

## **THE EDUCATION OF BOYS**

**A RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT,  
EDUCATION AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS:**

**THE RESPONSE IS FROM MRS GAIL PETHERICK (ESL PRIMARY AND  
SECONDARY TEACHER IN DARWIN NT)**

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**Dear Standing Committee/Committee Secretariat,**

**I was very interested to read your advertisement concerning the Education of Boys in the NT News, which was published just before our school vacation. Since I went away, this is a little late but I read that material could be sent by email after July 28<sup>th</sup>.**

**I have read the formal terms of reference, as described in the Internet Home page.**

**Thank you (Mr Brendan Nelson and the Committee) for asking for ‘the public’ and teachers etc to respond to your inquiry.**

**I have been a secondary teacher in Melbourne and Ararat in the 1970’3. I then did some nursing and returned to teach at a Secondary Correspondence School for 2 years in the NT in 1986-188. I then moved into the Primary teaching role and studied Linguistics externally. I have since taught for 13 years as an English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher in 2 Darwin primary schools. I am currently based at Leanyer Primary where we have over 500 students.**

**During my time in teaching, particularly in the Primary schools, I have taught boys 9and girls of course) from 5-13 years of age, for the last 13 years. That is, my role has been to go into all classrooms across the whole school and to teach ESL children who need extra tuition. I also teach for 2 hours a day in the Library with a group of up to 10 children, from mixed backgrounds and cultures (Australian born and**

indigenous etc). This wide experience has enabled me to make a number of close up observations, regarding boys in particular. These observations are as follows:

#### **OBSERVATIONS AND TRENDS REGARDING BOYS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE:**

- The points below address the social, cultural and educational factors affecting boys in Australian schools.
  - Boys literacy needs, socialisation and maturity needs are addressed in context of the early and middle years of school (ages 4-13years especially).
1. **Early signs are showing up of immaturity in Preschool:**  
Many of the boys entering Preschool (4years is the age of entry in the NT; in the southern states it is known as Kindergarten, I believe) are showing more signs of not gaining all the necessary social and academic skills needed for Year Transition (Yr Transition is 5years here and in the Southern states you refer to it as Prep.) This may refer to a third or so of the children or only a quarter. (25-33%). The very severe or outstanding are sometimes kept back for an extra term or 2 terms.
  2. **School based Assessment of such children is delayed for up to a year often.** Some of these children (which are predominantly boys) are then referred to Student Services who test and assess the children within 6-12 months of receiving notification that there is a problem. For instance, recently we had 2 of the ESL boys presenting at Preschool as 'immature' in behaviour and social patterns. They were not able to understand the teachers' instructions often. The first boy, T. M. was referred to school services over 6 months ago for speech delay and then fine motor skills were added. When the school assistant Principal tried to find out when the School Services personnel could see the child, she was informed that there could be a delay of up to 12 months and that the child must first be seen by the Speech Therapist, since this was protocol. This boy had no real ESL problems as both parents spoke fluent English as well as Greek. The real problems were speech delay and comprehension and an inability to form a sentence or to understand instructions. It was also discovered that he could not chew fruit or food and that he had only taken in liquids until the age of 4years. The Pre School began a diet of mashed foods and realised that the speech delay was probably connected to the eating problems. I was very concerned that this boy has moved onto Year Transition without being seen by an expert in the speech and (Occupational Therapist/O.T.) fine motor skills areas. The case is not an isolated as there appears to be at least 3-4 of these every year.
  3. **Delayed Maturity handicaps boys for the remainder of their schooling.** Thirdly, some of these children (at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  are boys) also flounder in year Transition, because they have not developed sufficient social and academic skills, required for Transition. (e.g. they can't sit for more than 5 minutes and a number of these show signs of Attention deficit). These boys go on to struggle when learning the sounds of the Alphabet and letters. They, in turn, become slow readers and

struggle to connect meaning to letters (graphophonic knowledge is often poor). Some of these boys are ESL (especially Greek or indigenous, I have found). It is rare to find any Chinese boys with a problem but occasionally (once in my 13 year experience) there has been a learning delay. There are obvious cultural and social and genetic reasons for these trends. The indigenous children come from an oral culture and so are slower to grasp reading and writing skills, as a rule; but where, they come from a committed family and an urban family there may be no disparity. The Greek children (more boys but some girls) may have fathers with poor or no literacy skills in their own language. The modelling of the father is reflected in the struggle the boys have. There is also some retention problems and often I have found the boys to be remedial or slow learners in English and Maths, who need extra tutoring throughout their schooling (more than other cultures, except for the indigenous children who have similar needs). There are also more 'hyped' or over-active boys nowadays (in the last 10 years) than there used to be. I am sure TV, play stations, computer games and ever changing technology and fast toys have influenced the speed of thinking of these children and they yearn for constant change and excitement. Some of the later, are diagnosed later as having genuine ADD and some need medication. Others respond to the social training of schools and settle down to accept firm discipline.

4. Fourthly, Automatic promotion into higher classes handicaps the late achievers as Steve Biddulph has found when researching late development of some boys. (Benchmarking results will help monitor this need). I believe, like Steve Biddulph, that there is a maturity delay with up to 30% of some boys. (Please see below Appendix No 1 and points made by Steve Biddulph who visited Darwin). My own son (now aged 10 years) is a prime example of this. These boys who mature a little later than others, are very disadvantaged by the Educational system that believes in 'automatic promotion'. That is, in the last 15 years all boys and girls have been automatically put up to the next grade whether they are ready or not. They then struggle from Year Transition/Prep on. Those that I have seen over the last 13 years have needed extra tutoring from the ESL staff, the Special Education staff and if they are fortunate, they are supported by voluntary parent schemes such as "Support a Reader" or "Support a Writer". (The latter is a scheme which began in the Qld and has been widely adopted by the NT Govt. The Special Ed teacher/or similar trains volunteer parents so that they in turn can teach children to read. The teaching starts as early as possible (often far too late however, in Year 3) and the children have 3-4 sessions of 20 mins. each week in reading. They read structured readers (of high interest with controlled vocab) and learn to pronounce all main sounds and to break words into syllables. This support is offered for as many years as needed, until the children progress sufficiently to become independent reads. Some schools also offer inservices to parents on Reading Strategies so that there is follow up at home. The main problem with the scheme is that as more mothers work (a few fathers join the scheme, too) there are fewer and fewer volunteers available. The economy being as it is, has axed any paid staff, except for the occasional grant made to 1-2 parents, to be paid on a part time basis to carry out this role.

5. **Fifthly, I believe that there are far more children showing signs of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) in the last 10 years especially.** Speakers as Dr Ian Wallace of NSW have published books to help parents and teachers understand this unusual neurological handicap. I have studied it myself, as my own son showed signs of being ‘borderline’. There are many theories about it and many misunderstandings. I believe that there are many other reasons for ‘hyperactive’ behaviour but it is the other ‘dreamy’ and hypo-type of behaviour that is often overlooked. There are reasons for some of these children ‘acting out’ (such as split families and stepfamilies and chaotic social/personal experiences going on in some children’s lives) but others are like that through the hereditary pattern, commonly passed down from the father of the family. The severely affected children are often not diagnosed until well into Year 5, yet there are definite signs showing at the age of 4-5 years on. These children (mostly) boys disrupt whole classrooms and I have seen them exhaust teachers very quickly. I know of situations where 1-2 of these children have quickly destroyed classroom peace. There was such a class a year ago that had a turn over of at least 5 teachers. The first was experienced but pregnant and so left. The next 2 were first year out teachers who lefty the profession (both were excellent teachers but lost all morale). There was then a turn over of 2 more. The last one stayed on and fought daily for discipline and ‘won out’ but it was at an enormous cost to herself. (Not one teacher was male, notably which would have helped as the problem stemmed from boys in this class). One of the boys has since been diagnosed with ADD and is on Ritalin and has become very obliging when on medication but very nasty off it. What I would like to point out here is that there is only one Centre in Darwin that helps support teachers in these situations. The “Sat Centre” send their staff out (4 in all) to counsel teachers and to review problem children. The child will then be reviewed by School services. The very acute may then have a Teaching Assistant granted (but funding runs out often half way through the year for this). Some are taken to a Pediatrician who monitors them and some later go on medication. A few visit the Centre for a few days but there is no longer a place for these children to go to for a term or semester or year, as in earlier days. The results are that very disturbed behaviour from children stresses all the children in the class and others in the playground and of course, the teachers lose faith and morale, as there is little support for them. The expert ones find strategies and the good schools share the problem so that the Principal and seniors all take a part in disciplining these children. My personal belief is that the Behaviour Centre needs multiplying; so that there are more centres and staff and support for parents, teachers and schools. The one that services Darwin is to stay the same but we have been told that there will be 10% cuts in funding and staff to School Services every year, as from 1998-9. This has put more stress on teachers and the real issue of who will and can help these children (that is, boys 80-90% of the time) is not addressed.
6. **Sixthly, my other recommendation in relation to that, is to re-introduce training programs and apprenticeships so that boys (and girls) can find out what skills they can develop to help become useful to society and fulfilled.** The Government has shown a new interest in this area, which is wonderful. The earlier Technical

colleges (where I taught sometimes) were a great asset to society, economically and socially, and to boys especially. It gave a chance for boys to be taught by males and to learn useful skills under supervision. It gave status to manual labour and to so many professions that have now been down graded. If boys could learn and practise such skills in a College or Tech more easily, it would be excellent for their morale. The ones who show signs of ADD could also benefit by using their hands, as so many are quick thinkers and doers, and yet feel they are 'no good' academically. The stress on theory and degrees has hidden the genuine need to produce manual workers who will become mechanics, agriculturists, air-conditioner operators, fishermen etc.

7. The latest trends in Information technology in Schools will benefit boys especially: I have attended Information technology Inservices for the last 5 years in the NT (see notes in Appendix 2 for issues facing NT schools). We have introduced many of the skills during Library Research lessons. The current trend of teaching skills in lesson time or in a Computer lab situation is helping boys, both with their self esteem and to learn new skills. The boys do tend to excel in this area and it is good to see that they can learn quickly and show progress. Thus, the skills are easy to learn for boys and most take to I.T. as a 'duck does to water'. I would therefore, recommend that this trend be encouraged in both the Primary and Secondary schools. A further problem is addressed here and that is the fine motor skill area. Many of the boys have shown late maturity with fine motor skills (Barbara Brann of QLD addressed this recently). They are therefore often poor hand writers, and very slow. (My son is one of these and I have researched the issue as best I can and found it is more predominant in boys in the last 10 years). If these boys learn type early and learn the keyboard, then they can overcome their handicap by writing more quickly in High School. This in turn will help their self esteem and also help motivation. (At present there is a lack of funding for IT teachers and schools in the NT are trying to encourage the Govt. to grant more money for this need).

## APPENDIX 1

### STEVE BIDDULP TALK: THE LATER MATURITY RATE OF SOME BOYS AND HOW IT AFFECTS EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES A SUMMARY BY GAIL PETHERICK

Steve Biddulph, an Australian Psychologist and Educator, spoke to teachers at a Darwin Early Childhood meeting in August this year. He began by telling us about his childhood. Steve came to Australia as a migrant. He was enrolled by mistake as a Year 6 student, instead of as a Year 4, because he was tall and the teachers were in a hurry. He didn't speak up about his real age, as he perceived that his parents were already under great stress, moving as migrants to Australia. So, later on, he went to High school 2 years early and then progressed through his schooling with a chronological age gap from his peers. Yes, he said, it can and does happen, but not very often!

Steve is currently based at Coff's Harbour, NSW.

Steve made the following points about boy's behaviour in general, and then he went on to talk about trends in Australia.

- Boys are often aggressive
- They often have a low self-esteem
- They have a changing image but are often stereo-typed
- There is an increasingly high suicide rate amongst boys (aged 15-25yrs in particular). Ref: Statistics from Richard Fletcher's research show that boys are 3 more times as likely to try suicide.

#### Trend 1

- In earlier years, boys were raised by one main male figure and often 4-5 others, who acted as role models. In earlier days, men looked after boys.

#### Trend 2

- The Industrial Revolution changed everything for boys and others. Men went out to work with machinery and the women were left to raise boys. This was a new role for fathers and since those times, fathers have found it hard to give time to their sons. One study showed:
  - ◆ that 30% of fathers and sons don't talk
  - ◆ that 30% had a relationship with their father that was of no significance
  - ◆ that 30% had a strained relationship
  - ◆ 10% had a relationship that was meaningful
  - ◆ There is still an average of 5 minutes conversation a night between father and son in many homes

Ref: Read chapter on "Fixing it with your Father" in Steve's book on Manhood. This emphasizes that men often feel inferior as women talk more and more fluently/more easily whilst boys/men feel threatened or insecure. Also, Steve felt he had to address the problem of reconciliation between father and son, as many relationships were in disrepair.

Steve advocates that men have good role models so that they don't just grow up acting tough.

Often, with no male role model, boys grow up with the following:

- an aggressive style of relating
- an over interest in appearances only
- a narrow way of acting...eg 'cool'/as in Summer Holiday
- with a derogatory attitude to women

NOTE:

The answer to all this is for boys to have more time with fathers or a male role model and so more male interaction.

Other studies have shown that testosterone, the male hormone, inhibits brain growth whereas oestrogen enhances it. Since testosterone levels increase at ages 4

and 14 yrs approximately, in boys, this is a time when language skills are somewhat impeded.

Tests have shown that girls are stronger in spelling and language, and that their brain is larger in this area of development. Boys often catch up a year later. (Steve drew an illustration to show the scientific evidence for this in sketch form. He said that the scientific evidence has been presented but no one has acted on it.

- Steve advocates and concludes that some (not all) boys need to have that extra year to develop. He said that all teachers know this fact but no one has really acted upon the research. On average, boys need one more year for school readiness (eg delay school entry by a year or allow 2 years at the Preschool age for boys). This will prevent them lagging behind girls and it would tackle the 'boy problem'....i.e. boys finding school and language subjects more difficult.
- Another fact that Steve mentioned was that boys needed more help with motor coordination and gross motor skills. Some schools have added 20 mins exercise to their curriculum to help boys settle into learning and develop gross motor skills more readily.

At the age of 13 years he warns that boys are very disorganised because of testosterone changes. This is the age they usually start High school and so it is very hard for them.

The teachers present found Steve's talk very enlightening. There were questions afterwards. One of the questions was :

**Q. Has any country done anything to increase the number of male teachers?**

**Answer:** Steve said that only in the USA, a large number in the negro community had sought to attract male teachers to the profession. He also emphasized that the whole world is suffering from a lack of male teachers as role models and this has produced a new generation of boys who need leadership and authority figures. Although mothers do a good job in raising boys, Steve said that boys still need father-figures if they are to develop holistically.

The challenge I now see (as a teacher who listened to Steve's talk) is:

- **How do we go about recruiting more male teachers?** (They are a dying breed and there are definitely more pressures on male teachers because of media coverage of some teachers who have sexually abused their privileged role, as carers of young children)
- **How can we encourage fathers or males to participate with their sons in today's society?**
- **Is it possible for more fathers, step fathers, uncles or granddads to help with homework, or read aloud at night or listen to reading?**
- Can fathers, big brothers, male relatives and others take on a "Big brother" or father image and take younger boys on more outings as fishing, sport, or just to play in the park or at the beach?
- **Can there be more male tutors to teach after school or coach?**

I am very aware that our long hours of work in all professions are stealing our family and relation time? However, it should be possible to talk to a son or young boy for more than a few minutes every day in a positive way, yet our modern way of life is making this very hard. It's a matter of priorities in every family and in our nation. This is a very hard issue when jobs are scarce, pressures to perform are higher than ever and material goals are given priority.

**Summary by Gail Petherick (ESL Teacher, Darwin)**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **SUMMARY OF A WORKSHOP BY A VISITING SYDNEY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LECTURER; PRESENTED IN DARWIN.**

*Points mentioned here show the great need to quickly inservice teachers in the Northern Territory so that information technology can be implemented into the schools to keep abreast of the changes in society and workplace demands.*

**SLANT (NT Library Association)  
Information Technology and Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Presenter: Ross Todd of Technology, from Sydney.  
(Seminar 1)**

**I attended a terrific Slant workshop along with Jenny Parish and 42 other teacher-librarians and teachers from the NT at Cas. Senior College, March 20-21, 1998.**

**Some of the highlights that may be helpful to other teachers were as follows:**

- 1. Children down South are being trained for Technology of the future in schools in various ways. Some schools have trained children from an early age and then issued a Computer License once they have mastered basic Net skills. This includes responsible usage, knowing how to use a search engine, how to log on and off and how to evaluate both information and the search engine. There has been emphasis placed on evaluation lately as teachers and students have come up against problems:**
  - Understanding search engines and then assessing over-commercial search engines**
  - how to evaluate masses of information quickly**
  - how to read and look for abstracts (some search engines as Magellan provide these and so save vast amounts of time)**
  - how to think out the best use of resources...often starting with the books available and later moving to the Net for more recent answers or for a global outlook or to correspond with Dr Geeves...he is found on the Top End home page.**



2. We were given a rundown of 4 –5 main search engines and told their good and bad points...and were encouraged to find out first hand. Ross told us that most people need to go to the HELP button first for most search engines, to find out if they deal with upper or lower case and to find out their method of linking or connectors used (ie Boolean operators)

The engines looked at were as follows:

- **ALTA VISTA:** this is often voted as the fastest (which is) and the best. But Ross pointed out that it indexes EVERY key word and so there will be times that it brings up a number of irrelevant papers on a subject that has been given a brief mention in the middle of another topic. (eg Kangaroos may be the key word and in a History paper of early Australia, there may a sentence to say Cook first sighted them...but the rest of the article may be on early settlement problems etc). In these situations, children must be taught how that search engine works and so expect some articles not to be relevant.
- **Alta Vista has NO SELECTION PROCESS** and so nothing is filtered out.
- **MAGELLAN** is a quality search engine that he recommended. It makes some assessment of the sites it visits and so has some selection process. . It contains thought-provoking information. It uses controlled vocab. It is updated slowly (unlike Alta Vista that is updated each month, quickly). It has good, clear abstracts. It also indicates whether papers are good/suitable for children.
- **YAHOO** is run by a smaller company and it does not have many abstracts. It has very selective sights. It is higher quality and it rejects rubbish. It is updated slowly. It visits quality sights. It is linked to **YAHOO LIGANS**.
- **DOGPILE!!!**..is the name of a mega search engine that has an open door to over 23 search engines all at once. This can be overwhelming but it can be useful to older students and to teachers. It says “fetch” rather than search! One of its benefits is that it doesn’t duplicate materials and so it is selective in this way. eg It may say it has found 27 papers in Magellan or it searched Web wombat and found 5, but it won’t bring up the same article from both.

The problems that have arisen as teachers and children come to the turn of the Century are being tackled down south in various ways. All schools have found that after a short time, the teachers and students, need to train others to teach the Net so that time is not wasted and because time is so scarce in the daily timetable. For this reason, one breakthrough method has been to train the older children (eg Yr 4-Yr7) who can already surf the Net, in a responsible way, so they can teach others. In one school, these children were given a gold license for being trainers. They went on to train teachers as well as students, as this was expedient and highly successful.

Another breakthrough, has been to develop a Proforma to use for computer evaluation. The children then fill in form very briefly, saying what search engine was helpful, what key words helped, how they evaluated the information that came up and they also list any problems they encountered.

Ross mentioned that sources of information from the Net need to have a reference source to be reliable. Children and teachers should learn to look up the home page

and see whether the writer has quoted their source or statistics and so evaluate information and see if it has authority. This includes graphs, charts, or research data.

The main problem in schools has been that children have stampeded towards the Net, mistakenly believing it has all the answers they need on any topic. This MYTH has to be dispelled in every school. He said the main way to do this is to train the children to evaluate the information and sites, as said above, but also to restrain them from looking on the Net in the first phase of investigation (eg During Library research skills time....make the children first explore all the other existing information properly, rather than rushing to the Net). Then train the children to think carefully about their key words and the information brought up on the Net and then make them evaluate it...In time, they all learn to see that the Net has answers for some subjects in a limited way and that it is only one source to learn from.

Ross also emphasised that teachers need to give marks to students for spending time looking for and evaluating information, rather than just giving marks for an end product. This will help discourage plagiarism and copying large slabs of text. Lastly, Ross said that a number of schools had updated their computers but had neglected to look at the tremendous range of good CD's and information that has been made available to school children. He thought this issue needed addressing, if schools are going to benefit from the explosion in technology. The CD's are very worthwhile as resources for learning and they are very appealing. There are also many spelling and reading programs available.

### **SLANT INSERVICE**

**March 1998:Casuarina Secondary College  
Ross Todd of Sydney University in Technology Dept  
Speaking on RESEARCH ISSUES  
(Seminar 2)**

#### **FOCUS:**

**To Research or not to research:**

**What are the questions?**

**What are the answers?**

**(Handout accompanies this talk)**

**Teachers are now choosing to introduce the global society into the classroom eg Sally has decided to work on the theme Hungary and Japan. The Net has emerged as a global source. It has the potential for very exciting research assignments eg Space exploration using NASA's site where children can e-mail an astronaut and a space researcher will answer.**

**The issues:**

- **What about research into literacy levels in Australia?**

- Has the Net info seeking been any help to improving literacy levels?
- Is it relevant to every child?

Research by Judy Garland in 1995 has indicated the following:

When Judy examined 300-400 research assignments and interviewed 350 children from Grade 7-12 the results were as follows:

- Students face research tasks with apprehension and uncertainty
- They need a pre-task explanation, clarification of the task and support during the research process (explicit directions or frameworks)
- Students need to clearly understand how they will be evaluated on a research project
- They need to be given marks for finding/selecting/presenting their work
- Options need to be presented
- Children need to understand the research process. It is often assumed that children already know this process.

In order for students to learn they must link prior known knowledge to the new. They must also know where to begin their task. This will start with defining the topic, locating information, selecting the most relevant info, and presenting it. Marks should be given for all these steps in the research process. The process itself must be given credit and not just the end result.

- Students must make sense of the research topic (analyse and synthesize info)
- They must research topics in the real world
- Teachers must NOT reward plagiarism
- Students must have the chance to talk about their information and to discuss it (don't abandon them midway)
- Students must evaluate the info on the site and ask what the text is really saying

#### Licences for the Net:

Net licences should be allowed to those who have been trained as Net seekers. Some schools are now saying that teachers also need a licence and training and so many teachers are completing computer courses. Skills include:

- Finding key words
- Be able to use a search engine
- Make a bookmark
- Evaluate a site

Ref: 1996 Scan research Vol 14 and 15 Issue 4. See article about a teacher Mark and the case study presented.

#### Design of Research Tasks:

Questions to ask:

- Is the task meaningful?
- Does it matter if the children don't link this to their current learning?

- **Have I offered a pre-task explanation?**
- **Clarification of the task**
- **Skills development**
- **Is there a range of sources?**
- **Have I provided for an evaluation of the process?**

### **Problem of Plagiarism:**

**Teachers can find ways to avoid this issue:**

- **Teachers can ask the student to design a poster, draw a diagram, make a chart or graph of a situation or issue**
- **Teachers can ask ‘What skills are implied in this task?’**
- **Teachers can rethink the issues and present them in a different genre eg as an argument, discussion, summary etc**
- **There is a website PLC that helps students brainstorm issues (compare www. Inspiration. Com.au that can be downloaded for 1 month free, and then purchased on a CD). This can help students plan the main headings, subheadings, main points, specialist details**
- **Students will need support in learning to evaluate conflicting viewpoints from the Net and other sources of information. In order to do this, students could be given an exercise where they evaluate 3-4 different sources, such as the encyclopedia, the Net, non-fiction books.**

### **TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**SLANT meeting: Speaker Ross Todd of Sydney, University of Technology**

**March 1998**

**Casuarina Secondary College**

**(Seminar 3)**

**Leadership is all about moving forward and seeing how your school can move forward.**

**3 actions are recommended for this:**

- **Feedback from conferences and inservices**
- **A proforma for using the Net (key words, search engines, evaluation and follow up)**
- **Train Year 7 students to surf the Net and award gold Licences to those with competency (eg train at lunchtime)**

**How can we change an organisation?**

- **Aim to transform, not to transact**
- **Identify values**
- **Collaborative decision-making**

- **Acknowledge many types of leadership**
- **Have a good knowledge of the issues, threats and opposition**
- **Build up an electronic library (eg Ross Todd advised that all schools now need to update their CD collections to take advantage of the educational CD's that have been released). Most schools have failed to tap this wonderful resource.**

#### **STEPS TO TAKE IN YOUR SCHOOL**

- **Ensure students are competent users of information technology**
- **Provide a lap top program (or use alpha smart if this is not an option). The main aim is to have competent users who have keyboards skills**
- **Check that you have a strategic plan for technology**
- **Have a strong knowledge of technology to implement the plan**

#### **ISSUE:**

**Where do the computer skills belong in the curriculum?**

- **Ross Todd maintains they are not primarily the responsibility of the Teacher librarian**
- **Alternatives are to have several teachers to specialise and teach the year 7 students or to have a Computer lab with an IT teacher**
- **Each school should draw up a list of competency skills that they want students to attain. (eg Years 1-4 Learn keyboard skills, Year 4 use CD Rom, Year 5-7 surf the Net using an evaluation form)**
- **In the high schools teachers see only their main subject and so there is not a lot of networking and discussion of computer skills. Information technology skills are taught separately.**

#### **WHAT IMPACT HAS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP?**

- **Better library staffing skills**
- **Library staff a high priority extension of library facilities**
- **Library becomes focal point of the curriculum**
- **Library priorities are decided jointly**

#### **AUTONOMOUS V INDEPENDENT LEARNERS**

- **Plan for Topic and outline**
- **Learning needs**
- **Information skills required**
- **Learning outcomes with Info skills**
- **Indicators of achievement/successful learning**
- **Evaluation**
- **Teaching strategies**

### **SITES AND MAGAZINES RECOMMENDED**

- *The classroom*
- *Travel Buddies*
- *OZGLNET websites give evaluation skills for the net*
- *OLSU contact via the Net*
- *EDNA (educational site)*
- *School sites*
- *SCAN a NSW School Educational magazine which reviews educational CD's*
- *ERIC Informational site in America for education, evaluating Info technology developments in American schools.*
- [Ross.todd@uts.edu.au](mailto:Ross.todd@uts.edu.au)
- *See also the list that OLSU gave as a handout at the 4 day Inservice in July 1999*

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

**This can include basic computer literacy skills and include socialising. Include a computer Licence for students.**

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**Summary by Gail Petherick (ESL Teacher at Leanyer Primary School, Darwin)**