

WORKING WITH PRE-LEVEL 1 LEARNERS IN A SPECIFIC CONTEXT

CASE STUDY: AURUKUN

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CAPE YORK PENINSULA



- Located 800 km North West of Cairns on Cape York Peninsula
- Population: 1200 people (June 2010)
- 93% identify as Indigenous

HISTORICAL CONTEXT



Mission House circa 1913

- Presbyterian Mission 1904 – 1978
- In 1978 QLD government took control of community
- Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978 granted a 50 year lease to Shire of Aurukun

CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT



Aerial View of Aurukun – 2012

- Wik and Wik Waya peoples
 - 5 spiritual clan groups
 - 17 families/tribes
- Language: Wik Mungkan
- Inter-clan conflict
- Overcrowded housing conditions
- Dry community (AMP)
- 80% unemployment/ welfare economy

CHALLENGES FOR TRAINERS IN AURUKUN

INITIAL INTERVIEW

- Finding clients to can be difficult
- General suspicion of trainers

VENUE

- Must be flexible: work times, security, keys – access to building

LOW WORKPLACE ATTENDANCE

- Competent, capable individuals can feel overwhelmed
- High staff turnover
- Death – huge impact on community

ENGLISH IS 2ND/3RD LANGUAGE

- Slow response time
- One word or short phrase responses

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

- Some may suffer from foetal alcohol syndrome, drug and alcohol abuse
- Dysfunctional home environment

APATHY

- Not accustomed to study or work – minimal structured formal learning
- 'Shame' factor amongst peers

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

DEPOT

- Third Year Plumbing Apprentice in final year with one TAFE block to complete – works/studies independently
- First Indigenous apprentice in Aurukun to successfully complete his trade qualification.

CHILDCARE CENTRE

- Staff are increasingly motivated; routinely show up for study at scheduled times

HOUSEKEEPING STAFF

- Improved quality of work

SMALL GROUP CLASSES

- Overcoming the 'shame' factor
- Growing interest in training and study opportunities.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM COUNCIL

- Improved communication skills, self-esteem and confidence

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING (PBL)

- A learning approach used to enhance content knowledge and foster the development of:
 - Communication and collaboration skills
 - Problem-solving and critical thinking skills
 - Self-directed learning skills.
 - Utilises 'real-life' problems and scenarios
 - Learner is required to identify, interpret and analyse data to make recommendations.
- Barrett, 2010

INDIGENOUS LEARNERS IN REMOTE REGIONS – COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

- Limited exposure to Western culture
 - English as a second (or third) language
 - Limited technological resources and low technological literacy
 - Low literacy as measured by ACSF
 - Limited education and/or formal instruction
 - Interactive and practical activities are most effective
 - Concrete and immediately implementable.
- Robinson & Nichol, 1998

CASE STUDY: JANELLE

- Female; 43 years old
- First language is Wik Mungkan
- Left school after finishing grade 10 in Aurukun – no training since leaving school
- Currently employed as a cook and cleaner at local guest house
- Recognises all letters of the alphabet and their sounds – cannot read words.
- Writes first and last name; completes simple forms with guidance
- Copies inconsistently
- Oral responses are limited to one word answers; does not elaborate
- Adds numbers to 20
- Limited understanding of herself as a learner
- Learning goals include improving writing and numeracy abilities.

CASE STUDY: THOMAS

- Male; 22 years old; hearing difficulties
- First language is Wik Mungkan
- Left school after finishing grade 12 in Townsville
- Has taken training since leaving school (White card and computer)
- Currently employed as a member of the Parks, Gardens and Maintenance team
- Recognises most letters of the alphabet and their sounds – did not recognise 'x' and 'z'
- Frequently text messages and uses video technology on phone
- Writes first and last name; requires someone to read and complete bank and Centrelink forms for him
- Copies inconsistently – has not written formally since leaving school
- Confident speaker/ broken sentences but meaning is understandable
- Does not modify speech according to context
- Familiar with digital time; some difficulty with symbols (\$); adds numbers to 20
- Confused by questions about training and study; did not see relevance of learning
- Learning goals include improving reading abilities.

USEFUL RESOURCES

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS EDUCATORS IN REMOTE AUSTRALIA

<http://didgchildcare.wordpress.com/2012/02/17/working-with-indigenous-educators-in-remote-australia-article-for-kpv/>

CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC POLICY RESEARCH

[Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research - CAEPR - ANU](#)

AURUKUN SHIRE COUNCIL

http://www.aurukun.qld.gov.au/asc_annual_report_2011.pdf

PLUS, MINUS, INTERESTING

- What worked? (informative/ interesting/ engaging)
- What could be improved?