

123 BIG Mob!

ABSTRACT:

In this paper we intend to address the everyday issues and circumstances that we encounter in our role as Literacy /Numeracy Lecturers/Prisoner Education at Darwin Correctional Centre.

We cover the background of the target group – namely adult Indigenous students – that come from a diverse range of communities; the prison environment; training packages and appropriate approaches and strategies that we have found most effective here at Darwin Prison.

This is an evolving framework with the need for continuous re-evaluation and reconsideration. Therefore, our practices, resources and assessment tools require ongoing modification in order to meet the individual needs of our students and AQTF requirements.

We illustrate how our own teaching is implemented through examples of two units of work- one is literacy and the other, numeracy. We show how we have adapted our assessment tools to meet the AQTF requirements. We will also provide examples of our students' work as a result of the teaching and learning strategies that will improve the literacy and numeracy of our learners.

Most importantly, with regard to Indigenous adult learning, we consider the two world views –Indigenous and Western- that we feel are salient and how they affect our approaches to teaching this specific client group.

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Background:

Staff:

Literacy/Numeracy background lecturers.

Currently we have 3 part-time literacy /numeracy lecturers and 1 assistant tutor. We work 4 days a week 30 hours in total. 16 hours are contact and 14 hours are administration time. We work in with the computer/business lecturer, Steve Robinson, and provide support to other industry lecturers and external providers.

Clients

We deliver to over 95% Indigenous students at the prison. Many have been assessed at NRS level 1 or 1 NYA. These students are representative of many remote NT and Islander / Queensland and WA communities. Those of the lower literacy/numeracy level need intensive, phonics focussed sessions and base 10 number system concepts, to help them develop the required whole language skills before or during their participation in other courses. The mid-literate group consists of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students **ranging from the middle-upper level 1 to level 2.** These students will have completed schooling from approximately Year 5/6 onwards. Some of these students will have also attained good reading and writing skills from exposure to workplace numeracy and literacy experiences.

These students are able to meet unit criteria more so than those of a pre/low literate level. Many students at DCC are Indigenous (over **90%**), hence the majority of enrolments are of Indigenous background.

There are a number of disadvantaged students and therefore their learning difficulties are often compounded. From the initial assessment stage, we have found that many Indigenous students:

- ❖ Have little or no formal educational experience;
- ❖ Suffer hearing loss in Aboriginal communities and this can impair speech development ;
- ❖ Do not go on to employment after they leave school at an early age. (This factor may be largely due to a lack of employment opportunities in their own communities caused by isolation and remoteness) .
- ❖ Have little hands-on industry experience and literacy skills, which impact on chances of employment;
- ❖ Have poor health due to the affects of drugs, alcohol and/or petrol sniffing;
- ❖ Suffer brain impairment, eye problems, long term diabetes or heart problems;
- ❖ Have short term memory loss or suffered behaviour problems as children;
- ❖ Lower-socio-economic factors caused by or causing the above problems.

'One of the major problems in health is the ear problem. 'Otitus Media', an infection of the middle ear, is a common ear condition. If children develop this problem in the first 5 years of their lives they will have trouble hearing all of their first language. This loss of first language makes literacy acquisition difficult because they do not have the basic foundations of their first language to build on'.

Bridget Priman. (p. 16 Literacy Link Feb 04)

Finally, the cycle of imprisonment takes over and future direction becomes less clear. Because of their criminal background, students may have attitudinal factors that make learning difficult. These motivational filters also cause barriers to learning and need to be 'worked through' by the student and understood by the facilitator.

Training needs

Student training needs are determined through the following process:

- A request from them to participate in education.
- An 'Enrolment to Education' session is carried out. This is in accordance to AQTF Standards 6 and 8 which state, that as an RTO it is our duty to inform students of what takes place within the prison such as courses offered, the facilities provided and the lecturers involved.
- Students undertake a Literacy and Numeracy Assessment as well as a Needs Analysis.
During this session they provide background information to the SEO about their education, employment and health. Courses they wish to pursue are also indicated.
- They are then waitlisted according to what courses they have chosen. The work they complete during their literacy and numeracy assessment provides vital information to the lecturers about their reading, writing and numeracy levels and any *gaps* they may have. This allows us to help them develop a training pathway.
- If a student's level of reading and writing is very low, they are strongly recommended to attend literacy/numeracy classes and so they are class listed. Their language needs are mapped according to their chosen courses and life-skills needs, and the relevant language elements, linguistic features and textual genres can be developed to prepare them for further study, work or daily life.

Training Packages

In order to meet the educational/vocational demands of these groups, we deliver accredited training from CSWE, Prepare for Work, IVEC, Access to Employment and Further study (70113 NT), Vocational Access and General Education (70057NT). We also access external sources such as NTOEC, BIITE, CDU etc. and support the required content according to the literacy demands of the course.

Prison Environment:

Recommendation 45 of the CAYA report, sets out that:

'We recommend that targets for achieving literacy, numeracy, and English comprehension be established and the spaces to deliver the programs be provided'. ('A review of the Northern Correctional Services- Adult Custodial Operations- A Path to Good Corrections', March 04)

We are unique in that we are one RTO that is internally staffed and employed by the Department of Justice but shared by both Darwin and Alice Springs. We are required to meet AQTF standards the same as any other RTO. Alice Springs is a newer purpose built prison which is not only better planned but also has greater access to prisoners due to its longer structured day. It therefore, has a training facility that is better able to suit the needs of the prisoners they service. Consequently, with regards to AQTF standards and the above recommendation, Darwin prison is less able to function to its fullest capacity, because of its outmoded, pre existing structures that lack the resources as well as its own limited access to prisoners, which currently stands at 4.5 hours daily, 5 days a week.

Recommendation 47 from 'A Path to Good Corrections', also states that:

'We recommend that programs be delivered on the evening shift as well as the day shift, with access expanded to a minimum of 3.5 hours in the morning, 3.5 hours in the afternoon, and 2 hours in the evening'.

Currently, lecturers are unable to be employed as full time permanent because of external funding arrangements. Therefore, our positions are set at part-time conditions.

Movements around the prison make access time for prisoner education difficult and frustrating. Because of the prison layout which is physically dislocating, achieving prompt arrival of students is difficult and optimum contact time restricted.

The women are housed separately from the main prison, and have access to literacy/numeracy classes only once a week. This particular part of Darwin Correctional Centre was initially built for officers and not purpose built to house prisoners, let alone run educational programs. The low security area is positioned away from the main prison area and its access is through a walkway where prisoners are strip searched each time they come and go between the two areas. Like many other prisons, prisoners, educators and visitors often need to wait in either scorching heat with no shade, or pouring rain with lightning strikes. These delays impact on the available contact time that remains, and lessens the quantity, as well as the quality, of each session that students eventually attend. Consistent, uninterrupted, regular sessions set aside for literacy and numeracy each day, using explicit teaching would benefit our ESL students.

QUOTE: ??? Ask Madonna (CSWE Little bit by Little bit?????)

Teaching Issues

Time is simply not available for teachers working part-time at the prison, surrounded by all the disruptions that take place in the prison. The time to organise paperwork and ensure all files both hardcopy and on computer hard disk (to meet AQTF standards), make it difficult to design suitable tasks that meet the individual numeracy and literacy needs of our students. Unfortunately, any preparation time we have, is often at the expense of meetings, travelling between classes, ensuring enrolments and assessments are completed, general administration and other daily interruptions, so that ultimately, little time is left to consider the actual suitability and cultural appropriateness of resources and teaching tools.

AQTF Statement 9.3 upholds that,

‘..... in developing, adapting or delivering training and/or assessment products and services:

vi. the language, literacy and numeracy skills required are consistent with the workplace demands specified in the relevant units of competency or module and that these skills are developed in learners’, but

*‘While teacher – made materials have the distinct advantage of being designed to address the needs, abilities, and cultural background of students, they do require a considerable investment of teacher time and energy....’
(Mimi Met p.166, 1994 ‘Teaching content through a second language’,)*

The literacy lecturer has no access to her own computer in LSA and so must re-enter the main education, to update paperwork, electronic enrolments and completions.

Once the new LSA is operational, these issues should be addressed and hopefully, should resolve these problems and prevent new ones.

Class groupings and sizes are also issues which we are constantly addressing. Many students do not wish to sit near, or enter a class where a particular inmate is present, whether it be for personal, cultural or family matters. Many times we have had to reorganise classes, hence being flexible and adaptable in our teaching environment is of the utmost importance when considering learner preferences and needs

Learning Issues

Often program and educational courses, other prisoner demands such as visits, medicals, court appearances, work parties, program clashes, lock downs, cultural and sorry business, family/relationship problems, ongoing illnesses, negative past experiences with their schooling, or lack of, all place pressures on students and impact on a student’s ability to attend, let alone perform, in education 100% of the time.

For the very low literacy learners, a regular, structured remedial intensive program needs to be maintained, using appropriate cultural material and human resources that most benefit the Indigenous population.

For many, they wish to participate in only art and craft or music courses as purely recreational. Naturally, this is understood, but as an RTO we need to be able to utilise their interests and talents and stream these into a vocation which requires them to be somewhat literate and numerate.

In *'The Path to Good Corrections'*, Recommendation 43 : 5.5 Programs states:

'Literacy. About 80% of inmates have not achieved public school graduation levels, which are necessary to thrive in society. Many more spaces are needed. Consider making literacy mandatory.'

While we agree with this statement, in that it is vital to ensure *'mandatory'* enrolment in literacy/numeracy, it is not always possible to ensure their attendance. One needs to consider, what experiences students already have had in the past with their own schooling.

Bill Langlands found that Indigenous students' own expectations and attitudes was in itself an impediment to successful learning. Their own written histories revealed that their own *'social, cultural and historical background, and the attitudes and expectations implicit in Western, 'schoolish' education'* impacted on this lack of success. (FATSIS NTU Sept 96)

His study revealed that the students felt:

- the content was boring;
- a clash of learning styles (formal verses informal instruction);
- their own personal failure at academia;
- their own disruptive behaviour reinforcing negative stereotypes of racist teachers and peers and
- a curriculum that didn't prepare them for the wider community or a future in employment.

He found at home:

- their parents had similar notions of school, content and teachers and therefore felt they were unsuccessful themselves as supporters of their children to succeed at school;
- their truancy was not a cause to discipline their children, hence the children's education was not regular or maintained;
- homes were always full of other people and it was not conducive to study;
- They often went out and stayed up late;
- They were not given space to study;
- It was generally unacceptable, anti-cultural and antisocial behaviour to study;
- Families were on low incomes and did not purchase books or stationery;
- There was little access to public libraries or study facilities, particularly for the more rural, remote areas;

- Family life was often disturbed with arguments, violence, substance abuse, relationship problems and family breakdowns;
- Court appearances, crime and prison impacted family life;
- Many young people left home before they left school, ending up homeless;
- Ill health, funeral, sick siblings, moving away, mid-teen relationships, pregnancies, sport priorities and general social life effected their attendances and success at school and academic life;
- Many did not use English at home. If so, it was a dialect. Hence, they have little facility with academic registers of language;
- There was little interest in reading and writing at home and finally,
- There was little literature and people to model reading, in particular reading strategies, at home.

Not much is different in today's 2005 society. What Bill found true nearly 10 years ago, is still quite evident today. In the most recent document, 'Working with Diversity' - Quality Training for Indigenous Australians' these points are also a remarkable indication of the lack of change for Indigenous people in today's times. (P. 15).

Indigenous Culture and Learning Styles

If we make education '*mandatory*' as recommended above, this is in conflict what many Indigenous people have been brought up to believe in and know. This is based on a belief that, as children, they are treated as equals by community adults. At home they have the right to say '*no*' and decide *when* to do an activity, yet at school we take away this equality away by insisting that decision making is not a joint activity, but rather, teacher directed and controlled.

Indeed, it needs to be acknowledged that 'prison' *is* a loss of freedom, control, independence, decision making and home, but for us to impose these notions within a classroom context when many have not seen a classroom for many years, some not at all, is expecting a lot of literacy and numeracy to occur 'magically'. Many cannot forget this strict compliance of rules as adults if they had attended school on a regular basis as children.

(p.7 West, L 1992 'Cultural behaviour, conflict and resolution' in 'Aboriginal kids in Darwin Classrooms')

Some students emphasise they *do not* wish to attend literacy/numeracy classes. We are put in a position where if we force them, they attend begrudgingly to classes, and do not learn to their fullest capacity because of lack of motivation and at times disrupt classes making it difficult for others to progress

'Working with Diversity- Quality Training for Indigenous Australians' states:

'One of the aims is to increase the involvement of Indigenous peoples in the decision-making processes of vocational education and training.' (p32)
".....involving community elders in the development of training, are techniques that will help preserve and strengthen cultural fabric' (p9) as they are

'..the best people to provide advice and knowledge on development of training and its delivery and assessment...' (p 34)

Expectations

Student expectations are often unrealistic and unfortunately a result of their own community elders' wishes for them to become 'magically' educated overnight.

(see Neville for minutes of meeting where elders stipulate lit/num

We have observed as Prison Educators, that one particular learner expectation is that, once they have a Statement of Attainment, this will lead directly to employment.

While we explain during their initial interview that the pathway to employment is not so simple, they still do not understand that learning is a process taking place over much time and effort - and not an immediate product due to simple attendance. The idea of accepting and taking responsibility in reaching their own goals is something that the student needs to grasp and appreciate during their prison sentence. Often growing up in a small community, with little or no formal education, a student does not appreciate or understand this learning process for what it is.

Students realise, through their own everyday experiences, that they have gaps. They know that they are limited in what they can do independently and confidently. Students often say that they need help with their reading, spelling, writing and basic maths. They want to know how to fill out forms, they would like to do these by themselves; they need the confidence to take risks- not an Indigenous learning approach for fear of the error in the trial. We are often asked to teach about budgeting, receiving correct change, filling in their buy sheets, and although it is difficult for them to understand why, they *need* to know the importance of adding up. Their inability to bridge the concepts between basic maths functions and relate them to everyday life is a problem that is evident in our groups.

Exposure to a broad range of experiences in their own community is often meaningless and irrelevant. Shirley Brown and Cath Nichols state:

' students have found the learning context in which maths is presented is fairly meaningless' .

The following example is quoted:

'A man bought a dress for his wife. The dress cost \$89.00. How much change did he receive from \$100.00'. (PAGE NUMBER) (1997, FATSIS Seminar Series),

It is out of context because an Indigenous man would not think of walking into a shop to buy a dress as, *'Shopping is women's work'*.

Although shopping is meaningless, it is nonetheless '*important...for survival in a western cultural workplace*' or even as a simple life skill.

The problem of living in an abstract monetary system where Centrelink or CDEP payments appear in their banks accounts, only to be used up by all family members does not allow for base 10 number concepts or the four operations to develop through tangible experiences. The availability of credit gives them little access or opportunity to learn basic money and budgeting skills and does not allow Indigenous people to experience the income/outcome of earning and spending.

It is important to consider the Indigenous world view with regards to knowledge and how the western knowledge system differs to it. Ritual knowledge, in Aboriginal view, is knowledge that is pertinent to labelling appropriate Aboriginal terms such as a ritual tree or animal that is part of their culture.

Concrete knowledge relates to empirical, skill based knowledge.

Western knowledge does not separate the two, and sees knowledge as a process that exists without these two classifications or differences.

Western world view and learning styles are entwined.

Shielding oneself from failure until the learner has perfected a task, is part of Indigenous learning styles. In this way, shame and embarrassment (and therefore no chance of teasing) is avoided, as opposed to the Western approach to trial and error, which is encouraged in the learning process. Co-operation in Indigenous life is encouraged, rather than competitiveness as in our Western education system. Older Indigenous peers encourage the younger learners, so copying and trialling in front of an appropriate peer group still remains an important learning style right through into adulthood. This peer group, though, is selective and the SEO/lecture chooses a sensitive approach when selecting a prison peer tutor when such a position arises.

Literacy example presented by Angela Pattison

By using the unit 'Apply Reading to Everyday tasks – ULO034' from the *Certificate 1 in Access to Employment and Further Study (70113NT)*, I will show how the relevant elements and performance criteria are applied in order to teach and assess the required literacy skills for reading to the lower literacy ESL students at Darwin Prison.

I chose this unit because one of my strongest beliefs as a literacy teacher is that as reading and writing are so closely linked, one can only improve their vocab and word attack skills by reading with fluency and confidence.

O/H 1.

****Apply Reading to Everyday tasks – ULO034***

Present the assessment template we are currently using for the above unit. I have chosen to present two students' work.

Students studied

Student A is NYC- Level 1 with his literacy and numeracy. He has short term memory problems and has trouble retaining sight words, or sound/letter

relationships, He can recall most of the alphabet in sequence, but has difficulty applying word attack skills when reading or writing simple words. He can use read a few words on the '100 most used words' list. (ie I, we, a, my). Student B is working at level 1. He can read basic sight words and has some writing and spelling strategies, using them to relate sounds to letters when reading and writing new words.

Resources

The booklets we use are from the Reading Discovery Series, Ashton Scholastic, and both co-authored by Sue Briggs-Pattison and Bev Harvey. Student A used 'Camp Fire'. Student B used 'Last Winter'.

All the booklets are accompanied by tapes. For each page that is turned, a sharp bell indicates the next page to look at.

The material surrounds culturally appropriate and somewhat regional activities, that Indigenous people would partake in at home in their communities, such as hunting; life during the wet or dry; or making a fire. ('Last Winter' was the least appropriate and it was mentioned to the students that Winter down south is our dry up here, so he could consider the story to be set during ' Last Wet')

This cultural background knowledge is illustrated by the use of relevant linguistic elements such as verbs/material processes (need; flooded; took; made; paddled; found; caught; climbed; cooks;) and labelling words/ nominals (leaves; sticks; logs; mob; fire; father; Bunyip; tracks; snakes; damper; tin shed; river flats) .

Using the 'top-down' (using background information to make sense of reading) and 'bottom up' approach (decoding print to make sense of texts) when processing language whilst reading, the '*reader is an active participant in the reading process, making predictions and processing information using everything in the reader's prior experience and background knowledge Cultural information is a key element of prior experience..*'. (p 45 , 1997, Study Guide *Teaching Reading:Teaching Reader*, Gerot and Wignall, NTU).

Class groupings

Students of similar low literacy level are grouped together with no more than two or three in the room to avoid the shame and embarrassment of having the more literate students present.

Teaching Strategies

Task 1: Each student listened to the tape accompanying the booklet. This took place a number of times, till they were confident they could manage much of the text by themselves.

Task 2: They were listened to both as a group, then individually. Confidence is one of the strongest factors one needs to grasp in the task of decoding print. As well as building self –esteem, the following word attack skills and reading strategies are reinforced:

- Prediction

- Sound letter relationships
- Repetition (From Camp Fire , ‘ *We need...*’, From Last Winter ‘*Last Winter we it rained.....*’)
- Using pictorial aids for assistance
- Cause and effect (See ‘Last Winter using conjunctions such as ‘*that, so, and*’)
- Backwards and forward referencing by teaching reading on rather than focussing on one word.

Student 1 was asked to draw his own pictures of leaves, twigs, sticks logs, water food and the mob. He required reading material with limited print . Pictorial aids enabled him to recall the object of each sentence on each page.

Task 3: Students were asked to then cut up the reduced pages provided (see **OH 2/3**) and sequence the story as they remembered it. This sequencing is also important in reading and writing narrative structures right through from the Orientation, complication, crisis and resolution stages.

Task 4: Each student was to rewrite the story themselves using what oral and print knowledge they gleaned from the tape using both, the pictures and the text itself. (Refer Student A’s work Show **OHs 4/5**)

Task 5: Finally, they were to self-check their story by restructuring the print and glue in near of next to what they had written.

They were allowed to use the text to check on words they wanted to use but were unsure of.

Student B enjoyed using the THRASS chart to help him with writing unknown words. (Show ‘Last Winter’ students attempts. **OHs 6-9**)

He was encouraged to listen to sounds/ in each word, and count them, then to alternate between the consonant and vowel sections on the chart for each syllable he was sounding out. All attempts at trialling unknown words were congratulated, and if incorrect, he was to compare the correct spelling with a number of other words, (using the ‘which way *looks* right strategy’) and to choose the correct one . A simple dictionary was also at hand to check words .

Task 6: Each student was encouraged to read their own work, to see if it made sense.

Student A required further word order experience.

Eg Subject -verb -object-‘We need water’ .(**show OH 10**)

The sentence was cut up, and he was to rearrange the words according to the correct word order. Points made to him were:

- *He needed to have a capital to indicate the first word of the sentence, and
- *A full stop had to follow the last word.

He still found reading back his work difficult to do due to his short term memory. A simple procedural text of having a shower was start. He was to follow a similar sentence pattern (S-V-O) but write ‘*I*’ instead of ‘*We*’ and still using the verb ‘*need*’ in order to reinforce some sight word vocab. He

attempted to 'sound out' the letters, using the THRASS chart although confused many of the letters.

Student A also wrote a short set of instructions on 'How to make a boomerang'. (Show workbook). During the sessions, it became evident that he did not understand the notion of deconstructing spoken instructions in order to simplify written steps so that the reader could understand the process.

(Show **Oh**)

Task 7: I ask students to underline or circle only 5 words they know or *think* they have misspelt. This reinforces their own abilities to check their 'does it look right' reading/spelling strategies and therefore improves their confidence in seeing themselves as independent readers and writers.

(Show Assessment template, 'Apply Reading to Everyday Tasks', (**OH 1**) again, and tick off showing how some of the elements and performance criteria have been accomplished using the above tasks).

Research and Studies **Teaching approaches and strategies**

Unfortunately, due to the lack of literacy exposure amongst Indigenous families (refer above to Bill Langland's studies), the ability to differentiate between written and spoken texts (which influences the above literacy understandings) does not develop. The exposure to and immersion of print itself is vital in the formation of these understandings.

The differences between spoken and written language is important with second language learning and teaching. Considering that Indigenous languages were initially in spoken form rather than in written form, one should be careful not to assume the Indigenous learner is aware of the impact on learning in both the spoken and written forms.

According to his paper 'Is Learning to read and Write the same as Learning to Speak?', (1990 pp. 34-35, from *Literacy for a Changing World*, ed F. Christie, 1st Ed ACER, Hawthorn, Victoria), J. Hammond states, within a literate society or family, one develops the understandings that:

'Speech is typically used where participants are face to face, as in conversations, service encounters, recounts of personal experiences, or in formal and informal learning situations. Writing is used where some kind of permanent record of facts, information or ideas is required'. (p.34)

He claims that

'Speech is dynamic in the sense that it is created at the moment of speaking and..... is created jointly by two or more people and thus it develops fluidly as each participant contributes. It is not pre-planned.... And it cannot be drafted and edited. The participants..... share knowledge and background information'. and

'....speech situations can require clarification if (the participants have) not understood something'.

Finally, *'...the context itself contributes to the meaning being created.....the actual physical location, any non-verbal gestures, (and) intonation used.....'* (p 35)

On the other hand, Hammond claims that writing is *'fixed'*. It is a *'permanent record'* that is *'reflected upon and analysed'*. Being able to access and read it no matter where and when one is, as many times as one wishes, are its advantages. It has *'existence beyond the moment'* and can therefore be planned, edited and drafted, whereas spoken text cannot. Speech cannot be thrown away due to its starts, stops and hesitations. However, written texts must be *'carefully developed so that the writer can be sure the intended message is the one actually conveyed'*. The reader cannot ask for clarification of any points, and so written text must be formalised and *'decontextualised so that it makes sense in another time and place for a reader....'* (p 35)

Reading strategies such as the following can develop these necessary understandings of print. Teaching reading skills for the low-medium literacy students will then help them to cope with the demands of purposeful workplace related texts:

- ✓ Synonyms, dictionary practice and cloze activities in order to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words;;
- ✓ Reading for main ideas using headings;
- ✓ Using pictorial cues;
- ✓ Prediction skills;
- ✓ Comprehension , both oral and written;
- ✓ Critical thinking;
- ✓ Skimming and scanning and
- ✓ Reflection and personal response to reflect the notion of integrating background knowledge and values when reading texts
- ✓ Vocab extension using lists
- ✓ Initial/median and final sound/letter relationships

In this way, reading can stimulate writing and the text used as a model for writing so whole language can develop, as seen with the previous students discussed.

Using vocab lists gleaned from the texts, the THRASS program in conjunction with visualisation using the Lindamood program, can be used to support the difficult letter formation and patterns that commonly occur.

In his 1996 study, Bill Langland also found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students illustrated certain features in their writing, which are still evident today. These include :

- ✚ Unmarked plurals (eg mob ...)
- ✚ Unmarked possessives (eg My brother wife)
- ✚ Marking incorrect possessive (eg That's was the end)
- ✚ Omission of the article (egit was bad day/we had great time..)
- ✚ Added pronoun/verb (eg...so the plan was is to make a boats....)
- ✚ Addition to the pronouns system (' We mob, us two)

- ✚ Incorrect use or lack of conjunctions (eg On the fifth day so the plan.../This was the third day the tin shed all fed down))
- ✚ Inclusion of participles for simple past (eg We went and we seen our new house.)
- ✚ Use of invariant 'don't' (eg He don't read much)
- ✚ Use of double negatives (eg he don't work no more)
- ✚ Use of 'never as a simple negative (eg. We never did that this morning.)
- ✚ Lack of agreement between verb and noun (eg. All the boys was running).

We do not wish to make this a forum to air our 'grievances' about our work conditions which affect the quality of education for prisoners. But we do feel that it is important for others to appreciate the difficulties we face at DCC, and wish to have those in positions of change to acknowledge the ground level barriers that exist. We are all committed to improving the current teaching/learning environment as any other teachers involved in adult Indigenous education.