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Curriculum Outcomes in Access Asia Schools

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This unit was introduced as a way of overcoming narrow understandings and visions of culture amongst students of a traditional Anglo-Celtic background. However, in another case, studies of Asia were introduced to students with backgrounds that were not primarily Anglo-Celtic.

> At Christ the King Primary School in the Melbourne suburb of Braybrook, 85% of the 275 students are first or second generation migrants, from a range of countries such as Vietnam, China, the Philippines, South Africa and Chile. The school offers Asian studies units, as part of the administration's commitment to Asian studies across the school.
>
> During 2002, the school offered a unit titled 'Braybrook Goes to Bollywood' for all year 5/6 students. The topic fell within the Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE) key learning area framework.
>
> As part of the planning for this unit, the school contacted local Indian people who visited to school to help teachers understand elements of Indian life, culture and experiences.
>
> The aim of this unit was to learn about the diversity of cultures, lifestyles and history of India. Students were engaged in learning through a combination of teacher directed, individual and group tasks. There was an emphasis on learning about the culture, history and geography of India. In common with other cases, the aims were to increase the understanding of an Asian culture, to encourage the students to compare it with the Australian culture they experience, and to challenge cultural stereotypes.

We were interested to know what motivated Christ the King to study a culture which was not represented among the student body. Their answer was that students should be encouraged to understand and be tolerant of other cultures, regardless of whether they were born in Australia or not, and regardless of their ethnic origin. An important feature of this case, which also shows up in other schools, was the involvement of the local community in the school and their contribution to the authenticity of the material provided in classrooms.

> At Holy Spirit Primary School in NT, Year 3 students studied a unit titled 'Japan'. The unit was designed to increase the students enjoyment and comprehension of the storyl 'Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes', appreciate a different way of life, and to contrast Japanese and Australian cultures through comparisons on issues such as customs, traditions and beliefs. Outcomes for students included learning about Japan's natural and man made environment, appreciating customs and traditions of the Japanese people, acquiring new skills in arts and crafts, and celebrating the contributions of Japanese people in the local community. Teaching of this unit was considerably enhanced by the teacher's experiences of Japan and the presence of a Japanese intern who worked in the school for nine months.

A feature of this unit was that students were encouraged to compare their own culture with that of an Asian neighbour. The unit meets the requirement of the NT Curriculum Frameworks in that teaching of Asian Perspectives is now mandated. As with almost all teaching about Asia in primary schools, the approach taken here was avowedly cross-disciplinary, but in this case built around a world famous story.

Studies of Asia and Whole School Presentations

A feature of the unit offered at Christ the King Primary School was that it ended in a major presentation. This was a dramatic performance, which was offered to the whole school community, involving the creation of stage sets, costumes, and rehearsals. The preparation and proceedings were videotaped for those who could not attend. The presentation has been a way of attracting parents to the school in numbers, and an important one because the general level of participation in school affairs by parents at the school is low.

This was also a major objective of a unit offered at Caboolture State School in Queensland.

> At year 7 the school offers a unit titled 'Where in the World is…?' which required all students to undertake research on an Asian country. Teaching strategies centred on facilitating students investigations, e.g. internet research, atlas work, mapping, health needs of an Asian country, examination and comparison of cultural differences. The responding teacher writes that "the greatest highlight (of the unit) was most definitely the Culminating Activity. This was held in our school library with invited guests from the community and parents. The students had planned most of the activities, games and displays. They dressed in Asian fashion and cooked Asian dishes. They taught visitors Chinese hopscotch, origami, etc. It was great".

A similar event takes place at Launceston Church Grammar School. Every second year the school conducts an 'Asian Day' programme for all classes with guest performers and an Asian Food Festival.

These are examples of how schools call on and give back to the community through studies with this format. Encouraging links with parents and the community at large was a reoccurring theme across the cases.

> At Teven-Tintenbar Public School in northern NSW, "the Rice Growing Cycle" is a unit offered in year 4/5. This unit encourages students to become involved in all stages of rice growing based in the playground of the school as part of the NSW HSIE curriculum framework. The students are expected to use problem solving and experiential learning to achieve the goals of the programme. The small-scale fully operational model rice farm includes; an irrigation system, hut and rice paddies. The rice is planted, irrigated, harvested, threshed, milled, cooked and tasted by students. Over time the unit has gained considerable publicity in educational circles and in the local press. There has been extensive parental support and involvement that is encouraged by the teacher and supported by the school administration.

Links with Asian LOTE

Several case schools reported difficulties with teaching LOTE, one result had been that students had been 'turned off' and this led to low achievement. One solution has been to provide more context for the teaching of Asian languages. A feature of the Teven-Tintenbar example is the integration of the teaching of LOTE and environmental studies in this school. At this school, connections were made because the teacher offering 'The Rice Growing Cycle' also offered Indonesian studies in LOTE. The decision to integrate these studies was made at the school level.

At Busselton Senior High School, the teacher said that 'in a school that does not really have cross-curricula focus, one valuable outcome of the LOTE-SOSE interaction is the student perception that LOTE is an isolated learning area has been partially broken down, with benefits to LOTE teachers too.

This was also a theme at Holy Spirit School. In 2002, teachers focussed on ensuring that an Asian perspective was widely incorporated into the curriculum and as mentioned earlier, the school hosted a Japanese intern to assist with the implementation of studies about Japan. However, there was also a spin off for integration of LOTE and cultural studies. The teacher said that 'we feel that this resulted in a much more successful model than isolated LOTE lessons as teachers were more actively involved in cultural learning'.

At Caboolture State School, through studies of Asia, the school aims to foster tolerance and understanding across all year levels.

Linking Studies of Asia with Community Resources

In several cases classroom focussed teaching was extended to include excursions, and/or visitors which gave a real-life and out of school aspect to the learning.

> Beechworth Secondary College is situated in a country town in Victoria with a 19th/20th century local Chinese history. Studies of Asia are embedded within most key learning areas in years 7-10. In year 7 all three classes studied a unit called 'Ancient China'. The unit rests on Chapter 5 of the text 'Exploring North East Asia' and encourages students to learn more about Ancient China, through a wide variety of teaching techniques, including HOT (higher order thinking) activities, creation of pamphlets, costume and digital photography, presentation of China fact files and comprehension of written and visual text. Through these strategies students increased their knowledge and understanding of cultural, historical and environmental aspects of China. Taking advantage of the historical setting students also visited Beechworth's Chinese History Heritage Trail that includes a cemetery that holds the graves of Chinese miners who came to Beechworth in the "Gold Rush" years.

As with the previous examples the unit of work was linked to a performance. The follow through here was through the Ancient China unit,

which functioned as a preparation for a later school production, called "Willow Blues" which was set in Imperial China. Most of the year 7 students were involved in some way, as performers or makers of costumes or sets.

> At Beckenham Primary School in WA, the school offered a unit called 'Vietnam', a nine-week unit for years 2/3. The unit outline suggests that the unit encourages outcomes across all key-learning areas, although it is formally placed in the S&E framework (Society and Environment). There is a particular connection with the LOTE area.
>
> Like the Beechworth case, the unit places a strong emphasis on relevant excursions outside the school. The study of the Buddhist religion is a key aspect of the teaching, and students are taken on a visit to a Buddhist temple. At the temple, students meet and talk with a Buddhist nun. In addition the students have a conversation with a recent Vietnamese refugee. These experiences are designed to develop an appreciation of the culture of an Asian country, and an understanding of and respect for people from other countries. Students are also expected to develop information collection, discovery and sharing skills.
>
> Hills Montessori School, located in the Adelaide hills, offered a unit called 'Festivals and Celebrations'. A principal motivation for the unit was to counter rising animosity and fear towards other religions and beliefs. Opportunity was provided for the participation of parents and the wider school community. From October to December 2002, many cultural and religious groups celebrate significant festivals. The students studied four such festivals: Halloween, Divali, Ramadan and Christmas. Features of the unit were: integration across disciplines, student research presented in booklets, and visits by guest speakers. In this case, the speakers were an Indian born in South Africa, an Indonesian Consular representative, and a young woman from Afghanistan. The teacher said that these visits put 'a positive face on these unfamiliar celebrations and gave the children greater understanding of different beliefs. I believe we made positive progress toward removing the fear of difference and enabling the discussion of issues informed by knowledge and understanding."

The majority of these units are located in a formal sense in the SOSE or equivalent key learning area. As we have seen, while these units start out studying culture and related aspects and then culminate in extension performance and artistic activities. The quality of the curriculum is in no small part due to the efforts of teachers in researching the relevant external resources, and emphasises the degree of planning that is involved to provide learning experiences with such rich perspectives.

Studies of Asia in the Secondary Schools

It has been well documented that there are fundamental differences in the way curriculum is organised and delivered between primary and secondary schools[v]. While each State and Territory has developed curriculum frameworks for all schools, there is no doubt that primary and secondary schools view these frameworks in different ways.

Primary schools have a reputation for developing theme-based teaching. In theme based teaching, content and teaching strategies are drawn from across frameworks. A more linear perspective is for school based curriculum development to respond to the frameworks in a more direct manner, and this is more likely to be found in secondary schools. In this perspective, a unit of work is more likely to have a one to one link to a given framework. For example a unit on mathematics would show strong correspondence to the key learning area framework in mathematics.

Generally, the teaching about Asia cases in secondary schools in the sample fell into this latter perspective. However, this did not reduce the quality of the units or their creativity.

> Unley High School in South Australia is well known for the performing arts, and has hosted performances by the Shandong Traditional Chinese Orchestra, the Bharatan Dance Company and the Lu Lin Dance Theatre. The school subscribes to the view that 'including studies of Japanese contemporary art in the curriculum gives teachers an opportunity to promote cultural understandings through the Arts'. The focus on contemporary Japanese art is not seen as a separate study as students are asked to draw from their own society and their own popular culture to make comparisons and connections'.
>
> In Year 10 the school offers a year 10 Art study titled 'The Concept of the Cute'. The unit explores aspects of contemporary Japanese Art and connections with culture, consumerism and mass production. Connections are also made to American pop art movement and current western youth culture. Students view cartoons, and related contemporary Japanese popular images and connect these to contemporary Japanese artists. The teacher said that 'the students were able to make the connection between art and culture; they related their own art to events and issues in society. Students showed a greater understanding of aspects of Japanese art and culture which they were previously not familiar with'.

This example is obviously drawn from the Arts. There were examples from other key learning areas and different year levels

> At Birrong Girls High School in NSW, Year 11 students studied a unit titled 'Aung Sang Suu Kyi and the Democracy Movement in Burma', as part of the Modern History Sequence. The school-based unit asks students to apply history enquiry methods to investigate significant political, social, economic and technological forces, in this case to the situation in Burma in the twentieth century.

This is an example of teaching about contemporary Asian issues located within the formal senior school curriculum, years 11 and 12. At Beechworth SC, in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) the school offers a unit-four history topic titled 'The Chinese Revolution' which has had a high success rate in terms of student achievement. Student interest and achievement at this level was due to the emphasis on studies of Asia in the year 7-10 curriculum, according to the teacher involved.

Student Outcomes

In the discussion above, we have discussed the objectives of units in different schools. Student outcomes should be consistent with these objectives.

We have also noted two major patterns of units vis a vis curriculum frameworks. In secondary schools, unit topics tended to fall within one learning area. In primary schools unit topics tended to span many, if not all of the key learning areas, a finding that has been well documented in previous research on studies of Asia in schools.

We asked every teacher to tell us about the actual learning outcomes for the unit they nominated. As expected, some mentioned cognitive outcomes, for example, learning about Japan's natural environment, understanding of cultural elements of India, knowledge of festivals and celebrations. These were always accompanied by process and affective outcomes, for example, one teacher said the outcomes for her unit were 'engaged learning', enjoyment with hands on activities, sense of challenge and satisfaction with learning activities. In another case a teacher mentioned group-cooperative learning and problem solving. In some cases no cognitive outcomes were listed.

While we did not seek information about assessment, some schools provide information about how student outcomes were monitored. For example, one school told us that in the SOSE area, assessment reports were given twice a year. The mid year report focuses on knowledge and skills and the final one focussed on processes. Activities are geared towards understanding and are judged as achieved or not. However, few other primary school teachers said that students were formally assessed in relation to learning about Asia.

Also, the units discussed in this section show a considerable concern for affective and related outcomes, for example appreciation of cultural differences, reduction of animosity towards other cultures, countering prejudice etc. While teachers can get a feeling for the net impact of teaching on students in their classes, there are some who require more systematic evidence that curricula with these objectives do make a difference to individual students.

For some time valid student assessment of higher-level cognitive outcomes has been an area of considerable concern among policy makers and academics with interests in student outcomes. The problem of valid assessment is compounded if schools and educational systems wish to collect valid and reliable assessment data on outcomes such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph. This is an area where the AEF could make a significant contribution, not only to Studies about Asia, but to outcome measurement more broadly, if it were to fund developmental studies based on these objectives.

School Level Commitment to Studies of Asia

In the previous section, we concentrated on teaching, learning and outcomes related to teaching about Asia in the case study schools. We now turn to other elements in the 'causal chain' in Figure 1.

The Figure reflects a view that the success of innovatory curriculum and teaching is linked to developments in the school in which the innovation is located. In turn, innovations in schools are more likely to succeed and be sustained if the systems in which schools are located support the schools to adopt and implement the innovation[vi].

Thus, we can think of two levels of influence

- school level, and
- system level.

In this section we examine the links between school level effects and the implementation of units of work in the classroom. This involved examining the data from each case for links between the key blocks in Figure 1. This technique has been called 'backward mapping'.

School level factors include:

- school commitment. By this we mean the degree to which the school as a whole had or is adopting policies that support teaching about Asia across the curriculum.
- availability of resources. By this we mean the degree of material and personnel resources which have been made available at the school level to support teaching about Asia and
- school based professional development. By this we mean formal and informal activities designed to inform teachers about studies of Asia, and to assist them with implementation in the classroom

Across these factors, we expect indicators of school support to be a manifestation of the influence of the school administration in enabling the development and institutionalisation of studies about Asia across the curriculum.

School Commitment

The majority of the case schools had adopted a whole of school approach to teaching about Asia. For some, this commitment had stretched back over time for at least six years, while others have adopted this position more recently. In this latter group of schools, individual teachers had originally introduced units of work in individual classes. Their success was the basis for other teachers to do likewise, usually in a subsequent year. Interest in studies of Asia had then snowballed, and, ultimately, led to a whole school commitment to teaching about Asia across the school.

A major indicator of commitment to studies about Asia was its inclusion in the schools' strategic plans or working policy. These represent priorities for a given school over an extended time frame, such as for three years. Some schools reported that studies of Asia had been part of their plans for longer than this.

For example one school, Hills Montessori School, said:

> The School's Strategic Plan spans a two to three year period and provides guidance for key learning and development issues. It is regularly reviewed and updated to maintain best educational practice. Since 1997 studies of Asia have been placed as a special focus within the Strategic Plan, under the headings; multicultural component, spiritual aspect, LOTE and the Arts.

Another, Christ the King Primary School reported that:

> Studies of Asia focus on cultural diversity. This provides opportunities for students to reflect on the past, interpret the present and to affect the future. By including studies of Asia in the curriculum, we are contributing towards a more comprehensive education reflecting the socio-cultural realities of Australian life. Students are expected to develop:
>
> - an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of cultures, societies and environments of Asia
> - informed attitudes and behaviours about Asian people, events, issues and life styles enabling them to communicate these effectively and appropriately to others
> - an understanding of the diverse values of Asian societies in order to raise awareness beyond cultural stereotypes
> - skills that will enable them to interact effectively with Asian peoples and contribute to Asia related activities at school and beyond
> - a commitment to the principles of friendship, peace and mutual respect among peoples and nations.
>
> These are achieved through an in-depth study of a country or an aspect of that country or a core unit within a topic or a comparative study developed along side a topic or an Asian perspective reflected through a topic.
>
> Asian studies are embedded in the curriculum and this is written into school policy. For some time the school has adopted a whole school approach to studying Asia during one term of the school year. It is likely that now the programme will be sustained as the new Principal has been coopted on to the Asian Studies Curriculum team.

For these schools, the policies are an indication that studies of Asia have become embedded in the curriculum policy, and the fact that they appear in official school documents means that this commitment has become explicit.

It is clear that this kind of commitment underlies the level of support the school gives to studies about Asia. That is, official and explicit statements that the school values studies about Asia are the basis for operational aspects of the teaching and associated activities related to studies of Asia.

A second indicator of whole school commitment to studies about Asia is the extent to which information about studies of Asia is included in key learning areas across the whole school curriculum.

> Birrong Girls High School offers a very wide range of teaching and associated activities taking place that indicated the strength of studies of Asia across the school. There are units of work taught in many learning areas of the curriculum: drama, history, LOTE (Japanese), Economics, Science, and the Arts up to year 12.
>
> At Unley High School there is a strong commitment to studies of Asia, in areas such as English, Visual and Performing Arts (Music and Drama), Home Economics, Society and Environment and Business Education. During Asia month, all Year 8 classes include studies of Asia across the curriculum. The school has over 1200 students, many of them from non-English speaking backgrounds.
>
> Canberra Grammar is a K-12 school, which offers studies of Asia throughout the curriculum. In the primary school, it is incorporated into the learning process, for example at year 1 students study a unit on transport which includes comparisons with transport in Asian countries, year 6 students study a unit titled 'A Taste of Asia', year 9 students in geography study the impact of monsoons and global warming, and an in-depth study of Bali, and the year 11/12 modern history course provides students with a study of pre-colonial and colonial Vietnam and an in-depth study of Indo-Chinese wars..

A third indicator of commitment to studies of Asia is the extent to which 'across the school' activities were mentioned. These are activities, which transgress across key learning areas, and are likely to involve the school community as a whole.

> At Caboolture State School there are a wide range of teaching units about Asia. But, in addition there are associated activities, which involve the community such as Access Asia Day, and the celebration of Chinese New Year. The school is committed to publicising activities in school newsletters and local papers, inviting community members to the school, supporting a student paper folding club, and funding participation in an Asia Wise competition.
>
> At Beckenham Primary School, the whole school celebrates diversity of culture in the community through Access Asia week. This includes excursions, Artist in Residence and an Asian Food Festival to which parents are invited.
>
> Beechworth Secondary College is in its 6th year as an Access Asia school. The curriculum policy promotes an Asia inclusive curriculum. In addition to studies of Asia across the curriculum, a highlight is a whole school dramatic performance. The school plans to participate in the town festival parade in 2003.

As we have remarked, most schools offered many units related to studies of Asia. However, an alternative scenario is that a unit related to studies of Asia could be offered without a school having policy commitments to studies of Asia. This was the pattern in a few of the cases we collected information from. In these cases, the initiative for the introduction of studies about Asia came come from an individual teacher. In most cases we studied this was the head of department for the SOSE or equivalent learning area.

We have insinuated in this discussion that the development of whole school policy precedes the teaching of innovatory units in the classroom. This is not so. While we did not have the time to pursue this in detail, it is likely that whole school commitment to studies of Asia has developed in parallel with teaching new units about Asia in classrooms. Small successes in classrooms are disseminated to other teachers, who are encouraged to try studies of Asia course in their classes. Over time, a critical mass of committed teachers is created, and this became sufficient for the school to acknowledge that there should be a school level commitment. This is something that could be examined in more detail by the Asia Education Foundation for its own purposes and as a contribution to educational change theory.

Professional Development

There is no doubt that professional development for teachers has been a key support mechanism for implementing studies of Asia in schools.

Professional development can meet this end in several ways:

- providing information about what other teachers have done in the classroom;
- providing information about resources which are available, both inside and outside the school;
- allowing teachers to see and or try a new teaching technique in a non-threatening environment;
- providing an opportunity for teachers to share information and undertake unit planning.

The schools in this sample all undertook professional development of some kind. We can distinguish three major formats:

- professional development which was done in-house, generally, but not always without an outside facilitator;
- professional development conducted by Access Asia personnel, often at the State and Territory level;
- participation in AEF international study tours and attendance at conferences, often sponsored by educational jurisdictions.

For most respondents professional development within all three formats has been essential for the effective teaching about Asia in school. As one teacher remarked 'professional development is the key, developing your own understanding and increasing confidence in teaching studies of Asia is essential'.

In some cases, a one-off curriculum day devoted to studies of Asia was the catalyst for what followed.

> This was the case at Teven-Tintenbar Public School where as a result of a staff development day in 2000, the school adopted as policy the inclusion of studies of Asia into the curriculum.

Professional development can also provide the impetus for a school committed to studies of Asia, but wishing to start something new within this commitment.

> At Christ the King Primary School, a whole staff PD day was focussed on Asian performing arts and helped drive planning of units of work which led to the whole school performance in 2002.
>
> A rather novel approach to professional development was employed at Holy Spirit Primary School, where a Japanese intern student worked alongside the classroom teacher as the unit on Japan was offered for the first time to the students. The intern was able to provide just in time support as the teacher grappled with ideas and strategies she had not tried before. The school has continued to run Asia in Schools professional development meetings and it was reported that, even though the Japanese intern was no longer in the school, staff continue to feel more confident about teaching Asian Perspectives.

Developing units of work can be thought of as a professional development activity. This usually involves smaller number of staff, such as the teachers responsible for teaching the unit and support staff such as the school librarian.

> This was the case at Caboolture State School where staff worked intensively for two days to devise the unit "Where in the world is…?, and to identify the resources needed to teach it effectively. It is well known that school based planning takes time as well as knowledge and enthusiasm on the part of those involved. This school emphasised the important role that librarians can play in organising resources, something that we will discuss more in the next section.
>
> The unit 'Vietnam' taught at Beckenham originated from a visit the teacher undertook to Vietnam on an AEF Teacher In-country Fellowship to Asia (TICFA) in 2002. This was the motivation for the planning and development of this unit. Subsequently she was involved in PD sessions at the school. A key additional factor in the development of the unit was the collaborative planning undertaken with a school colleague, which 'gave us both confidence to develop deeper insights and understandings with our students'.

Several schools highlighted the benefits of engaging in unit planning.

> At Birrong Girls High School the respondent said that staff should be provided with training to enable them to undertake this task effectively, and that if they are given adequate time, they show increased commitment to teaching the unit if they have been given the opportunity to develop it themselves. On the other hand another experienced respondent said that, when a teacher is contemplating teaching a unit about Asia for the first time, it is easier to begin implementation by purchasing a quality resource that is already available, and selecting and improvising from there. She also suggests that if the notion of developing a 'stand alone' unit is daunting, neophyte teachers should consider the addition of an Asian perspective to a current unit.

Another way of keeping staff up to date with developments about Asia is through staff bulletins, mentioned by several schools.

> Birrong Girls High School distributes a regular bulletin to staff each fortnight, which covers topics such as teaching resources, material on Asian culture, economy and politics, and key dates relating to Asia.

For professional development to be well presented in a school there needs to be structures which can initiate, plan and present activities. This is usually the responsibility of the curriculum committee.

> However, at Unley High School, there is an Asian Focus teaching group that is responsible for raising the awareness of teachers, and organising curriculum and professional development. Christ the King Primary School has an Asian Studies curriculum team of 3/4 people which is changed every year to include a mixture of older and newer staff members, meeting twice a term. St Helens is a K-12 school which has three teams responsible for developing the curriculum at different stages (K-4, 5-8, and 9-12), and each has the task of incorporating studies of Asia at these stages

Resources

As discussed, by resources we mean the degree of material and person-resources that have been made available at the school level to support teaching about Asia.

Respondents mentioned the importance of the role of the library and the librarian in preparing for and implementing studies of Asia in the curriculum. While this is not specific to studies of Asia, the need for cooperation between teachers and the librarian in curriculum planning was seen as essential if the units were to be taught with the most appropriate materials.

Some schools made specific reference to the influence of the librarian.

> Beechworh Secondary College said that the 'college library and librarian' are vital links to an Asia inclusive curriculum'. The school also used a National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Strategy resource grant to purchase a class set of 'Exploring North-East Asia-China, Japan and Korea', published by the Curriculum Corporation, which was essential to the teaching of the unit of work discussed in the first section of this report.

Christ the King Primary School drew on the Catholic Education Office (CEO) support staff to plan their 2002 unit and whole school performance. The CEO also provided helpful resources in the form of videotapes and resource book and a child friendly version of the Ramayana.

In 2002, to encourage the process of integrating literacy with studies of Asia, Hills Montessori School purchased multiple copies of novels and picture books with an Asian theme for group and guided reading. These books are suitable for different age groups within the school. Big books, travel brochures, materials from embassies, CD ROMS and internet facilities are also available.

At Teven-Tintenbar, following a school decision to adopt an Asian focus in the curriculum, the school has gradually accumulated a variety of books and other material resources, which have been organised into boxes and located in the staff room for easy access by staff. Also, a large-scale map of Asia and copies of "Snapshot of Asia", published by the Curriculum Corporation, are housed in the school library.

As indicated above, resources can be in the form of people. We have already touched on the role of the Japanese intern who materially assisted in the teaching of the unit on Japan at Holy Spirit Primary School in several ways. At many other schools, individuals with Asian backgrounds are involved in teaching Asian LOTE subjects such as Indonesian and Chinese.

At Beechworth Secondary College, a Korean exchange IT teacher was on the staff in 2002 for a short time as an exchange with a staff member who went to Korea on a TICFA. Many of the schools called on the resources of the local community to provide authenticity to the units they were about to teach. For example at Christ the King Primary School, teachers drew on the expertise of the local Indian Association in their planning, and Birrong Girls High School drew on the expertise of the local Burmese community for support for the unit which focused on Aung Sung Suu Kyi and the democracy movement in Burma.

At a more general level, many schools said that they had entered into student and staff exchanges with schools in Asia. Busselton Senior High School has had a ten-year student exchange with a school in Japan involving 12 year 10 students and two staff during 2003. Last year was the first year of a new exchange arrangement involving year 11 students. This links in with a sister city arrangement involving Busselton and Sugito in Japan.

In 2002, St Helens District High School hosted 10 students and a teacher from Sanskriti School in New Delhi, and Unley High School has an exchange programme with a high school in Japan.

The very presence of a group of students from an Asian country must make some impact on local students.

There may be other instances where visitors from Asia have been influential in the implementation of studies about Asia, and this may deserve more attention by the Asia Education Foundation.

Influence of System Level Agencies

Curriculum Frameworks

One of the intricacies in handling the responses from the case study schools was coming to grips with educational developments at the State level which impinge on school level curriculum matters.

We are all aware that educational matters in schools are largely the responsibility of the States. Within each State and Territory non-government schools often use government frameworks and developments to structure their educational programmes.

One way in which state education authorities influence what happens in schools is through curriculum frameworks. Over the past decade all States have developed frameworks for all years K-12. Frameworks in years K-10 usually relate to content areas of the curriculum, some of which are based on 'traditional' disciplines, for example Mathematics, Science and Literacy. Other frameworks can be regarded as more modern and the Studies of Society and the Environment (or its equivalent) is one of these. There are usually about eight of these frameworks.

It would be true to say that most of the units we discussed in the first part of this report were organised to fit under this framework. However, and especially in primary schools, the units examined were related to more than one and in some cases, most of the frameworks.

Of particular note was that respondents made sure that the links between their unit and the frameworks was made clear. In addition there was often discussion about the need for the relevant frameworks to be kept in mind during implementation and when thinking about outcomes for students.

In the senior school there was also recognition of the need to work within guidelines which relate to what can be offered in schools to meet the requirements of certificates at these levels.

For some cases, it seemed that changes in central directives or frameworks were, or will be, used to consolidate the place of studies about Asia in the curriculum.

For example Birrong Girls High School said that a new Modern History syllabus in NSW created an opportunity to develop the unit on democracy in Burma. In Victoria the Catholic Education Office has decided that a key learning area will be organised around Civics and Citizenship, which will absorb studies of Asia as well as gender and indigenous studies and the environment. Teachers see this as a plus for the maintenance for studies of Asia in the school curriculum.

In other cases there was an element of compliance about offerings. One respondent stated that 'there is no whole school approach (to studies of Asia) at this school, except that it is mandated by the WA Education Department that years 8-10 must have compulsory LOTE. In our case, (they are) Indonesian, Japanese and German. The Society and Environment department includes Asian Studies as a year 9 theme of approximately 13 weeks and incidental references at other times.' This could be regarded as a minimalist commitment to teaching about Asia and it would be of interest to determine the proportion of schools which include this level of studies or less.

The most direct link between curriculum policy in terms of frameworks and school level curriculum is in the Northern Territory. There, the teaching of Asian Perspectives is mandated for schools. At Holy Spirit Primary School in the NT, this was the stimulus for increasing the amount of curriculum time spent on studies of Asia, including teaching Indonesia from T-7, and offering units about Asian culture. The need to complement the teaching of LOTE with studies of this nature to make LOTE studies more meaningful was part of the school planning. This has been commented on in the first section of this report.

In other schools teachers who champion studies of Asia were actively at work to ensure that these were included in as many frameworks as possible. For example, at Beechworth Secondary College, it was stated that 'Asia-inclusive curriculum is now embedded within most Key Learning Areas (KLAs) from year 7-10. VCE studies for Years 11-12 demonstrates this too. Unit 4 History-The Chinese Revolution is a proud example, and VCE English always includes an Asia inclusive text.'

In summary, schools and teachers are very aware of making links between what they do at the school level, and the overarching curriculum frameworks. By and large they seem to value these frameworks because they provide a legitimate conceptual overview of what schools should be doing. There is also the fact that pressure has been put on schools to show the links between what education authorities mandate and what schools actually do.

Support from the External Agencies such as the Asia Education Foundation

There is no doubt that professional development that has been offered by the AEF and AEF Advisers has had a profound effect on the schools and teachers in this sample.

Schools have been supported to introduce studies of Asia for some time, since the AEF was set up in 1992. In addition, NALSAS grants have supported the implementation of LOTE and other areas of the curriculum that include studies of Asia.

The AEF have adopted a particularly interesting support strategy for change, which resulted in schools committing themselves to an Asian focus in the curriculum. This has involved targeting 'promising' teachers, promising in the sense that they had the potential to begin studies of Asia in a school and the ability to encourage other teachers to work with them over time.

This was the basis for awarding TICFA scholarships to allow teachers to visit Asian countries, in groups organised and conducted by AEF staff. More than one of the respondents mentioned the influence of a TICFA on their work. For example, in 2002, one teacher visited Vietnam as part of the Access Asia travel programme and came back with a wealth of experiences and resources which were shared with other staff. A unit of work was the direct result.

Another teacher mentioned that in 2000 she travelled to India as part of an AEF in-country programme. 'As a follow-up to this tour, I developed a unit of work based on Howard Gardiner's multiple intelligences, and Bloom's taxonomy. I used this with a grade 3/4 class and encouraged other staff to utilise the resources I had brought back with me. The school principal was a member of a party of teachers to travel to China the following year'.

Several staff at one school had successfully applied for TICFA fellowships and used the knowledge gained from these trips to develop new curriculum offerings.

At another, a teacher visited Vietnam on a TICFA. This visit was the motivation for what followed in the school. 'The teacher came back from the experience with aids for teaching and educational experiences to share with colleagues, and a wealth of cultural experience to share with students in their learning. This was shared throughout the school for those teachers wishing to undertake (the teaching) of the study of Vietnam.'

The longer a school had been in the Access Asia programme the more the school had the benefit of professional development offered by Access Asia staff. The respondent at Beechworth Secondary College said 'the staff here are highly Asia-literate and have taken on extensive PD since 1997'.

The influence of AEF Advisers in the states was also mentioned. The following are testimonials from the Western Australian schools in the sample, which are typical of responses from other States.

At Beckenham Primary School 'teachers have undertaken professional development courses as they have been offered through Access Asia WA. A strong group of teachers regularly attend PD courses when they are offered, and this supplements the S&E programme by giving teachers ideas, models, good teaching practices and assessment strategies.' From the point of view of the respondent at Busselton Senior High School, 'Perhaps the most consistently valuable (support) has been the supply of information by the Access Asia PD meetings in this area. This is a personal observation, because it has saved me a great deal of work searching for school resources.'

NALSAS grants provided funding for attendance at these conferences. This source of funding also enabled Canberra Grammar School to conduct a seminar on Indochina. Students from other schools in the area and from Sydney attended the school to hear a series of lectures provided by eminent scholars. NALSAS funding has now ceased but the school plans to sustain the seminar using other sources of funding because the seminar has been shown to be valuable for students, and presumably, provides publicity for the College.

Another use of NALSAS funding was to purchase resources, for example the purchase of class sets to support the teaching of a new unit in the curriculum. A grant also provided relief support for teachers engaged in developing teaching kits.

In South Australia, there has been a strong move to involve teachers in more formal professional development. Flinders University offers a range of courses on the studies of Asia. More than 15 staff at Unley High School have completed the "Including Studies of Asia in the Curriculum" course, six have completed a Graduate Certificate, Teaching Studies of Asia, and two are currently working on Masters degrees in the area. Staff at other schools have also been involved in post-graduate studies and have also attended AEF sponsored conferences.

Also the Catholic Education Office in Victoria assisted one school with the development of a new unit by providing professional development and resources which could be used during implementation.

And a unit of work at Beechworth Secondary College has been developed as a result of the staff involved being involved in the AEF's "Linking Latitudes, Shanghai and China" international conference held in April 2001.

Conclusion

We based the structure of this report on the assumption that studies of Asia in schools could be thought of as an innovation. Looking at the extensive documentation which has been produced by the Asia Education Foundation, it is clear that this is a very complex innovation, from the point of view of implementation and the extent of support for implementation over the more than 10 years since the AEF was set up.

The recent AEF publication "Change in a journey, not a blueprint" is a reminder that innovation involves change which is a process, not an event, and that getting to a stage where a school has a commitment to studies of Asia will not happen overnight[vii]. This is a finding supported by the vast literature on innovation. Another finding from this literature is that the more complex the innovation, the more time is required for its implementation, and the more difficult it is for it to become an accepted part of the work of the adopting institution. The consensus is that a major innovation takes at least three years to become sustained. By a major innovation is usually meant a single identifiable new procedure or practice, an educational example, a new method of student assessment and reporting.

Commitment to Asia is actually not like this. Securing a commitment to teaching about Asia is a complex undertaking. As we have seen from most of the cases, this is does not merely mean that a unit or two across the curriculum is based around information about Asia. It is in fact multifaceted and involves school and classroom levels. At the very least it consists of a policy statement and/or a strategic plan, the teaching about Asia in many areas of the curriculum, and in addition, whole school activities such as a festival or school performance involving the school community. While the link has rarely been drawn, securing a major commitment to an innovation across the whole school could be seen as an example of a sustained learning activity for staff, and thus the strategies used to install and sustain a commitment to Asia in the fabric of the school can be seen as a good example of organisational learning, which acknowledge social, political as well as pedagogical dimensions.

This study was, of course, a snapshot in time across a limited number of schools, and there was never an intention to trace back the journeys that they had undertaken to arrive at their present arrangements, regarding studies of Asia. However, it was clear that the schools **had** been on journeys that had been challenging at times. While the majority of the sample had most of the characteristics associated with a commitment to studies of Asia, others had not graduated to this stage, and in fact, some may not have been moving down the path, or their progress may have stalled.

'Change is a journey….' has some valuable advice to schools that wish to move along what might be called milestones on this path. Across the cases of those well down the path, the diagram in Figure 2 represents a refined causal map compared to the one on which we based our data collection, and which was included as Figure 1.

Figure 2. School Commitment to Studies of Asia: Implementation Characteristics

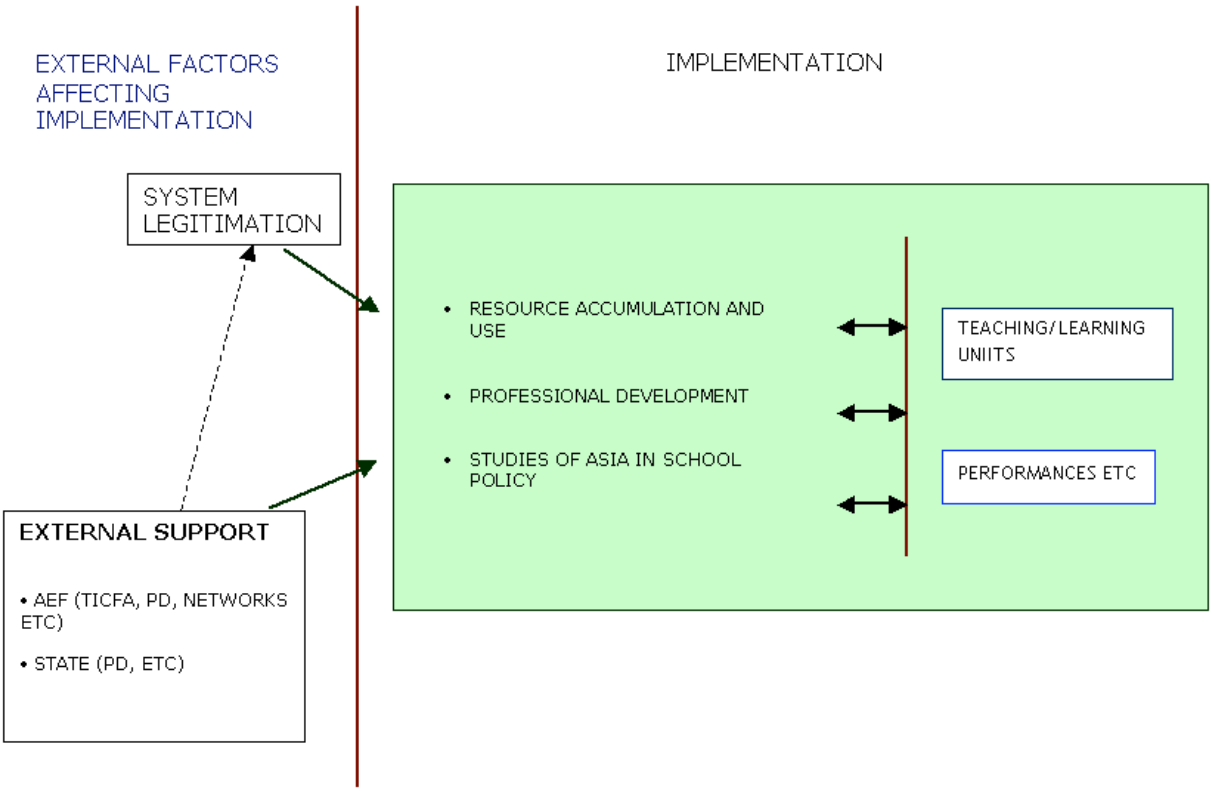

Figure 2 highlights the important relationships between whole school and individual curriculum units of work offered to students in classrooms in a mature or sustained studies of Asia school. It also indicates the relevance and importance of 'out of school' agencies and jurisdictions which assisted schools to implement their studies of Asia curriculum.

However, as indicated earlier, Figure 2 does not allow us to highlight events over time. From our data, it is clear that the strategies of the AEF in 'seeding' studies of Asia have been very important in getting schools up and running. Most of the case study schools mention the importance of a key teacher being granted a TICFA scholarship to visit an Asian country. This led to a snowball effect when the receptee came back to his or her school. The fact that the receptee went with a group of like-minded teachers on these country visits made them even more powerful as a stimulus for subsequent school level action.

We would like now to make some comments on the elements in Figure 2, some of which reinforce what has been said above. Some of these have implications to further the area of implementation concepts, and as such should contribute to the body of knowledge about educational and organisational theory and decision-making.

A mature or sustained commitment to studies of Asia has the following characteristics:

- There are two levels of implementation, the school and individual units of teaching and learning. The latter involves students directly, and leading to identifiable learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills
- A linear, and hierarchical pattern would have the school develop school policy before units of work are developed. Getting studies of Asia implemented in schools is not like this. Instead there has been a recursive and interactive relationship between school policy and practice. From the cases, it seems that getting whole school commitment to studies of Asia was more likely to happen after a 'critical mass' of teaching practices had been implemented, often over time.
- This also applies to the relationship between the amount and nature of in-school professional development, the availability of resources, and the creation of policy. Again, of critical importance in what might be called an incremental build up of interest in Studies of Asia was the work and interest of passionate teachers, many of whom had been involved in extensive external professional development supplied by the AEF at the national and state levels.
- While activities such as TICFA tours were important as seeding activities, most cases in this study mentioned the ongoing support that individual teachers and schools accessed from the AEF, for example via AEF Advisers. In addition, schools received support from advisers who were not part of the AEF such as curriculum consultants in government and Catholic systems.

In addition to sources of external support, it is important to note that schools which moved towards a commitment to Asia, did so within a given educational and socio/political milieu. The most obvious curriculum manifestation of these milieux are the various curriculum frameworks which represent policy about important learning outcomes in each State and Territory. As we noted these frameworks are presented as a range of 'learning areas' within which these learning outcomes are set. In another study we have conducted, we examined relationship between these frameworks and what happens in schools. Two of these relationships apply here.

First, there is what could be called a directional relationship. Here, policy requires that practice conform closely. For example the new Northern Territory Curriculum Framework expects that studies of Asia be included in the curriculum. A more common scenario is an indirect relationship in which studies of Asia in schools cut across curriculum frameworks, especially in primary schools. Perhaps the most important factor is that the frameworks **allow** this, and so cross-disciplinary studies of Asia are given the green light by educational systems. This is not always the case in other countries where there is greater central direction about what can be offered in schools.

While this discussion has focused on whole school commitment to studies of Asia, there were cases where studies of Asia were confined to one area of the curriculum, for example within the Society and Environment department of a school. This represents a more limited commitment to Asia. While supporters of a whole school commitment to Asia might be disappointed in this outcome, the fact is that this is a preferable situation to having no studies of Asia in the curriculum at all. Other reports suggest that this is in fact the most likely pattern of studies of Asia across the country. If one regards whole school commitment to Asia as being a desirable situation, there is clearly more work which needs to be done by the AEF and associated agencies to increase whole school commitment in these schools, and in encouraging the 10 percent of schools who report no studies of Asia in the curriculum to begin the journey.

This report provides an illumination of what is possible for the education of students through studies of Asia in the school curriculum. It shows what schools and creative teachers are capable of achieving if they are supported by the educational systems in which they work. There is ample evidence in the change literature to show that ongoing system level agencies play a crucial role in school improvement and change. The study shows that the AEF has played an invaluable role in supporting studies of Asia which has been appreciated by schools, and valued by State and Territory jurisdictions.

Finally, this report has been based on the notion of studies of Asia as a curriculum innovation. Innovations should not automatically be accepted without critical analysis by those responsible for their implementation. In fact, a major issue for school management has been, and will continue to be, the rate at which new ideas need to be sifted, adopted or rejected at a time of rapid knowledge creation. One might ask about the characteristics that set studies of Asia apart from other innovations vying for inclusion in the school curriculum. The answer lies in a view expressed by respondents that studies of Asia are crucial for the future education of the citizenry of Australia, given imperatives fashioned by location, economic ties and the need to coexist with other countries in the region. Continuing national support for studies of Asia would seem to be essential.

Appendix One

Data Collection Instruments

<date>

<Principal>
<School>
<Address>

Dear <name>

Access Asia Programme National Survey: Request for Co-operation

As you know, the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) in collaboration with education jurisdictions and the Commonwealth has supported schools across Australia to plan and implement effective programmes about Asia through the Access Asia Programme.

In order to inform future national strategies, the AEF is seeking feedback from the schools that have participated in the Programme.

Accordingly the AEF is undertaking an evaluative project that will examine the studies of Asia curriculum developed by 16 exemplary schools from around Australia who have participated for more than three years in the Access Asia Programme.

The objective of this project is to assemble good practice information about:

- studies of Asia curricula developed and implemented in classrooms
- outcomes of related learning experiences for students, and
- how schools and other agencies have supported these studies.

The project will be undertaken by the AEF in conjunction with John Owen and Pam Andrew, from Programme Review Consultants, who have extensive knowledge of schools and expertise in evaluation.

We are aware that your school has done significant work in this area. Accordingly, we are seeking your co-operation by allowing the consultants to collect information about the studies of Asia programmes in your school.

Specifically, we would like you or your nominated studies of Asia contact person/co-ordinator, to:

- provide information about school level commitment to studies about Asia in 2002 (in Access Asia Survey Part A).
- identify a unit of work about Asia which was taught during 2002, which could be regarded as being good quality classroom practice.
- ask the teacher most involved in the delivery of this unit to complete Access Asia Survey Part B (note that it is acceptable for you or your nominated studies of Asia contact person/co-ordinator to complete Part B if appropriate)

In addition, with the approval of those that complete the survey forms, there may be a follow-up telephone interview to clarify or expand on the school's experiences.

A copy of the Access Asia Survey Parts A and B are attached for your consideration. Should your school agree to participate in this study, the above information would be required by the end of March 7, 2003.

All schools that agree to participate in this evaluation project will receive with our compliments an Access Asia resource of their choice – see Curriculum Corporation catalogue.

The findings from this project will be made available to a range of parties with interests in studies of Asia, including schools that participate in the project. The final report will not identify schools or teachers, as these will remain confidential.

Maureen Welch will call you shortly to discuss your school's involvement in this project. If in the meantime you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact her.

Yours sincerely

Kathe Kirby
Manager

Access Asia Programme National Survey

Part A – School Overview: To be completed by the nominated school contact for this project.

Please refer to the letter accompanying this schedule which outlines the nature of this project.

This schedule is designed to collect information about studies of Asia in the curriculum in your school, as outlined in the letter.

Please complete the following details

A1. Name of your school .....

A2. How long has your school been in the Access Asia Programme/Asia in Schools Project/involved in studies of Asia programmes?

…… years

A2. Your school's contact person for this project - at work

name ..... telephone .....

email* .....

A3. Details of the teacher responsible for completing Part B of this schedule

name ..... telephone ..... email* .....

A4. Before handing this schedule on to this teacher, please tell us about the 'whole school' approach to teaching about Asia at your school in 2002.

This may include details about curriculum policy, school profile or priorities etc. (We would be grateful if you could include relevant documents which relate to this approach).

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We may wish to call or visit you during the next two months to find out more about your work in this area. Please indicate below whether you agree to a follow up contact.

	yes	no
•I am available for a follow up contact	☐	☐

Our school would like to receive a copy of …….Access Asia resource – see Curriculum Corporation catalogue.

Now, please ask the nominated teacher to complete Part B and return the schedule to you (with attachments if there are any). Then enclose both Parts A and B in the self addressed stamped envelope provided and return to:

Maureen Welch, Asia Education Foundation, Level 4, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, The University of Melbourne, Victoria 3010 by March 7, 2003.

Thank you very much for your assistance with this project.

Access Asia Programme National Survey

Part B – Classroom Curriculum: To be completed by the teacher nominated by your school contact.

The Asia Education Foundation is undertaking an evaluative project which will highlight exemplary programmes being taught about Asia in Australian schools.

The objective of this project is to assemble good practice information about:
•studies of curricula about Asia, and their use in classrooms
•outcomes of related learning experiences for students, and
•how schools and other agencies have supported these studies.

The contact person at your school has nominated you to provide information about a unit of work you taught in this school during 2002 (and maybe in previous years).

We would be most grateful if you could give us some information about **this unit** in the spaces below (you can use the reverse side if needed).

B1. Title of unit or sequence of work.

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B2. Year level(s) at which this unit was taught.

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B3. Describe the aims and content of this unit (we would be grateful if you could be specific as possible in answering this and the following questions)

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B4. For this unit, describe key teaching strategies used in the classroom (or other learning setting)

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B5. What were the highlights in terms of **outcomes** for students?

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B6. Does this unit fit in with the mainstream school curriculum policy, or school priorities? Please tell us about these links.

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B7. What factors supported the development of this unit (for example availability of resources, support from others, professional development, facilities)? Please tell us about the most important one or two below.

*factor one .....

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*factor two

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B8. Are you teaching this unit again in 2003? If there are any major changes from 2002, briefly tell us why these changes have taken place?

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B9. Do you have any advice for other teachers thinking about implementing units of work related to teaching about Asia? If so, write them in the space below.

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We may wish to call or visit you during the next two months to find out more about your work in this area. Please indicate below whether you agree to a follow up contact.

	yes	no
•I am available for a follow up contact	☐	☐

Finally, if you have any documentation (curriculum statements, photographs, publicity, etc) which relate to this unit of work, and which you can spare, please **attach them to this schedule** and return it to the **school contact person for this project before March 7**.

Thank you for your assistance with this project.