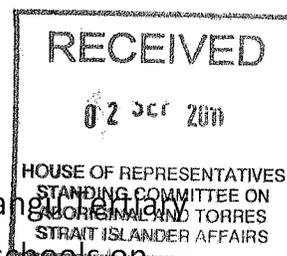


## Language Learning in Indigenous Communities



I am a teacher, lecturer in Amata Anangu School, I work in the Anangu Secondary Education Program which trains Aboriginal Education Workers in schools on APY Lands.

I have been involved in developing a Pitjantjatjara Language program initiated by two AEWs for AnTEP Students to teach independently in the two Junior Primary Classes in Amata School. They teach four days a week for a 40 minute period 10-00 till 10-40 time is at a premium, but I believe the program is successful because the children are very receptive at this time in the morning, and respond very positively to material presented in their own language. The Anangu Teachers plan the program in AnTEP they usually read a story and present related activities. It is planned to extend the program to other classes. AEWs in primary levels are currently training to perform these roles, They attended an English only school as children and their Pitjantjatjara needs revision.

Pitjantjatjara is the main language in Amata Community. It was important to start the program because the AEWs believed the children, although they speak Pitjantjatjara they are losing much of the correct grammar, many of the names of birds, small animals and words that are not used generally in conversations. Many of the old people are passing away and much of the language is being lost.

The program started at the beginning of the year 2011, the age of the children involved is approximately 5 to 7 years, there are 12 to 15 children in each class sometimes more. We do not receive help directly from the government or other agencies, but DECS pays the AEWs' wages at the school.

The main difficulty currently facing the Pitjantjatjara Program is the insufficient time to present the program in the school, teachers have to sort out priorities. If an Anangu person could be appointed to foster the development of Pitjantjatjara language and culture. Working in the Anangu Domain in cooperation with the Anangu Coordinator, giving greater representation to the members of the Community. This may assist in the development of this important but vulnerable area.

Margaret Dinham

Amata Anangu School

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TO the Committee,

Please find enclosed comments on a project at Amata School.

Yours truly,

M.Dinham

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