



From the Known to the Unknown

The Australian Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training 2002 Adult Literacy Innovative Project
“From the Known to the Unknown”.

Following is the final report for pilot project “From the Known to the Unknown” funded by The Australian Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training 2001 Adult Literacy Innovative Projects.

The report is presented in four sections:

- 1/ Processes and Pilot materials
- 2/ Challenges
- 3/ Achievements
- 4 / Next Steps



1/ Processes and Pilot materials

“From the Known to the Unknown”* was a pilot project to present health material visually and in the local Indigenous language Ngaanyatjarra, and then move out into the relevant spoken and written English.

The material, on interactive CD, has been developed during workshops with Indigenous Ngaanyatjarra Aboriginal Health Workers from Ngaanyatjarra Health Services (Aboriginal Corporation). Ngaanyatjarra Health Services (Aboriginal Corporation) are the major health providers in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Western Australia. (Please refer to pilot CD material “Body Parts” attached).

The pilot group of Ngaanyatjarra Aboriginal Health Workers was made up of Certificate III Aboriginal Primary Health Care Work students;

Dorcas Shepherd	Giles
Florrie Chambers	Giles
Burt Lane	Jamieson
Nola Lane	Jamieson
Queenie West	Warburton
Vicky West	Warburton
Melanie Nelson	Tjirkarli
Lana Porter	Patjarr
Thelma Richards	Wanarn

Aboriginal Health Educator
AHW Educator
Professional Development Coordinator (ED)

Valerie Foster
Issy Coffey
Fiona Nash



* For details of the “From the Known to the Unknown” approach please refer to the CD material “Leaving Letters; Finding Letters” attached

Supporting the delivery of “Certificate 3 Aboriginal Primary Health Care Work Course”.

The aim of the health material is to support the delivery of the “Certificate 3 Aboriginal Primary Health Care Work Course.” Such a certificate holds considerable English literacy challenges for many Aboriginal Health Workers.

Following meetings with members of the project Steering Committee, Ngaanyatjarra community members and Aboriginal Health Workers, the consensus view was that the health concepts which underpin the “Certificate 3 Aboriginal Primary Health Care Work Course” were also not fully understood by many Ngaanyatjarra Health Workers. Prerequisite knowledge such as the, “Heart and Circulatory system” and “Lungs and Respiratory system” needed to be understood. As such, the presentation of these vital fundamental health systems in the indigenous language of Ngaanyatjarra would be useful in supporting the delivery of Certificate 3. (See attached copy of the first interim report for details)

During some of these workshops the CD material “Spoons” was shown to introduce the approach of presenting information on the computer in local Indigenous languages and English. The material also tested basic computer skills of workshop participants. (see attached material “Spoons”)



English Literacy Levels

Amongst the target audience of indigenous Ngaanyatjarra-speaking Aboriginal Health Workers there is a wide range of literacy levels. To ensure accessibility the project presented English literacy material to cater for Health Workers with low levels of literacy. The first three literacy exercises for each key word are;

1/ add the missing vowels ie H _ _ RT and choosing from A, E, I, O, U.

2/ form the word by choosing from all the letters of the alphabet.

3/ a multiple choice of key concepts words ie

“Arteries take bloodthe heart” With multiple choice such as “towards” “away from” or “behind”

(Examples of these word activities available are on Macromedia “Flash”)



2/ Challenges

As with all innovative projects, as new ground is crossed the unexpected is encountered. There may be challenges that need to be overcome or surprise benefits enhancing achievements.

Translations.

A major challenge of the project has been the translation process. The number of able translators between English and local Indigenous languages are very few. This is the situation with the Ngaanyatjarra language. After working through various translations options, Ameer Glass and Dorothy Hackett are working with Ngaanyatjarra Health staff at Warburton, W.A to strengthen the translations components.



Technical Issues; Computer Literacy

Computers are just beginning to be used in many of the Ngaanyatjarra Clinics. The current use of computers at work is quite low. For English as a Second Language speakers, the text keyboard can present challenges. The pilot material overcame these challenges by requiring only the use of the “Mouse”.

For many other people, such as those working in large government organisations, working with computers means mainly using text. In general use of multimedia applications, such as Adobe Acrobat, with sound files and video “Quick Time” movies, has proved to be low. Consequently an aspect of this project has been to provide staff development in the use of such software.

Technical Issues; Use of Software.

While developing the pilot material, limitations with the Adobe Acrobat PDF format was encountered. While this format was suitable to present video, text and interactive layout on CD, for display and dissemination, it was unsuitable for integrating the associated word activities. Macromedia “Flash” or “Dreamweaver” proves to be more suitable for this work.

Expertise in the area of choice and use of appropriate software for developing and presenting an integrated CD document need to be sourced outside of our local region. In this regard the isolation of the remote nature of this project is a challenge. To overcome this skills shortage, links are being made interstate with the aim of working with personnel via the internet or bringing in personnel for input into projects.

3/ Achievements

Dissemination.

During the project a number of requests for information regarding the “From the Known to the Unknown” were received. All such requests from magazines, journals, radio stations and individuals were responded to. This included articles appearing in

“Literacy Link” , April, 2002 the publication for The Australian Council for Adult Literacy.

“Australian Training Magazine” June 2002, the publication for the Australian National Training Authority.

Conference presentations at:

“People and Technology... Bringing the World Together” 2nd World Congress of Colleges and Polytechnics Melbourne, March 2002 - “Known to the Unknown.”

The 19th International Conference of the International Society for Quality in Health Care, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France, November, 2002 - “Known to the Unknown.”

“Bridging the Divide”; Australian Council for Adult Literacy National Conference, November 2002, Brisbane, 2002 - “Leaving Letters; Finding Letters.”

Radio.

Several radio interviews, including ABC Territory Radio and Radio National, Community Radio 8CCC-FM Alice Springs, and National Indigenous Radio Cairns.

Individuals / Organisations

Individual requests for information were received throughout the project from within the Northern Territory (eg. Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin) interstate (eg. Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia) and internationally (eg. Kenya, India, Canada and The Netherlands)

These individuals and groups are geographically dispersed, but all share common challenges in literacy development. They have provided feedback and critical evaluation of the project and proposed next steps.

Health and Education Collaboration.

During workshops with Ngaanyatjarra Health Services Health Advisory Board (see Memberships below) enthusiasm was expressed for the potential use of material in schools throughout the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

Literacy levels of Ngaanyatjarra Adults and Ngaanyatjarra school age children can overlap. Material prepared for Adults can be of use in schools. Also the literacy work of one age group can enthuse and support the literacy work of the other.

Another benefit of developing such links with education is to workshop word activities with Ngaanyatjarra teaching staff to increase options, cumulative sequencing and graduations in difficulty levels for literacy activities.

Membership of Ngaanyatjarra Health Services (Incorporated Body) Health Advisory Board

Douglas Josif
Winnie Woods
Alwyn Bates
Maimie Butler
Daisy Cooke
Rhoda Watson
Valerie Foster
Cindy Shepherd
Annie Tangey

Ngaanyatjarra Health Service Office
Blackstone Community
Wannan Community
Tjukurla Community
Tjukurla Community
Tjirrkarli Community
Wannan Community
Warakurna Community
Ngaanyatjarra Health Service Office

—NGAANYATJARRA—
Health Services

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PRODUCTIONS

4/ Next steps

Developing an online “Community of Interest”.

Ngaanyatjarra people within the Ngaanyatjarra Lands often move from one community to another. This can be quite disruptive to the delivery of study materials. If learning materials were available from a web-based server, then Ngaanyatjarra Health Workers could continue their study regardless of the community they are in. This would greatly increase the continuity of study. Also materials could not be so readily misplaced or lost, as they would be stored on the internet.

In association with Internet structures such as the Northern Territory, Learning and Technology in Schools (LATIS) program, a web based server system is being explored.

Collaborations: Health and Education.

As outlined above enthusiasm has been expressed for the potential use of the ‘Known to the Unknown’ process and materials in schools throughout the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

Integration between materials delivered at post-primary and secondary levels, with clear paths that lead into the VET sector could open up career choices for Indigenous speakers in remote communities. By expanding literacy paths trialed in this project, literacy skills could be increased to match levels required at each stage.

Collaboration between the curriculum needs of post-primary, secondary levels, and VET courses such as the Certificate III Aboriginal Primary Health Care Work, could lead to an integrated literacy approach. Students could work through curriculum material with accompanying literacy levels from post-primary onwards, working towards possible study / career options in the VET sector.

Collaborations: Speech Pathology.

Staff at the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Service, Pathology Unit, have expressed interest in the draft material for use in their cross-cultural work. Workshops are planned to follow up this interest. This collaboration may result in possible applications of the material for improvement of spoken English with Indigenous speakers who have speech difficulties.

Collaborations: Interstate and International

Literacy challenges faced within the cross-cultural setting of Central Australia are similar to those in other parts of Australia and overseas. There is mutual benefit to be gained from collaborations interstate and overseas which trial the processes and material of 'The Known to the Unknown' project. Conferences planned in Brisbane, Queensland and Paris, France later this year plan to develop such collaborations. The more "critical filters" and different work place settings 'The Known to the Unknown' is put through, the stronger and more adaptable it can become.

