

A LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH STUDY OF THE FOLLOW THE DREAM/PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESS PROJECT

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Background to the strategy

- FTD strategy modelled on Gumula Mirnuwarni (Karratha)
- Fundamentals of the strategy:
 - aspirant students
 - after school learning/enrichment centre
 - coordinator
 - tutors
 - mentors
 - extension and enrichment activities
 - representative steering committee
 - operations group

Aims of the strategy

1. *Secondary graduation of an increased number of Aboriginal students achieving a TER (Tertiary Entrance Rank) score resulting in university entrance or WACE (Western Australian Certificate of Education) allowing TAFE entrance;*
2. *Improved retention rates;*
3. *Improved literacy and numeracy levels;*
4. *Increased employment opportunities;*
5. *Functional and reciprocal partnerships established to enhance education outcomes;*
6. *High level achievement in education becomes the norm rather than exception in the Aboriginal community;*
7. *Community pride in excellence;*
8. *Engagement of Aboriginal people in education through employment and support*

(Aboriginal Education Training and Services Directorate, 2004, p. 3)

Aims of the research

1. *To study the implementation of a program to support Indigenous students continuing from Year 8 to Year 12 in Western Australian secondary schools.*
2. *To examine the contribution of strategies in the program that are intended to improve Indigenous student success.*
3. *To produce a policy and program framework to better address interventions to improve school success for Indigenous students.*
4. *To develop theoretical constructs that explain the relationships among the factors contributing to Indigenous student success at school* (ARC Grant Application LP0454314)

Key questions

- **Is the program effective?**
- **What factors contribute to (or inhibit) its success?**

Research methodology

Qualitative data sources:

- semi-structured interviews with program participants
- meeting minutes
- coordinator and researcher journal entries
- researcher observations of program activities
- notes from coordinator PD sessions
- program artefacts
- media releases, school newsletters and school websites
- survey data

Research methodology (2)

Quantitative data sources:

- students' school and learning centre records, such as attendance, individual school and benchmark test achievement data
- career and life goals
- survey data

Research methodology (3)

Collective case study – 12 focus sites based on key characteristics:

- location (metropolitan or regional)
- program type (multiple schools or single school)
- source of funding (industry or solely by DET/DEEWR)

Research methodology (4)

Participants:

- students
- parents/carers
- community members
- coordinators
- school staff
- education and industry personnel

Challenges

- Distance
- Sourcing quantitative data
- Variations in assessment systems

OUTCOMES

Graeme Gower

1. Increased and improved secondary graduation

Destination	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
TEE score	3	7	9	9	13	41
University entry (direct entry and bridging courses)	7	16	15	20	20	78
TAFE Pathways (incl. traineeships and apprenticeships)	15	24	17	16	28	100
Aboriginal Aerospace Initiative			2			2
Employment	6	7	3	13	10	39
Seeking employment	2	4	1	4	14	25
Other	1	1	4	1	5	12
Total	31	52	42	54	77	256

2. Improved retention

Summary enrolment data for FTD/PFS focus sites, 2006 – 2008

Year	Male	Female	Gender not specified	Total
2006	91	167	13	271
2007	129	197	10	336
2008	138	245	4	378

- Significant improvement in retention rates to Yr. 12 in focus sites, i.e., 271 (2006) to 361 (2008)
- Influence of changes to school leaving age in WA

Comparison of average school attendance of FTD/PFS focus site students & other students in WA, 2005-2008

	FTD/PFS students (%)	State - Aboriginal students (%)	State - All students (%)
2005-8	84.3	N/A	N/A
2005	86.7¹	N/A	N/A
2006	85.7¹	68.6	88.0
2007	85.8¹	69.4	88.4
2008	82.7¹	67.4	87.6

1. = Figures are approximate

From 2006 National Report on Schooling: Indigenous Education

- In WA, in 2005, 30.7% of Aboriginal students were retained in school from Years 10-12, compared with 74.5% of non-Aboriginal students
- In 2006, the proportion retained increased to 45.7%, compared with 73.4% of non-Aboriginal students
- Reasons: Changes to school leaving age and influence of FTD/PFS strategy

3. Improved literacy and numeracy outcomes

- Based benchmark test results for FTD/PFS students on tests sat in Yr. 7 & Yr. 9
- Results coded according to whether student was at, above or below benchmark.
- Progress between two tests was determined & a score assigned, e.g., 0 = no change; 1 or 2, or -1 or -2, depending on how much the results had advanced or dropped over time.
- Limitations: Small sample

Summary of academic progress in Reading

Score	-2	-1	0	1	2
Frequency	4	0	25	6	9
Percentage	9%	0%	57%	14%	20%

91% of students achieved at or above the benchmark in Reading.

Summary of academic progress in Numeracy

Score	-2	-1	0	1	2
Frequency	1	2	32	4	5
Percentage	2%	5%	73%	9%	11%

- 94% of students achieved at or above the benchmark in Numeracy.
- 20% of students made academic progress from WALNA7 to MSE9.
- 73% were consistent across two tests.
- 7% of students achieved lower results.
- Students who maintained performance considered to have improved.

4. Increased employment opportunities

- Increased awareness of employment options available to students.
- Increased awareness of career choices and study pathways needed to attain them.
- Employment aspirations beyond those available in the local community.

Student comment on career aspirations

Student: Well, before with my career choice, I think I was very narrow-minded and I was choosing to do medicine but now like my subject selections for TEE, I've made them more broad and open, so I can have lots of different options and it has helped me.

Interviewer: So what sort of options are you contemplating apart from med?

Student: Computing, engineering and science, like chemistry and maths.

(Student interview, 2007)

5. Functional and reciprocal partnerships to enhance education

- **Benefits of the program:** keeping up with school work; completing assignments; improving their grades; helping friends; improve their feelings of self worth; explore job opportunities; providing a pathway to fulfil their aspirations.
- **Increased capacity to engage in learning:** through the assistance and guidance of tutors.

5. Functional and reciprocal partnerships to enhance education (2)

Increased engagement of parents & community members: The development of partnerships with parents & members of the local Aboriginal community was incorporated as an important part of the FTD/PFS program. Varying degrees of success noted throughout the program and engagement improved gradually as the program became widely known.

6. High level of achievement becomes norm amongst Aboriginal students

- Academic & attendance data show FTD/PFS students are close to, if not exceeding, mainstream outcomes.
- FTD/PFS students in some schools are doing better than mainstream counterparts.

6. High level of achievement becomes norm amongst Aboriginal students (2)

Student: *If we weren't in the program then we'd just....we wouldn't achieve the high standards that we are at present. Plus if we didn't have the program we'd just go home, we just sit there and play video games and listen to music..... We wouldn't ...if we didn't have the program, we'd just be some other mediocre students.* (Student interview, 2006)

7. Community pride in excellence

Parents and community members have expressed appreciation of their children's achievements:

I think this is a great program ... which enables the kids to well you know decide for themselves where they want to head and ... and that they can do it, and they can achieve it. And it is like a following a dream.

(Parent interview, 2006)

7. Community pride in excellence (2)

I am absolutely enthralled with it, I have to admit. I think it's one of the best things the government has done (chuckle) to help. I think it is really helping Aboriginal children, it's really helping them in an area that is so important, not only for their future but the future of Aboriginal people but their whole country because they have so much to give but unless it's encouraged and drawn from them, it's hidden and we never learn and they have so many talents that they don't know about. (Parent interview, 2007)

- Most FTD/PFS centres hold events to celebrate student success and engage parents and community members.
- Media coverage of FTD/PFS activities have increased community awareness of the program.
- Students overtly recognised personal growth through their pride and ongoing achievement.
- Small core of high achieving and successful students in most sites who have set the benchmark for others to follow.

8. Engagement of Aboriginal people in education through employment and support

- Long term goal: Increase number of Aboriginal students undertaking further education & training and in a broader range of careers.
- Shorter term: As a result of FTD/PFS coordinators building strong relationships with Aboriginal parents & community members, parents are better informed about education & what is needed for success.
- FTD/PFS programs have involved parents in tutoring, mentoring and conducting cultural activities.

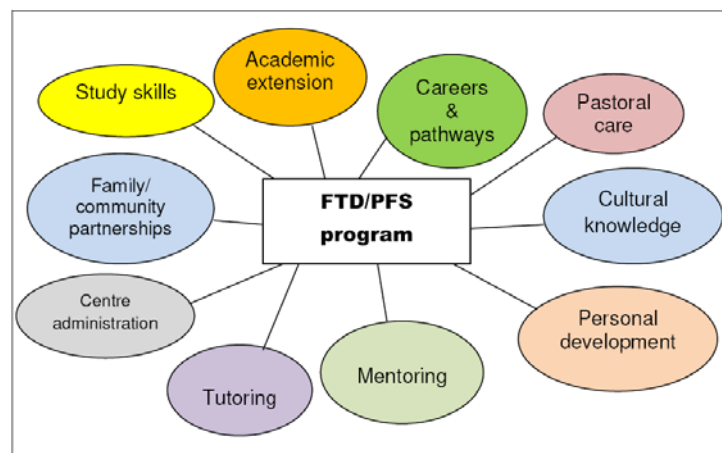
EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Ann Galloway

Overall program characteristics

- Good conceptualisation
- Program champions

Program elements



Strategies for achieving program goals

- Clear criteria for participation:
 - entering program
 - remaining in program

FOLLOW THE DREAM, ALBANY

My responsibilities as a participating student.

I will:

- ✓ Attend school everyday and bring notes for all my absences.
- ✓ Do the best I can in all of my subjects.
- ✓ Complete all my homework, assignments and set tasks.
- ✓ Ask for help from my teachers, tutors or mentor when I am having difficulties or problems.
- ⊗ Attend the Enrichment Centre on my assigned days and provide notes for when I can't attend.
- ⊗ Attend camps and excursions organised as part of the Enrichment Centre program.
- ⊙ Behave in an appropriate manner at all times, showing positive social skills.
- ⊙ Be a positive role model to other students and friends.
- ⊙ Be positive about the program to other students and friends.

Student's signature: _____

Date: _____

Strategies for achieving program goals (2)

- Structured program:
 - timetabled learning centre program
 - individual education plans
 - career development
 - good administrative procedures
- Good relationships with stakeholders

Effective coordinators

Job description includes:

- an approved teaching qualification
- ability to work independently
- ability to provide leadership in a team
- excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- project management skills
- organisational abilities
- knowledge of Aboriginal education
- ability to work and liaise with Aboriginal people
- knowledge of Education Department policies and procedures
- ability to use assessment instruments and reporting methods to develop individual learning plans for students
- commitment to professional development

Effective coordinators (2)

Duty statement includes:

- selecting students for, and monitoring them in, the program, utilising performance data
- establishing and maintaining a steering committee
- goal setting and career counselling with students
- implementing individual support and development programs
- establishing baseline data, monitoring and reporting to Education Department on the program
- promoting and publicising FTD/PFS in their area
- recruiting and performance managing tutors, mentors and other staff
- consulting with stakeholders to address site needs
- maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders, including local sponsors

Effective coordinators (3)

Additional characteristics:

- professional background
- relationships
- motivation
- commitment and attitude
- pro-active
- good networks
- resilience
- planning and time management skills

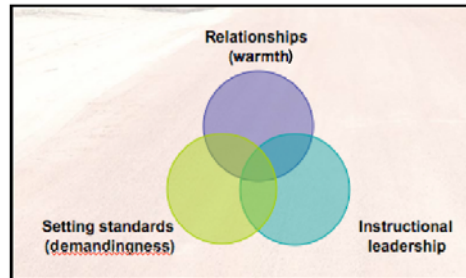
Effective coordinators (4)

Summary of attributes:

- positive relationships based on mutual respect and trust
- development of good, open communication
- being a good educator
- being a good administrator

Effective coordinators (5)

- Good relationships with stakeholders - 'warmth'
- High but realistic standards and expectations – 'demandingness'
- Instructional leadership



INDUSTRY SPONSORS

Gary Partington

FTD/PFS industry sponsors

- **The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation**
- **Rio Tinto (WA) Future Fund**
- **BHP Billiton Iron Ore**
- **Dampier Salt (a Rio Tinto Company)**
- **AMP Foundation**
- **Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines**
- **Gold Fields Aust**
- **Jubilee Mines**
- **Goldfields Esperance Development Commission**
- **BHP Billiton Nickel**
- **Rio Tinto Iron Ore**
- **NW Shelf Venture Partners**
- **Argyle Diamonds (a Rio Tinto Company)**
- **Alcoa**
- **Gumala Aboriginal Corporation**

The benefit of industry sponsors

Provision of money and resources for the following:

- a study centre
- trips and camps
- transport of students
- equipment and materials
- entertainment expenses
- food and drink for learning centres

The benefit of industry sponsors (2)

Provision of money and resources for:

- part salary of the coordinator
- employment of additional clerical support
- additional tutoring

Incentives for students

- Expectations of jobs on graduation
- Scholarships, apprenticeships and traineeships

Benefits to companies

- Participation in PFS contributed to fulfilling Native Title agreements
- Training a local workforce and so avoiding need for fly-in, fly-out workers
- Acknowledgment of broader social responsibility

Benefits to companies (2)

By supporting strong education at a local level and particularly a strong Indigenous education and getting those graduates through, it's a sustainability issue for those communities and for the businesses we operate in those communities. Local employment is a huge commitment that we have... it's not only about employment, it's about retention of employees, it's about employees at the higher level, so graduate positions and ... and management positions and those kind of things, and part of it's about kind of obviously some kind of sustainability in the community

Gaining industry sponsors

- The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation (GPFF) is responsible for engaging industry sponsors.
- Success has been greatest with mining companies.
- 11 sites in WA have industry sponsors: a direct result of the efforts of GPFF.
- There are also sites in other states.
- GPFF continues to seek sponsors.

Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation

- To provide support to Indigenous youth to achieve their potential.
- To enhance the skills and potential of young Indigenous people.
- To generate positive aspirations in young Indigenous people.
- To assist Indigenous youth to relate to the community in general, particularly to other young Australians
(The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation, 2009a)

Coordinators' perceptions of sponsorship

Coordinators liked having an industry sponsor:

- The sponsor facilitated a range of activities associated with the program.
- Staff from industry sponsors demonstrated a 'can-do' attitude to problems and sorted them out quickly: no problem is too difficult.
- The availability of a range of resources not normally available to schools was beneficial to the program.

Coordinators' perceptions of sponsorship

There's never been a problem between [the company] and Polly Farmer and the Department that I can think of. I can't think of one instance where we've had any tension and they work collaboratively, cooperatively. X will ring up and say look, I need this, can you do it? Yes, okay I'll organise people for the ... enough students during the holidays. I'll organise that and whatever else is you know ... and I really appreciate their can do attitude. They're ... they're very professional, very switched on as you see by Y. They're all ... they all seem to be like that.

Conditions of sponsorship

Sponsorship is not unconditional:

- Sponsorship is for support that is not normally provided by the school.
- The sponsorship must be effective: sponsors may request evaluations of their contributions.
- Sponsorship is not a binding contract: the sponsors are at liberty to redirect their support.
- Consequently, the FTD/PFS program has to be seen to be effective.

Students in sponsored sites

- Greater resources mean more, and more varied, activities: travel, camps, computers, etc.
- Job prospects motivate students.
- Graduates who go on to university, apprenticeships, etc. return as models for student aspirations.