Implementing the Sustainable Schools Program

Project Based - Investigating and implementing the Sustainable School Program

Loddon-Campaspe-Mallee Region - Bendigo
Kennington Primary School - Government Primary school
Number of students – 600 approx.
Demographics – English speaking
Other relevant features – school houses Bendigo Deaf Facility

1. Area that TPL addresses (That is, what area/s does your focus involve? e.g pedagogy, VELS, numeracy, literacy, VET etc)

The TPL focussed initially on researching the Sustainable Schools Program, how it came about and how it could be implemented at KPS. This involved a visit to CERES in Melbourne and local Primary Schools to view exemplary models. Contact was made with the Co-ordinator of the Sustainable Schools Program in our area who was an invaluable resource.

Many hours were spent organizing an action plan to shift/confirm pedagogy with staff members and provide Professional Development. See Document 1 Action Plan.

Teachers were given opportunities to prioritise environment issues that the school was addressing or needed to address, as well as commitment to curriculum activities from Prep - 6. An audit of school operations was completed, a priority area (ie.biodiversity) was agreed upon and policy development was commenced. The TPL team applied for a variety of grants offered by Junior Landcare and other environment agencies, as well as presenting to the Parents and Friends Association with a request for physical and financial support. The TPL provided time for teachers to audit, collaborate and subsequently document the schools’ commitment to environmental education.

The introduction of VELS and the schools POLT principle foci provided opportunities for the TPL team to promote environment education. Other key learning areas such as Literacy and Numeracy were incorporated into curriculum planning at a grade level for teams of teachers.

Eg. A support teacher used the layout of the vegetable garden as a focus for her Maths sessions with ‘Gifted Students’.
2. What you are trying to do or improve? How was the problem identified?
Kennington PS is situated on 12 acres and has access to the local reservoir. Three teachers, all members of the schools’ SOSE or Science key learning area committee had developed some strategies to promote waste wise ideals across the school. Many programs such as worm farms, small vegetable patches and rubbish free lunchbox lotto were all initiatives embraced by the school community. The sustainability practices and environmental programs needed to be more permanently imbedded into whole school culture and planning. The three teachers applied for and were successfully granted professional leave to explore the possibility of the Sustainable Schools program. Completion of the TPL has allowed initiatives to be promoted and included in curriculum planning. These programs have also been supported financially by the SOSE curriculum budget and to a large extent, Parents and Friends Association.

Reflection Garden as a centre for the vegetable garden.
Lots of weekend working bees.

3. What has been achieved?
The TPL team has

- Completed the Core Module of the Sustainable Schools Program
- Identified Biodiversity as the next priority component of the Sustainable Schools Program
- Successfully applied for Grants to financially support development of the school’s Environment Area
- Auditing of school operations in regard to Environmental Issues
- Commitment from Prep-6 for the integration of environmental curriculum activities into planning.
- Entry to Clean Up School Day, National Tree Day, Waste Wise awards as well as Eco-recycle competition
- Official Opening of Kennington PS Environment Area that includes a reflection area, planting boxes, propagation shelter and chicken enclosure
- Use of the Environmental Area written into the schools new Implementation Plan and Strategic Plan as a Well Being Strategy

4. What has been learnt?

- Leadership, presentation and team work skills
- The value in collaborating and sharing with other staff members curriculum activities and personal expertise
- Community agencies that are able to support schools in promoting environment education eg. Coliban Water, Landcare
- The importance of documenting procedures and policies
- The need to involve all key stakeholders, that is, students, staff, parents and community
- Time to concentrate on key components in the early stages is vital to the sustaining of any long term project
- Teachers, students and parents value environment education
5. **How this learning has been applied to practice**

Learning has been applied to practice through careful planning and collaboration with teams of teachers. Discussion around needs of students at different stages of their learning had occurred. Teachers prioritised their specific students’ needs alongside their personal interests and abilities. Documentation, staff professional development, involvement of community experts, policy development and curriculum planning has allowed the Sustainable Schools Program to complement current environment education practices.

6. **How the application of the new knowledge/skills has impacted on student learning outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Measures used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students believe environment practices and education are valued by Kennington PS. Students, teachers and parents actively seek TPL members to discuss ideas/concerns around Kennington PS environment education.</td>
<td>Work completed by students/discussions with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many students, through curriculum activities supported by TPL now understand and can articulate some key concepts around waste and biodiversity issues.</td>
<td>Documentation by teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on different areas of the Environment Centre as students move through the school</td>
<td>Rubbish free lunchboxes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusion of the use of the Environment Centre in the 2006 Implementation Plan</td>
<td>Development of an Environment Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetables grown used in the school canteen</td>
<td>Entry into Community Competitions – 2006 Organic Vegetables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm and desire by students to visit the Environment Centre</td>
<td>Gardening Club to be established at lunchtime</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More salads bought at the Canteen??</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Competitions – name the chook pen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus – Prep – Waste Wise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 1/ 2 – Vegetable Gardens</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 3/ 4 – Chook Pen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 5/ 6 – Propagation Shed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Opening Day – information for parents on the Chook Nook’ fence

Vegetable Garden – Opening Day
7. **What you hope to achieve in the next six months, drawing on Teacher Professional Leave learning.**

The TPL team is hoping to:

- present a final draft of the schools’ Environment Policy
- prioritise activities that will allow for completion of the Sustainable Schools module components
- have documentation from all sub school teams of their current environment curriculum activities
- incorporate the environment area into student activities (eg. garden club)
- apply to Parents and Friends Association for continuing financial support
- utilise student expertise to run some environment activities eg. Clean Up Schools Day, National Tree Day and Rubbish Free Lunches
- Install a computerised watering system, review drainage and tank use
- Enter Organic Vegetable Competition
- Purchase benches of the Propagation Shed
- Purchase more poultry
- Participate in PD - ‘Toolbox for Environmental Change’
- Include more information on the Environment Centre on the school website
- Keep the Parent Community informed of Environment Issues
- Working Bee to cover the rest of the chook pen with wire
- Apply for relevant Grants or community resources
- Include vegetables and eggs on the Canteen Menu
- Sell eggs to parents

8. **Further information on Leave**

The TPL team was supported by:

- Paul Dullard, regional facilitator of the Sustainable Schools Program
- Glenn Davison from CERES
- Kennington PS SOSE budget
- Kennington PS Parents and Friends Association
- Grants provided by Junior Landcare

9. **Contact Details of the lead teacher for those interested in obtaining further information**

Trish Johnstone – Kennington PS  PH. 54 432 011  FAX. 54 417 321  
johnstone.trish.t@edumail.vic.gov.au  Leader of the Team

Vicki Rogers – Kennington PS  rogers.vicki.v@edumail.vic.gov.au

Chooks arrive!
An individual team member response is required for:

(Questions 13 – 17 focus on individual contributions within the team. The questions apply to the particular role each team member undertook and to their particular learning. This is expected to differ from the other members of the team. It is expected to be approximately half a page in length.)

10. The specific area you have addressed within the team TPL focus.

Trish Johnstone
My specific area was co-ordinating submissions, entry to environment competitions and liaising with environment educators. I collected and collated resources that were made available to other staff members. I also had input into the staff professional development sessions, policy and curriculum development as well as actively supporting the environment area development.

Vicki Rogers
We planned, discussed and visited other schools as a Team. I was often the one responsible for contacting parents, organizing working bees, liaising with school groundsman or placing orders.

Marnie Pollock
It was my responsibility to complete the initial audit, collate documentation, prepare letters for interested parties and type up draft documentation.

Propagation House structure ready for Covering.
11. **Your role within the team. (what exactly did you do? outline how your role contributed to the team focus)**

**Trish Johnstone**

*Within the TPL team I was responsible for*

- Grant submissions
- Competition entries
- Liaising with Sustainable Schools regional facilitator

My role within the team supported the development of environment education activities through submissions as well seeking advice from expert environment educators.

**Vicki Rogers**

*I was usually responsible for the ordering of soil, plants, fencing wire etc.*

As I was a Member of the school Resources Committee and School Council, I reported the progress of the Environment Centre and organized working bees. We did not have specific roles as such, instead simply shared tasks. I kept a digital record of the Environmental Centre and made a powerpoint for the school web site.

**Marnie Pollock**

*Tasks were shared within the group, such as presentation at Staff Meetings and all decision making. Specifically I was nominated to complete any required documentation including working with Trish on Grant Applications. The school energy and waste audit required me to calculate percentages, etc in order to make an analysis of school resources and usage.*

*I collated the Action Plan for the PLT and typed letters to all agencies supporting the development of the Environment Curriculum.*

12. **What you have achieved. (include expected outcomes for you)**

**Trish Johnstone**

*I have*

- developed my leadership skills further through collaboration with staff, outside agencies, students and parents.
- been able to use the days provided to concentrate solely on the Sustainable School program without other school based responsibilities impacting on that time
- developed my knowledge of current environment practices
- developed contacts with environment agencies that with support school based activities eg Bendigo Council,
- enhancement of ICT skills

As a team we can take great pride in the establishment of a valuable resource that Kennington PS will benefit from for many years to come. The Environment Centre will have an impact on all students who attend KPS. The sense of achievement and and pride in a task well done has been very satisfying.
13. What you have learnt. (You are encouraged to use tables to convey information)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Learning</th>
<th>Learning activities that most promoted learning (indicate names of consultants used, courses undertaken etc if appropriate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Trish Johnstone | • Sustainable Schools program – Paul Dullard  
• Environmental Toolbox Professional Development day – St Francis of the Field PS |
| Vicki Rogers | • Sofweb  
• School Visits / CERES  
• Type of soil, wire, etc needed  
• Resource material |
| Marnie Pollock | |

14. How this learning has been applied (or intended to apply) to practice.  
(include an outline of how the learning has been transferred to your practice)

**Trish Johnstone**
Learning has been applied to actual classroom practice using knowledge gained from various professional development sessions, consultants and professional reading undertaken. My classroom practice is underpinned by a greater understanding of environment practices and support provided by outside agencies. I am developing my own beliefs about the best way to provide environment activities to students that will promote life long, sustainable environment practices.

**Vicki Rogers**
The Learning will continue as our Environment Centre grows. An environmental component will be incorporated into our Grade 1/2 planning to include the Centre, at this level it will be growing of vegetables, companion planting, butterfly gardens, healthy food and healthy lifestyle. Hands on activities will develop an appreciation and awareness of how we can make a difference in our environment beginning with our school. A lot of time will be spent organizing, planning, collecting resources, liaising with experts etc to ensure the Environmental Centre continues to be an important part of KPS.

**Marnie Pollock**
Since I have been involved in this Program I have endeavoured to include an environmental session into the class program each week. Lessons have incorporated the use of our new Environment Centre and work with buddy grades focusing on our impact of the environment and how we can make a difference.

An electronic copy of the template is available at the following websites:
Teacher Professional leave -  
Knowledge Bank -  