

educationally speaking

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Welcome

In the time that I have been working with the corporate sector and education community to develop long-term partnerships, I have had experience with identifying and facilitating education stakeholders and advisory committees.

The importance of involving and consulting with these particular groups for relevancy, currency, and adoption of potential programs by their desired target groups is often underestimated.

This issue of *Educationally Speaking* focuses on the process of identifying and managing education stakeholders in program development and implementation. Tina Broad from the Music Council of Australia’s ‘Music. Play for Life’ program speaks about their experience in developing their national program for schools. We also have Will Morony from the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, who provides his view of the importance of corporate sector involvement and his predictions for the future of education program funding and development.

For more information about this latest issue, in particular implementing a corporate-developed and funded education program, or seeking to engage in a partnership for program development, please contact me.

Heather MacDonald
Director, Education Partnerships (Schools) Pty Ltd

Engaging education stakeholders in program development

Often when business seeks to develop an education program for schools, consultation with the education community is limited, or in some cases, even neglected. The importance of involving and consulting with these particular groups for relevancy, adaptability and integration of potential programs by their desired target groups is often underestimated. Some considerations for engagement in program development:

■ Initial engagement of the education community

In the initial stages of program development it is beneficial to engage the education community at a state and/or federal level, depending on the intended nature and reach of the program. Not only can these groups assist with identifying appropriate representatives at a program management level, they also have the ability to influence the broader education community when it comes to the roll out of programs state-wide and nationally.

■ Identifying partnerships in education

Once an organisation has highlighted a program area of interest they wish to pursue, it is necessary to identify the appropriate representatives or providers to partner with. These may consist of professional teacher associations which focus on the particular key learning areas of the program, state or federal education departments, or other education industry professional organisations which will be able to provide their knowledge and expertise.

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■ **Researching the core program offering**

To ensure that a resource or program actually addresses the curriculum and key learning areas, it is important to undertake comprehensive research with representatives, particularly curriculum advisors. This research should provide the scope of work to be undertaken including the method of delivery, education content, target audience, and concept timeline.

■ **Relevancy to target group learning needs and curriculum**

Often educators are not consulted on what they want or even need to meet their curriculum requirements. Neglecting to maintain a consultative approach with educators during development and implementation may result in the program being less likely to be successful and adopted by the teaching community. Educators are inundated with requests for inclusion of material in their curriculum, so it is extremely important to ensure that the program being developed has relevancy to the target group and addresses the key learning needs of students.

■ **Appropriate resource delivery and piloting programs**

While many schools are now 'online' there remain issues with broadband, hardware, software, and teacher professional development, and these can influence the effectiveness of delivery. For example, if your target audience is Physical Education educators, and the activity is practical-based, they will need a portable, easy-to-reference resource available to use on the school oval or in the gymnasium. Lack of buy-in or ongoing consultation with education professionals during the crucial program development phase, particularly in trialling the program within the school environment, may result in a program being ignored or deemed as too difficult to use within the classroom.

■ **Communication to schools**

Communications to schools should be streamlined so that they directly target the intended audience. Generally, initial communications to a school should be addressed to the Principal. The target audience for subsequent communications could be more specific, to the educator of the particular segment or key learning areas of the curriculum. Consider whether teacher workshops, letters, posters, emails or merchandise would be more effective to promote the organisation and the education program. Teacher professional associations are able to assist with the delivery of communications to the desired audience.

■ **Ongoing teacher development and program enhancement**

Educators are busy people and need an opportunity to absorb and discuss new programs and teaching materials. Lack of professional development to support the resource will influence the ongoing sustainability and relevance of the program for educators and their students. When introducing a new program, it is recommended that an organisation consider teacher workshops with consistent follow up and support as educators will be more likely to engage in programs or services that have a long-term education strategy. Providing opportunities for teacher evaluation is also highly recommended. This way, educators can work with organisations to develop a program that will have long term benefits for both parties.

■ **Establishing a steering/advisory committee**

Keeping abreast of educational trends is important. This can be managed by engaging education stakeholders at regular intervals throughout an education program's research, development and implementation stages. Educators, particularly education policy advisors, can provide information on education trends, the needs of respective education communities and the ongoing resources required to meet these. It is also important to monitor the national and international marketplace to identify trends in corporate support for education and the changing needs of teachers and students.

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There are many opportunities throughout program development and implementation where education stakeholders can provide beneficial advice and input for a successful and appropriate outcome for all involved, in particular students and teachers.

Professionally Speaking

A Business Perspective: Music. Play for Life



'Music. Play for Life' is a national advocacy campaign to get Australia more musically active. The campaign is run by the Music Council of Australia - the nation's peak not-for-profit music body, representing all aspects of musical life in Australia. Against the backdrop of a recent federally-funded review into the provision and quality of school music education in our schools, the campaign has had a particular focus on raising awareness about the value to kids in learning music at school.

The benefits to children are many and varied – all backed up by compelling international and local research – improving kids' self-esteem, confidence, self-discipline and engagement with school. Plus there are proven links between music learning and kids' literacy and numeracy outcomes. Despite the overwhelming evidence about the value of music education in children's lives, we know that as few as 2 out of 10 state schools provide their students an effective music education. In the private system, the number leaps up to 9 out of 10!

Access to an effective music education is particularly weak in the primary school sector. With funding from the philanthropic Freedman Foundation, 'Music. Play for Life' has been piloting a unique music-in-schools program, 'IGNITE'. Under the program, primary school students work with some of Sydney's brightest young professional jazz musicians in classroom workshops intended to light the children's love of music. The five-week program culminates in a performance by the musicians and students for the whole school, showcasing songs the kids have written with the musicians' help.

Of key importance is that the program has been designed in collaboration with musicians, music education experts and classroom teachers – under the watchful and evaluative eye of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's Dr Peter Dunbar-Hall. A true partnership of education and industry.

The IGNITE evaluation from teachers shows that children benefit from the motivating and inspiring program in many ways. Their confidence improves, they learn how to work together as a team, they learn about harmony, rhythm and the joys of singing. For many of them, IGNITE is their first experience of performing to an audience. And most of them can't wait to do it again!

"Most of these kids really haven't had much musical experience themselves," said Leanne Sullivan, a participating classroom teacher. "So this program has been incredible. I've been able to work it into our literacy work in class, because we wrote a rap as part of the song. Their sense of rhythm has noticeably improved, they've seen what can be done when they practise and really work at something. It's been terrific."

For more information about 'Music. Play for Life' visit www.musicplayforlife.org

Tina Broad
Music Council of Australia

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An Educator's Perspective: Partnerships: challenges and opportunities

Anyone involved will tell you that educational partnerships worth having take time and effort, and often a great deal of both. Time needs to be taken to reach an understanding about what each partner expects to get out of the relationship and why. Effort needs to be made to maintain the partnership. Good communication is important.



Busy educators in schools, universities and professional associations will tell you it is hard to find the time. I am sure people in the private sector say the same. So it has to be worth it, and that comes down to the quality and importance of the ideas people are working on. Here are a couple of ideas in the world of school maths that I think are 'worth it'.

Making mathematics come alive relies on good teaching, and part of that is being able to link the mathematics students are learning to their worlds. Partnerships between teachers of mathematics and business and industry are central to programs that help:

- teachers to understand how mathematics is used in industry — from the 'shop floor' to the 'design suite' and manager's office — and draw on this in their teaching;
- teachers to appreciate and use modern applications of mathematics in business and industry in their teaching; and
- students to understand the importance of mathematics in many careers.

We at the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers Inc (AAMT) are aware of some examples of these sorts of programs in mathematics; it would be great to hear about more of these, no matter how small. And maybe get some more going. It is my view that the current work on 'national curriculum' indicates that the model of governments owning the process of curriculum development has run its course. What we need is curriculum in mathematics that anticipates and responds to the 21st century in which our young people will live and work. What we are getting in the main is tired regurgitation of the same old stuff.

So here comes the idea. What about a partnership between the mathematics teaching profession and the private sector to break the mould? A mathematics curriculum that is relevant, challenging and engaging for all our young people; a mathematics curriculum that truly meshes with the needs of business and industry. Now that would be something worth working on... Anyone want to talk about a partnership?

For more information about the AAMT and the programs offered to schools visit www.aamt.edu.au

Will Morony, Executive Officer
The Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers Inc.

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Education Calendar

August 2007

- 18-24 – Children’s Book Week 2007, Children’s Book Council of Australia <http://www.cbc.org.au>
- 18-26 – National Science Week 2007, DEST <http://www.scienceweek.info.au>
- 22-2 Sep – Keep Australia Beautiful Week <http://www.keepaustraliabeautiful.org.au>
- StartSmart Teacher Development Workshops, Commonwealth Bank Foundation: Canberra, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart. StartSmart Rural & Regional Workshops: Broome <http://www.startsmart.com.au>

September 2007

- 2-8 – National Child Protection Week <http://www.napcan.org.au>
- 3-9 – National Literacy and Numeracy Week 07, DEST <http://www.literacyandnumeracy.gov.au>
- 3-9 – Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers Inc – Let’s be Fair (secondary schools); Reach for the Stars (pre-school, primary, middle school) <http://www.aamt.edu.au>
- 7 – Term 2 ends: Tas
- 19 – Applications close, Commonwealth Bank Foundation Financial Literacy Grants 2007 <http://www.commbank.com.au/financialliteracygrants>
- 21 – Term 3 ends: Qld, Vic,
- 24 – Term 3 commences: Tas
- 28 – Term 3 ends: ACT, NSW, NT, SA, WA
- StartSmart Teacher Development Workshop, Commonwealth Bank Foundation: Sydney/Brisbane. StartSmart Rural & Regional Workshops: Cairns, Innisfail <http://www.startsmart.com.au>

October 2007

- 8 – Term 4 commences: NT, Qld, Vic,
- 15-16 – Term 4 commences: ACT, NSW, SA, WA
- 24 – Universal Children’s Day, UNICEF Australia <http://www.unicef.org.au/SchoolRoom-Subs.asp?SchoolRoomID=66>
- 26 – Australian World Teacher’s Day
- 21-27 – National Water Week <http://www.nationalwaterweek.org.au>
- StartSmart Teacher Development Workshop, Commonwealth Bank Foundation: Darwin. StartSmart Rural & Regional Workshops: Rockhampton, Yeppoon, Port Macquarie, Newcastle <http://www.startsmart.com.au>

Enquiries

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