness to school.

The intended audience of this publication includes teachers, coordinators and principals who are seeking to consolidate their knowledge of successful intervention programs or who may be considering taking action and looking for alternative ways of providing support or wanting to affirm decisions already made.

This document provides evidence of a range of strategies schools have used successfully to achieve excellent results as part of the *Restart* initiative.

PART A: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

1 BACKGROUND

The aim of the *Restart* initiative is to improve the literacy skills of identified low achieving Year 7 students. The three-year initiative that started in 2002, provides additional funding for 100 additional, appropriately qualified teachers to be employed in 101 schools. Participating schools were selected on the basis of a combination of information including Year 7 literacy achievement, SLN index, Koorie enrolments and VCE achievement data.

At the beginning of 2002 the Development Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART) reading test Danny's Egg C was used in each of the participating schools, in conjunction with other assessment procedures, to select the lowest performing students to participate in the program. The next five lowest performing students were identified to become a control group.

At the end of 2002 the DART Myths and Legends B was used to reassess students and the control group. The assessment material was changed following surveys of participating schools mid-way through the year, which indicated that the Danny's Egg test was too difficult for most *Restart* students. Schools recorded each students' results in an Excel workbook and emailed it to the Office of School Education at the end of the school year. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), which developed DART, was consulted on the selection of tests and analysis.

Analysis of the 2002 end of year test identified fifteen schools that achieved 97–100 per cent student improvement. Case studies have been undertaken of fourteen of these schools to provide all schools with information about successful literacy intervention strategies. One of the fifteen schools had only three *Restart* students and was in a remote location and was not included in the case studies. One of the fourteen schools operates across three campuses. As there is some variation in the way the program has been implemented at each site, each campus is treated as a separate case study. The total number of case studies is thus sixteen.

As part of this study, interviews were also conducted with six schools that had only achieved 35 per cent or less improvement. Three of the schools were located in metropolitan areas and three were located in large regional towns in different geographic regions of Victoria. A summary of findings from these schools is included.

2 METHODOLOGY

Schools to be visited were selected by analysing the 2002 *Restart* end-of-year test. A questionnaire (Appendix 1) was prepared as a basis for discussion.

In one case, the questionnaire was completed electronically and a telephone interview was conducted. In the other fifteen cases the questionnaire was provided to schools prior to a face-to-face interview. Interviews were conducted at each school site involving the *Restart* coordinator and in some cases other teachers involved in the program. Interviews were generally of one to one and a half-hour duration. When there was a special room used for the program, it was visited during or after the interview.

Following each visit, information from the questionnaire and additional information that had been provided during the interview was organised in a case study under the following headings:

- background, covering a brief profile of the school size, location and any special characteristics of the school population
- the *Restart* program in the school, covering number of students involved, organisation of *Restart* sessions within the timetable, number and backgrounds of teaching staff involved and links between *Restart* and other teachers and programs in the school
- teaching methods, covering specific programs used, strategies and resources
- monitoring students
- student attitudes to the program
- support for the program including parental involvement, attitudes of other staff and professional development
- main benefits of the program
- most valued strategies
- further suggestions.

3 ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

Each of the schools selected for the case studies achieved excellent results with their *Restart* programs. Various organisational models for literacy intervention and a range of strategies and resources were employed by these schools.

Organisational models

Successful results were achieved within different organisational arrangements, selected because of their applicability to each particular school's culture.

Withdrawal or classroom-based assistance

Withdrawal was the form of organisation preferred by thirteen of the sixteen schools. In every case teachers spoke of the value of withdrawal for removing distractions and promoting students' concentration. One of the schools preferring this form of organisation had trialled classroom-based assistance in 2003 which indicated that learning was not as effective as the learning that could be achieved in small groups. One other school in this group had worked with a combination of withdrawal and classroom-based assistance in 2002 and had found it worked well in a context where there was an ethos of team teaching. However, timetabling requirements had made it necessary for the school to use withdrawal in 2003.

Many of the schools using withdrawal spoke about the enhanced relationships that could develop in a shared, separate environment within the *Restart* group and between students and teachers. Withdrawal worked particularly well when other aspects of school organisation ensured that there were strong and positive links between the *Restart* team and other year level teachers. Elements of school organisation that facilitated effective links included a culture of collegiality within the school and/or the pastoral organisation of Year 7 that had a small number of teachers working with students.

Three schools have organised their *Restart* programs to contain a mix of withdrawal and classroom-based assistance. These schools consider that this is more effective in ensuring the successful reintegration of *Restart* students into mainstream classes and that there are also greater benefits for the teaching culture in their schools. In each of these cases, team teaching was a pre-existing and valued element of school culture.

One of these schools had used the system of withdrawal in 2002 but found that it led to students missing valuable time in various key learning areas (KLAs). Also, in this case, students did not respond well to the system of withdrawal (as ascertained by the attitudes expressed at the beginning of 2003 by students who had been part of the group). In addition, it was believed that the use of team teaching for class-based assistance and

the associated spread of professional expertise would lead to more effective integration of *Restart* students' progress with their full range of studies and an associated improvement in literacy outcomes for all students across the college.

Although the school decided to move to a predominantly classroom-based model, there was recognition of the value of *Restart* students spending some time in a smaller group and having the opportunity in such a context to participate with more confidence than might be possible in the larger group. Consequently all Year 7 SOSE classes were blocked together on the timetable with the *Restart* Coordinator taking the *Restart* students together as a SOSE class. Regular SOSE texts are used but the *Restart* team have worked together to provide additional scaffolding to ensure the work is accessible to all members of the *Restart* group.

At this school, classroom assistance is organised through team teaching. Three teachers are involved in the program. They work with six other Year 7 teachers to ensure there is a team approach to classes in English, Art, Science and SOSE. Within the classroom, students have become accustomed to the presence of two teachers. The *Restart* teacher at times gives assistance to students not in the *Restart* program and the close communication between all members of the team means that the classroom teacher may be the one providing assistance to *Restart* students. At times additional help outside the classroom is provided for individual students. In the class that has the largest number of *Restart* students (eight), a seating plan is followed. The *Restart* students in this class include those with the lowest reading levels. The *Restart* teacher ensures that students are assisted with organisation and management of work in the classroom.

In the second school, each student has three sessions of withdrawal and five sessions of assistance in class over a fortnight. The whole group is together for one of the three withdrawal sessions in a week. There is a strong belief in this school that *Restart* students should not be isolated. They need to identify themselves with their regular class group and all the work they are undertaking is seen as a bridge to getting them back into regular classes.

In the third school combining the two methods of organisation, students receive in total about eleven periods of assistance each week. Students are withdrawn for three periods which run parallel to

their regular English classes. The *Restart* teacher is also present and provides assistance in Health, SOSE and other English classes. In addition, the *Restart* teacher works with students in some Maths and Science classes, to assist students to interpret written instructions.

Selection of *Restart* personnel

In each of the schools the people selected to work in *Restart* had particular qualifications or background experience in literacy intervention. Across the schools there was representation from teachers with primary teaching backgrounds and a number with special education, literacy education or teacher-librarian qualifications. In three of the schools the literacy coordinator was part of the *Restart* team. In some cases, setting up the *Restart* team had required the employment of teachers from outside the school's establishment to ensure that expertise was available.

In a number of the schools, teachers spoke about the value of being able to devote a substantial portion of their teaching time to *Restart*. A number of schools also commented on the high status of the *Restart* program within their school communities. This was due in part to recognition, by other staff members, of the expertise provided by the *Restart* personnel.

Two of the schools which have team teaching arrangements in place have added one member new to teaching to their teams. Within each team, mentoring is being provided to support this team member. The longer term planning in each case is to ensure that there is a spread of teaching expertise.

Selection of students

In common with all other schools in the *Restart* program, DART was used as a primary instrument for selecting students for the program. However, with only one exception, additional information was sought and consultation was undertaken before students were selected for the program. Additional testing included a range of reading, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as transition information from the primary school.

In the most elaborate form of selection, an exhaustive process included consideration of all relevant Year 6 information and analysis of alternative forms of funding that could be available to the particular student. Where appropriate, discussions were conducted with the speech

pathologist, student welfare coordinator and the special needs coordinator. Quantitative data was used including, BURT, Dolch Sight Vocabulary, SA Spelling Test, Gentry's Development Spelling Test and a writing text. Finally classroom observation and observations of attitude/attendance, Year 7 teacher recommendations, informal chats with the students about their own perceptions of need and informal contacts with parents helped to select students.

Size of *Restart* groups

Eleven of the sixteen schools surveyed worked with groups ranging in size from two to five students. Three of these schools expressed the opinion that three was an ideal number for creating positive relationships, ensuring maximum participation and minimising any behavioural difficulties. The other five schools worked with groups that ranged in size from seven to a maximum of ten students. However, in three of these cases, two teachers were always involved with each group. In the case of one school where seven students participated in a program that involved withdrawal and class-based assistance, the seven were only together as a whole group for three periods a fortnight. In the five other sessions providing class-based assistance over a fortnight, the teacher was frequently able to provide one-to-one assistance.

Time for *Restart*

The lowest number of *Restart* periods per week was three in five of the surveyed schools, although in two of these cases provision was made for additional individual assistance as required. In one other school the timetable had been arranged to ensure that *Restart* sessions were always held in either period one or two. In this case the teacher believed that the value of the early morning session compensated for the relatively small number of classes. Four schools provided four periods and five schools provided five periods each week. One school, using team teaching and working with a group of up to ten, provided seven periods each week. Another school using team teaching and organised to provide withdrawal and classroom based assistance was providing assistance for up to eleven periods each week.

Making space available for the *Restart* groups

It is not always possible for schools to have a designated area set aside for small group withdrawal. However, of the schools surveyed, nine had provided a specific room and it was evident in a number of cases that there were significant benefits for students and teachers flowing from the allocation of a fixed, resourced room. In three

schools with this arrangement *Restart* teachers had found that the room had become a focal point for many staff to develop a wider range of strategies to use in their regular classrooms.

Issues relating to organisational choices

To ensure successful implementation of their selected organisational methods, each of the schools had worked through a variety of issues including timetable arrangements, students' attitudes to participation and maintaining links between the *Restart* program and students' other classes.

Timetabling

In each school, careful analysis was made of the timetable implications of withdrawing students. The arrangements finally put in place reflected the priorities most appropriate for each context. For schools using withdrawal and classroom-based assistance, it was necessary to have timetable arrangements that could place teaching team members together in appropriate classes. There were some common emphases such as not withdrawing students from practical classes or other subjects for which they had particular enthusiasm, or in which they enjoyed success. Successful schools also demonstrated a capacity for staff members to work collaboratively to achieve the best organisational outcomes.

A common strategy was to ensure that there was a wide spread of subjects from which students were withdrawn so that one subject was never missed consistently. To support the withdrawal of students from classes, most of the schools surveyed had arrangements with other subject teachers to ensure that work was made available to cover content. Frequently other teachers were prepared to make some concessions in terms of expectations of work for assessment.

One of the schools withdrew students from SOSE and English classes but provided courses that ran parallel to work being undertaken in the mainstream classes so that students were not disadvantaged by losing content appropriate to the year level.

One school made the decision to timetable *Restart* sessions against two of the four electives available to Year 7 students. In 2002 this school conducted two *Restart* groups. One of them was timetabled against two electives; the other group was withdrawn from two periods of English and two periods of one elective. Results at the end of the year showed that the students who had continued

regular English alongside *Restart* had improved learning outcomes at a higher level than the *Restart* students who were withdrawn from two English periods. In 2003 the school decided that *Restart* students must continue mainstream English and consequently all these students now have *Restart* sessions in lieu of two electives.

Two schools experimented with withdrawal of students from LOTE classes. In one case this arrangement was negotiated with the full cooperation of LOTE teachers in the school who achieve great success with the teaching of German through to VCE. LOTE teachers, in this case, found that the smaller LOTE classes made it easier for them to work effectively with students who were likely to continue with their LOTE studies. LOTE teachers in the second school were not happy with the arrangement and in 2003 this school changed to a system of withdrawal across all subjects. In preparing for this change there was a great deal of collaborative work between the *Restart* team and all KLA teachers. The outcome was the incorporation of work from all KLAs into the *Restart* program. In addition, this school has set up a system of mentoring and additional tutorial assistance for *Restart* and other students. Up to eight staff members are providing timetabled assistance in their own subjects. *Restart* students are among the main student beneficiaries of this program.

In one of the schools using withdrawal, the organisation of the Year 7 team teaching structure has been a valuable structural basis for the *Restart* program. In this school, Year 7 core subjects are taught as integrated units. The Year 7 team, including the *Restart* teacher, meets weekly to plan the delivery of these units. The *Restart* teacher is able to pass on information about procedures, successes and observations of *Restart* students and assists by suggesting ways in which core work in the regular classrooms can be made most accessible for *Restart* students.

A further dimension to the issue of timetable arrangements concerns perceptions among students and staff of the role of *Restart* in the curriculum. Many of the schools spoke about the value and importance of having a regular, timetabled presence in ensuring the legitimacy and status of the program within the school community.

Student attitudes to withdrawal

Every school surveyed reported that students enjoyed the small group situation and found it

supportive and confidence-boosting to work with others at a similar level in a situation where there was individualised attention and assistance available. A number of schools had strengthened the positive response of students by:

- negotiating some aspects of the program with students. There was negotiation about certain topics on which students worked, the selection of books for reading, and negotiation about the timing of the classes to ensure that students did not miss classes in which they had particular interest. Three schools had student self-evaluation at the beginning of the year to establish with students the areas on which most work was needed.
- attaching certain privileges to the *Restart* group. Each school was working towards fully reintegrating the *Restart* students back into mainstream classes. As an early part of this process a number of schools spoke of the value of bonding members of the group. In developing positive relationships within the *Restart* group, students were strengthening the social skills that would enhance their ability to reintegrate with the mainstream later.

To strengthen the bonding process one school had taken the *Restart* students away on a Literacy and Self-esteem camp and another had organised end-of-term excursions for the group. Small tokens to mark birthdays and to celebrate individual student successes were other means of strengthening the positive attitudes of students.

The experiences of these schools suggest that withdrawal provides a means of increasing social skills and engagement of a group of students who had often felt marginalised. Even those schools that combined withdrawal with classroom-based assistance recognised the benefits gained from some time spent within smaller groups.

Maintaining links between *Restart* and students' classes

There was common recognition among the schools of the importance of establishing and maintaining strong links between *Restart*, personnel and other staff members. Regular attendance at year level meetings and reporting back on *Restart* students to other year level teachers occurred at every school. In a number of cases, these meetings also provided an opportunity for *Restart* teachers to provide strategies that could be used by other teachers working with these students. The continuing

reminders about these strategies ensured that professional development learnings were put into practice in the classroom. In several cases, *Restart* teachers commented that teachers within their schools were significantly extending their repertoire of teaching practices in recognition of different learning needs and the presence of *Restart* was a major factor in bringing about this change.

Very effective links were evident between *Restart* and other teachers in three schools, which have introduced professional learning teams, and in three other schools which have other forms of team teaching in place. In each case the stimulus from *Restart* has been very valuable in broadening teacher awareness of appropriate ways to respond to varying student learning needs.

There is a natural connection between *Restart* and other literacy programs operating in schools. Nine schools were making use of Access to Excellence funding to provide continuing literacy support in Year 8. Two schools had been able to strengthen the resource base and widen the teaching strategies used by linking with the Koorie program.

4 STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTION

No single program is in universal use across the schools. Schools are adapting elements from a number of sources to meet the learning needs of their cohort of students. However, a number of common teaching and learning strategies emerged across the schools.

- In every case, teachers spoke of the importance of creating an atmosphere of support and encouragement within the small group. In three cases *Restart* teachers spoke of their recognition of the social difficulties that were compounding learning problems for many of the *Restart* students. Their close relationships with students and subsequent liaison with the student welfare coordinator had led to a variety of forms of appropriate support, in addition to literacy intervention, being made available to assist students. The teacher/student relationships that could be developed within the small group situation were particularly important in developing trust and confidence in students who, in many cases had low self-esteem. Collaborative work with one other person or in a small group with others of comparable skills encouraged these students to participate effectively. The creation of

an appropriate environment was often based on personal recognition in the form of incentives for the students.

- Most teachers recognised the value of structure within their *Restart* programs. At the same time a number of teachers emphasised that it was very important to respond to student interest in the selection of topics and activities and to retain flexibility in management of the program to ensure continuing student engagement. There is no necessary contradiction between these recommendations. For example, one teacher, working in a designated room which is well stocked with literacy resources, spoke of regularly adjusting the program in response to students' attitudes or requests. However, within the program students still understood that in every session there would be some reading, writing, vocabulary development and recall. The order of those activities, the form in which they might be undertaken and the content of the reading exercise were all areas in which adjustments could be made without reducing the security of a predictable structure.
- The full range of middle years literacy strategies was in use across these schools. These included pre and post-reading activities such as brainstorming existing knowledge, identifying key words prior to reading, modelling reading (and writing) using graphic organisers and other visual aids, visualising, reciprocal reading, deconstructing sections of text, summarising, retelling and paraphrasing, clarifying and verbalising what had been learned. In several of the schools at the conclusion of every lesson students had to verbalise what they had learned in the session and explain how they would apply the particular strategy or skill in other classes. A number of the teachers also emphasised the importance of their own verbal exchanges with students. They spoke about the importance of keeping their instructions clear and explicit and the value of explaining in the simplest way possible what was to be done by the students and why they were doing that particular task.
- Visual stimulation was recognised as useful for this cohort of students. In four of the schools that had use of a room for *Restart*, visual aids were used to good effect to promote interest in reading. Visual clues and reminders were prominently displayed to provide reinforcement and repetition to assist students.
- All schools recognised the value of providing variety within the *Restart* sessions. Most indicated that fifteen minutes was the optimal time to spend on any one activity. Several schools had developed a range of hands-on, highly interactive activities, such as word games. These played a role in programs by providing concrete examples, engaging students through an element of play and competition and provided an opportunity for some movement around the room during the session.
- Most of the schools identified the importance of providing texts that were stimulating and interesting to students and age-appropriate in terms of content. For boys, in particular, informative writing had been found to interest them and in several of the schools the *Restart* room was well stocked with such texts covering a range of hobby, sporting and popular science topics. In two of the schools where resources were limited, teachers had found a wealth of appropriate material available in texts reflecting popular culture, such as magazines and daily papers. Informative writing had also been found to provide effective models for student writing, once scaffolding support was provided. Two teachers spoke about these students being sick of 'baby books' and being asked to write 'stories'.
- Scaffolding was identified by three schools as a very important strategy to ensure that work was made accessible to students. This took a variety of forms but generally was based on texts or writing tasks being presented in small, manageable sections, and a number of additional steps being provided as students moved through each task. Strategies such as highlighting and discussing key words and concepts and using guided questions ensured that understanding was firmly in place at each point of the task. Concrete examples were used to guide students' understanding and skeletal structure was provided as students, working with others, moved on to writing. With such support, *Restart* students were producing written work of a high standard in a variety of genres.
- The writing element of *Restart* programs was also working particularly well in one school where real audiences, in the form of local primary schools, had been established. Students were taking great pride in creating books for younger readers in those settings and in providing regular information for newsletters. In this case, the use of computers in the *Restart* room was enabling

students to present their finished work in professional-looking formats.

- A small number of schools had found it useful to incorporate some elements of Corrective Reading to improve students' specific skills of decoding, but expanded and moved beyond the limits of this resource by progressively adding middle years literacy strategies and in particular substituting tests drawn from Australian popular culture. One school introduced a range of strategies including oral comprehension in response to spontaneous questions that arose in the course of reading. Strategies of repetition, reinforcement, prediction and retelling were added to provide more of a challenge and extension for students. Modelling was used and students often read in pairs preparing rehearsed and timed readings.

In two schools Corrective Reading was rejected by students. The content was considered to be too boring, and the teachers found it didn't extend students. In addition, its reflection of American culture was seen as culturally inappropriate.

- In developing and implementing various strategies, schools made use of a variety of resources. In many cases teachers had developed their own resources based on texts readily available from popular culture, or within the general school library. Several of the schools requested further information about resources used by other *Restart* schools. A list of the resources mentioned in the case studies is provided in the appendix. In addition, an on-line discussion group has been established to facilitate the exchange of such information. (Although a number of the schools identified early difficulties with accessing on-line support, the website has now been modified to ensure easy access.)

5 SUPPORT FOR *RESTART*

A majority of the schools reported that their programs enjoyed strong support within their schools and in some cases the *Restart* team members were playing a central role in widening teaching practices throughout the whole school. Support was experienced most strongly in those schools in which a culture of team teaching and collegiality existed. In only one case, where a single teacher conducted the program with the assistance of a teacher's aide, there was an expressed need for additional support.

Each of the schools had approaches in place to ensure parental support for the program. They used regular newsletters, information evenings, personal letters, involvement in students' Individual Learning Plans, home-based spelling assistance and supervised reading to ensure parents remained informed about student progress. A number of cases schools had invited more direct parental involvement but this had only occurred in one school for one semester.

Professional development was an important source of support for *Restart* teams. *Restart* providers in every school had attended the *Restart* professional development either in Melbourne or in one of several locations throughout the state. Most of the schools had continued to participate in regionally organised professional development. In several cases particular mention was made of the professional development provided by Dr John Munro who suggested strategies for effective literacy intervention. Network participation was identified by several schools as a particularly valuable form of support with teachers finding great benefit in sharing ideas about strategies and resources.

In many of the schools, targeted professional development had been provided to all staff to enhance practices that improved students' literacy outcomes. One result of such PD was that staff members were according literacy a higher priority and were more able to understand and welcome the role of the *Restart* program within the whole school curriculum. PD for the whole school included Middle Years Literacy and Thinking Oriented Curriculum, (four schools), Literacy Across the Curriculum (four schools), Motivating Boys and Literacy (one school) cooperative learning (one school), Strategies for Scaffolding (one school) and one of the schools in the surveyed group had two Middle Years Literacy Leaders on the staff who had organised a six week course in Literacy Across the Curriculum for other staff members.

A number of the schools had been able to establish very effective links between *Restart* and other initiatives such as Access to Excellence. Typically these schools were extending the benefits of *Restart* in Year 7 to students as they proceeded into Year 8 and beyond. Links between *Restart* and the Koorie Literacy Links Program had enabled the development of a stronger resource base and the identification and use of teaching strategies particularly appropriate to a particular cohort of students.

6 OUTCOMES REPORTED BY SCHOOLS

The schools in this study used DART as a performance measure. In terms of the DART results alone the programs would be regarded as achieving extremely positive outcomes. However, every school in the study reported positive outcomes for students in addition to those that could be measured by the DART.

Such outcomes were evident in demonstrations of increased confidence and willingness to participate, both within the *Restart* group and at the point of reintegration into mainstream classes. For some students the close and trusting relationship that was developed with the *Restart* teacher and liaison with the student welfare coordinator enabled assistance to be provided to remove further social barriers to effective learning. Several teachers spoke about the relative narrowness of the DART as an instrument for determining students' progress in literacy as it ignored the importance of improved self esteem and personal confidence and the effects that these improvements were likely to have on the continuing ability of students to use and improve literacy skills.

Most schools reported anecdotal evidence that Year 8 teachers were recognising the improved skills of former *Restart* students. Every school in the study had some continuing support available if required for Year 8 students with literacy difficulties. There were four schools which had formal tracking of former *Restart* students in place. Each of these schools reported that the majority of the 2002 cohort was no longer requiring additional literacy support. As the initiative is only in its second year there is no basis for determining long-term effects of intervention at Year 7 at this point.

A number of *Restart* teachers identified benefits from the initiative for their own teaching practice and for the teaching culture within their school. They reported a broadening of their own understanding of effective intervention practices and an increased awareness across their schools of the need to develop teaching strategies to ensure inclusiveness.

Every participating school confirmed the value of *Restart*. The opportunities it provided for intensive, personalised responses to students' learning needs were most enthusiastically welcomed. There was also a generalised recognition that learning outcomes for many other students in each school would be greatly enhanced if the program could be extended.

7 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings below are a summary based on responses made by the teachers interviewed.

Organisational arrangements

- Withdrawal from regular classes was the most widely used form of organisation of *Restart* sessions.
- Withdrawal worked well where there had been careful analysis of the timetable; effective collaboration with other staff members; and students had a positive attitude to their own involvement.
- Classroom-based assistance, accompanied by withdrawal for a limited number of periods worked well in schools where a team-teaching culture existed.
- Small group work was recognised as particularly valuable for students' social development as well as for the opportunities it provided for intensive work on aspects of language development.
- Most schools preferred to work with students in groups of from two to five. If groups were any larger, provision was made for team teaching or additional one-to-one assistance outside the group.
- Students benefited most from regular participation in *Restart* sessions. Successful schools generally were providing at least five periods a week.
- The selection of *Restart* staff was an important element in the success of programs. In these successful schools, *Restart* teachers had been able to bring a breadth of background understanding and experience to their work in literacy intervention.
- Students' attitudes to *Restart* were crucial to the success of the program. Successful schools used a range of strategies to ensure that the *Restart* enjoyed high status in the school and that students held positive attitudes to their involvement.
- The provision of an appropriate room for *Restart* sessions was of significant value.

Teaching and learning strategies

- The creation of encouraging and supportive environments was crucial in providing a base from which students could approach learning challenges with confidence.

- Most teachers in the study reported the importance of structure, predictability and regularity within the *Restart* sessions in assisting these students with personal organisation and the development of effective learning strategies.
- Within a strong overall structure, flexibility to respond to student interest was regarded as very important.
- Half the schools incorporated some elements of decoding within their programs.
- Variety within each *Restart* session was a common strategy to retain student engagement.
- Different learning styles were accommodated by strong use of visual aids, oral activities, collaborative work with others and the opportunity for hands-on activities.
- Repetition, verbalisation and reinforcement were important means of consolidating skills.
- In a number of these schools, elements of the Thinking Oriented Curriculum were incorporated to ensure that students were challenged and extended within their programs.
- Scaffolding, modelling and reciprocal reading were valuable strategies to assist students to gain access to age-appropriate texts and tasks.
- Texts of age-appropriate content, across a number of genres, were selected to reflect student interest and increase interest in reading.
- Students' interest in writing was increased when real audiences were provided and technology was used to enhance the appearance of their finished work.
- Competitions, play and the use of incentives were useful means of engaging and sustaining student interest.
- No single approach emerged as being appropriate in all contexts. Most schools were creative in combining elements from many sources to meet the particular needs of their group of students.
- Schools that established effective connections between *Restart* and other initiatives such as Access to Excellence and Koorie Literacy Links were creating infrastructures within their schools that supported strong developments in literacy across the whole school.
- Targeted professional development providing effective literacy intervention strategies played an important role in supporting *Restart* teachers.
- Whole school professional development in literacy had been valuable in sensitising school communities to the importance and value of literacy intervention and in creating a climate of support.

8 OUTCOMES OF *RESTART*

- *Restart* demonstrated that intensive, individualised assistance provided by teachers trained in strategies of literacy intervention could provide measurable, beneficial learning outcomes for students with low literacy skills.
- Benefits of the program extended beyond the development and application of literacy skills. Every school reported marked increases in social competency for participating students.
- Most schools reported that anecdotal evidence suggests that students are maintaining the benefits of *Restart* in their reintegration into mainstream classes.
- Many participating teachers reported their own professional satisfaction in increasing their understanding of literacy intervention and the consequent broadening of their personal teaching repertoires.
- A number of the schools reported significant changes within the middle years culture of their schools that they attributed in some part to the existence of *Restart* and the associated increased interest in effective literacy intervention.

Support for *Restart*

- Parents were supportive of the program although there was little direct involvement of parents in any of the programs.
- In most cases other staff were supportive of the program. When there was lack of support it was generally connected with concern about withdrawal of students from classes.
- *Restart* had the strongest support in schools where literacy was a high priority in the school curriculum.

9 FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

- The initiative should be continued beyond the initial three-year period. It has provided effective intervention for groups of students whose low literacy skills block their continuing access to and participation in learning.
- Teachers who participated in the three-year program will accumulate a body of expertise and practical experience in literacy intervention that

represents a resource within their own schools and for other schools. They should be supported in disseminating their understanding through such means as mentoring or network facilitation.

- Professional development to support effective literacy intervention should be continued and extended to reach other teachers of middle years.

Investigation of six schools in which students achieved only 35 per cent or less improvement from the *Restart* program

As part of this study, interviews were conducted with six schools that had only achieved 35 per cent or less improvement. Three of the schools were located in metropolitan areas and three were located in large regional towns in different geographic regions of Victoria. Face-to-face visits were conducted with the *Restart* co-ordinator at three of those schools. The three remaining schools were in distant locations throughout the state. For these schools information was gathered electronically and completion of a questionnaire was followed by at least one telephone interview in each case.

Findings

The findings below are a summary based on responses made by the teachers interviewed.

- There was no one single factor common to all schools that could explain the relative lack of success of their programs.
- Two schools found insufficient support within the school from the leadership and other staff for the project in its first year of operation.
 - * In one school, timetabling was identified as the most important factor preventing the structured, sequential, intensive form of assistance appropriate to the program.
- In another, timetabling and personnel issues restricted the full development of the program. In this case no permanent location was provided for *Restart* sessions and other teachers were resentful of students being withdrawn for the program. The *Restart* teacher was not able to begin the program until the beginning of Term 3 and did not participate in the selection of students for the program.
- In two other schools the main contributing factors appeared to be inexperience in literacy education of those implementing the program and an associated absence of appropriate resources within their schools.

- * In one school, regional support is now in place, teacher professional development and appropriate resources have been provided and the school administration is providing full support for the teacher who conducts the program.

- * In the second school, which also experienced insufficient support from other staff, a team of teachers has received advice on strategies and resources from a regional Middle Years Officer. The team implementing the program has not undertaken any targeted professional development but with resources in place the program ran more effectively in 2003.

- Teacher illness had prevented the program from operating effectively in one school for the whole of Term 4. As the program had only begun at the beginning of Term 2; students had insufficient time within the program at this school. (In 2003 the program operated well with two permanent members of staff sharing responsibility for implementation.)
- The sixth school attributed the relative lack of success to problems with the DART as a tool of analysis. In this case there was an artificially high recording of students' literacy skills using the initial test. Although students definitely improved skills during the year and benefited significantly from the program, this was not apparent in post-testing against the incorrect earlier judgment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This review of case study schools has identified the following key aspects of intervention for improving the literacy skills of students:

- promoting positive relationships between teacher and students by providing a designated teacher for intervention
- providing at least three to five sessions of explicit intensive instruction per week
- using experienced literacy teachers to facilitate the intervention
- maintaining flexibility within the program to address changes in individual students' interests and needs
- working with other teachers to extend support into mainstream classes

- monitoring and collecting evidence of students' skills using a range of procedures
- ensuring whole school support for the program and for literacy improvement
- allocating a warm, inviting room for withdrawal sessions
- developing all teachers' knowledge about literacy learning and expanding teaching repertoires through appropriate professional development.

PART B: *RESTART* SCHOOLS CASE STUDIES

**CASE STUDIES OF 16 SCHOOLS THAT
ACHIEVED 97–100 PER CENT
IMPROVEMENT IN LITERACY FOR A
GROUP OF STUDENTS SELECTED FOR
THE *RESTART* INITIATIVE**

CASE STUDY 1

Background

The school of 950+ students is situated in the western metropolitan area. The area is one of high growth with several other schools in close proximity catering to the post-primary years. The school has high Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) levels. Issues of concern are low parental support, low literacy levels and high absenteeism. There is a relatively low ethnic mix with the majority of students Australian-born.

Restart in the School

In both 2002 and 2003 *Restart* involved twenty-one students. They were selected on the basis of the DART, analysis of reading effectiveness and analysis of student achievement against CSF levels.

In 2002 the program was based on withdrawal of students. Despite excellent results at the end of 2002, significant changes were introduced in 2003 because of concern about students missing content time in various KLAs and unfavourable student response to withdrawal. The school had a strong ethos of team teaching. It was decided to build on this to support a system of classroom-based assistance, combined with one separate class involving all *Restart* students. This organisation was seen to be one which would result in a spread of professional expertise and ultimately more effective integration of *Restart* students into regular classes.

Extensive consultations with all teachers at Year 7 led to different arrangements for 2003. The twenty-one *Restart* students are divided into three home groups. Three teachers, including the literacy coordinator and *Restart* coordinator, have primary responsibility for the program. The *Restart* students are blocked together for SOSE, which is taken by the *Restart* coordinator and a SOSE teacher. At times, additional help outside the classroom is provided for individual students. Six additional teachers are involved in a system of team-teaching, which occurs in English, Art, Science and SOSE. Time is set aside once a fortnight for a curriculum planning session that involves the nine teachers who form the *Restart* team.

Teaching Approaches

Usually the *Restart* students are working with texts in general use at the year level. At times this work will be supplemented by specific comprehension activities. The three main teachers meet for regular

planning sessions and have developed a series of common lesson plans making use of middle years strategies. There is consistency between all team members in their approach to the development of basic skills. Extensive use is made of modelling and reciprocal teaching. The strategies suggested by Dr John Munro during professional development have been followed closely when structuring lessons, particularly in the SOSE classroom. There is an emphasis on reinforcement of preceding work and providing clear instructions and simple steps to enable students to achieve success and gain confidence.

A concerted effort is being made to communicate developments in *Restart* to all year level teachers. This occurs at year level meetings and one-to-one PD provided by the literacy coordinator. The literacy coordinator works closely with all year level teachers and uses Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) levels to assist teachers in the development of class work that ensures access for all students.

Monitoring Students

The *Restart* teachers keep and share journals, which provide a record of work covered, individual student response and further ideas and strategies. Student progress is reported upon half yearly within KLA reports. At the end of Year 7, in addition to the DART, other tests are conducted for the lowest students.

There has not been formal tracking of 2002 *Restart* students in Year 8; however, feedback from Year 8 teachers indicates that former *Restart* students show increased confidence and interest in participation.

Student Attitudes

In 2002 there was some negativity towards withdrawal from regular classes. In 2003 students accepted the team-teaching style as a normal part of school life. Students in the SOSE class responded well to the structure of their classes.

Support for *Restart*

Although consistent efforts have been made to involve parents through letters and information evenings there is a low level of parental involvement.

The three central members of the *Restart* team have attended all middle years PD and *Restart* sessions, including PD in distant regions as well as locally, to familiarise themselves with a variety of approaches and strategies. Improved literacy is a major school goal. The school is participating in the Access to Excellence initiative and has established a literacy

working party looking at all aspects of literacy across the curriculum. In-school Middle Years Literacy Professional Development was provided for all year level teachers at the beginning of 2003 and fourteen staff have received training in middle years literacy strategies. Regional support has been provided through middle years PD and *Restart* programs such as Modelling/Reciprocal Teaching PD. Some funding was provided to facilitate network arrangements. In 2003 with the changed organisation of the program and emphasis on developing team planning there was growing support within the school.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

Students have benefited with improved skills in reading and comprehension. They have also shown significant improvements in self-confidence, engagement, personal time management, goal setting and organisational skills.

For teachers, the program has led to a stronger team ethos and increased awareness of the value of sharing resources, ideas and practical strategies and the value of CSF judgments in determining appropriate teaching styles to ensure inclusivity.

Most Valued Strategies

Teamwork has been a key strategy with shared ideas and strategies creating a consistent approach. The program has contributed to a broadening of teaching practices throughout the school.

Further Suggestions

Further professional development opportunities to meet with other *Restart* teachers in order to share strategies would be highly desirable. Ideally this should occur before the end of each year. In particular, further professional development covering specific teaching and learning strategies for *Restart* students would be valued.

School organisation of the *Restart* groups would be improved if schools had the means to determine members of the *Restart* group by the end of Year 6. This could be achieved by earlier testing or closer collaboration between primary and secondary schools.

CASE STUDY 2

Background

The P-12 college of 450 students is situated very close to the city. The college population is ethnically diverse with a fair gender balance.

Demographic changes in the surrounding area are improving the socioeconomic status of the students. The school population draws in part from a large public housing estate and there is a high rate of transience among students. Although the school has a well-established program of literacy intervention, student transfers have meant that it receives many students with poor levels of literacy.

***Restart* in the School**

In both 2002 and 2003 there were thirteen students involved in the program. They were selected on the basis of the DART, analysis of Corrective Reading tests (which has been in place in the college for a number of years) and close consultation between class teachers and the *Restart* coordinator.

The approach is one of withdrawal from regular classes. Two teachers are involved, one with 0.6 and the other with 0.5 time allotments to the program. Each of the teachers has training in primary school teaching and one also has secondary teaching training. One of the teachers also has trained in Reading Recovery. All *Restart* students are mapped according to their individual corrective reading needs and are then placed in different small groups for withdrawal. Those who are able to decode, engage in more intense comprehension activities in their *Restart* sessions. Those with the lowest reading levels may also receive individual one-to-one corrective reading assistance. All students in the program are withdrawn for at least one period a day.

Care is taken to ensure that students are not removed from one subject area consistently and that students do not miss practical classes in which they have a particular interest, thus minimising any negative effects of withdrawal.

There is very close formal and informal communication between *Restart* teachers and other teachers at the year level. The *Restart* coordinator attends all year level meetings, provides diagnostic information and suggests strategies relevant to particular students. Year level teachers are provided with information about all aspects of the *Restart* program as it is being implemented.

Teaching

The program is highly structured using Corrective Reading materials and the *Key Comprehension Series (Into Interference and Into Organisation, Triune Publications, New Zealand)*. Activities are conducted as set out in these programs and as appropriate for the reading level determined by pre-testing.

The small group methodology and teaching style has created a highly individualised, supportive environment in which students feel confident to tackle reading and comprehension. A positive learning relationship has been built up between the *Restart* teachers and the students.

Monitoring Students

Daily observations of each student are recorded. Testing occurs regularly after thirty lessons. Regular informal contact with other Year 7 teachers provides anecdotal evidence that the skills acquired in the *Restart* sessions are transferable. No official monitoring of 2002 *Restart* students has been undertaken in Year 8 although there has been positive feedback from staff.

Monitoring Students

Students generally seem to enjoy the small group situation although there has been no formal survey. In 2003 one student dropped out temporarily but his mother insisted on his return. He participated with some reluctance.

Monitoring Students

Parents have been kept informed of the program through information evenings and letters. There is a group of Steiner primary school parents who initially felt concerned about the methods of Corrective Reading, but are now more supportive of the program.

Professional development was organised privately for Corrective Reading and associated comprehension. *Restart* staff members have attended all *Restart* PD organised centrally and in the region. *Restart* staff members attend Reading Recovery meetings each month. Although these are designed for assistance with Year 1 students there are some benefits for their work with Year 7 students.

Other staff members are accepting of the *Restart* program and recognise its benefits.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

Students have shown dramatic improvement in reading and comprehension ability. Other teachers have commented that this improvement is evident

in their work in general classes. Their new skills have added greatly to their self esteem and confidence in themselves as learners.

Most Valued Strategies

The small group situation and the highly personalised attention made possible within *Restart* are most highly valued. For these students the interaction with others who are operating at the same level has provided a platform of confidence on which skills in reading can be built.

Further Suggestions

The *Restart* program is highly valued and seen as very necessary. For this school, Corrective Reading has been valuable for addressing the specific needs of the students participating in *Restart*.

CASE STUDY 3

Background

The school of 300+ students is situated in the eastern metropolitan area. Students in the school generally come from low socioeconomic backgrounds with 40 per cent of students receiving EMA. In recognising that some students have issues with engagement, low literacy levels and low retention rates to VCE the college had already implemented a number of compensatory educational programs to address these issues prior to the implementation of *Restart*.

Restart in the School

During 2002 and 2003 the program involved 8 students in each year. Students were selected for the program on the basis of the DART, PAT (Progressive Reading and Achievement Test) which provided information about reading comprehension and vocabulary and transition information about students' abilities and needs.

The approach in the school is based on withdrawal of students in groups of two to four to the *Restart* room, as well as individual instruction based on particular needs of the students. Each student has at least one session each day.

One teacher with long-standing experience of teaching upper primary classes conducts the program. Another teacher who has developed and provided a Compensatory Education Literacy program in the school provides professional support by exchanging ideas and strategies. There is very close liaison between the *Restart* teacher and the

Home Group, English and SOSE teachers of each student. There has also been very close liaison with the student welfare coordinator in relation to issues of social isolation, harassment, personal organisational skills and hygiene, which have represented barriers to learning for some *Restart* students.

Teaching Approaches

The *Restart* room is set up in a very central position in the school. It is warm, inviting and laden with resources. Visual aids and displays create an atmosphere very conducive to effective literacy learning. No single program is used. A multitude of resources has been developed to ensure that all learning styles and needs are catered for. Many of the resources developed by the teacher cater extremely well for active learning and visualisation with plenty of movement and interactivity by the students. Resources include card games based on joke matching/proverb matching/ hyphen hunt and using speech bubbles to get students started on short pieces of writing. Word games such as Scrabble, Stackers, and Alphabetics are other means of engaging students and introducing variety into lessons. Literature is selected based on students' interests and humour in the form of rhyming verse and jokes.

A lot of work is done on building students' knowledge and understanding of vocabulary, comprehension and word families. In reading, students are assisted to develop and use strategies of prediction, clarification, questioning, visualising and summarising as included in reciprocal teaching and suggested by Dr John Munro during professional development for *Restart* teachers. When weaknesses in oral reading suggest that some aspects of decoding need to be addressed, the teacher makes use of her own compiled word lists and phoneme charts. For comprehension work, use is made of black-line master worksheets that are skill-based. These assist students to use context clues, make inferences, identify central ideas and draw conclusions. Cloze exercises are also used.

Monitoring Students

Every session involves informal monitoring of students' word attack skills, confidence, comprehension difficulties and vocabulary improvement. Students' worksheets and workbooks are kept in the *Restart* room. Records are kept of students' test results at the beginning, middle and end of year.

Restart students from 2002 continue to be monitored through additional assistance provided within the school's pre-existing literacy support program. In Year 8 increasing use is made of computer-based literacy strategies.

Student Attitudes

The great majority of students are willing participants in the program and in some cases have asked for extra lessons. Student attitudes have been gauged by comments from students, requests for particular activities and from responses to attitudinal tests provided by the Department. Students have some involvement in the content of the program because they have all provided information about the areas of literacy in which they believe they need to improve. There is negotiation about topics and books that they choose for free reading.

Support for *Restart*

Unfortunately parents have expressed little interest in the program. A note is sent home early in Term 1 informing parents of the selection of their child for the program. Parents are asked to respond if they do not want their child to participate. No responses were received in either 2002 or 2003.

All members of staff acknowledge the need for literacy intervention strategies in the school although some teachers become frustrated with the system of withdrawal at times.

Professional development support has been provided through Middle Years Literacy Professional Development. The school has organised whole-school professional development on cooperative learning strategies and literacy. Regional support has been provided through *Restart* meetings. These meetings of two to three hours duration, once each term, have been a great support and avenue for sharing ideas, resources and strategies.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

Willing, receptive students have shown an increase in confidence, self esteem and enjoyment of reading. They have become more capable of dealing with the reading and writing demands in mainstream classes (especially English and SOSE).

Most Valued Strategies

Flexibility to respond to students' individual learning needs is a key strategy. This is made possible in an environment where a diverse resource base has been developed. Strongest emphasis is

placed on vocabulary development, development of reading comprehension skills and strategies for effective, independent learning.

Further Suggestions

The program is highly valued and it is hoped that it will be extended beyond the initial three-year period.

CASE STUDY 4

Background

This small secondary college of 274 students is located in the Southern Metropolitan Region. The student population has very high numbers of students of non-English speaking background and EMA levels are very high. The school population is multiculturally diverse. Forty different countries of origin are represented and 60 per cent of students are of Asian origin.

***Restart* in the School**

During 2002 and 2003 there were eight students involved each year in the program. Students were selected on the basis of the DART, TORCH and PAT tests and extensive discussion with teachers in Year 7 following admission.

The program operates by withdrawing students from regular classes. A trial was conducted early in 2002 of withdrawal together with some time spent in class. It was judged that learning with this approach was not as effective as the learning achieved by withdrawal and from that time students have been withdrawn in small groups (usually seven) for one period each day. A small room is set aside for this purpose. One teacher-librarian delivers the program. *Restart* classes make up 0.5 of this teacher's allotment and additional time in the library allows a great deal of informal contact and personal assistance to be provided for students in the program.

The school is one in which a high level of pastoral care is provided to students at Years 7 and 8. It has been long-standing practice to limit the number of teachers dealing with students at these year levels. As a consequence there has been good formal and informal communication about the individual learning needs of students. The *Restart* teacher attends all year level meetings and provides regular updates on the progress of each student.

Teaching Approaches

The program is based on pre-existing resources

which had been used for literacy programs within the school. Decoding, using word attack strategies, is the first element of the program and initially the lessons are highly structured. It is believed that the structure is reassuring to students and assists them to develop self-discipline in learning. The structure guarantees initial success in reading which is a good basis for continuing work.

Typically, students move from the decoding basis to literal comprehension. Students learn to use strategies of prediction and speculation to increase understanding. Comprehension is a crucial area in which these students need continuing assistance.

Based on individual progress, students move on to comprehension-based extension activities, including essay writing. Students are assisted to develop strategies for independent learning derived from the Middle Years Literacy Professional Development, such as predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarising. A wide variety of resources derived from popular culture are used to assist these students in their understanding and use of colloquial language.

Monitoring Students

The *Restart* teacher makes daily assessments of each student and records these in her own journal. The decoding program provides regular tests, which are carried out progressively through the year. DART results and AIM results are used at the end of Year 7 to determine which students will require continuing individual assistance into Year 8. As part of the general pastoral care at Years 7 and 8, a profile is developed for each student at the beginning of Year 7. This is added to at the beginning of each term and is the basis for individual learning plans, which are followed for each student.

Student Attitudes

Most students are appreciative of the assistance they are receiving. At times there can be reluctance to attend because of other classes that are being missed. Occasionally there is seen to be some stigma, indicated by individuals identifying themselves as being 'too smart' for the program.

Support for *Restart*

The school has a fairly close relationship with many parents and this has been a useful basis to gain parental support in supervising short sessions of daily home reading.

Professional development was organised privately for Decoding Strategies and associated comprehension activities. *Restart* PD organised centrally and in the region has been a source of significant support with network meetings and visits between *Restart* schools being particularly valued. PD sessions around the Thinking Oriented Curriculum and Middle Years Literacy Professional Development have each provided useful strategies that are employed within the program.

Other staff members endorse the program and see it as fitting within the general ethos of the school and the long-standing commitment to literacy. Good communication between the *Restart* teacher and other teachers has made it possible for an exchange of ideas and strategies to benefit all students.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

There has been good feedback from Year 8 teachers about the ability of *Restart* students from 2002 to integrate their skills into the regular Year 8 programs. Students have shown dramatic improvement in reading and comprehension abilities and in levels of self-confidence.

For staff, the program has resulted in better teacher knowledge of the learning and other needs of each student. *Restart* has played a role in further spreading the literacy message across the curriculum.

Most Valued Strategies

The small group situation and the highly personalised attention made possible within *Restart* are highly valued. Lots of praise and encouragement is used to provide incentive. Realistic but firm expectations are held of all students and their diligence is demanded in ensuring that their work is completed to standard. In 2003 there was less emphasis on the decoding aspects and an increasing use of activities reflecting middle years literacy strategies.

Further Suggestions

The program is highly valued and seen as very necessary in this school where many students have unusually disrupted primary school experiences. It makes possible the intensive student-teacher relationship that is crucial for successful literacy intervention. More resources are needed to widen the range of activities that can be undertaken with students. In this school there is a need for more computer-based resources that could play a role in further stimulating literacy learning.

CASE STUDY 5

Background

The school of 300 students is situated in the Southern Metropolitan Region. The school has high rates of EMA with many single parent or pension-dependent families. Boys make up 60 per cent of the school population. Issues of concern include a high level of literacy difficulties among students with the majority of students testing at CSF Level 3 on admission, and problems of recurring absenteeism.

***Restart* in the School**

During 2002 and 2003 *Restart* involved seven students each year. Students were selected on the basis of the DART; analysis of an additional writing task and reading and comprehension analysis conducted by the English KLA coordinator and literacy coordinator; analysis of student achievement against CSF levels; consideration of transition information; and consultations between the curriculum coordinator, principal and English and SOSE KLA teachers.

The approach, based on withdrawal of students, operates in the *Restart* room, which is brimming with resources and items of visual interest. Students are withdrawn for three sessions each week in small groups (two to three), or occasionally for individual attention. The literacy coordinator, who has special education/English qualifications, conducts the *Restart* sessions.

Teaching Approaches

A number of different strategies are used, although a predictable structure is followed in each lesson. There will always be a segment of revision of the previous lesson, discussion, which includes prediction and the creation of contexts to enable students to make more immediate sense of particular reading that is being undertaken. Some time will always be set aside for reading, using strategies that students are assisted to develop. Towards the end of each term students may be given assistance with work from other classes if this is seen as necessary.

At the beginning of the year students complete a literacy self-evaluation and personal interest questionnaire. This is a basis for planning lessons that respond to student interest and a platform for students to engage in regular self-evaluation of progress.

The approach is friendly, with an emphasis on the belief that students' difficulties present an opportunity for building strategies that will bring about improvements.

Many hands-on activities have been developed. These include language games such as up-words, crosswords, literacy question cards and the use of a dice to choose questions to answer. Many small incentives are built into work and students are rewarded with small prizes for achievement. A comprehensive library of texts reflecting students' interests has been developed.

In writing, real audiences have been established by building on students' links with their previous primary schools. They engage in writing letters, creating books for younger students and writing for the Newsletter. Computer access is available in the *Restart* room and computers are used frequently in the presentation of work.

Monitoring Students

Profiles based on the exhaustive testing and evaluations made at the beginning of Year 7 are kept for all students. Student progress is monitored closely through the year and there are frequent consultations between the *Restart* teacher and all other teachers of *Restart* students.

In Year 8 a file is kept for each former *Restart* student, building on the profile developed during 2002. The *Restart* coordinator in her capacity as literacy coordinator is providing on-going support for one period each week for these students in small groups.

Student Attitudes

Students have shown a positive attitude to their involvement. This has been evident in the degree to which they engage in set work and the pleasure they take in display of their work as well as their responses to a survey. There is a high level of student involvement in negotiating the time of their lessons (to avoid their withdrawal from classes which they value particularly) and to some degree the content of their sessions.

Support for *Restart*

One parent was involved in assisting with the program during one semester in 2002. She had good rapport with students and was assisted with reading and discussions. Generally, however, it has been difficult to get parental involvement despite information evenings and communication by letter and newsletter.

There has been good support from other staff, who have seen *Restart* as a necessary part of the school's literacy program. Professional development has included Middle Years Literacy Coordinator Training and Middle Years Twilight PD sessions. Strategies suggested by Dr John Munro in PD sessions have been used extensively. Teachers have attended *Restart* and DART PD and network meetings provided by the region. In particular it has been valuable to have the opportunity to visit and observe reciprocal reading in practice at a local primary school and to share ideas and strategies with other *Restart* teachers. The school has also organised very useful PD on motivating boys to improve their literacy.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

It was valuable that the program established clear targets for students to which the *Restart* teacher could direct her efforts.

Students have shown significant improvements in motivation and engagement. There was a general benefit for Year 7 teachers and an increased emphasis on individual needs. Teachers were more aware of different learning styles and ways in which work could be made more accessible. Teachers were led to question, improve and adapt their own repertoire of teaching styles.

Most Valued Strategies

Friendliness and approachability of the teacher has been crucial in building trust and confidence in students. The involvement of students in all processes of their learning, beginning with self-evaluation and conscious work on the strategies they needed to develop is also important.

Further Suggestions

The program is highly valued and it is hoped that it will be extended beyond the initial three-year period. However, the need for assistance extends far beyond the limited number of students for whom provision is made. The individual analysis of literacy difficulties made possible by *Restart* has exposed the enormous range of social factors that may be affecting some students and their learning competencies.

Case Study 6

Background

The school of 950 students is located in the Northern Metropolitan Region. The school

population is multiculturally diverse with 64 per cent of the student population having a non-English speaking background and 24 per cent born outside Australia. The school draws from an area which is of low socioeconomic status and there is a very high level of transience within the school population.

Restart in the School

During 2002 and 2003, the program involved twenty-seven students each year. In determining admission to the *Restart* program, DART results, CSF levels and transition information were all considered. The school has used a range of literacy interventions in the past and had an assessment process already in place to determine the reading ability of all Year 7 students and then to develop individual learning profiles.

The Year 7 students who tested at the lowest level across each of the DART, CSF levels and on interview, formed the *Restart* group. Students are withdrawn in groups of four to ten for seven periods a week from English and SOSE classes. Two teachers work as a team with each group and team teaching is in place from day one of the school year. Three teachers have primary responsibility for the program. Two team members have extensive experience in literacy education. The third member of the team, from the English KLA, is new to teaching. The other team members and the literacy coordinator provide mentoring support for this teacher. Classes take place in a specific area set aside for small group work.

Teaching Approaches

The work undertaken is parallel to the curriculum followed in regular Year 7 English and SOSE classes. Work is not modified but scaffolding, structure and strategies are provided to assist students to build skills and understanding. CSF descriptors are used to determine learning goals and there is a constant focus on developing skills that are relevant to mainstream work based on support materials such as Effective Reading in Content Areas and Writing in the Subject Areas.

Modelling and deconstructing are used to make explicit to students the processes they should follow. Active thinking and participation pervade the learning environment. Reading, for example, is never passive. Practical assistance is provided for students by the use of graphic outlines, structured overviews, reciprocal teaching and other strategies. Their use is repeated from topic to topic to assist students to become independent learners.

There is some negotiation about the approach that may be taken to various topics. Students are guided to develop an understanding of their own strengths and areas that need further work and to reflect on the process of their learning.

Monitoring Students

In addition to the DART, students complete five English and four SOSE work requirements in each semester. The school has established professional learning teams in each KLA. These teams work together to moderate CSF judgments made on work requirements produced by Year 7 students including *Restart* students.

Restart students from 2002 were tracked during 2003. Of those twenty-seven students, twenty-five no longer needed intervention. The other two were placed in a Year 8 group and received continued support.

Student Attitudes

Students have a very positive attitude to the program. Many of the *Restart* students have not had positive feedback and encouragement in the past and respond very well to the highly individualised approach of the program.

Support for Restart

Parents are notified of the inclusion of their children in the program and an information evening is held. Parental assistance with reading is welcomed. However, in many cases the parents have low literacy levels themselves and are not aware of the problems being experienced by their child.

Professional development is an important element of the program and has produced significant benefits for the whole school. Regional support has been provided through courses such as the Middle Years Literacy Professional Development, *Restart* and Modelling/Reciprocal Teaching. Within the school there are two Middle Years Literacy Leaders. They have conducted a six-week course in Literacy Across the Curriculum in weekly one and a half hour sessions for staff members. The school's participation in the Access to Excellence initiative has enabled the establishment of professional learning teams in English, SOSE and Maths. The work of these teams in raising awareness and developing expertise in literacy across the subject areas has been an underpinning support for the *Restart* program. Throughout the school there is respect for the *Restart* teachers and their program, which is recognised as a high priority for the school.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

Commonly the *Restart* students are those who have missed out on some crucial early steps in literacy development. They do not have specific learning difficulties. Once they have the opportunity to make up the gaps in their literacy development they have been successful in re-entering the mainstream program.

There has been a huge benefit to the learning culture of the school from *Restart*. Other teachers in Years 7 and 8 are taking up strategies used in *Restart* to respond to individual learning needs.

Most Valued Strategies

The decision to run the *Restart* program as one of parallel learning has been crucial to success. The program is viewed by students as 'the real thing' It is not an 'add on.' The intensity of seven sessions a week in a small group has generated energy.

Withdrawal has been a successful strategy. Initially the program was conducted with *Restart* teachers in other classes but this caused discomfort for some teachers. Teamwork in planning and organising the program has been a key strategy as has been the effective use of the team members across the school.

Further Suggestions

The program should be extended beyond the initial three-year trial period. The teachers brought into the system for *Restart* constitute a tremendous resource for the school and ways should be found to maintain their use.

CASE STUDY 7

Background

The school of 300 students is located in the Northern Metropolitan Region. The school has a very high EMA rate (76 per cent) and a high level of absenteeism is an issue. The school is multiculturally diverse with 65 per cent of the students having a language background other than English. Islam is an important element in the school culture as a third of the students are Muslim.

***Restart* in the School**

During 2002 and 2003 the program involved nine students each year. Students were selected on the basis of the DART and TORCH tests. In addition, all Year 7 students undertook the Woodcock Reading Test.

Students for *Restart* are withdrawn in small groups from class for one period each day. Classes are conducted in a small room with students sitting together around a central table. Initially the students were withdrawn for the same period each day. However this resulted in them missing too much time in particular subjects. In 2003 there was a more even spread of withdrawal across subjects.

In 2002 one contract teacher with qualifications in adult literacy implemented the program. In 2003 a teacher's aide provided additional assistance. The teacher's aide assisted those *Restart* students functioning at the lowest levels and continued that support to some students in Years 8 and 9.

Teaching Approaches

Corrective Reading is used as the basis for the program because decoding strategies are regarded as important for this group of learners. The Corrective Reading program is American and it takes some time for students to engage with the content, however, they are reassured by the structure and some students find the strong decoding component helpful.

A number of other strategies supplement the Corrective Reading lessons. Oral comprehension work comes from spontaneous questions posed by the teacher in relation to the text being read. Repetition and reinforcement, prediction, retelling and modelling are used and students often read in pairs preparing rehearsed and timed readings.

In 2003 once the Corrective Reading component of their program was completed, *Restart* sessions were conducted in classes across various KLAs. The *Restart* teacher provided support in a team teaching situation to ensure the integration of improved skills across the curriculum.

Use of cooperative learning strategies ensures that a supportive atmosphere is created in which students feel confident. Many incentives, including small prizes and group excursions are built into activities and contribute to student enjoyment and bonding within the group and with the teacher.

Monitoring Students

Student progress is monitored through close supervision and regular testing. There is regular checking and marking of student workbooks. Regular notes are kept on each student in the teacher's journal. A comment on progress is provided in each semester's report.

The progress of students is monitored into Year 8 and when necessary additional reading assistance is available from the literacy aide.

Student Attitudes

Students enjoy the program although there were some concerns about missed classes prior to the timetable changes made in Term 3, 2003.

Support for *Restart*

Parents are notified of the inclusion of their children in the program through letters, the school newsletter and in some cases by phone. There has not been feedback from parents about their attitudes to the program.

The *Restart* teacher has attended regional PD sessions on literacy strategies advocated by Dr John Munro. Many of these strategies are now incorporated into *Restart*.

The *Restart* teacher has felt somewhat isolated in the school. There has not been much contact with other staff members although she has attended year level meetings and has offered to work with other teachers to ensure that their subject area is covered in the *Restart* sessions. Timetabling has been a difficult issue to resolve as initially some teachers were resentful about student withdrawal.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

The program has been a great self esteem booster for students, and reticent students have become more prepared to participate.

Students have expressed pleasure at the closer relationship they are able to establish with the teacher in a small group situation.

Most Valued Strategies

The group has benefited from the withdrawal and the division of *Restart* students into two smaller groups of like ability. Students' learning needs have been addressed more effectively as a result. Students with lower literacy levels felt that they had been holding others back, thus sapping confidence.

The use of incentives and a great deal of positive reinforcement have worked very well to motivate students.

Further Suggestions

Teachers working as the single *Restart* person in a school benefit greatly from PD in which they have the chance to meet with other *Restart* teachers and to look at a range of organisational structures,

resources and strategies. This is necessary if the full range of specific learning needs is to be addressed most effectively.

CASE STUDY 8

Background

The school of 400 students is located in the Northern Metropolitan Region. There is a gender imbalance with boys making up 70 per cent of the school population and draws its enrolments from a lower socioeconomic community. The school is culturally diverse with a growing enrolment of students from Middle Eastern family and language backgrounds.

***Restart* in the School**

During 2002 and 2003 the program involved eight students each year. In 2002 the group was made up of seven boys and one girl. In 2003, despite the school's gender imbalance, there were five girls.

Students were selected for inclusion on the basis of the DART, Burt, Corrective Reading testing and transition information. The school uses a teacher's aide to conduct a Corrective Reading program. This program has continued alongside *Restart*, providing assistance to those students with the lowest reading levels.

The program is based on a combination of withdrawal and assistance in class. There is a strong belief that *Restart* students should not be isolated. They need to identify themselves with their regular class group and all the work they are undertaking should be seen as a bridge to their return to mainstream classes. Each student has three sessions of withdrawal and five sessions of assistance in class over a fortnight. The whole group is together for one of the three weekly withdrawal sessions. Withdrawal sessions are usually conducted in a small room adjacent to the library. Other literacy groups in the school also use this room so timetabling constraints mean that for one period a fortnight the class is conducted in a regular classroom.

One teacher from the existing staff runs the *Restart* program. As part of the Access to Excellence initiative the same teacher is able to provide additional literacy assistance to other Year 7 students by working in a team-teaching situation in two Year 7 classes.

Teaching Approaches

Teaching methods follow many of the middle years strategies proposed by Dr John Munro in the professional development provided by the Department. To equip students with the strategies that will help them to become independent learners, part of each session is spent reading and spelling, preceded by discussion that helps them with prediction. For wider reading, students are exposed to different text types that relate to other subject areas besides English.

Many incentives are provided for students. The atmosphere in the withdrawal groups is lively and friendly and students have fun with their learning. The close relationships developed within the small group and with the teacher are an aid to students increased confidence.

Monitoring Students

Student workbooks are retained by the teacher and checked regularly. The teacher maintains her own record after each session. DART results and information from testing are used to monitor progress.

Based on reports from teachers in Year 8, *Restart* students from 2002 are still weak in some areas but they are continuing to show improvement.

Student Attitudes

Students are very positive about their participation. Anecdotally, students frequently comment on their own improvement.

Support for *Restart*

Parents have been kept informed about the progress of their children through letters and student diaries. Parents seem supportive of the program.

PD support has been provided centrally and regionally. In 2002 there were *Restart* meetings organised by the region, providing useful strategies from Dr John Munro. These strategies were later presented to the whole school in an internally organised literacy PD day. There was also a valuable regional *Restart* network.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

Students have definitely shown greater self-confidence in their own abilities and skills. There has been a turning around of negative self-images.

Team teaching has supported teachers within the school and has assisted in producing better literacy outcomes for all students. Class time can be used more effectively in the team teaching situation.

The whole school has benefited from learning more about literacy strategies and approaches to teaching have been widened as a result of this.

Most Valued Strategies

Dr John Munro's strategies have been very important in ensuring that students are equipped to take control of their own learning.

The small group situation has enabled close relationships between teachers and students. This benefit has extended to the work with individuals in class.

Further Suggestions

There are many more students who would benefit from literacy intervention. Resources should continue to be directed to making this possible and if possible providing more time for staff running such programs in schools. The *Restart* program combines well with Access to Excellence in building the practice of team teaching.

CASE STUDY 9

Background

The school of 670+ students is located in a large provincial city. The school population is culturally diverse and includes a small group of Koorie students. The area from which students are drawn is of low socioeconomic status. Unemployment has affected many families and there are many single parent households. The school had a number of pre-existing literacy and other programs already in place to support ESL, Koorie and gifted students and those with disabilities and impairments.

Restart in the School

During 2002 and 2003 the *Restart* program involved fifteen students each year. Students were selected for inclusion on the basis of the DART.

Small group withdrawal is the model used in the program. Students participate in three sessions a week, which are timetabled against LOTE. No group is larger than ten. Two teachers conduct the program and are both present in all sessions. One teacher has a background in English, LOTE, and special education and has worked in tertiary education as well as schools. The other teacher has a background in primary teaching and special education. The school has a strong culture of collegiality and the teachers receive assistance from a number of volunteers, including a parent with primary school teacher training, a friend of the school with qualifications in special education, an

aide with training in Reading Recovery and some students from Year 11 who act as mentors for *Restart* students.

Teaching Approaches

Group sessions are conducted in the *Restart* room. The room is adjacent to the library and has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. There is a central table for shared work; lots of visually stimulating resources and computers are available for students' use. Students are able to move around the room during the *Restart* sessions. The room is full of resources and there are tea making and cooking facilities which students use at times. The room operates as a drop-in centre providing literacy assistance for many students in the school.

In each session there will be three different activities. These include some phonics work using resources developed by one of the teachers, reading and comprehension and a game, which is phonics-based. The pace of the lesson is always lively, entertaining and informal. The resources that have been developed within the school are based on students' interests. The language-skills games segment of each session is highly competitive and requires concentration and application.

Expectations of students are made explicit and they know that staff members have high expectations of their attitude and level of effort.

There is an emphasis on bonding relationships within the group. A camp was held at the end of 2002 and for many of the participating students the advances in social competencies and the experiences of inclusion have been very important in removing barriers to learning.

Monitoring Students

Students are tested each term using the South Australian Peter's spelling test and the ACER open reading and Schonnel silent reading systems.

All worksheets completed by students are kept and used to measure student progress against the independent learning plan and improvement plan prepared for each student. Students have access to all their previous work and are encouraged to see their own progress. They are told about improvement in their test results.

In Year 8 the Access to Excellence initiative ensures that continued support is available to assist students as they move towards full transition to the mainstream classroom.

Student Attitudes

Students are very positive about their participation and comfortable with the *Restart* sessions. They have also expressed pleasure at the positive friendships that have developed from the small group situation.

Support for *Restart*

Parents are supportive of *Restart*, although invitations to parents to provide assistance at home for students have not been taken up.

PD support has been provided centrally and regionally through the Middle Years Literacy Professional Development course, which was thorough, comprehensive and up-to-date. The region has provided *Restart* activities, including strategies from Dr John Munro. *Restart* network meetings have been organised every term. Within the school PD has been organised based on the Thinking Oriented Curriculum. *Restart* staff attended a literacy conference in Melbourne.

As literacy is a Charter priority and the sessions run in addition to normal English there is a lot of support among other staff. Support services assist staff members and Access to Excellence staff members further help to create a structure of support within the school.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

Students have shown great increases in confidence and social competencies and this has assisted in improving their attitudes to learning. There has been some transferral of skills to other classes which has been observed and commented upon by classroom teachers.

Most Valued Strategies

The informal and friendly atmosphere of the small groups combined with a variety of activities has been very important in increasing student participation and success. The strong interpersonal relations made possible through the intensity of contact have enabled teachers to recognise and respond appropriately to individual learning needs of students. It has also assisted teachers to increase their expectations of each student and students are showing a willingness to meet these standards.

Using incentives, friendly competition, peer support and resources that are appropriate to student interests have also been important strategies.

Timetabling of sessions against LOTE has worked very well to ensure that there is strong staff support

and that students do not miss out on normal English classes.

Further Suggestions

The program is working well and is highly valued. The establishment of a fully developed literacy centre would allow even more effective coordination of programs and initiatives such as ESL, Access to Excellence, Gifted Students and Students with Disabilities and Impairments.

CASE STUDY 10

Background

The school is located in the Northern Metropolitan Region. There are 420 Years 7 and 8 students and this number is expected to increase steadily in coming years. A majority of the students are of Turkish or Arabic background although the cultural diversity of the student population is increasing. Almost 70 per cent of students receive EMA.

Restart in the School

In 2002 there were fifteen students in the program. During 2003 with an extra allocation for growth in student numbers, the program involved thirty students. They were selected on the basis of the DART and the TORCH tests, which were undertaken by all Year 7 students.

The program withdraws students for four periods each week. *Restart* groups are made up of three students, a group size which is seen as ideal for relations within the group and for behaviour management. In 2002 students were withdrawn for two sessions from English and for two sessions from an elective. In 2003, it was determined that it is crucial for *Restart* students to be part of regular English classes as well as having *Restart* support. Consequently the timetable was arranged so that *Restart* classes occurred at the same time as two of the four electives undertaken by Year 7 students.

In 2002, two teachers conducted the program. One teacher had a Masters degree in Literacy and a background in teaching ESL. The other teacher had a background in English and ESL teaching. In 2003, the original two teachers were joined by another two teachers. One of these has a background in English, ESL and literacy. The fourth member of the team is new to teaching and has qualifications in English and SOSE. There is very close collaboration between all team members.

The whole school is organised in professional learning teams to deliver curriculum in each subject area. The members of the literacy learning team have each developed a semester-length unit of work based on the resources and strategies that have proved most effective with *Restart* students. The units rotated across each group over the year.

Teaching Approaches

The *Restart* team works on the basis of a needs analysis for each student as conveyed by the DART results. They have developed structured materials and worksheets which cover foundational skills in literacy such as alphabetical order, sentence structure and vocabulary and different levels of reading comprehension.

They make use of a wide range of text types using contemporary materials, which are of high interest to students. Concrete examples are used along with constant modelling, visualising and paraphrasing to ensure that work is relevant and accessible for students. There is a strong focus on strategies derived from teaching ESL, including vocabulary and pronunciation, retelling, modelling, describing and repetition. The team uses the Stages of Reading strategies suggested by Dr John Munro for pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading activities. The group situation is used to build confidence through techniques such as brainstorming and shared reading.

In their work with students the team's aim always is to move from existing knowledge and skills to the establishment of a level of skills and understanding that allows full integration into the mainstream. The units of work are designed to assist students to develop strategies for reading, understanding, including the ability to respond to inferential level questions, and writing in any subject.

Monitoring Students

There is ongoing assessment of oral presentations, assignments, reports, grammar exercises, reading comprehension and reading for fluency. Student progress is monitored after initial testing. They are placed on a reading development continuum (using the WA First Steps Program). Samples of work are kept as records of progress.

It was planned at the end of 2002 to continue support for *Restart* students into Year 8. As preparation for this, all Year 8 students were TORCH tested at the beginning of 2003. *Restart* students from 2002 performed well and it was

found that there were other students who were in greater need of continuing support into Year 8. Anecdotally the reports from other teachers indicate that former *Restart* students who are now in mainstream classes do not require specialised literacy assistance any longer.

Student Attitudes

Surveys have been conducted to determine students' attitudes to the program. Other measures are attendance, progress and behaviour. On each of these measures, students seem comfortable with the program and express their greater comfort in working within a small group. At times some students resent missing electives but the school's judgment is that attendance in mainstream English is crucial.

Support for *Restart*

Parents are kept regularly informed about the progress of their children and seem supportive of the program.

Restart staff have attended central and regional *Restart* professional development programs. The school has provided its own PD for Literacy Across the Curriculum and the region has provided workshops with Dr John Munro on strategies that have been useful to integrate into the program.

There is good support from the rest of the staff. Literacy is a Charter priority and teachers in all KLAs have been keen to share resources and to get advice about strategies to use in their subject areas.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

There has been marked improvement in the self-confidence and self esteem of students as they have seen the improvement in their skills and understanding. Students from 2002 are now operating well in the mainstream.

Most Valued Strategies

The use of concrete examples and constant modelling have been particularly useful strategies. Strategies developed from the PD sessions have been very effective, particularly Stages of Reading and Seven Steps for Approaching a New Topic.

Further Suggestions

The program is highly valued. There are a large number of other students who would benefit from individualised support if the program could be extended. When there are teachers without previous experience in literacy (as was the case with one

member of the team in 2003) it would be useful if specific PD were made available to provide additional support.

CASE STUDY 11

Background

The school of 900 students is situated in a high-growth area in the Southern Metropolitan Region. The school population is multiculturally diverse with a slight gender imbalance, favouring boys. The school places a high emphasis on literacy and had a number of literacy support programs in place prior to the introduction of *Restart*.

***Restart* in the School**

Fourteen students participated in *Restart* in 2002 and 2003. Boys have predominated in the composition of each group. Students were selected using DART results combined with analysis of transition information and other testing.

In 2002, the school used a combination of withdrawal and assistance in class in their implementation of *Restart*. Two teachers from the English KLA conducted the program with the assistance of the assistant principal and *Restart* students received four periods of assistance each week. In some cases additional time was made available for one-to-one assistance.

In preparation for the program the *Restart* teachers spoke to all other KLA teachers. They worked with classroom teachers to modify class work in all subjects to ensure its accessibility for *Restart* students. In cooperation with the class teachers they worked in the classroom, undertook team teaching or withdrew three to four students at a time to give assistance outside the classroom environment.

The school was happy with the combination of withdrawal and class intervention across a number of subject areas, but in 2003 timetabling requirements led to a change in organisation. Three teachers worked with the students and the vice-principal continued to provide support. The *Restart* classes were blocked against English and the students concentrated on the English curriculum with individualised attention and modifications to work used to ensure the material was accessible.

Teaching Approaches

As a first step the school placed a strong emphasis on reading and spelling, recognising that many of the students needed assistance in decoding.

Student interest was a key criterion in determining suitable reading materials with short stories, humour and strong visual reinforcement such as diagrams, used to engender interest in reading. Pre-reading activities such as prediction have been used to build reading confidence. Modelling in both reading and writing has been used with VCE student mentors providing assistance. Cooperative learning with students working in pairs has been another strategy.

Elements of the Thinking Oriented Curriculum have been introduced with reading, comprehension and writing activities devised to challenge and extend students in such activities as investigating, developing and producing a travel and holiday program. The emphasis on responding to student interest is carried into negotiation of topics and forms of presentation of student work. Computers have been used regularly and are seen as assisting these students in presentation of their work.

Monitoring Students

Student progress is monitored closely through maintenance of individual files for each student. Marks are allocated and recorded for completed work. The school's involvement in the Access to Excellence initiative has meant that *Restart* students from 2002 have continued to receive support and to further extend their skills in Year 8. Liaison with teachers and cumulative comments have made it possible to monitor continuing progress.

Student Attitudes

Some students were initially cautious about their inclusion in the program. However, they have become progressively more relaxed and express enjoyment of the small group situation.

Support for *Restart*

Parents have been provided with information and have been invited to contact the school with any queries about student involvement. Some have done this.

Professional development has been provided through participation in the Middle Years Literacy Coordinator training and central and regional *Restart* PD. In addition the whole school has participated in Whole School Literacy PD with Sarah Culican from Deakin University and there have been beneficial meetings with other *Restart* teachers.

Other staff members are generally supportive of the program and recognise its value.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

Restart has definitely lifted the skills of the participating students and is seen as a very positive initiative. Students have shown increased pride in their work and greater self-confidence and enthusiasm as the quality of their work has improved. In addition the opportunity to work intensively with small groups has meant that the school has picked up a number of disabilities and impairments that had not been detected in primary school and the students concerned have become eligible for special assistance.

In terms of school organisation *Restart* has made it possible for other resources to be freed up in the school to provide additional assistance for integration students within the school population.

Further Suggestions

The school routinely tests all Year 7 students at entry for literacy levels. The testing reveals that almost 50 per cent of students are operating below expected standards. Continuing support for programs in literacy and numeracy is believed to be essential.

Restart staff believe that they would be assisted in their work by having more opportunities to learn about best practice in literacy education.

Opportunities for continuing one-to-one work with students as they enter Year 8 is seen as highly desirable.

CASE STUDY 12

Background

The school of 360+ students is situated in a country town in middle Victoria. Students are drawn from surrounding rural areas with some travelling up to two hours per day to attend the school. The town in which the college is located has a fairly transient population. The availability of relatively cheap housing has created population movement with some low income or single parent families moving from Melbourne into the area.

***Restart* in the School**

In 2002 there were fifteen students in *Restart*. In 2003 the year began with fifteen students but the transfer of families has reduced the number to thirteen. Not all students are withdrawn for a full year in *Restart*. If the degree of improvement is sufficient during the year they are returned to mainstream classes with support.

A number of measures was used to determine which students had the greatest literacy needs and should participate in the program. All Year 7 students undertook the DART test, along with the ORCHID, at the beginning of the year. The combined information from these sources was considered along with transitional information. The AIM was also useful and showed close correlation with the judgments that had been made.

The program is based on withdrawal in small groups. Each student has three periods a week of *Restart* assistance. (In 2002 students had four periods of assistance.) Sessions are timetabled for periods one and two every morning and students are withdrawn from a variety of classes, but not from sport or other practical classes.

One teacher with a background in Maths and Science and special education is contracted to deliver the program and to provide numeracy support for selected students. Students work in available classrooms.

Teaching Approaches

As a number of the students initially register no comprehension at the most basic level there is a concentration at first on word study, the identification of key words and the development of vocabulary using Corrective Reading as a basis. Activities are adapted to include students working in pairs, with shared reading and modelling being among the strategies used. Accuracy and speed in reading are checked frequently.

Monitoring Students

Student progress is monitored closely through testing which effectively occurs every day. Workbooks are retained by the *Restart* teacher and provide an ongoing record of improvement. The DART and AIM tests provide an evaluative basis for measuring progress.

Although there has been no specific monitoring of *Restart* students from 2002 in Year 8, the school provides literacy assistance to students in Years 8 and 9 following testing at the beginning of each of these years.

Student Attitudes

Students are very positive about the benefits of the program although some admit that they find the structure a bit boring. Students speak about the 'break through' in their understanding.

Support for *Restart*

Information evenings have been held to inform parents about the program. There has been very positive feedback from parents.

The whole school has undertaken Literacy Across the Curriculum professional development and members of the staff attended the regional *Restart* introductory meetings. The literacy coordinator and *Restart* coordinator organised a visit to another college in the region to look at their program. The literacy coordinator attended the Middle Years Literacy Professional Development course in Melbourne.

Staff members are generally supportive of the program as literacy is a Charter priority. There have been positive comments about improvement in students' skill levels and the transferral of skills into other learning areas. At times there have been some issues related to withdrawal and timetable difficulties in terms of 'catch-up' opportunities. However, many teachers have been prepared to modify their expectations to minimise such problems.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

There has been marked improvement in the self-confidence and self esteem of students as they have been aware of the 'break through' they have made with reading and comprehension.

Most Valued Strategies

The highly structured nature of the program has been reassuring for some students. The focus on phonemic awareness has enabled students to understand the ways in which language works and the small group situation has been a source of support and a basis for developing self-confidence.

Further Suggestions

The opportunity to provide literacy intervention at Year 7 is highly valued. In this college there is still a large, unmet need for support with about 50 per cent of students operating significantly below expected levels.

CASE STUDY 13

Background

This 7–10 college of 340 students is located in a small rural community in eastern Victoria. There is a highly transient local population with changes to traditional local industries creating socioeconomic difficulties for the local community. Koorie students make up approximately 10 per cent of the school population.

Restart in the School

In both 2002 and 2003 the program involved nine students. Students were selected following appraisal of all Year 6 information and use of a range of quantitative data including DART, BURT and SA Spelling Test. Where appropriate there was consultation with the special needs coordinator or other specialists who had worked with individual students. Also classroom observation, teacher recommendations, and informal chats with parents and students were used in determining participation.

The program is one of withdrawal in small groups for writing and spelling with one-to-one assistance for developing reading skills. Students receive support for at least three sessions a week. A further two sessions are available as needed. The *Restart* room is attached to the library. Its location facilitates informal contact between the *Restart* teacher and her students when they are working in the library in other subjects.

One teacher with a background in primary teaching and as an Early Year's coordinator conducts *Restart*. Very close links are maintained with all other year level teachers through the organisation of the Year 7 team teaching structure which has core subjects taught as integrated units. Links with the Year 7 team occur through weekly team planning sessions. The *Restart* teacher is also part of the college literacy team and attends faculty meetings where *Restart* is included on the agenda.

Teaching Approaches

Lessons are highly structured with step-by-step explanation provided. There is a great deal of repetition and students are required to verbalise their understanding, revisiting what has been covered and explaining how they will use it in other classes.

Session work remains as thematic as possible, in keeping with the Year 7 integrated curriculum. The lesson plan is treated with some flexibility to respond to student interest. Modelling using audio books assists reading. For writing there is a focus on information reports. Students have welcomed this, as many of them are tired of 'writing stories' after primary school.

Students are assisted to be actively involved in their own learning through the development of individual learning plans. The notion of student engagement is constantly kept in mind. Incentives such as special lunches, popcorn for birthdays and small prizes for competitions are used, as are strategies to bolster self esteem.

The *Restart* teacher has developed close personal relationships and a high level of trust with her students. She fills the role of advocate for many of these students, a number of whom are regarded as behaviour problems at times in other classes.

Monitoring Students

Running Records and weekly teacher observation records are maintained for every student, (in most cases recorded observations are discussed with the student). Students maintain writing portfolios and there is regular assessment of CSF levels by teachers. Tests are used, such as the DART, Dolch Sight Vocabulary, Gentry's Development Spelling test and the SA Spelling Test. The teacher's program includes weekly reflections on the progress of each student based on all available information.

Support for students into Year 8 can continue where necessary with further assistance being provided through the Access to Excellence initiative.

Student Attitudes

Students are very positive about being part of the program. This is evident in their eagerness to attend, willingness to be withdrawn, enthusiasm for inviting a friend to designated sessions and the absence of any discipline issues during the sessions.

Support for *Restart*

Parents are involved through initial discussion at a meeting where the individual learning plan for their child is discussed. Parents have given their support to informal contracts and a simple homework framework is currently being trialled.

Professional development support has been provided by *Restart* personnel at the initial launch and at regional meetings. There have been a few network meetings. Regional curriculum consultants have been very helpful when contacted by the school.

Year 7 staff members in the school are very committed. At planning sessions, programs are worked on for every ability level. The administration, is very supportive and have encouraged attendance at PD sessions, provided a budget and set aside a room.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

Students have shown improved self esteem, increased connectedness and reduced absenteeism. Organisational skills have improved and students have increased awareness of their own strengths, weaknesses and strategies most appropriate to deal with these. There has been an increased awareness in teachers of student needs.

Most Valued Strategies

Withdrawal is seen to be crucial for teaching skills. Students must have time and a structured and quiet environment to master new skills. The trusting relationship that can be developed in the small group situation is very valuable. It enables students to gain confidence and take control of their own learning.

Incentives and some degree of competition are useful strategies in maintaining student engagement.

Further Suggestions

DART works best when it is given individually and combined with a number of other assessment tools.

Timetabling is an issue for *Restart* schools. The program will only work if students are happy to be there and want to learn.

It can take some time for all staff to recognise the value of the *Restart* program. With increased recognition of the specialised abilities and strategies that *Restart* personnel bring into a school there are opportunities for all teachers to benefit and widen their teaching repertoires in ways that respond more effectively to individual learning needs.

CASE STUDY 14

Background

The school of 320+ students is situated in the Northern Metropolitan Region. Students in the school generally come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The school population is highly transient with absenteeism and unstable family situations being major issues. There are quite a number of Koorie students for whom the school has received additional funding. The school has a strong ethos of pastoral care. Team-teaching is practised widely through the school and is well accepted by staff.

Restart in the School

During 2002 and 2003 the program involved seven students each year. Students were selected on the basis of DART results and consultation with English teachers after students had been in Year 7 classes for the first three weeks of Term 1. Transition information was used although feeder-school estimations of CSF levels were often found to be inconsistent with judgments made at the college.

The approach is a combination of withdrawal and time in class, providing in total eleven periods of assistance a week. Students are withdrawn in two groups, one all boys and the other all girls, for three

periods that run parallel to their normal English classes. The *Restart* teacher is present and provides assistance in Health, SOSE and other English classes and also works in some Maths and Science classrooms assisting students with interpretation of written instructions.

One teacher who is also a member of the Access to Excellence team conducts the program. She has a background in ESL, English, literacy and special education. She works in very close collaboration with classroom teachers.

Teaching Approaches

The *Restart* room is set up in a very central position in the school. It is warm, inviting and there are lots of attractive literacy resources available for student use.

When students are withdrawn from English classes they work intensively on skills. Some techniques of Corrective Reading are used, in combination with scaffolding, which is the major strategy used. The content of Corrective Reading is not used, being seen as culturally inappropriate and insufficiently extending students skills.

The main approach used is based on scaffolding as developed by Dr David Rose of Sydney University. This program has been developed as part of a research program on indigenous literacy. It incorporates reading, spelling, interpretation and writing. It presents students with challenges and as it uses techniques that can be exercised on any piece of writing, avoids any 'dumbing down' of content.

In a typical session, students work collaboratively in small groups. A lively pace is maintained and a number of different activities occur in every session with no segment being longer than fifteen minutes. As reading is modelled, or shared, students use highlighting pens to identify key words and ideas. The meaning of words is elaborated in discussion. There is 'hands-on' activity as students reassemble words, or phrases that have been cut out of the text. In this system of scaffolding, reading is accompanied by a particular form of questioning. Guided questions are used to draw out structure and imagery so that students are actually analysing texts as they develop skills of reading.

In writing, the scaffolding system provides students with the model and then the skeletal structure of the form of writing that is selected. With group work assisting in the identification, meaning and choice of appropriate words and images to construct new pieces of writing in the provided framework,

students are enabled to produce work far beyond their previous abilities. The model of text patterning is a way of providing students with strategies that they are able to transfer across all KLAs.

Monitoring Students

Running Records are maintained for all students. Each student keeps a folder and a journal. Sections of the journals are photocopied to show concrete evidence of improvement through the year. Reports are provided for individual parents. There is no official monitoring of 2002 *Restart* students in 2003. However, of the seven students, only three have required continuing assistance in Year 8 alternative English in 2003.

Student Attitudes

There are some issues related to 'labelling' when students are withdrawn from classes although they do enjoy the small group activities. They are not embarrassed when assistance is provided in the classroom. The demands of concentration for scaffolding are quite intense. Students can become a bit tired and have problems in sustaining focus throughout the whole session.

Support for *Restart*

There is a positive response from parents who often recognise the need for assistance more clearly than the students.

Professional development support has been provided mainly through the Koorie Education Program, which enabled whole school PD with Dr David Rose. This was inspiring and has proved very valuable within the program. The *Restart* teacher and the alternative English aide have attended regional *Restart* PD but found these meetings did not allow enough time for useful interaction with other teachers.

Initially teachers did not fully understand the aims of *Restart*. To overcome this, the *Restart* teacher provided an interpretation of results of the DART to all Year 7 teachers and accompanied this with suggested strategies and work that could be used with students who were operating at levels as low as CSF Level 2. Most staff members are now supportive of the program and the team teaching works well.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

Students have been able to improve skills significantly. Associated with this has been an increase in confidence and self esteem.

Most Valued Strategies

The techniques and structure of scaffolding have been extremely valuable. There is also a conscious effort to provide students with enriched language models. The combination of withdrawal and work across a variety of classes has worked very well.

Further Suggestions

The program is highly valued. However, there are concerns about the use of the DART as a means of determining literacy needs, including the culturally specific nature of the content of the test and also the intimidation of a testing situation.

CASE STUDY 15

Background

The school of 420 students is situated in the Southern Metropolitan Region in an area where unemployment levels contribute to generally low socioeconomic status. The student population is multiculturally diverse and boys make up 55 per cent of the student numbers. The school had in place a pre-existing program in which all students were tested on entry to Year 7. On the basis of this testing the school provided a system of individual tutoring for students who were found to have literacy difficulties.

***Restart* in the School**

Seven students participated in the *Restart* program in 2002 and in 2003. Each group has contained a majority of boys. Students were selected from DART results combined with analysis of transition information and staff and counsellor consultation. At the end of 2002 results of the AIM also formed a part of the process of selection.

In 2002 the school used a system of withdrawal of students in groups of three to four for three periods each week from LOTE classes. One teacher with a background in special education and humanities conducted the program with the assistance of the student support coordinator. In addition support was provided for teachers in other subjects by modifying work to make it more accessible for *Restart* students. LOTE teachers in the school were not happy with the withdrawal of students and as a result, for 2003 there were a number of organisational changes.

Students were withdrawn from across all subjects. There has been a great deal of collaborative work with classroom teachers to incorporate elements of

their work into the *Restart* program. An additional six hours of *Restart* assistance has been provided from another staff member with a primary teaching and humanities background. This has made it possible for additional one-on-one assistance to be provided for *Restart* students.

Although the students have only three official *Restart* periods each week the school has also put in place of staff mentoring as one element of whole school reform. Up to eight staff members have timetabled tutorial groups covering literacy in their own subjects. *Restart* students are among the students who benefit from this program.

Teaching Approaches

Restart classes are conducted in a room set up especially for the program. It is centrally located and provides a welcoming and visually stimulating environment.

There is a central focus on reading for meaning. The program responds to students' interests with an emphasis on reading for pleasure and enjoyment. For those students needing assistance with decoding a phonetic approach is used for some sessions. Reintegration of *Restart* students into the mainstream classes is very important. Consequently activities providing vocabulary enrichment are an important element in the program. A conscious effort is made to move away from modifying work and to providing appropriate support to scaffold student achievement.

Lessons follow a recognisable structure and always contain elements of reading, writing, playing games and recall. Skills of prediction are increased through pre-reading activities, which are seen as an important aid to students and applicable in all subjects. Elements of the Thinking Oriented Curriculum are incorporated to challenge and extend students. Shared reading is used and if students are reading silently their understanding is tracked by use of questioning. Instruction is explicit, with the purpose and instructions made clear and backed up with the use of visual aids. To assist students with personal organisation their work is kept within the *Restart* classroom.

Computers are used within the program and some of the *Restart* students create most of their work using computers.

Monitoring Students

Student progress is monitored closely through regular assessment of performance on tasks. A written record is kept of individual responses and difficulties. In addition attitudinal surveys have been used for progressive testing. Involvement in the Access to Excellence initiative, and in school-wide adoption of the program You Can Do It, has meant that *Restart* students from 2002 have continued to receive tutorial support and to further extend their skills in Year 8.

Student Attitudes

There has been strong positive response to the program. The small group situation has been perceived as comfortable and supportive. They are happy to complete work and projects.

Support for *Restart*

Parents have been positive about the program. The school intends to produce a book dealing with ways to assist students at home for parents.

Support of other teachers is evident in the numbers that have volunteered to be part of the Literacy mentoring/tutorial program.

Professional development has been provided through the Middle Years Literacy Coordinator training and regional *Restart* PD. In addition Thinking Oriented Curriculum PD organised by the region has been of value.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

For students, the main benefits have been evident in a great improvement in literacy and general learning skills. Students have shown great increases in personal confidence, reflecting their recognition that change is possible. The program has been instrumental in positively changing the teaching and learning culture of the school. Such benefits have included:

- the establishment of the *Restart* room which has come to be seen as a major resource for teachers. Effectively, the *Restart* program, along with Access to Excellence and the whole school focus on improving literacy and numeracy and the level of student engagement, is revitalising teaching practices.
- a rigorous consideration of the implications for assessment when students are still operating at a level that requires modification of work. There have been professionally rewarding opportunities within the school to determine a means by which

students can achieve successful learning experiences while keeping in place the learning outcomes to which they must ultimately aspire.

Further Suggestions

The program is seen as very beneficial and one that should be continued. Continuing professional development for literacy educators is very important. There are issues about the cost of PD to individual teachers, which create some difficulties for individuals to attend all beneficial PD.

CASE STUDY 16

Background

The school of 900 students is situated in a rapid growth corridor of the Southern Metropolitan Region. The school population is multiculturally diverse with a slight gender imbalance favouring boys. The school has an emphasis on Literacy and had a number of programs in place to identify students with low literacy levels and provide some degree of support.

***Restart* in the School**

14 students participated in the *Restart* program in 2002 and in 2003. Each group has contained a significant majority of boys. Students were selected from DART and TORCH results combined with analysis of transition information.

In 2002 the school used mostly a system of withdrawal of students from LOTE classes. One specialist teacher in literacy education conducted the program. Students were withdrawn in groups of 3–4 for 4 periods each week. Timetabling issues and problems of space within the school created a number of difficulties with this form of organisation. Consequently, the system of withdrawal was maintained but for 2003 there were a number of organisational changes.

There are now three teachers involved with the program, which is timetabled against English for 4 periods a week. The teachers have backgrounds in English, IT/English and English/library. Students are divided into two groups of 7. Two teachers work at one time with each group in a team-teaching system, which makes it possible to provide some one-to-one assistance as it is required.

Teaching Approaches

Restart classes are usually conducted in the library. The program is based centrally on the English curriculum in the school and is designed to assist students to develop a repertoire of literacy practices and strategies, which are applicable across all KLAs.

The content used responds strongly to student interest and is generally based on popular culture. Lessons follow a recognisable structure and always contain some elements of reading, writing and speaking. Computers are seen as useful adjuncts to the program and are used whenever appropriate.

Monitoring Students

Student progress is monitored closely through observation of an Individual Learning Plan for each student with *Restart* teachers making regular observations. The schools involvement in the Access to Excellence initiative has meant that *Restart* students from 2002 have continued to receive support and to further extend their skills in Year 8.

Student Attitudes

Students have generally responded well to the comfortable atmosphere of the small group situation.

Support for *Restart*

Parents have been positive about the program.

Professional development has been provided through the Middle Years Literacy Professional Development course and regional *Restart* PD. The school is beginning to make use of Professional Learning Teams to provide continuing support.

Main Benefits of *Restart*

For students the main benefits have been evident in their significant improvements in literacy and general learning skills.

For staff there have been professional benefits in the opportunities for joint planning of activities.

Further Suggestions

The program is seen as very beneficial and one that should be continued. More financial assistance to provide a designated space within the school and additional time for more intensive one-to-one tuition would be welcomed.

APPENDIX 1

Restart Questionnaire

SCHOOL PROFILE

Can you provide a brief profile of your school?

Size, EFT allocation, number of students, gender breakdown, and any special features in terms of student population?

DESCRIPTION OF THE *RESTART* PROGRAM IN YOUR SCHOOL

How many students were in the program in 2002?

What was the gender breakdown?

2003?

What assessments or criteria were used in selecting students for the program?

How many teachers were involved in the program?
From which KLAs were they drawn?

What was the form of their involvement in each case?
Does this remain the same in 2003?

Were there links with other class teachers? If so, how were these links made and have they been maintained?

Have parents been involved in the program?

What has been the form of their involvement?

What model/s of literacy support have you adopted?
(If a particular program was, or is, being used, please specify.)
In the case of a specific program please outline the lesson framework.

For how many sessions each week have students received support?

How have students felt about being part of the program?
How have you been able to gauge student attitudes to their involvement?

Have students had input into the content and assessment of the program. If so, what has this been?

Where do the *Restart* activities take place?

Are there particular strategies that you believe have been most helpful to students? What are they?
In what ways have they been of help?

What texts have you used in the program?

SUPPORT FOR *RESTART*

What professional development was provided for participating or other staff?

What regional support was provided?

How effective was the support received?

What sort of commitment was there from other staff?

What additional support from the region or centre would be beneficial?

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

What records did you keep of student progress?

What qualitative and quantitative data do you hold to monitor student progress?

Do you plan or are you undertaking any continuing monitoring?

BENEFITS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

What positive outcomes have you seen from the program for students and teachers?

Have you made any changes to the program this year?
If so, why?

Is there anything else about the program you would like to change/improve upon?

Are there any further comments you would like to make about your experience of the program in your school?

APPENDIX 2

Texts recommended by schools in the survey

STUDENT READING

Alderson, J. *Crash in the Jungle* (2nd ed.) Classic Spirals, 2001 (non-fiction)

Aussie Nibbles/Bites/Chunks, Puffin, Penguin Books, Australia

Chapman, G., *the Phenomena series*, Howitz Martin Education, NSW, 1999

Donkin, A., *Atlantis the Lost City* (and other books in this series) Dorling Kindersley, Australia, 2000

Gleitzman, M., *Misery Guts*, MacMillan Children's Books, 1992.

Laser Beam novels

Pike, K. & McEvoy, P., *Brain Waves. Set 1. Plants that Bite Back* (and other titles in the series), Blake Publishing, Australia, 2003

TEACHER REFERENCE

Adcock, D., *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies: Book 4* (Cars and Stars), Hawker-Brownlow, Australia, 2000.

Lamb, L. & Sherwill, M., *Bridges, The Middle Years Literacy Program*, Shepparton Australia, 1999

Murphy, N., *Stepping Stones*, Heinemann Reed Education, Victoria, 2002

NSW. *Literacy Learning Journal*

Rasmussen, G. & Rasmussen, T., *Ideas to Go*, Hawker Brownlow Education, Australia, 1992

TEACHERS' MATERIALS FOR TEACHING AND TESTING ACTIVITIES

Barwick, J. & Barwick, J., *English Skills for Primary Students*, Howitz Martin, UK, 2001

Boning, R., *SRA Multiple Skills: Reading Series*, McGraw Hill, USA, 1998

Brownie, M. & Morcom, M., *Reading Between the Lines 4, 5 and 6*, Horwitz Martin, UK, 2000;

Twine, S. *Comprehension Lifter* (and other texts in the series), RIC Publications, Western Australia

Delange, B. & Kennedy, A., *ARK: For struggling readers/writers*

Englemann, S. & Meyer, L, et al, *Decoding Strategies*, McGraw Hill, USA, 1999

First Steps (Reading), Rigby Heinemann, Western Australia, 1998

Horsefield, A., *Opportunity Class English Tests*. Excel Pascal Press, 1999

Howard, P., *Creative Writing Skills*, Nightingale Press, NSW, 2001.

Johnson, P., *Phonics Matters*, Lingo Press, University of Ballarat, 2002

Reading for Detail, RIC Publications, Western Australia

Yeates, I., *Spelling Skills for Secondary Students*

The Department of Education & Training does not endorse any resources for use by schools. Schools make informed decisions about texts, resources and professional development they use based on local needs. This is not a complete list of all texts used by all schools visited. It represents those that particular teachers found to be helpful either for their own preparation of material, use in class or for student reading.

A useful source for exchanging information about resources is the *Restart* on-line discussion group at <http://ww2.sofweb.vic.edu.au:8080/~restart/>

Research shows there are some students in middle years (Years 5–9) who need extra support in developing literacy skills. The Department of Education & Training in response to a need for support materials to assist schools in working with these students is currently revising *Making a Difference*: a literacy development program for middle years students. The revised *Making a Difference* is aimed at students in Years 5-9. It looks at developing the students' skills in literacy beyond the decoding aspect of reading, emphasising the need for these students to have self-management strategies. The Middle Years Research and Development Project identified that middle years students want and need the opportunity to learn from others and discuss their work. For this reason the intensive instruction lessons have been changed to a small group withdrawal using Guided: Reciprocal teaching as a basis.

A copy of the revised *Making a Difference* will be distributed to all government schools during Term 1 2004. Details regarding professional development on *Making a Difference* can be obtained from regional offices.



