

## **Young and Black and Deadly: Strategies for improving outcomes for Indigenous students**



### **Quality Teaching Series**

\$22.00 ea (Members)

\$27.50 ea (Non Members)

### **No. 5 - Young and Black and Deadly: Strategies for improving outcomes for Indigenous students**

Chris Sarra

The ACE publication Quality Teaching Series has a new release authored by Indigenous educator Chris Sarra. Currently Chris is Principal of Cherbourg State School, which is an Aboriginal community school approximately 300 km north west of Brisbane.

The paper discusses the value of genuinely valuing Aboriginal perspectives about Aboriginal education and changes at the school have been based on the premise that if Aboriginal children could be convinced to subscribe to positive and meaningful Aboriginal beliefs, then the outcomes for these students would be greatly enhanced. His consultations with Elders in the local community greatly assisted in promoting better 'service' to the members of the community.

The aim for the school is to generate academic outcomes comparable to other schools and develop within students a strong and positive sense of what it means to be Aboriginal in today's society.

Like many Indigenous schools, Cherbourg has faced many challenges in the past and to facilitate the vast changes required, a major paradigm shift has been required to have Aboriginal students believe in the possibilities for their achievement.

In the last four years, the school staff team has instigated some dramatic and imaginative changes under the direction of the school's first Aboriginal principal. Since 1999 absenteeism has improved by 94%, and literacy levels by 45%.

The vision for the school is encapsulated in the new school motto Strong and Smart which anchors everything that happens in the school. All members of the school community expect and believe in great outcomes for the school and its community.

### **Author Profile – Chris Sarra**

Chris commenced his career as a Physical Education teacher in Queensland, his credentials including a Diploma of Teaching, Bachelor of Education and a Master of Education. Currently he is enrolled in a PhD in Psychology at Murdoch University.

To date he has had quite an extensive career in education, his passion being the pursuit of more positive and productive educational outcomes for Indigenous children.

He has worked in a range of positions including: Education Officer and Manager of Aboriginal Employment and Education programs for DEET; Administrative Services Officer for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; Career and Guidance Counsellor for the Qld Department of Education; and he has lectured at the University of Southern Queensland.

In his three years as Principal at Cherbourg State School he has facilitated many changes which have seen increasing enthusiasm for student learning through dramatically improved school attendance and increased community involvement in education. The new directions towards more positive and productive outcomes for the children of Cherbourg State School are ensuring that they are becoming 'Stronger and Smarter'.