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Decision making for students with disability in the mainstream classroom

Jennifer Stephenson, Mark Carter, Amanda Webster, Neale Waddy, Robert Stevens, Melissa Clements & Talia Morris

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Decision making for students with disability in the mainstream classroom

Jennifer Stephenson, Mark Carter, Amanda Webster, Neale Waddy, Robert Stevens, Melissa Clements and Talia Morris present their research on different ways schools manage to integrate students with disability into mainstream classrooms.

With the increasing acceptance of inclusion, which acknowledges that students with disability should have the same opportunities and choices in their education as students without disability, most schools work to incorporate students with disability as part of their population. The [Disability Standards for Education](#), under the [Australian Disability Discrimination Act](#) (DDA), requires schools to make reasonable adjustments in consultation with families and the student (if possible) so that students with disability can access learning and teaching experiences within mainstream schools. However, little is known about how schools make such decisions, the kinds of adjustments they make or how the adjustments are employed and evaluated.

Our study on the way schools accommodate students with disability involved collaboration of researchers from the NSW Department of Education, Macquarie University and University of Wollongong. In the course of the study, we interviewed multiple stakeholders involved in school-based decision-making processes for accommodating students with disability. The study included principals, executives, teachers, parents, student learning and support officers (SLSOs), school counsellors and students in order to investigate a broad range of perspectives on selecting and implementing adjustments to support students with disability. Interviewees came from 22 NSW schools including 18 primary and four high schools. School locations varied with representation from metropolitan, inner regional and outer regional areas. Participants at each school were asked to focus on the same student in their school community, and to consider the extensive or substantial adjustments required to accommodate and assist this student in the mainstream classroom.

The process of planning and implementation of adjustments

The interviews covered a range of topics including how decisions were made, what adjustments were implemented to accommodate the student, and how student outcomes were monitored and evaluated. Our results derive from the analysis of all the interviews, which were recorded and then transcribed.

Overall, we found that almost all schools were proactive in their planning, and that members of the school community could describe specific adjustments for the student and generally agreed on what these adjustments were. Almost all schools had processes that involved joint decision making and reported that families were substantively involved in the decision-making. Typically, the decision-making process involved families, the principal or executive, the child's teacher and the learning and support teacher (LaST). Despite these broad commonalities, there was wide variation across schools in the finer details of the decision-making. For instance, in some schools there was disagreement, or concern about the lack of clarity in the processes, amongst the stakeholders. In general, about half the schools thought they were meeting the student's needs. However, in other schools, teachers identified areas where they thought the student's needs were not met. An example of such concern is raised in the following comment.

I am really concerned about him socially especially going to Years 11 and 12, where there is a great deal of work and students rely upon each other to do group work, and to support each other. ... and I'm just at a loss as to how to progress with that with him. I can't make him be more social and I don't know what kind of a program would help him. (Teacher – high school)

Adapting instruction and classroom procedures

Over half the schools reported they had a broad educational focus for the student with disability, but there was a number that focussed to a much greater extent on care, safety, and participation, than they did on student learning outcomes. Related to this, in most schools, the focus of adjustments was narrow and limited to a few specific areas. While for some students, such as those with vision impairment, a narrower focus might be appropriate, the majority of students with higher support needs would require a broader range of adjustments.

In many schools the adjustments to curriculum content were given less emphasis. For some students, fairly generalised adjustments to teaching or curriculum provided the support necessary for the student with disability. The essence of these less complicated adjustments is captured in the following comments.

The classroom teacher adjusts her – the delivery of her instructions, and makes them very simple, low on the verbal, and more high on the visual. (School counsellor – primary school)

Obviously, a lot of the things that we do as a class N can't do the same, so we adjust it so he can be included, such as if we're playing a dice game kids might be adding

numbers whereas he'll just be identifying the number that's rolled on the dice.
(Teacher – primary school)

There have been lots of adjustments around seating plans, teacher instruction, making teacher instruction explicit, the way they dealt with conflict in terms of not confronting him and letting him have time to cool off. I think he's used the timeout card at various points as well. (School counsellor – high school)

But we always encourage teachers to constantly touch base, 'Do you understand what is required of you N?' Certainly, he's not made the centre of attention in the classroom necessarily, but we really stress that he needs clear expectations of what is required of him during the lesson. (LaST – high school)

A range of more specific adjustments were also described as necessary in some situations. In one small school, which did not employ an SLSO, the teacher outlined the simple and effective adjustments to teaching he used consistently. He explained,

I make sure that when I'm working with him, that I get him to sit opposite me so that we've got, you know, I'm right in front of him so I can stop him from being distracted by stuff happening behind us. We've got eye contact, make sure he's listening to me, and we just do lots of reminding, we do lots of retelling, showing, helping, so you support him a lot in getting stuff started. And when he does something, we're really making a big deal, 'Wow, look at that! You've really done that well. And that's fantastic writing.' (Teacher – primary school)

Some schools found individual peer support worked well, suggesting that the use of a peer may be a strategy to reduce the need for an SLSO. One school approached peer support more broadly by teaching all students some basic sign language.

... a peer tutor, that was another suggestion, that would help her meet her goals, to have a peer. She would get a peer to read to her and she would read to a peer and things like that. Same as writing and recognising her numbers, so having flash cards and a peer going over them with her. (Executive – primary school)

She's always paired up with a buddy who's like a stronger worker, she's always sitting next to a more capable worker to give her that support. (Teacher – primary school)

... teach the other children some signs and put those signs around the school. We've put them in the classrooms and in the playground so the children can learn specific signs to help N. (Principal – primary school)

For a number of students, participants reported using various visual resources to support oral instructions in order to establish and maintain routines.

We have the use of the visual timetable and social stories, short, clear instructions, repetition of instructions, record of behaviour booklet, task completion booklet, which was about recording the positive behaviour. ... had a mat for when sitting on the floor for group stories and class sharing time ... feedback via a happy face and a sad face to help him, assist with class task completion ... we maintained a clear

routine and practice, particularly between transitions between activities and locations. The use of visuals to identify when feeling stressed or anxious. Use clear, concise visual timetables and visuals throughout the room and school environment. (Teacher – primary school)

As a part of a behaviour management strategy, visual representations were often used as a way to support students to maintain appropriate behaviour.

What I've done is I've put together a behaviour contingency contract for him ... and we talk about the expectations and we identify our three things that we're going to focus on, and that's laminated [visual representation], and we stick it on his desk. That way we can use his language when we speak to him about what's expected, and they're the things that he's come up with as well, that he's decided that he needs to work on. So, there's that element of ownership as well. I've got a sticker book, and a little tick chart as well. If we're doing the right thing, we're following all of our rules, we get ticks. When we get five ticks, we get a sticker in our book, each row has four little boxes, and then when he fills up a row of stickers, then he gets something out of the prize box, and he gets some free time. I've sort of been trying to make sure he gets there quite quickly to try and shape his behaviour a little bit, and then I'm going to sort of ease back on it come the last week of school and see how we go. (LaST – primary school)

For some students, text to speech and/or voice to text software was used to provide access to and production of more complex text, and this use of technology fitted into general class routines.

They did a Year 7 novel just to see - a text that they read through in class and the teacher actually got me to download the audible, which is online, and it actually plugged into the text. And that way B could actually listen to the book get read to her, so that was a big benefit because someone was actually reading the book to her and then she could go through and she could answer the questions that the teacher was actually asking. (Parent – primary school)

We all use, the whole class uses Google Classroom, and that she finds really effective. I use an app on my phone or sometimes on her iPad that's a text to speech app, because she still struggles with writing. So, if we're doing creative writing or writing of any sort of text, she will 9 times out of 10 use the voice to text and then she'll type that up. (Teacher – primary school)

Allowing him to at times type his work, rather than write with a pen, because he's so inclined towards doing that [typing]. So, if he wants to demonstrate his learning through that, digitally publishing his work, then actually that's the end point anyway. (Teacher – primary school)

Flexible use of SLSOs

We found that the most common adjustment utilised across all schools was the employment of an SLSO. These individuals were used extensively and were reported to

mostly work under the direction of a teacher. SLSOs were frequently used to help the student stay on task and to complete activities. Most schools used the SLSO to work one-to-one with an individual student and did not indicate plans to fade this support over time. Nevertheless, some schools described a range of more flexible uses of SLSOs including use for specific small group instruction.

The spelling lists were adjusted, and the little small group would work with the teacher's aide and they practice spelling and look at the spelling patterns. (Teacher – primary school)

Support from an SLSO was also used to allow the teacher to focus on small group teaching.

If I'm with a group and she's [the SLSO] on, she's helping with some of the other groups, then she'll notice a behaviour, or she can implement something. (Teacher – primary school)

Few schools had specific goals for the student associated with the use of an SLSO. Clarity about student goals and how the SLSO can contribute to specific student outcomes would facilitate evaluation of SLSO use. This approach might include training SLSOs to implement specific academic programs or activities, to implement strategies that increase student independence and ability to complete tasks. More broadly, it may be helpful for schools to consider their reasons for employing an SLSO and even consider other strategies (that is, peer support, technology, and increased teacher use of adjustments to pedagogy, curriculum and classroom management) that could be used to achieve specific outcomes for a student with disability.

Formal programs to address task related behaviour and clear goal setting

Many schools reported that the main use of the SLSO was to help the student to stay engaged and to complete set tasks. Despite this, only a few reported they used systematic adjustments to encourage students to become more independent, monitor their own engagement or decrease the SLSO support over time. One teacher described how he had promoted student task completion.

I could sit there with him the whole time, but I don't. We've been giving him more and more extended periods of, 'Well, here's the work.' Support him to get started. Once he knows what he's doing, walking away and letting him actually take a bit of responsibility. And then giving him a reward, and when he finishes that, 'What would you like do once this is complete?' ... We've gone from writing a word to writing 20 words. (Teacher – primary school)

We identified some areas where some schools might need additional support when making decisions about adjustments for students with disability. For many schools the goals for the students were unclear, or only very generally stated. Clear goals allow for monitoring of student progress in relation to the goals. In some schools, teachers were able to describe very specific goals.

Basic goals, when she first started kindergarten, was to write her name, count to 10, read a level 2 text, I think I had a goal of write five simple sight words. We started off with a goal of I think it was going two days without having a toileting accident ... (Executive – primary school)

So, what we're looking for is, in regards to academic goals, is looking for him to be able to write his name, being able to identify letters, being able to identify specific words and he's on a certain reading programme for that. Number knowledge, so can he count to 10. Can he identify numbers up to 10? Does he know what a group is? (LaST – primary school)

A goal for N. going through was actually to be able to identify using an emotional thermometer which is one the adjustments that we put in place and there was a lot of education put in behind that with him as well but to be able to identify where he was on the emotional thermometer and then the action that he would take. (LaST – primary school)

One school had worked through a series of goals related to independence.

So it could be something like independence with walking into the playground at the beginning of the year, he needed to be escorted into which part of the playground it needed to be, or into the classroom because that was all new, whereas now he does all of that himself, he independently puts his bag up, his hat, his shoes. So, independence would've been goals for that but now independence shifts to say independently logging onto a computer. So that independence goal changes as we go through the year. (Executive –primary school)

Another school, working on increasing social interaction, taught ways for a student to approach other children and ask to join in.

How to promote interaction; how to say somehow, 'can I play?' Because there was a while where she would stand and wait for everybody to come to her, which a lot of kids with a lot of input do. So, we had to teach her to go out and reach out. And how to make the girls understand 'can I play too?' (LaST – primary school)

Monitoring

Lack of clear, specific goals meant monitoring was often informal and not individualised. Monitoring was most commonly described as involving a discussion of student progress or formal monitoring of generic outcomes through half-yearly class assessments or NAPLAN. About one-third of schools had some system for formally monitoring adjustment-specific outcomes. In some schools, individual monitoring for every child, enabled teachers to track progress.

We have instructional leader process in our school, and they have a very complex system of data collecting which is done every five weeks ... So, N's progress in literacy and numeracy is assessed - like it's ongoing, every five weeks, collection of data and tracking of the data. So that then, in turn, generates where the teaching

points have got to be for the next five weeks. And that's done for every child. It's the most perfect way to support students, including N. (LaST – primary school)

Well, because we're Early Action for Success school data's collected and submitted to Sydney every five weeks but collected every week, our plan data, so it's closely monitored and we have a data [wall] that tracks every student in our school to show where they're up to and where they need to go. And their learning goals for writing for instance are in their writing book and they know where they need to go to next to achieve that goal so that's ongoing all the time for maths and literacy. (Principal – primary school)

In some school communities, the value of clear goals and more consistent monitoring were recognised.

Yeah, I think there needs to be more sort of goals set so that, not just for N. but so the teacher knows okay, well this is where I have to help him get up to, because it's sort of just a bit casual. (Parent – primary school)

Overall, many schools had established broad outcomes for students, but had not considered setting clear and specific goals that could be regularly monitored to inform changes to programs and adjustments. Teachers described a range of adjustments they found helpful, and although some schools described basic adjustments to teaching strategies, few curriculum adaptations were described. Many schools considered the use of an SLSO as an adjustment but had not planned specifically how the use of an SLSO would help the student reach the planned outcomes. Some school used SLSOs flexibly and others used peers or technology to provide support in place of an SLSO. Overall schools appeared to be committed to doing the best they could for students with disability and including them in all aspects of school life.

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Cultural competency: Reconciliation in action

Alanna Raymond is a proud Aboriginal Australian woman, primary teacher and member of Reconciliation Australia’s Narragunnawali team. In this article, Alanna explains cultural competency in the context of education, and suggests practical ways teachers and schools can build cultural competence.

What is cultural competency?

Cultural competency can be seen as processes of increasing awareness, safety, security and capability in a culturally informed way. The very nature of building cultural competence is personal; it requires a deep awareness of one’s own identity, examining one’s own biases, prejudice and privilege, while increasing knowledge and understanding of cultures other than one’s own.

‘...a teacher’s cultural competence is characterised by their teaching practices as well as their dispositions, attitudes, values, and knowledge relating to culture’

(Clinton, Aston & Koelle, 2018, p. 35).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency should be set apart from broader multicultural competency – taking into account the unique historical and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities across Australia.

Cultural competence in action is central to actively driving [reconciliation](#) across all five of its interrelated dimensions: historical acceptance; race relations; equality and equity; unity and institutional integrity.

- **Historical acceptance** - is accepting wrongs of the past and recognising the impact they continue to have on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today, to ensure these wrongs are not repeated.

- **Race relations** - involves all Australians understanding and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, resulting in stronger relationships based on trust and respect that are free of racism.
- **Equality and equity** - recognising the distinction between 'sameness' and 'fairness'; advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to participate equally and equitably in a range of life opportunities, including education. This dimension upholds the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with a focus on respecting, protecting and promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- **Unity** – by definition involves all Australians valuing the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritages as part of a shared national identity.
- **Institutional integrity** - the active support for reconciliation across the nation's political, business, educational and community structures.

Cultural competency in the classroom

While the concept of cultural competency is not new, it has been increasingly recognised as an important factor in teacher effectiveness and as part of delivering quality education in Australia.

As Clinton et al. (2018) explain, cultural competence is both a behaviour and a trait of effective educators, and is essential for creating an empathetic, supportive and inclusive classroom environment. In this way, 'a teacher's cultural competence is characterised by their teaching practices as well as their dispositions, attitudes, values, and knowledge relating to culture' (p. 35). Underlying this is an important link between the teacher's own culture, and views on diversity, and the ways in which these factors directly inform and impact their pedagogical and professional practice.

Cultural competency also has a strong relationship with 'cultural responsiveness'. That is, while cultural competence relates to one's **capacity to act**, cultural responsiveness refers to effective cultural competence **in action** (Perso, 2012). As part of building cultural competence in the education space, culturally responsive pedagogy 'acknowledges and draws on diverse learners' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and discourse patterns to make classrooms more inclusive and to make learning more meaningful and relevant' (Rosaen, 2003, as cited in Dunbar & Scrimgeour, 2009, p. 2).

It is therefore not surprising that cultural competence is key in improving educational outcomes for students from non-dominant or diverse cultures (Gay, 2000, as cited in Dunbar & Scrimgeour, 2009, p. 2). This is especially important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who, in 2019, accounted for just under 6% of all students in Australian schools (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020), and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers who (in 2016) made up approximately 2% of the teaching workforce (Australian Council of Deans of Education, 2018). Essentially, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and teachers are most likely, at some point in their educational journeys, going to be taught by, teach, and/or work with other Australians who are from different cultures.

As education is acknowledged as a significant determinant of both health and wellbeing for children (Biddle & Priest, 2019), it is important to increase opportunities for all teachers to continually build their cultural competence to holistically and effectively support their students' cultural and learning needs. This expectation is articulated in the first standard of the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#). Standard 1 requires teachers to know their students and how they learn, with particular emphasis in focus areas 1.3 and 1.4 on 'students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds' and 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011).

For these reasons, it's important for educators to continually grow, using their understanding of historical (both pre and post-colonisation) and contemporary Indigenous Australia, while simultaneously taking into account students' individuality to inform their teaching. As Krakouer (2015) highlights, perceptions of what is considered to be best practice in culturally responsive teaching are mixed, since Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have diverse languages, histories, cultural practices and ways of learning. She also notes the need for teachers to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledge from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in order to avoid the perpetuation of misinformation or negative stereotyping.

Building cultural competency in a broad sense is also essential as it equips individuals and the wider school community with the knowledge and understanding to create and maintain culturally safe spaces that promote respect and stronger relationships in the classroom, around the school and with the community.

A new [AITSL initiative](#) is working to build teachers' cultural competency and increase cultural safety in schools in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The project seeks to ensure that cultural competence is both an assessable and accessible aspect of the professional requirements for individual teachers and forms part of any whole-of-school plans or priorities. Cultural competence is not about **teaching** 'culture' or including [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content](#) (although it does not sit in isolation from this). It is more about incorporating respect **for** and understandings **about** 'culture' broadly to build better relationships. Understanding diversity and how to navigate relationship building in a respectful and culturally informed way is applicable in many cross-cultural professional and personal settings.

Taking action to build cultural competence

Taking action to build cultural competence should be an individual, school and community priority.

Reconciliation Australia's [Narragunnawaii program](#) supports schools and early learning services in Australia to develop environments that foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. Following are some ideas and resources, from Narragunnawaii and beyond, to enrich professional learning.

- Watch the video, [Cultural competence for staff](#) [2:58] by Reconciliation Australia. This short clip outlines some ways in which schools and early learning services can provide opportunities for staff to extend their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures:



YouTube video: 'Cultural competence for staff' by Reconciliation Australia

- Sign up and engage with cultural competency resources on the [Narragunnawali platform](#) including:
 - [Cultural Competence for Staff](#) Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
 - [Cultural Competence for Students and Children](#) RAP Action
 - [Cultural Competence Continuum](#) professional learning resource
 - [Reflecting on our own Cultural Identities](#) professional learning resource.
- Explore the information and ideas for action included in the following [Narragunnawali RAP Actions](#):
 - [Build Relationships with Community](#)
 - [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Classroom](#)
 - [Elders and Traditional Owners Share Histories and Cultures](#)
 - [Explore Current Affairs and Issues](#).
- Research, listen to and read a wide range of diverse perspectives (particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives):
 - Visit [Reconciliation Australia's website](#) and the [Share Our Pride](#) online resource.
 - Investigate the Narragunnawali [subject specific resource guides](#).
 - Visit [AIATSIS](#) (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies).
 - Watch documentaries such as [In My Blood It Runs](#) and [Zach's Ceremony](#).
 - Explore the [National Indigenous Music Awards](#) (NIMA) finalists and winners.
 - Engage with [ABC Indigenous](#) and [NITV](#) (National Indigenous Television).

- Be prepared to be challenged and have reflective, healthy discussions with colleagues by engaging with the [Head, Heart, Hand: Reconciliation Yarning Circle](#) and [Face the Facts – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rights](#) professional learning resources.
- Source professional development which builds cultural competence and develops understanding of diverse perspectives. Such opportunities could include the [In My Blood It Runs professional learning resource](#) and courses run by the [Stronger Smarter Institute](#) and the [NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group](#) (such as [Connecting to Country](#) and [Healthy Culture Healthy Country](#)). Professional learning could also include local equivalents to ensure local context is captured.
- Engage with and learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses by [creating a stakeholder list](#) including organisations such as Magabala Books.

Cultural competency is not a destination; it's an ongoing personal and professional journey. It can be seen as a continuum (Hart & Dargan, 2014) that recognises the constant process of building knowledge and understanding, and transforming that learning into informed action, in ways which often resonate in both personal and professional settings dynamically over time.

Together, through building cultural competence in ourselves and our students, we play an active role in shaping an Australian society that values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage, recognises them as a proud part of a shared identity, and is empowered to provide equal and equitable opportunities for **all** Australians.

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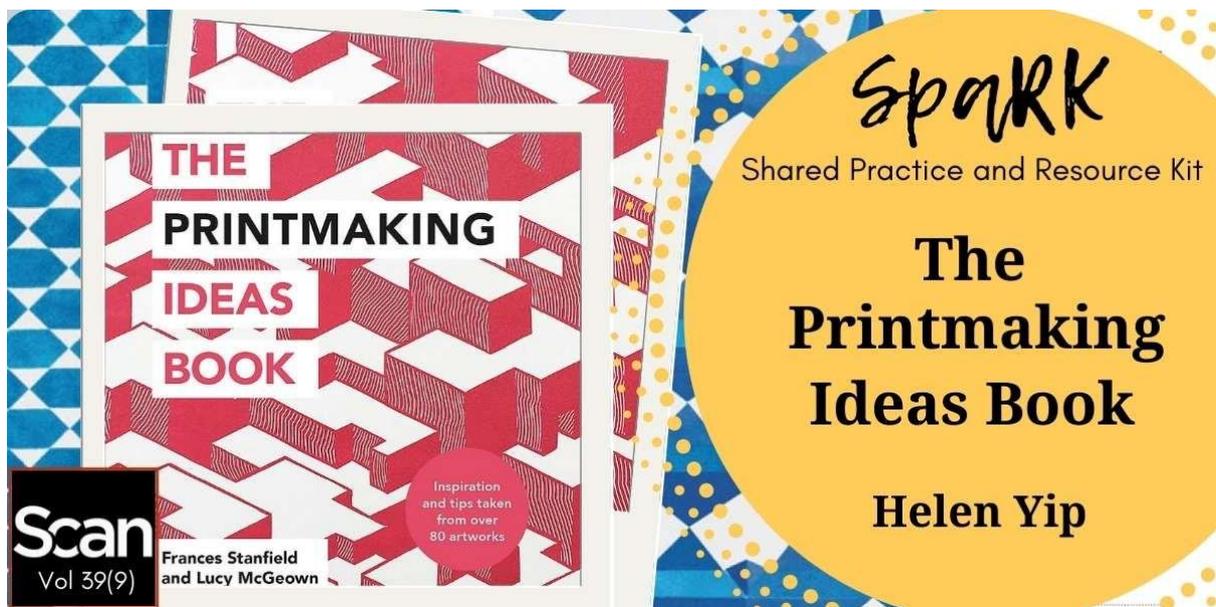
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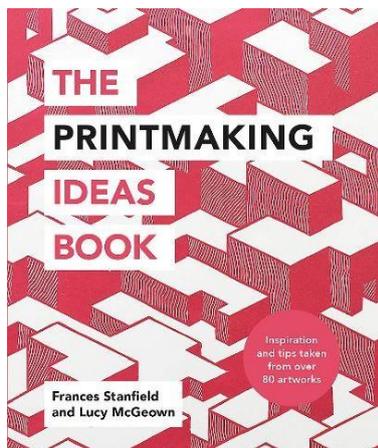
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SPaRK – The Printmaking Ideas Book

Helen Yip is a teacher of visual arts and photography, video and digital imaging at Asquith Girls High School. In this Shared Practice and Resource Kit (SPaRK), she shares an inspiring resource on printmaking as a mode of expression for students of visual arts in Stages 4-6.



The Printmaking Ideas Book by Frances Stanfield and Lucy McGeown

Resource overview

Versatile, experimental and transformative, printmaking is a powerful medium that offers infinite material and conceptual possibilities. Presented in an accessible handbook format, 'The Printmaking Ideas Book' outlines a variety of approaches to printmaking employing traditional to contemporary techniques. Punchy artwork visuals accompany each technique, and are balanced with concise summaries of artists' practice, historical insights and practical artmaking advice. Students and teachers can flick through and find immediate inspiration across a range of subject matter and innovative approaches for interpreting and translating ideas, materials and imagery. Offering an exploratory platform for building and extending students' artmaking, this book promotes an interdisciplinary approach to practice, highlighting dynamic connections between 2D, 3D and 4D forms, including printmaking,

drawing, collage, painting, textiles, sculpture, photography, digital imaging, animation and film. A thumbnail index of featured artworks with artists' names and websites provides a quick reference guide for further research and inquiry. From embossing, laser-cut lino printing, collagraphy and alternative methods for printing without a press, to working with time, found objects, rain, urban architecture and experimental surfaces, the possibilities revealed by this handbook provide a bold blueprint for creative thinking and positive risk-taking – within and beyond the classroom.

Educational significance

Offering authentic approaches, insights and experiments for developing students' creative and critical thinking, this resource promotes positive risk-taking, material experimentation and conscious conceptual decisions through the artmaking process. It highlights the significance of printmaking as a rich platform and means of interpreting and translating ideas, materials and imagery, and its role in framing innovative interpretations of the world. The book provides a useful starting point and scaffold for enriching students' understanding of how they may represent their intentions and an informed point of view via their artmaking as well as their critical and historical accounts.

Strikingly, this book explores how chance and control underlie the practice of artists, prompting students to consider the nature of artmaking as a balance and interplay between intuitive, spontaneous acts and intentional, informed decision-making. Investigations of the diverse concepts, materials and techniques outlined in this book will promote students' engagement with the physicality, immediacy and expansive possibilities of printmaking as an evolving practice.

Syllabus links

- [Visual Arts Years 7-10](#)
- [Visual Arts Stage 6](#)

Additional syllabus links

- [Photographic and Digital Media Years 7-10](#)
- [Photography, Video and Digital Imaging CEC Stage 6](#)
- [Visual Design Years 7-10](#)
- [Visual Design CEC Stage 6 CEC](#)

Suggestions for using this text

This resource serves as an accessible handbook and quick reference guide for generating a range of artmaking, critical, historical and investigations. Both students and teachers will find it useful for informing the development and extension of their own material and conceptual practice, given its concise design and highly experimental, hands-on approach to artmaking, including simple yet eloquent techniques for printing without a press or specialised equipment. Particular techniques, materials and subject matter may be selected to form the focus of individual lessons or extended, project-based tasks, or a combination may be explored.

As the book is structured in terms of alternating techniques, materials and sources of inspiration, teachers may choose to workshop specific content and approaches to printmaking, to inform an artmaking task or the development of a body of work. Techniques such as monotype, etching, screenprinting, linocut, stamping, embossing, digital printing, collagraphy, risography, laser-cut lino printing, kitchen litho and ebru may form the basis of practical experiments and lead to the generation, extension, translation or resolution of ideas. Experimenting with innovative layers, surfaces, contexts, sites, forms of mark-making, transformations over time, representational approaches and modes of presentation could also provide opportunities for students to take positive risks in their learning and extend their practice as artists.

Significantly, the book highlights the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary artmaking practice, providing direct strategies for teachers and students to reveal and exploit 2D, 3D and 4D interconnections between printmaking, drawing, collage, painting, textiles, sculpture, photography, digital imaging, animation and film. Students could inform their own practical experimentation through further research and critical analysis of the practice and work of artists referenced alongside each technique or approach. Brief summaries of historical developments, artists' conceptual aims and material choices provide additional contextual cues for critical, historical and practical inquiries.

Teaching activities

- Analyse the impact of printmaking on the practice of artists, exploring how and why artists experiment with interconnections between printmaking and drawing, collage, painting, textiles, sculpture, photography, digital imaging, animation or film. Classroom investigations could focus on how collage and printmaking informed the visual and critical language of Cubism, Dada, Pop Art or Postmodernism. Students could also explore how traditional printmaking methods have been adapted and transformed to interpret and represent contemporary issues and subject matter, including hybrid identities, urban life and landscapes, digital culture, and the revisioning of histories and narratives. Refer to Common Works' animated print project [Picture of the Floating World](#) and the practice of [William Kentridge](#), [Sindiso Khumalo](#), [Stathis Tsemberlidis](#) and [Mandy Pane](#).
- Explore how printmaking forms an integral part of our daily lives and visual culture, as a means for personal, collective and mass communication. Challenge students to brainstorm, research and record all forms of prints which they might encounter, collect or create during a given timeframe, such as over the course of an hour, day or week. For example, tickets, receipts, photos, magazines, advertising material, billboards, postcards, letters, photocopies, clothing, consumer packaging, tyre marks, digital fingerprint locks or other temporal traces or impressions in their surrounding environment. Students can collect, photograph, draw or film these forms, then individually or collaboratively create a physical, digital and/or moving collage that maps their encounters over time. This could be extended into series of artworks using techniques such as monoprinting, etching, frottage, linocut, stencils or digital editing.

- Research the historical development and role of printmaking as a means for reproducing, publishing and distributing images and texts. Analyse the impact of technological advancements on the evolution of printmaking, such as papermaking, improved printing presses and digital imaging. Discuss how printmaking has served powerful social and political functions in the dissemination of images, artworks, ideas, ideals and ideologies across time and place. Evaluate the role of art as a means for social commentary and critique, considering how prints act as a powerful means for public protest. Refer to a range of historical and contemporary examples, such as anti-war and anti-discrimination campaigns, street art and paste ups. Consider the practice of artists such as Albrecht Dürer, Katsushika Hokusai, Francisco Goya, Käthe Kollwitz, [Andy Warhol](#), [Banksy](#) or [Swoon](#).
- Evaluate the nature and status of printmaking as a medium that generates copies and multiples, examining the concept of originality in art. Discuss the notion and value of the 'copy' in contemporary culture, considering how our visual landscape is saturated with images, advertising and simulacrum or copies of copies. Refer to Jean Baudrillard's 'Simulacra and Simulation' and the blurring of reality and representation in our screen-based lives. Explore the postmodern strategy of appropriation and how artists intentionally recontextualise pre-existing images, artworks and texts, to comment on the 'original' and generate alternative readings and meanings. Experiment with copies and multiples in artmaking, manipulating scale, colour, texture, layers, transparency, noise and appropriated imagery to generate distorted, abstract, sensory or symbolic qualities. Reference the practice of [Lindy Lee](#), [Gerhard Richter](#), [Helen Frankenthaler](#), [Joan Ross](#) and [Deborah Kelly](#).
- Investigate the idea and significance of 'controlled chance' in artmaking, with a focus on the practice of historical and/or contemporary printmakers. Explore how a balance between chance and control can be thought to underlie the practice of all artists, including students' own practice as artists. Reflect on the interplay between intuitive, spontaneous acts, accidental discoveries and incidental learning, and intentional, informed decision-making and choices. Discuss the importance of setting up frameworks for investigation which allow for structured freedom, positive risk-taking and trust in the artmaking process itself. Trace how specific artists move through a process of brainstorming, research, planning, concept development, experimentation, reflection, refinement and material resolution. Scaffold the development of students' own artmaking process and practice through project-based learning or tasks that incorporate big questions, authentic scenarios, structured freedom in the form of conceptual and material options, sustained inquiry, and student voice and choice.

Syllabus outcomes

A student:

- explores the roles and relationships between concepts of artist, artwork, world and audience through critical and historical investigations of art (Conceptual framework, p 8, [Visual Arts Stage 6](#)).

- explores ways in which significant art histories, critical narratives and other documentary accounts of the visual arts can be constructed (Representation, p 10, [Visual Arts Stage 6](#)).

Additional syllabus outcomes

- [Visual Arts Years 7-10](#) 4.8, 4.10, 5.8, 5.10
- [Photographic and Digital Media Years 7-10](#) 5.8, 5.10
- [Photography, Video and Digital Imaging CEC Stage 6](#) CH2, CH4
- [Visual Design Years 7-10](#) 5.8, 5.10
- [Visual Design CEC Stage 6 CEC](#) CH2, CH4

Experimenting

- Promote play and the development of students' own distinctive visual language through the investigation of diverse printmaking processes, materials, tools and mark-making approaches. Explore simple techniques such as frottage, monoprinting, stamping, stencils, chine-collé, drypoint etching, collagraphy, kitchen litho or ebru to create a series of prints that could be drawn or painted over, stitched, collaged or digitised. Experiment with available technologies such as laser-cut lino, risography or digital printing onto fabric to extend material and conceptual possibilities.
- Activate the ties between printmaking, drawing, painting and photography. Translate drawings, paintings and/or photographs into prints, observing and emphasising the translation of particular lines, marks, textures, tones, details and sensory qualities. Experiment with different mark-making tools and techniques, variations in composition, layers and transparency. Form images directly or indirectly by drawing or painting on the printing plate. Once the print is dry, explore the potential of hand-colouring and autographic mark-making using pencils, pastels, washes, markers or highlighters. Refer to the practice of [Nanette Wallace](#), [Grace Exley](#), [Sam Luke Heath](#) and [Chuck Close](#).
- Discuss how printmaking can be thought of as a process through which marks, images or impressions are transferred from one surface to another, which opens up the possibility for any surfaces to be used. Explore how printing on different surfaces creates opportunities to develop material and symbolic layers, resulting from changes in the texture, saturation and absorption of ink. Experiment with creating prints and impressions on unusual surfaces such as cloth, clay, concrete, wood, hand-painted paper, glass, perspex, or the environment itself. Refer to Eleonora Sher's series Landscape and Memory and the work of [Rachel Neale](#), [Andreea Mandrescu](#), [Therese Lebrun](#), [Marilene Oliver](#) and [Thomas Klipper](#).
- Translate 2D prints into 3D forms. Experiment with folding, stitching, collage and/or layering 2D prints to construct 3D sculptural forms. Consider relationships between printed shapes, imagery, positive and negative spaces, illusions, and internal and external structures. Create embossed relief prints to emphasise textures, patterns, lighting and shadows. Cut out, recombine, reassemble and hang elements to create

juxtapositions, distortions, wearable artworks or site-specific installations. Refer to the practice of [Carol Wyss](#), [Susan Robey](#) and [Sally Smart](#).

- Animate a sequence of prints to create a short film, considering each print as an individual frame. Alternatively, work over the same print or plate experimenting with the addition or subtraction of marks, details, layers or areas. Photograph or scan each frame, exploring the significance of transitions, narrative and the flow of time. Conversely, translate and deconstruct a film into a series of prints. Pause or screenshot the film and create monoprints by placing acetate over the screen, or monoprint from drawings or paintings of film stills. Experiment with ghost printing and building details from traces and shadows of ink remaining on the printing plate. Refer to Catherine Cartwright's '[Two Minute Memorial](#)', and the approaches of [Gill Roth](#) and [William Kentridge](#).
- Explore natural processes and cycles as a means for printmaking and exploring interconnections between the human and natural worlds. Utilise rain, sunlight, erosion, crystallisation and rust to generate organic, unexpected images, impressions, marks, textures, hues, compositions and transformations. Consider the reciprocal relationship between the fields of art and science, and the role of experimentation in both. Print directly from nature using plants, seed pods, branches, coral, sand, stones or earth. Consider the practice of [Serena Smith](#), [Amelia Phillips](#) and [Emily Harvey](#).
- Experiment with alternative modes of presenting a series or edition of prints to engage audiences, such as artist books, zines, accordion folds, panoramas, scrolls, stitched compositions, floating screens, box frames, Turkish-map folds and wearables. Refer to '[The Sketchbook Project](#)' and the practice of [Laurie Alpert](#), [Bettina Pauly](#), [Katherine Venturelli](#) and [Macy Chadwick](#).
- Channel the surreal, nonsensical and irrational to generate unusual connections and subconscious associations, to inspire a series of printmaking experiments. Explore collage, automatic drawing and the Surrealist game of Exquisite Corpse to create experimental compositions, juxtapositions and abstractions. Inversions between dreams and reality could be achieved through additive and subtractive monoprinting, and chine-collé could be used to highlight unusual hybrids, contrasts and focal points. Refer to the work of Man Ray, André Masson, [Joan Miró](#) and Hannah Höch.
- Deconstruct found objects or images, investigating how the process of fragmentation provokes possibilities for reconfigurations, reassembling and mending. Break apart what is familiar, analyse details and component parts, and reconstruct meanings, memories and frameworks for viewing the world. Discuss Marcel Duchamp's concept of the 'readymade', Tod McLellan's series '[Things Come Apart](#)', the work of [Claire Willberg](#) and Keiko Matsui's mended '[scar](#)' vessels. Form a series of prints based on this process of fragmentation and/or mending. Continuous line drawing, monoprinting, embossing and/or collagraphy could be used to create material and conceptual threads.

- Compare printmaking to the process of mapping, inscribing, visualising, sensing, documenting and embedding a place or journey in time and over time. Map the natural landscape, human body, urban environment, patterns of movement or inhabitation, miniature versus macro, past and present or interior versus exterior, experimenting with a range of printmaking techniques, materials and surfaces. Play with perspective, scale, transparency, topographies, patterns, textures, sculptural transformations and working on location, referencing the work of [Sadie Tierney](#), [Slawomir Chrystow](#), [Dolores de Sade](#), [Karolyn Morovati](#) and [Michael Chance](#), [Elisabeth Lecourt](#), [Heidi Whitman](#) and [Nikki Rosato](#).

Outcomes

A student:

- investigates subject matter and forms as representations in artmaking (Representation, p 4, [Visual Arts Stage 6](#)).
- investigates ways of developing coherence and layers of meaning in the making of art (Conceptual strength and meaning, p 5, [Visual Arts Stage 6](#)).
- explores a range of material techniques in ways that support artistic intentions (Resolution, p 6, [Visual Arts Stage 6](#)).

Additional outcomes

- [Visual Arts Years 7-10](#) 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6
- [Photographic and Digital Media Years 7-10](#) 5.4, 5.5, 5.6
- [Photography, Video and Digital Imaging CEC Stage 6](#) M4, M5
- [Visual Design Years 7-10](#) 5.4, 5.5, 5.6
- [Visual Design CEC Stage 6 CEC](#) DM4, DM5

References and further reading

Books

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Websites

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[Chuck Close: Prints, process and collaboration](#), MCA Australia

[Expressive forms: Printmaking](#), AGNSW

[How to print like Warhol](#), TATE

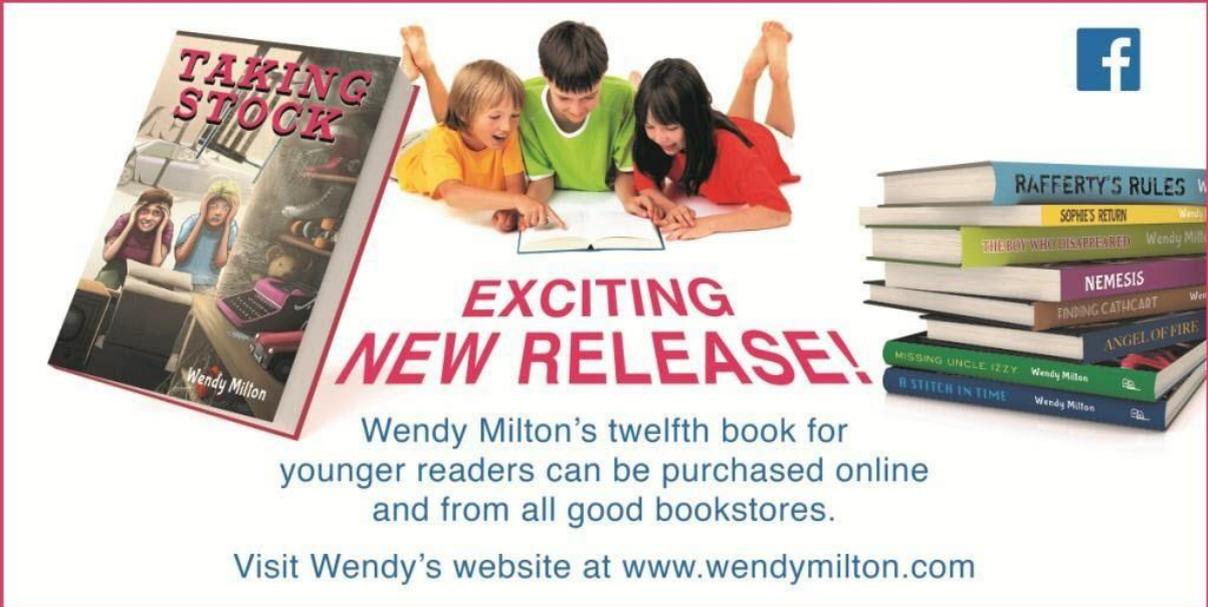
[The sketchbook project](#)

[Ukiyo-e woodblock printmaking with Keizaburo Matsuzaki](#), AGNSW

[What is printmaking?](#) MET Museum

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The advertisement features a central image of three children (two girls and one boy) lying on their stomachs, reading a book together. To the left is the cover of the book 'Taking Stock' by Wendy Milton, which shows a collage of images. To the right is a stack of seven books by Wendy Milton, including 'Rafferty's Rules', 'Sophie's Return', 'The Boy Who Disappeared', 'Nemesis', 'Finding Cathcart', 'Angel of Fire', and 'Missing Uncle Izzy'. A Facebook logo is in the top right corner. The text 'EXCITING NEW RELEASE!' is written in large, bold, red letters. Below it, the text reads: 'Wendy Milton's twelfth book for younger readers can be purchased online and from all good bookstores. Visit Wendy's website at www.wendymilton.com'.