



Girrakool Education and Training Unit (ETU) is a community care school operating within the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre, providing quality, significant programs for male juvenile offenders.

All students attending Girrakool ETU have been committed by the courts to custodial sentences of varying lengths and are on remand pending court appearances.

Students are aged from 16-21 years and are drawn from all areas of New South Wales. Aboriginal students represented 30% of the total school enrolment throughout 2005, while NESB students made up a further 40%, mainly from South Pacific Island, Arabic and Southeast Asian cultures.

Students often present with varying degrees of behavioural/emotional disabilities, compounded by low self-esteem, negative prior school experiences and dysfunctional personal relationships.

The mission of the school is "To create a positive learning environment and to facilitate students' successful integration into the community". The main literacy target of 2006 was to continue the schools commitment to improve the literacy skills of all students. Strategies to achieve this target include implementation of the Lexia program.

The implementation of the Lexia program has been a success to date. Currently there is a single teacher managing Lexia in preparation for a whole school implementation. All staff are trained in the working of the Lexia program.

Lexia has also formed a crucial basis of the after school Intensive Literacy Tutoring Program. It is during this program that students have been the most responsive to the independent style learning of the Strategies for Older Students (SOS) component of Lexia. It was observed that students also enjoyed the flexibility of ranging between prescribed levels and content. Students were motivated by, and have greatly benefited from, the quicker puzzle style tasks that have made mastering literacy more interesting and less intimidating. They were particularly responsive to the level one, short vowel words activity where they were required to race against the clock to match short vowel words with pictures.

As a teacher, I found that it was a better use of my time to have the opportunity to work intensively with a single student on a diagnosed weakness, whilst I could be confident that the remainder of the class were still learning through SOS.

The Quick Reading Test (QRT) component of Lexia is also successfully used to report students' weaknesses and contrast those with improvements made over time. The results below are from a QRT test implemented over a nine month period. This particular students attitude was of a considerable hindrance to his continuing to progress. He was difficult to motivate and a reluctant worker despite his improvements.

QRT- RW1 09/2005	QRT- RW1 06/2006
1. Short vowel words categories 1.0 and 1.5 and Sight word category 1.9 identified as Instruction needed.	1. Short vowel words categories 1.0 and 1.5 and Sight word category 1.9 identified as Practice needed.
2. Letter Names category 0.5 identified as Practice needed.	2. Letter Names category 0.5 identified as Completed Successfully.
3. One Practice needed categories identified and ten Instruction needed categories identified.	3. Eight Practice needed categories identified and four Instruction needed categories identified.

QRT- NW1 09/2005	QRT- NW1 06/2006
1.	1. Test extended to include Short vowel words categories 1.5.
2. Short Vowels-Simple 1.0 (CVC) identified as Instruction needed.	2. Short Vowels-Simple 1.0 (CVC) identified as Practice needed only.

In the classroom the CrossTrainer component of Lexia was particularly successful with the students that fit into one of two categories:

1. They were intimidated by traditional aspects of language acquisition and required a non-traditional format of learning to assist in their cognitive development.
2. Students that had competent levels of literacy and wanted to be challenged in a unique way.

Based on my experience the overall the implementation of Lexia has been successful for this unique school environment. Whilst no whole school comparison testing has been completed for the QRT or the Comprehensive Reading Test (CRT) -results are still observable in students who are engaged in their learning.

Lexia satisfactorily facilitates the aforementioned mission of the school "To create a positive learning environment and to facilitate students' successful integration into the community".



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