



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

In 2022 *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* transitioned to fully Open Access and this article is available for use under the license conditions below.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

ENGAGING *with* LEARNSCAPES: CONNECTING COMMUNITY *and* SCHOOL

COLIN BOYLAN
& ANDREW WALLACE

School of Education, Charles Sturt University,
Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, 2678, Australia

■ Abstract

Learnsapes are places where learning has been designed in ways that enhance the interaction with an environment (Tyas-Tunggal, 1997). A small rural primary school has creatively adopted a *Learnscape* as a significant focus to engage with its community. Within the school the *Learnsapes* Program works from the classroom to the playground and from there to the broader community to create a new place for learning. The *Learnsapes* Program allows cross curriculum boundaries to emerge and in the case of this school facilitates active participation with the school community, in ways that reengage culture, the community and curriculum. The experiences of this rural school as it promotes learning across the whole community through the exploration of Indigenous culture using *Learnsapes* are documented.

■ Introduction

“Country” is a word with which we all struggle, not just because it goes to the heart of the being of Aboriginal people, but because of the complexity of meanings. This paper is in many ways an oddity. It talks about a meeting place for learning and finding country. It speaks of country, and how a community has creatively rediscovered a rich Wiradjuri past by working together around a small rural school. It is the place that has linked an Indigenous community and its school through a *Learnscape*. Understanding country provides a context where teachers, students and the community can sit and talk together, to rediscover culture and find reconciliation between people and the place where they live. This paper talks of the ways in which an innovation in education, a *Learnscape*, has helped a community to grow, and to find ways forward for all Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to share and learn together.

The meeting place is the school playground. This playground is the place where students play and learn together, but it is much more. It is a place where all parents and community members can meet – a representation of place, culture and country. It has provided a focus for an Indigenous community, as they rediscover their country and collaboratively explore country together, and build the confidence to promote reconciliation with the whole community served by the school.

The school is located in an important place. It is a large site with trees, playing fields, a circular driveway and a number of buildings (the oldest of which extends back to 1898). More importantly, it reflects the occupancy of Wiradjuri people, which goes back beyond the time of contact with European settlers. There are scar-trees on the school ground, as well as on the nearby lands. The community is located in a place that is very close to an area of great significance to Wiradjuri for ceremony and traditional life. It is also located next to the Brungle Mission which was established by the Aborigines Protection Board as a partially self-funded reserve for Aboriginal people in 1888 and opened in 1890.

■ Background to the study of the school

This school was recently documented in a case study that was part of the Rural (Teacher) Education Project (R(T)EP) that was a joint New South Wales Department

of Education and Training and Charles Sturt University/University of New England study funded by the Australia Research Council (Wallace et al., 2005). Through discussion with senior education leaders in the Riverina Region, Brungle Public was identified as a very special school. The leaders spoke of the way that the school had implemented a culturally sensitive and inclusive curriculum that actively engaged Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members in the day-to-day life of the school. It is a lighthouse school for Wiradjuri learning and culture, both for the whole Riverina, but more importantly for the community. A *Learnscape* is the centre-piece of the project.

■ What is a *Learnscape*?

Learnsapes are places where learning has been designed in ways that enhance the interaction with an environment (Tyas-Tunggal, 1997). Using the school's outdoor environment for learning purposes commenced in New South Wales in the late 1990's (Smith, 2000) as part of the Environmental Education policy initiatives of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. *Learnsapes* were a key component of this major policy initiative. In 2004, Henderson and Tilbury noted that many countries around the world including the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, the United States of America as well as Australia were developing outdoor learning spaces in ways that aligned with the education for sustainability movement. An essential component to a *Learnsapes* Program is the active involvement and contribution of students, teachers, parents and community groups during both the planning and development phase as well as in the developing of learning programs that use the environment as the centre piece for learning (Hands on *Learnsapes*, 2008). As summarised by Cox:

A *learnscape* is not something that can be bought or created quickly. Like curriculum change, real school ground change takes time, thought, involvement, experimentation and risk. Nevertheless, as with our approach to the wider environment, changing our approach to school grounds may ultimately solve many more problems than it creates (Cox, cited in Hands on *Learnsapes*, 2008).

Learnsapes provide a valuable resource for enhancing learning and fostering concern and responsibility for our natural and cultural heritage. Smith described a school *Learnscape* as: "areas in and around a school which are designed for teaching and learning" (2000, p. 20). The *Learnscape* will evolve in response to changes in educational, cultural and environmental requirements and desires over time. Schools can apply for funding from the *School Landscape Trust*

to assist with the development of their *Learnsapes* environment (NSW DET, 1998).

The role of *Learnsapes* was investigated by Skamp (2009, p. 106) in a small "closed system" study of six teachers at one accredited *Learnsapes* school in New South Wales. Skamp reported that these teachers used the outside environment as a pedagogical tool with varying degrees of adoption. His work was based around a theoretical perspective associate with the concept of "Level of Use" which had been derived from the "Stages of Concern" model developed by Hall and Hord (1987) and amplified by Dlamini et al. (2001).

Learnsapes are sites for learning that refocus the curriculum onto the local environmental context as well as incorporating the historical, social, cultural, linguistic and community traditions in real, significant and contextually relevant teaching and learning experiences for the students. These attributes of *Learnsapes* align closely with the newer emergent concept of placed-based education (Bryden, 2003) and provide a synergy for creating and valuing the local as well as the global.

Collectively, the literature cited above on *Learnsapes* has focused on the roles of the teacher and the students while engaging in teaching and learning through *Learnsapes*. In this case study, we have moved the focus to a new and equally important domain: the community and their input into the teaching and learning experiences of the children enrolled at Brungle Public School. Our focus extends the literature in breadth as well as revealing the ways in which Indigenous language and culture have become the centre piece for quality teaching and learning experiences.

The New South Wales Primary Syllabuses and Aboriginal perspectives

In each of the six Key Learning Areas of the New South Wales Curriculum, both the New South Wales Department of Education and Training and the Board of Studies have mandated that teaching programs must include an Indigenous perspective on relevant content learning outcomes wherever appropriate (Board of Studies, 2009). The imperative for this focus arises from a realisation that across the breadth of the primary curriculum, teachers are provided with many opportunities for authentic curriculum integration in which the local contexts around language, culture, history and social mores provide rich learning experiences for their students.

The Board of Studies has indicated that by including an Indigenous perspective in the teaching programs, it provides teachers with the opportunity to develop integrated teaching units which demonstrate a more holistic approach to teaching. Teachers are strongly encouraged to engage with parents and community while planning and teaching units of work that have

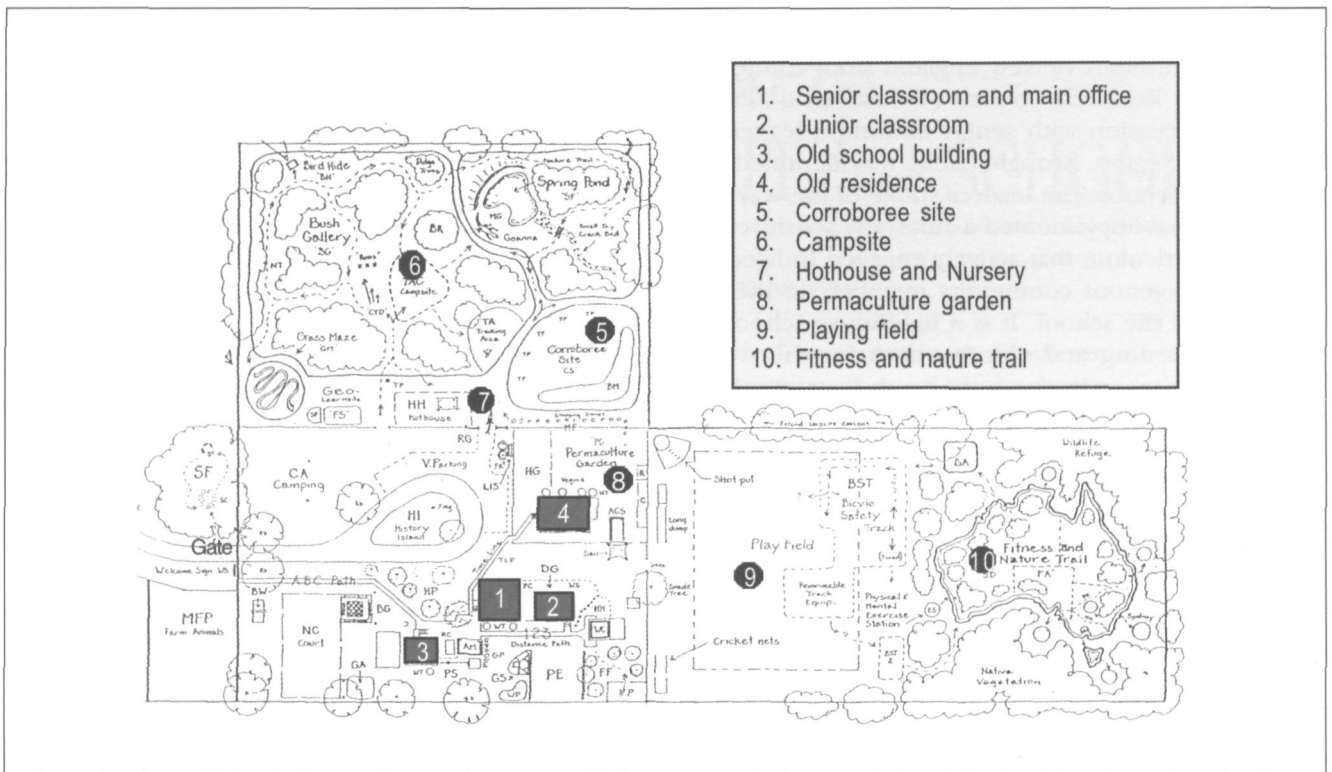


Figure 1: *Learnscapes* school map.

an Indigenous perspective. Each syllabus includes a statement under a Culture subheading that: “Students need to understand the diverse cultures of Australia and their origins, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the shared Australian culture” (Board of Studies, 1998, p. 10).

■ A context for the school

Brungle Public School is a small rural two-teacher primary school (K-6) located in the eastern section of the Riverina Region in southern New South Wales. The school’s student population is 26 students. Approximately half of these students have a Wiradjuri Indigenous background with the remainder of the students being non-Indigenous who live locally or travel from Tumut to attend the school. It occupies the site established in 1898 on the edge of the village. It is a picturesque location, set amongst open fields surrounded by rolling hills. The school serves a village of 80 people located between Gundagai and Tumut. In Brungle village, there is a memorial community hall, a public telephone and a community medical clinic opened in 2005.

Education provision in the district of Brungle has occurred for over 140 years. During that time there have been three schools in Brungle. In 1868, Upper Brungle Provisional School commenced and was ultimately replaced by the current Brungle Public School which opened in 1898 on its current site. The third school was the Brungle Aboriginal School which opened in 1888. The school served the children from

Brungle Mission and was operated jointly by the Department of Public Instruction and the Aborigines Protection Board. The school was renamed Googedee Public School in 1898. This school closed in August 1950. During the 60 years that both schools operated, the schools remained racially divided. During the case study of Brungle Public School, the authors spoke to a number of elders from the Brungle school community who spoke of their parents attending Googedee Public School. For many Indigenous children, their education finished when they completed Year 6 at Googedee Public School.

Brungle Public School is a large site, with a circular driveway which brings staff, students, community and visitors alike into the centre of the school. It is a unique setting. A site plan was prepared for the school in 2001 in collaboration with the *School Landscape Trust*. In the map (see Figure 1) the structure and layout of the *Learnscapes* environment at Brungle is shown. The grounds consist of a central playground and car park, surrounded by a full-sized playfield, fitness track and bushland area. Some images of the site are provided.

The school grounds reflect the major directions taken by the school in recent years. It encapsulates the major curriculum and community emphases adopted by the school and form a central part of the Principal’s focus on “creating a school of thinking learners” (G. Naylor, 2004, pers. comm., December). The school has a long association with the local Indigenous community and its culture and these influences are strongly reflected in the school’s current ethos.

In the classroom, each teacher's teaching programs incorporate an Indigenous perspective in both what is taught (the content covered) and how it is taught (through catering for different student learning styles) in all six (6) Key Learning Areas. Howard and Butcher (2007) have argued that for purposeful student learning to occur, it is dependent on the teachers engaging with their community and the diversity of people within it to develop informed teaching and learning experiences for their students. They suggested that, when teachers work in Indigenous communities, their belief system plays "such a critical role" (Howard & Butcher, 2007, p. 10) in the process of developing appropriate educational programs for their students. The concept of a school community partnership between the teachers, students and their Indigenous parents in which collaborative processes occur that result in culturally appropriate teaching and learning programs are essential if the mandated curriculum requirements to incorporate an "Aboriginal perspective" (Board of Studies, 2009) into all teaching programs are to be successful. This idea of a community partnership is one that the current Principal embraced when he was appointed to the school in 1995. Through interviews with the Principal, it emerged that he recognised that *Learnsapes* was an excellent program with good financial support that permitted and encouraged the local Indigenous community members to come into the school (G. Naylor, 2004, pers. comm., November). The program had a clear focus and a recognisable output that linked Indigenous culture with the school environment and with the curriculum outcomes. The input of the Indigenous community into the design of the *Learnsapes* spaces has ensured not only an initial contribution to its design but an on-going commitment to its use, management and maintenance. Many of the Indigenous community members participate in the learning activities that use the *Learnsapes* resources at the school. Johns et al. (2000) identified a range of benefits that arise from school community partnerships including the development of social capital, new leadership opportunities, the improved participation of youth in the educational programs offered, and developing a local, contextualised curriculum to meet the needs of the school's students. The impact of the *Learnscape* program has seen many of these claims by Johns et al. (2000) realised at Brungle Public School.

■ The *Learnsapes* Program

The learning focus of the *Learnsapes* Program is fundamental to the success of the programs at the school. The whole setting of the school is used to achieve learning outcomes across all six Key Learning

Areas of the New South Wales curriculum. It goes further, acknowledging and supporting Indigenous culture in a complex and important way.

Central to creating this culture of thinking learners within the school has been the *Learnsapes* Program which is central to the map provided in Figure 1. The focus of *Learnsapes* is to use the environment of the school, in terms of place and community, to enhance student learning outcomes.

In each of the six designated Key Learning Areas of the New South Wales curriculum, teaching programs and classroom activities are based on using Indigenous sources of information as primary sources for learning. In particular, the introduction of the *Learnsapes* Program at Brungle Public School has become the central focus for both curriculum and seeking community engagement and input. The community and the staff identified and used sites around the school to provide different learning experiences where close links to the land, Indigenous culture and history were developed.

Parents and community have had substantial input into the design of various culturally enriching learning areas around the school site, beginning in 1997. These rich learning areas have included:

- specific outdoor learning areas such as Poetry Corner and Sherwood Forest;
- the naming of learning areas within the school site using Wiradjuri language;
- a bush garden, growing foods eaten by Wiradjuri people;
- the Interactive Learning Zone/Planetary System;
- the Nature Trail, in the shape of a map of Australia;
- the Corroboree Area and its boomerang-shaped design;
- the identification of scar trees and the story of their use;
- the Koori Camp Site; and
- the Orchard and Food Forest.

Thus the *Learnscape* Program at Brungle is culturally appropriate, relevant and connected to the experiences of the children in Brungle and to the expressed needs of the community. An example can be seen in the Music program, where Aboriginal instruments are taught in the school grounds in culturally appropriate ways. Through consultation with the elders all the boys learn to play the didgeridoo, while the girls learn to play the clapping sticks. All students thus learn to play a musical instrument and acknowledge the mores and value systems of Wiradjuri culture. Students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their proficiencies by performing their music in the community and to school visitors. The staff use the various outdoor sites around the school to provide different learning experiences. For example,

English is often taught in the outdoor learning space known as Sherwood Forest while poetry is imagined and created in Poetry Corner. In the classroom, Wiradjuri words are used as labels for visual images to develop the students' facility with speaking this language. Oral communication in Wiradjuri language is promoted and developed with the senior students. Mathematical counting activities are included in the teaching program and wall posters around the walls of the classroom reinforce the Wiradjuri number concepts. Both the Principal and the classroom teacher at Brungle use Indigenous art and craft examples as visuals in their teaching spaces. Through interviews with both teaching staff, the use of the de Bono's six thinking hats as a learning styles strategy is seen as a significant way to cater for the culturally diverse range of learning styles within each class (G. Naylor, 2004, pers. comm., December).

The Albury School District Superintendent in November 2001, Mr Alan Schirmer, recognised the innovative and creative strategies being used at Brungle Public School at the official presentation of the school's *Learnscape* accreditation certificate. Mr Schirmer said:

You have created a resource that will be of immense value for all of our students and the wider community. All students are entitled to learn about Aboriginal Australia, understanding that Aboriginal communities are the custodians of knowledge about their own culture and history (A. Schirmer, 2001, pers. comm., November).

■ Brungle Cultural Centre

During 2000 and 2001, the Principal negotiated with the New South Wales Teachers Housing Authority for the school to retain and manage the old Principal's residence which is located within the school grounds. The house has been redeveloped as an Indigenous cultural centre, known as the Brungle Cultural Centre. It is the logical extension of the *Learnsapes* Program. The Brungle Cultural Centre allows students and the community to:

- access a growing collection of reading and resource materials;
- develop a range of services to meet community needs;
- learn about Aboriginal language, music and culture;
- study the artifacts of Aboriginal culture; and
- learn about *Dreamtime* stories and traditions.

The Centre includes a special *Dreaming Room* established by the elders. It allows the elders and students to teach each other and visitors to the school about Wiradjuri culture, the Dreaming, and traditional values and beliefs. This space continues to

be developed and maintained under the leadership of the elders, and has become a focus for the community at Brungle. It is a learning place for the community which extends well beyond the curriculum within the school.

The Centre is thus essential to the engagement of students in traditional culture, but also as a means of developing culture within the whole community. Students have been able to learn the traditional Wiradjuri language as part of their curriculum, through engaging Indigenous elders as teachers who come from elsewhere in Wiradjuri country to develop understandings of language for the students, but also for all members of the community. Classes are thus held for students but also for the wider community in the Cultural Centre.

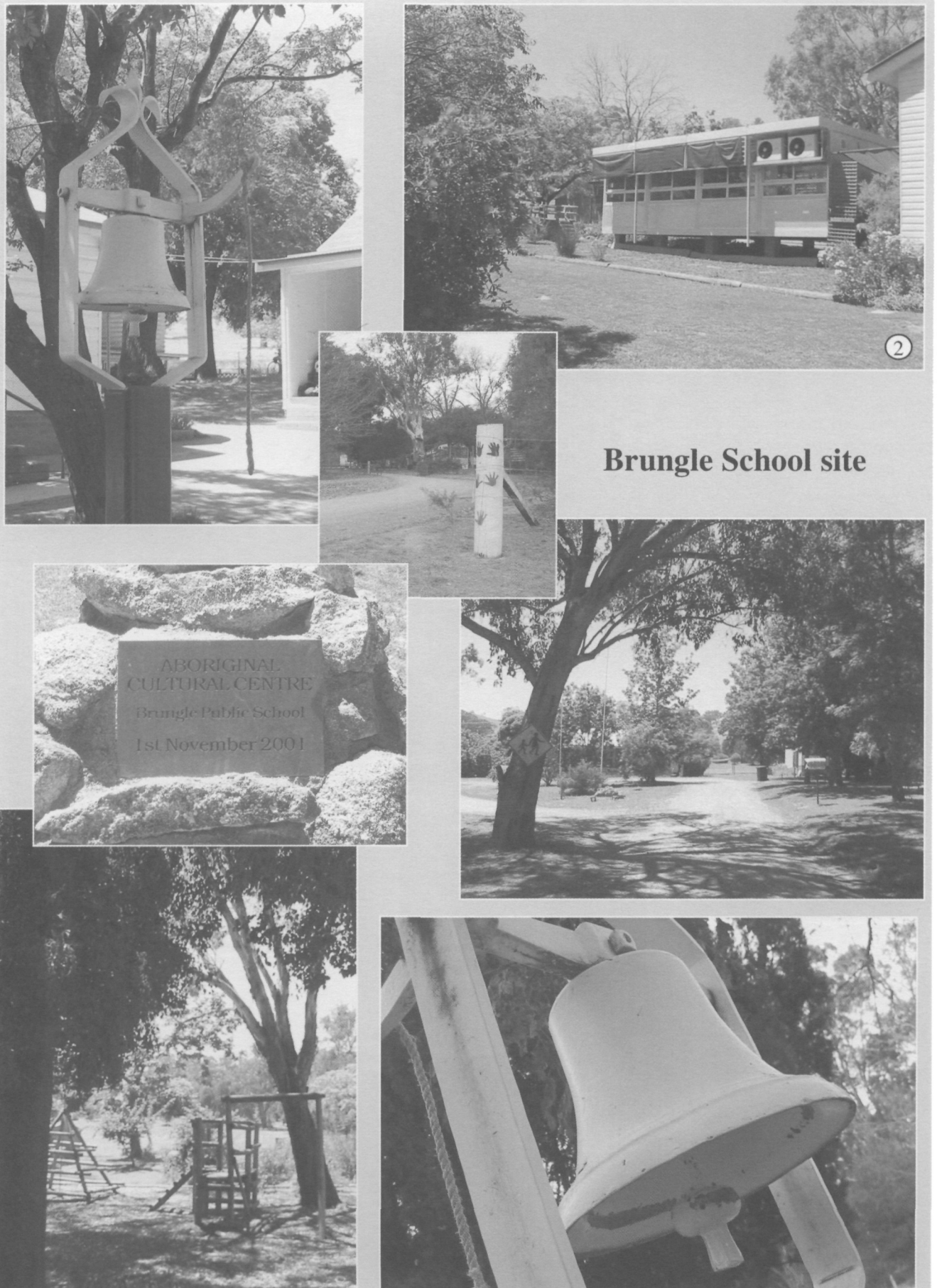
The Cultural Centre serves the community in other ways including:

- the pre-school group, which meets once a month to provide opportunities for children to become part of the School community, while their parents also explore opportunities within the school;
- a playgroup, known as *Puggles*, has met over the last nine years, using the facilities in the Centre; and
- the community Medical Centre was established at the Cultural Centre in 2005. It has become an important focus for Brungle, allowing weekly visits by a doctor who bulk bills patients from the community. The initiative has been very successful, and as a result a new Medical Centre has been constructed on the site previously used for the Mission Manager.

Each of these services to the community has been promoted by the Principal of the school in collaboration with the school community. They are community based initiatives which have provided part of the framework within which the school community has developed. These initiatives have helped to bridge the gap developed in the past between education systems and Indigenous people. It lies in stark contrast to the relationships of the past.

■ School and community

Significantly, the *Learnsapes* Program serves not only the students, but the whole community, particularly given the history of the community. Relationships between the school and community have changed dramatically over time. The school is located within a community once filled with racial tension. It is a school that has supported a remarkable process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It has successfully enhanced outcomes for all students, and has been a powerful force in reshaping the community.



Brungle School site

ABORIGINAL
CULTURAL CENTRE
Brungle Public School
1st November 2001

Figure 2: Brungle Public School.

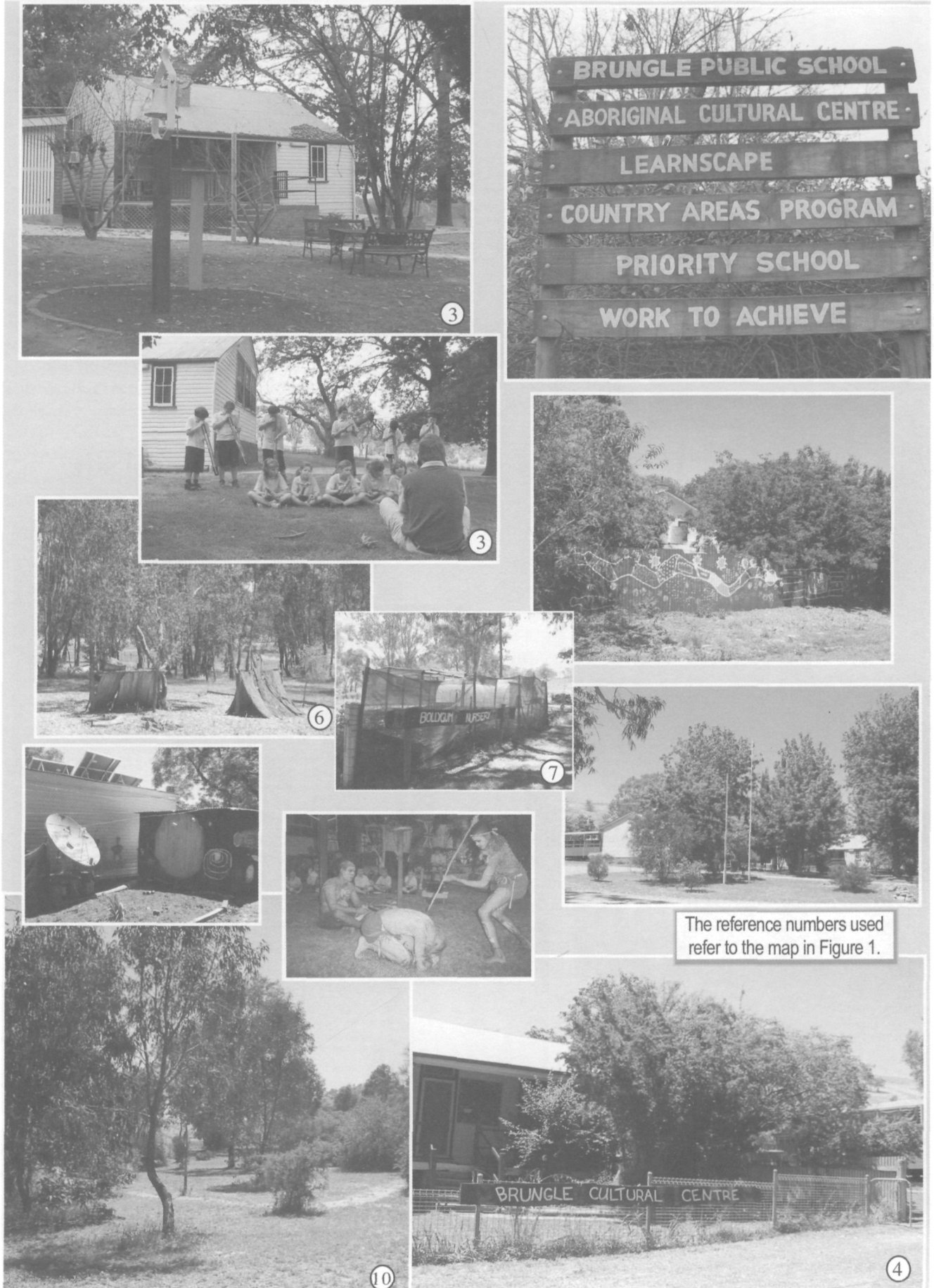


Figure 3: Brungle Learnsapes.

The full report on this school (Wallace et al., 2005) recounts a history of racial tension which has existed within the Brungle community for well over one hundred years. This tension has centred upon the Reservation/Mission system, which dominated Indigenous policies across New South Wales for most of that period. This tension has been present inside the education system as well as across the wider community. It saw parallel education systems for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students up until 1950, when a single school replaced the two schools at Brungle. In fact the Department of Education and Training faced significant opposition from parts of the community to the amalgamation of the two schools in Brungle.

It is important therefore to look at the reasons postulated for the success of the school in restoring relationships within the community, and developing appropriate outcomes for Indigenous students within the Brungle district. In doing so, it is important to return to the central focus around which this study has been undertaken.

The *Learnscape* Program is critical to the school. This single program provides not only a quality learning environment (Smith, 2000), but also a meeting place for the school and the community which it serves. This meeting place is a neutral meeting place for all members of the community where aspects of culture can be rediscovered and fostered. That has been the power of *Learnscape* within the Brungle community, as the school and community have worked together to foster understandings of Indigenous culture and histories within the Brungle area. It is an education for the whole community, and a means of facilitating new learning for all.

However, there is more. The *Learnscape* Program allows the community at Brungle to engage in programs which extend well beyond the school. It has become an education centre for the wider Riverina area. A recent visitor to the school wrote about it in the following terms:

At Brungle Public the *Learnscape* model has been employed and embraced. The whole school grounds and beyond are part of the "classroom". Involving children, parents and community in the decision-making, design, building and maintenance of the *Learnscape* means that the children and community feel they have ownership. The *Learnscape* is an evolving landscape and every year a new feature is designed and constructed; all of this is detailed in the master plan. It is an active team building experience; the students have been involved in the research, design and costing of that year's project – helping to write grant applications, obtain quotes for materials, and similar real world activities (anon. written communication, supplied by G. Naylor).

As a matter of course, visitors to Brungle Public School are always invited on a school tour. The school tour starts with the visitor being shown the map and given a brief introduction to the school by the selected students. The students' keen interest in and sense of ownership of their *Learnscape* is immediately striking: "we are doing this – see that, I did that bit and I am going to do this in the next bit" (Year 6 Student Guide). Students talk all at once in their keenness to tell everything about their school, and will take any opportunity to give an impromptu demonstration with didgeridoos and clapping sticks. It is clear that they believe their work and efforts are constructive: they are proud of their school. The non-Indigenous children are just as proud and eager to demonstrate what they have learned of Indigenous history and culture as the Indigenous children.

Brungle Public School has been able to achieve real reconciliation. That reconciliation has involved relationships between the Indigenous community and the education system, and between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Johns et al. (2001) explored the significant impact quality school leadership can have on school community partnerships. They stated, "leadership is viewed as a process of building relationships of mutual obligation and trust across community sectors, in such a way as to enable a wider group of community members to participate in the leadership process" (Johns et al., 2001, p. 20). Through the interviews with elders, community members and the staff at the school, the sensitivity and willingness of the Principal to promote and seek full community involvement in the school through inclusive cultural teaching and learning programs that have used the *Learnscape* concept as the initiator for this school community partnership are clearly evident. The elders have acknowledged the totem of the Principal as the platypus in acceptance of his role within the community, but more importantly of his knowledge and affinity with country.

Importantly, the value of the program is recognised well beyond Brungle. The *Learnscape* Program at Brungle has been recognised by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training as an outstanding innovation. In 2007 the *Learnscape* environment with its strong Indigenous culture focus led to the school becoming the first Aboriginal Environmental Education Centre in the New South Wales public education system.

As Skamp (2002) suggested, the *Learnscape* Program at Brungle has created four sets of benefits in the teaching and learning programs. Engagement with *Learnscape* has enhanced students' learning, improved the school's physical environment, provided a means for engaging all community members, teachers and students in school level decision making, and has led to the teachers becoming more

reflective on their teaching practices in ways that truly incorporate the Indigenous perspective that the New South Wales Office of the Board of Studies curriculum documents recommend and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training identify in their policy documents.

At Brungle both the Principal and the classroom teacher fully understand the educational focus of *Learnscape* as pedagogy and have used this environmental learning focus in ways that extend beyond the usual to actively promote strong school community relationships and to engage with Indigenous culture, language and histories in substantive ways. In achieving these outcomes, Brungle staff are firmly in the "Innovators" category in Dlamini et al. (2001) typology of utilisation of an educational innovation.

The school has a clear focus on the culture of the community, yet is one which has been able to achieve appropriate outcomes and help the Indigenous community to rediscover the heritage lost in the dislocations of culture following white settlement. The school remains an inspiration to a system that grapples with the problems of redressing the effects of racial tension and intolerance. *Learnscape* is a critical part of this process, building the curriculum of the school, rebuilding community, rediscovering country, and providing a place to enlightenment for the whole Riverina. It has been an astonishing achievement.

■ Acknowledgements

The researchers wish to express their appreciation to Mr Geoff Naylor, Principal of Brungle Public School for his support and assistance. It has been a pleasure to work at the school, and our thanks go to the school, the elders and the whole community for their openness and generous spirit in making this project possible.

■ References

- Board of Studies. (1998). *Human Society and its Environment syllabus*. Sydney, NSW: Board of Studies New South Wales.
- Board of Studies. (2009). *Aboriginal perspective*. Retrieved 1 June, 2009, from <http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/linkages/IntegratedUnits/aboriginal/aboriginal.html#whatisAP>
- Bryden, J. (2003, July). *Some links between economic and social changes in rural areas and the need for reform in rural education*. Keynote Address. Paper presented at the 20th national Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia Conference, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia.
- Dlamini, B., Rollnick, M., & Bradley, J. (2001, July). *Typologies of teacher change: A model based on a case study of eight primary school teachers who used an STS approach to teaching science*. Paper presented at Conference of the Australian Science Education Research Association, Sydney, Australia.

- Hall, G., & Hord, S. (1987). *Changes in schools: Facilitating the process*. New York, NY: State of New York Press.
- Hands on Learnsapes. (2008). *Learnsapes philosophy and objectives*. Retrieved 10 May, 2008, from <http://www.learnsapes.org>.
- Henderson, K., & Tilbury, D. (2004). *Whole-school approaches to sustainability: An international review of whole-school sustainability programs*. Report prepared by ARIES for the Department of Environment and Heritage, Australian Government. http://www.aries.mq.edu.au/pdf/international_review.pdf.
- Howard, P., & Butcher, J. (2007). *Community engagement and student learning: making community a core element of teacher education*. Paper presented at the International Studies Association of Teachers and Teaching Conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Johns, S., Kilpatrick, S., Falk, I., & Mulford, B. (2000). *Leadership from within: Rural community revitalisation and the school-community partnership*. Paper presented at the 17th national Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia Conference, Cairns, Queensland, Australia.
- New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSW DET). (1998). *Eco Schools Program (1998 Update)*. Sydney, NSW: New South Wales Department of Education and Training, Curriculum Support Directorate.
- Skamp, K. (2002). Learnsapes, science and technology teachers and the curriculum. *Australian Science Teachers Journal*, 48(1), 8-15.
- Skamp, K. (2009). Understanding teachers' 'level of use' of Learnsapes. *Environmental Education Research*, 15(1), 93-110.
- Smith, S. (2000). Learnsapes. *Investigating*, 16(4), December, 20-22.
- Tyas-Tunggal, H. (1997, September). *Hands on learnsapes*. Paper presented at Learning through Learnsapes: Grounds for Celebration Conference, Winchester, United Kingdom.
- Wallace, A., Boylan, C., Burton, C., French, B., Manton, K., & Streckfuss, A. (2005). *Brungle – a study of a community and their school*. Wagga Wagga, NSW: Charles Sturt University.

■ About the authors

Dr Colin Boylan is a Senior Lecturer who teaches rural education subjects at Charles Sturt University Wagga Wagga campus. His main research interests are in providing quality education for rural and remote students.

Dr Andrew Wallace is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at Charles Sturt University. He teaches in rural education and in the social sciences. His research interests and publications include rural education and also the history of the contact period.