Engaging parents/carers and community in a Middle Years HASS project: Creating purposeful and personalised opportunities for listening, interacting, and speaking

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Citation

Exley, B., & Willis, L.-D. (2024). Engaging parents/carers and community in a Middle Years HASS project: Creating purposeful and personalised opportunities for listening, interacting, and speaking. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years, 32*(3), 82-97.

Beryl Exley and **Linda-Dianne Willis** | Griffith Institute for Educational Research, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia

ABSTRACT

This article introduces Miss Lizzy, a non-Indigenous Middle Years early-career teacher working in a remote Indigenous community in the Torres Strait Islands, who facilitates ways to engage students' parents/carers and the community in the students' learning. Her subtle low-impost approach creates increased opportunities for the Year 5 and 6 students to draw on community lifeworld resources as assets for learning. At the same time, she works in purposeful and personalised ways towards the learning outcomes of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) Humanities and Social Sciences Curriculum, as well as ACARA's listening, interacting, and speaking Literacy Progressions.

Updated Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum rationale

The updated Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 (AC V9.0) by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) introduced a new rationale for the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) learning area. The rationale details the HASS learning area as:

> … the study of human behaviour and interaction in social, cultural, environmental, economic, business, legal and political contexts. This learning area has a historical and contemporary focus, from personal to global contexts, and considers the challenges that may occur in the future. It plays an important role in assisting students to understand global issues, and building their capacity to be active and informed citizens who understand and participate in the world. (ACARA, 2024, Section 2)

This section of the rationale outlines the disciplinarity of the HASS learning area, its multi-pronged foci, a futures orientation, and a proposal for how students specifically benefit from their study within this distinctive curriculum. Situating learning in a personal context means that teachers carry specific responsibilities for connecting students' lifeworlds and the HASS learning area. Torres Strait Islander academic and researcher Martin Nakata (1997) poses a pressing question: "So how is a teacher who knows nothing about my language, or my history, or my community, or my predicament, going to come in and harness my cultural capital?" (p. 69).

Nakata's question is a legitimate one, especially considering that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge is not always open knowledge (Nakata, 1997, 2003). Partington (2003) documents how well-intentioned teachers with insufficient knowledge of Indigenous lifeworlds can unwittingly rely on stereotypes or information gleaned from the

internet and media. Some non-Indigenous teachers also find themselves in a bind, when Indigenous students appropriately ask critical questions about the teacher's credibility to teach about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures (Exley & Chan, 2014).

One proactive response to Nakata's question above is for teachers to develop strong partnerships with the parents/carers and communities who support young people's participation in education. The Education Council's (2019) *Alice Springs Mparntwe Education Declaration* (The Declaration) asserts that partnering with parents/carers and communities contributes to the aim of enhancing students' engagement with learning. The Declaration also notes that when developing learning connections with Indigenous communities, effective partnerships must be "based on culturally supportive and responsive learning environments" (Education Council, 2019, p. 10). According to Aboriginal academic and researcher Lester-Irabinna Rigney (2024), culturally responsive educators engage students in meaningful activities that make everyday connections between community experiences and individuals within those communities, home languages, the students' prior knowledge, and mainstream literacy learning. In these instances, culture needs to be understood as more than the surface-level aspects of "food, dance, dress, music, language and art", and as encompassing the multifarious and intersecting dimensions of deep culture, including "shared language, beliefs, [and] behaviours in transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations, personal space, gender roles, family roles, presence and grooming, value of education, spirituality, and concepts of health and healing" (Perso, 2012, p. 11).

Engaging parents/carers and community in the HASS learning area

Over time, the research literature has provided convincing evidence that parents/carers and communities are more likely to engage in students' learning when schools invite their participation, provide multiple entry points, value diverse perspectives, and reach out in culturally appropriate ways (Auerbach, 2007). An open, invitational, and welcoming approach is especially important in schools serving linguistically and culturally diverse communities (Chen & Pushor, 2023; Christianakis, 2011) and low-socioeconomic communities where parents/carers and community members are juggling employment and caregiving responsibilities (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020).

Levinthal et al.'s (2021) comparative research into Finnish and Portuguese parents' preferences for parent-teacher engagement in the primary school years highlights commonalities such as a desire for two-way professional communication, alongside differences in preferences for the mode of the communication. In this small qualitative case study, the Finnish parents ($N = 10$) and teachers tended to have little face-to-face contact, but consistent online communication through weekly newsletters about the students' learning. Interview data from Finnish parents suggest that the professional competence of Finnish teachers was universally recognised, and that "trust in teachers' ability to perform their work exceptionally well seemed to enable both effective communication and active parental collaborative participation" (Levinthal et al., 2021, p. 13). On the other hand, the Portuguese parents ($N = 9$) and teachers tended to have more regular face-to-face communication within the school premises because the parents enjoyed "visits to their children's school space and contact with teachers" (Levinthal et al., 2021, p. 13). In the study, the Portuguese parents clearly communicated that not all invitations to attend the school were equally well received, and that invitations to play the role of a spectator were "unmotivating" (Levinthal et al., 2021, p. 13). The necessity of ensuring that parent/carer engagement invitations were purposeful for the students' learning, and personalised to parents/carers and the child also showed through in Posey-Maddox and Haley-Lock's (2020) interview-based study with 17 mothers who confirmed they prioritised *child-centred* parent engagement rather than *teachercentric* or *schoolcentric* (Lawson, 2003) parent involvement activities.

The caveats from a range of researchers, including Auerbach (2007), Christianakis (2011), Posey-Maddox and Haley-Lock (2020), Levinthal et al. (2021), and Willis and Exley (2020, 2022a, 2022b, 2023a), indicate that there is no one way to approach parent/carer and community engagement; teachers and school personnel need to be both "willed and skilled" in pursuing a time-sensitive and context-specific vision for parent/carer and community engagement (Auerbach, 2007, p. 703). Rather than uncritically instituting a potentially time-consuming set of activities, Jeynes (2018) draws on six meta-analyses conducted across 15 years to conclude that much of the empirical research indicates "the most powerful components of parental-involvement and -engagement were often subtle" (p. 147). The balance is a delicate one. As Posey-Maddox and Haley-Lock (2020) note, more is not necessarily better and "what counted as 'enough' engagement depended in large part upon a parent's unique situation and the needs of their children, not simply the needs and desires of teachers and school staff" (p. 686).

A year-long research collaboration undertaken with 55 research participants across eight Independent Queensland schools by Willis and Exley in 2023 (Willis & Exley, 2023a) identified overarching principles for effective parent engagement as being **S**hort in duration, **S**harp in focus, **O**ften offered, **O**ptional in nature, **P**urposeful for the students' learning, and **P**ersonalised to parents/carers and the child. The first letter of each of the six practices spells out the Parent Engagement SSOOPP Framework (pronounced soup) (Willis & Exley, 2023b). In their research report, Willis and Exley (2023a) provide a case study of Mr George (pseudonym), a Year 8 History teacher who spent some time investigating ways to connect with parents/carers and the community and "figuring out the spaces where dialogue can happen" (p. 83). Whilst undertaking project work on the topic of *Heraldry* as part of a mediaeval Europe study, Mr George asked the students to email their parents/carers to invite them to talk about their ancestral families and, in particular, the values their family held. The students were to incorporate the findings from the discussions with their families in a formative assessment task which involved designing a shield to represent their heraldry.

According to Mr George, the students' enthusiastic responses and extended discussions in the classroom evidenced rich, deeply personal conversations with parents/carers in which many different family values were canvassed (Willis & Exley, 2023a). One international student in the class set up a Zoom video conference call with her parents overseas expressly to talk about the topic, uncovering information and gaining insights about her family's values of freedom and responsibility (Source: researcher-recorded conversation). The student took screenshots of what she talked about with her parents to include in her assessment task response and subsequently represented the values on her shield, drawing a sparrow for freedom and a red carnation for responsibility. Mr George described how the students researched the meanings of symbols, colours, and new vocabulary (e.g., "Chevron") which became the focus of ongoing class and home discussions. He indicated that the initiative increased the number and quality of intercultural and intergenerational connections and heightened levels of student and parent engagement in the HASS curriculum topic and concepts.

Notably, Mr George commented that the activity to invite parents/carers to engage in their child's learning was "a very easy" shift in classroom practice (Willis & Exley, 2023a, p. 86). He credited the shift to his use of the Parent Engagement SSOOPP Framework (Willis & Exley, 2023b) "to [re]imagine school and classroom activities" (Willis & Exley, 2023a, p. 86). In other words, Mr George achieved effective parent/carer and community engagement using the framework's six SSOOPP principles: **S**hort (the students sent their parents/carers an email in class); **S**harp (the focus of the activity was the topic of heraldry); **O**ften (the opportunity was offered not at the beginning or end of the term, but rather mid-term); **O**ptional (the opportunity to engage was open and invitational); **P**urposeful (the opportunity

directly linked to the students' HASS curriculum and assessment); and **P**ersonalised (the opportunity was inclusive of all families and contexts, while simultaneously particularistic to each parent/carer and their child).

Updated Literacy Progressions

At the same time as updating the HASS learning area, ACARA also updated the General Capabilities—Literacy V9.0 (ACARA, 2022) to provide "more fine-grained descriptions of literacy development, to support teachers to accurately monitor students' literacy development, across all learning areas" (p. 4). This document outlines the Literacy Progressions aligned to the year-level expectations of the AC: English V9.0 (AC: E), noting that the progressions are neither a "prescriptive list" nor "designed to be used as a checklist" (ACARA, 2022, p. 3). ACARA (2022) asserts that students' achievements in any learning area depend on them being able to "use the significant, identifiable and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area" (p. 3). Whilst learning to read, write, listen, and speak have some general underpinnings that must be mastered, there is no single literacy that can be spread homogenously across all learning areas. Supported by research (e.g., Exley & Singh, 2011; Willis, 2013; Exley, 2019) on the specialised literacy demands of learning in HASS-related disciplines, these complex literacy skills need to be developed within the context of the learning area. As demonstrated in Wyatt-Smith and Cumming's (2003) research, each field of knowledge has its own set of knowing (content knowledge) and ways of representing knowing (literacies).

As a case in point, Fox and Exley's (2009) analysis of historical timelines demonstrates the complex linguistic, spatial, and gestural design of this HASS text. Historical timelines are a hybridised genre, usually made up of "a title; a visual continuum of time; briefly written factual descriptions or explanations pertinent to the point of time; and accompanying integrated visuals, either with or without captions" (Fox & Exley, 2009, p. 18). Historical timelines do not have what Lemke (1998) would refer to as an "ideal" canonical form. The corollary of this point is that historical timelines can be designed in a multitude of ways, which adds to the complexity of the reading/viewing, and writing/creating task. In research undertaken during Year 4 HASS lessons to identify the students' zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) and plan future intentional learning experiences, Fox and Exley (2009) identified that some students were more skilled than others when it comes to: writing with authority; using titles and subheadings to effect; orientating the reader/viewer with phrasings of time and place; harmonising written and visual texts; designing the timeline chronology visual display; and using the standard academic referencing style.

As this article focuses on the Literacy Progressions for listening, interacting, and speaking in a Year 5/6 multiage class, Table 1 lists the Literacy Progressions that align to the AC: E (ACARA, 2022). The progression levels are indicated for typically progressing students in Years 5 and 6, noting that in any one class students may also be working at, above or below the nominal progression. Also important is that the progression level does not necessarily use the same numbering code as the Year level. For example, in the sub-element of listening, a typically progressing Year 5 student will be working within progression 6 (ACARA, 2022).

Table 1. Literacy Progressions for listening, interacting, and speaking for Years 5 & 6 (drawn from ACARA, 2022)

Speaking & Listening	Literacy Progression Indicators Typical for Year 5	Literacy Progression Indicators Typical for Year 6

Sub-elements		
Listening	**Progression 6 Indicators**: • responds to moderately complex texts (see *Text complexity*) • responds to texts with unfamiliar content • identifies main ideas of a spoken text using supporting details • identifies purpose & intended audience of a spoken text • infers layered meaning from texts (e.g., musical overlay that creates mood) • asks relevant questions to extend understanding • describes language & audio features of texts	**Includes Progression 6 Indicators, plus the following Progression 7 Indicators**: • responds to complex texts • identifies & analyses how spoken language is used for different effects • explains the use of intonation, pausing, rhythm, & phrasing to give emphasis & weight to ideas • selects appropriate listening strategies for planned & unplanned situations (e.g., records & organises information from a text in a table or with detailed notes) • explains how vocabulary is used for impact on the target audience
Interacting	**Progression 5 Indicators**: • critically evaluates ideas & claims made by a speaker • explains new learning from interacting with others • appropriately presents an alternative point to the previous speaker • initiates interactions confidently in group & whole-class discussions • poses pertinent questions to make connections between a range of ideas • uses open questions to prompt a speaker to provide more information • clarifies task goals & negotiates roles in group learning • monitors discussion to manage digression from the topic • identifies & articulates the perspective of a speaker, to move a conversation forward	**Includes Progression 5 Indicators, plus the following Progression 6 Indicators**: • interacts within school context or the broader community, adjusting language & responses to suit purpose & audience • synthesises ideas from group discussion into a common theme or hypothesis • poses problems, hypothesises, & formulates questions about abstract ideas in group situations • restates different views & makes suggestions to negotiate agreement • poses questions to clarify assumptions made by the speaker • questions others to evaluate accuracy of thinking or problem-solving processes • uses language to align the listener with personal position (e.g., "of course", "as you can imagine", "obviously")
Speaking	**Progression 5 Indicators**: **Crafting ideas** • creates detailed spoken texts on a broad range of learning area topics • includes details & elaborations to expand ideas • uses connectives to signal a change in relationship (e.g., "however", "although", "on the other hand") or to show causal relationships (e.g., "due to", "since") (see *Grammar*)	**Progression 6 Indicators**: **Crafting ideas** • creates spoken texts responsive to audience & a broad range of learning area topics, clearly articulating words & ideas • organises more complex ideas or concepts logically, selecting details to accentuate key points

	• uses a range of expressions to introduce an alternative point of view (e.g., "in my opinion", "he did not agree with") • rehearses spoken text to accommodate time & technology • controls tone, volume, pitch, & pace to suit content & audience • uses technologies or audio & visual features to enhance spoken text (e.g., videos a spoken presentation with music, sound effect enhancements) **Vocabulary** • uses a broader range of more complex noun groups/phrases to expand description (e.g., "protective, outer covering") • selects more specific & precise words to replace general words (e.g., uses "difficult" or "challenging" for "hard") • uses some rhetorical devices (e.g., "don't you agree?")	• speaks audibly & coherently to a less familiar audience for a sustained period • shows increasing awareness of audience by moderating length, content & delivery of spoken texts • adjusts register according to purpose & audience • does research to prepare spoken texts • uses a range of technology as well as audio & visual resources to engage the audience & enhance content **Vocabulary** • varies vocabulary to add interest & describe with greater precision (e.g., uses topic-specific noun groups/phrases such as "exploitation of resources") (see *Grammar*) • uses language creatively (e.g., "the moon shines bravely") • uses sensory vocabulary to engage the audience (e.g., "a gasp of dismay") • uses technical vocabulary to demonstrate topic knowledge (e.g., "deforestation") • consistently uses a range of synonyms to add variety & precision to spoken text • uses abstractions (e.g., "freedom", "fairness")

The remainder of this article introduces a case study of one early-career teacher, Miss Lizzy, and her Year 5/6 multiage class located in a small school in the Torres Strait Islands, and researcher reflections from two points in time where parents/carers and community are invited to support the students' HASS learning. In this context, and alongside (i) a new rationale for HASS that includes a personal focus, (ii) the opportunity for teachers to invite parents/carers and community to engage in the students' learning, and (iii) the "more fine-grained descriptions of literacy development" in the General Capabilities—Literacy V9.0 (ACARA, 2022), this article explores the following overarching research question: When parents/carers and community members are invited to engage with the students' HASS learning, what opportunities arise for students to experience the listening, interacting, and speaking Literacy Progressions?

Research method

This article reports on a qualitative case study. Case study research is an appropriate methodology to develop new understandings of a relatively unexplored phenomenon such as parent/carer and community engagement in students' HASS learning with the goal of developing students' Literacy Progressions. As Merriam (1998) notes, qualitative case study

methodology facilitates greater understanding of a phenomenon in context as an integrated whole, allowing researchers to offer a "holistic description and explanation" (p. 29). This qualitative case study involves Miss Lizzy (pseudonym), a non-Indigenous early-career teacher undertaking her first teaching appointment with students aged 9.5 to 11.5 years in a small multi-age upper primary class in a remote community in the Torres Strait Islands, Far North Queensland, Australia. In line with University- and system-approved ethics requirements, and the permission which was granted by the Elders of the community for Author 1 of this article to be on the island as a teacher/researcher (Exley et al., 2018), only general observations about Miss Lizzy, Tortol Island (pseudonym), the school, and the students will be provided. In previous work, Exley (2010) describes Tortol Island as:

> [a] highly functional community, with an active local council and commercial cooperative, and significant pride in the establishment of community centres, including a number of churches, a sports facility, health care facility, art cooperative, and plans to re-establish a privately leased fishing cooperative. (p. 2)

Tortol Island school serves 100% Indigenous enrolment with all the students speaking Torres Strait Islander Creole and, in some cases, another local dialect or vernacular, before learning through Standard Australian English (SAE) as a medium of instruction in the early years of school. The multitude of non-SAE languages on Tortol Island "fulfil diverse and specialised communicative and creative needs" and are important for students' long-term participation in their community (Exley, 2010, p. 3). Field notes taken by Author 1 indicate students are proud of their local languages, regularly singing songs during craft lessons, when encouraging each other in sports, during playtime and lunch breaks, and when participating in dance and cultural performances. As such, the students are considered to be English as Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) users. Against this backdrop of a commitment to community languages, Nakata (1997, 2003) has long advocated for a more focused and urgent pursuit of English education in the Torres Strait Islands. Nakata (2000) is not suggesting that Torres Strait Islanders should abandon the cultural agenda, but instead recommends that they work systematically and progressively to acquire SAE competencies so they can better "negotiate [their] position in relation to these outside influences" (p. 112).

The HASS unit

Miss Lizzy planned a HASS unit of work called *You, The Citizen!* that brought together the English learning area and the disciplines of History and Civics and Citizenship (Exley, 2019). The unit focused on the three levels of Australian government, and Australian politicians. The goal was for the students to better understand how government works and the relationship between citizens and government structures. The two culminating assessment items were (i) an individual task of a written biographical recount of a person who made a significant contribution to Australian politics, and (ii) a PechaKucha PowerPoint© of a group drama presentation of a significant political person or social event in Australian history. A PechaKucha is a PowerPoint© presentation, typically 20 slides with visuals with few if any words, each accompanied by 20 seconds of live or pre-recorded voice-over narration. To create their PechaKucha, the students in Miss Lizzy's class worked in two groups to prepare a storyboard, source costumes and props, capture still photography, write a voice-over script, design the presentation including transitions, and record their voice-over narration.

The unit of work aligns to the "Pedagogy of Multiliteracies" framework of the New London Group (2000), of which Nakata (2000) is a foundational member. Instead of assuming that one pedagogical approach is better than any other, The New London Group (2000) conceptualises four integrated components of pedagogy: situated practice, overt

instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice**.** Kalantzis and Cope (2000) explain that this framework is based on the "fundamental argument" among the members of the New London Group "that all four aspects are necessary to good teaching, albeit not in a rigid or sequential way" (p. 240; see also Exley & Luke, 2009). Table 2 overviews the "Pedagogy of Multiliteracies" components (New London Group, 2000), and aligns each to the *You, The Citizen!* HASS Unit (Exley, 2019). The final column of Table 2 uses a tick to identify the two occasions where parents/carers and community members were invited to engage with the students' HASS learning.

Table 2. *You, The Citizen!* HASS Unit Overview aligned to the four components of pedagogy of the "Pedagogy of Multiliteracies" framework

Description of a "Pedagogy of Multiliteracies" framework (New London Group, 2000)	**Implementation of *You, The Citizen!* HASS unit (Exley, 2019)**	**Parent/carer and community engagement**
Situated practice: Learning is designed to tap into students' experiences, interests, & knowledges, whilst also deepening to new levels. Students are contributors of knowledge, rather than the teacher simply announcing a topic to be learnt.	**History content**: • discuss governance in the Torres Strait Islands • visit council chambers, discussion with Councillor **English content**: • What do students know about biographical recounts? • How do they undertake internet research? • What do they know about multimodal design?	 • Students visited the council chambers & listened to, interacted with, & spoke to the Councillor
Overt instruction: Based on observations & other forms of assessment, teachers identify students' specific learning needs & opportunities for extended learning that will contribute to the overall project outcomes. By providing scaffolded learning, teachers assist students to conceptualise, theorise, develop explicit generalisations, & learn appropriate technical points for literacy learning.	**History content**: • compare Island & State/Commonwealth governance structures • scaffold instruction for: searching the internet with keywords, evaluating worthiness of sites, learning to paraphrase • research key events in the historical development of Australia's State/Commonwealth governance & map onto a class timeline **English content**: • active comprehension, including activating prior knowledge, predicting, questioning, identifying main ideas, inferring, monitoring, summarising, & reflecting	

	• active writing strategies including planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, & reflecting • scaffolding students through biographical recount of Australia's first prime minister—Edmund Barton—including generic structure, language features, creating still photography, PowerPoint© presentation (PechaKucha), & voice narration	
Critical framing: Students understand different perspectives on knowledge & are able to infer & interpret relationships, interests, & perspectives.	**History content**: • Whose views dominate the research? • Whose views are silenced in the research? **English content**: • evaluating biases within information texts • How do words & visuals persuade readers/viewers? • How do writers/creators position an audience through text design?	
Transformed practice: Students apply knowledge appropriately in typical situations & apply knowledge to new situations. Transformed practice is where students showcase what they have learnt & can do.	**Integrated History/English content**: • students produce culminating tasks: (i) a written biographical recount (ii) group PowerPoint© presentation, where each student has taken responsibility for writing the content, constructing the visuals, & adding the voice narration to three slides	 • Students asked parents/carers to assist with costume & props for the culminating task (PechaKucha PowerPoint© of a group drama presentation) • Students listened to, interacted with, & spoke to parents/carers

The specificities of overt instruction and critical framing of the "Pedagogy of Multiliteracies" framework have been described elsewhere (see Exley, 2019; Exley & Luke, 2009). The remainder of this article focuses on the situated practice and transformed practice components where parents/carers and the community engaged with the students' HASS learning, and how these provided opportunities for students to experience the Literacy Progressions for the sub-elements of listening, interacting, and speaking (see Table 1).

Findings

Situated practice—Visiting the council chambers and conversing with the Councillor

To situate the students in the topic of *You, The Citizen!*, Miss Lizzy contacted the local Councillor who in turn invited the students to the council chambers (Exley, 2019). Although the council chambers were located a mere 500 metres from the school, for many of the students, this was the first time they had entered the council building. The Councillor invited the students to sit in the large chairs at the oblong-shaped table where he spoke about the institution of the government presence in the Torres Strait Islands from 1877 and the annexation of the islands to the State of Queensland in 1879. As Nakata (1997) documents, at this time the Queensland government sought control over the economic activities and profits associated with the booming pearling industry. As the new century dawned, missionary projects and basic-level primary schools had been established on some of the Torres Strait Islands (Nakata, 1997). During World War II, the threat of the Japanese invasion meant the military entered the Torres Strait and it was through this activity that Islanders came to know about the Commonwealth Government (Nakata, 1997). The students said they already knew about the large north-facing cannons that the military had cemented into headlands of various islands in the Torres Strait.

Together, the Councillor and students discussed matters of local governance, including the names of the councillors on the other 14 islands in the Torres Strait. The students chattered about their points of familial connection, such as, "That's my uncle", and in the case of one student, "I didn't know they were a councillor". The Councillor mentioned to one of the students that his grandfather had been a councillor in a previous period. The student did not respond verbally to this information, but nodded with pride. The Councillor also discussed processes for planning and decision making, laws and obligations, and engagement and advocacy, with the students asking further questions throughout the discussion. The approach adopted by the Councillor recognised the strong oral culture of community talking circles. The students asked respectfully about the Councillor's pay, as well as the representation of females in local council governance. The Councillor responded to both questions, detailing his pay as well as the significant time and travel responsibilities, and the array of political and advisory leadership positions women held across the Torres Strait. At this point, the female students' body gestures changed, showing an interest in the possibilities for the future. The conversations in the council chambers evidenced what Gonzalez et al. (2006) refer to as a "funds of knowledge exchange" between the students and the Councillor. A funds of knowledge exchange involves individuals sharing their life experiences. To facilitate this situated practice component, Miss Lizzy drew on the community resource of the local councillor, a strategy identified by Jeynes (2018) as holding the potential not only for "making the adult world more appealing" (p. 159), but also for positively embracing opportunities for students to critically frame their questions.

Not only did Miss Lizzy's initiative to connect the HASS and English learning areas create more time for the project during the school day, her approach to community engagement set the scene for more conversations about the HASS learning area in outside-of-school spaces in culturally respectful ways. This is an example of when teachers never quite know the particularities of such outside-of-school conversations, or their direct impact on the students' learning. What is important is that Miss Lizzy facilitated a learning community made up of the Councillor and the students that aligned to Indigenous ways of knowing. Hanlen (2010) uses an analogy to explain how Western ways of being in schools are often "square", such as when students sit in rows in a square classroom looking at a square screen, *vis-à-vis* Indigenous ways of being built on circular concepts of talking circles hosted in spaces that are not confined by the four walls of a classroom, or confined to a Western compartmentalised understanding of time.

The excursion to the council chambers lasted for approximately one-and-a-half hours. This situated practice component of the HASS Unit thus achieved strong points of connection in a relatively short period of time. Table 3 lists the sub-elements of the Literacy Progressions that were also practised by students as they listened to, interacted with, and spoke to the Councillor.

Table 3. Listening, interacting, and speaking Literacy Progressions practised as the students engaged with the Councillor (drawn from ACARA, 2022)

Speaking & Listening Sub-elements	Literacy Progression Indicators Typical for Year 5	Literacy Progression Indicators Typical for Year 6
Listening	**Progression 6 Indicators**: • asks relevant questions to extend understanding	**Progression 7 Indicators**: • identifies how spoken language is used for different effects (i.e., the formality of the council chambers)
Interacting	**Progression 5 Indicators**: • explains new learning from interacting with others • initiates interactions confidently in group & whole-class discussions • poses pertinent questions to make connections between a range of ideas • uses open questions to prompt a speaker to provide more information	**Progression 6 Indicators**: • interacts within the broader community, adjusting language & responses to suit purpose & audience
Speaking	**Progression 5 Indicators**: • controls tone, volume, pitch, & pace to suit content & audience	**Progression 6 Indicators**: • speaks audibly & coherently to a less familiar audience for a sustained period • adjusts register according to purpose & audience • uses technical vocabulary to demonstrate topic knowledge (e.g., decision making, laws & obligations, engagement & advocacy)

Transformed practice—Asking parents/carers to assist with costumes and props

In the transformed practice phase at the end of the HASS unit, the students worked on both assessment items. The second task was the production of the PechaKucha, which involved the students working in two groups to prepare a 20-slide PowerPoint© with each slide presenting a 20-second narration of a group drama presentation of a significant political person or social event in Australian history. The students were set up for success in the overt instruction phase, having been scaffolded through the language and design features outlined in Table 2. When it was time for students to choose their topic for the PechaKucha, the project continued its critical framing with one group of students eager to research the first Indigenous Australian to enter Federal Parliament, Senator Neville Bonner, and the other group eager to research the first woman to be elected to an Australian Parliament, Edith Cowan MP (Exley, 2019). The group-work nature of PechaKucha provided authentic

opportunities for students to engage with the listening, interacting, and speaking Literacy Progressions appropriate to the HASS learning area such as technical vocabulary of "government-issued", "crossed the floor", "Chairman", "legislation", "campaigning", "representation", "second-class citizens", and "recognition" (Source: researcher fieldnotes).

Importantly, for this article, PechaKucha provided another point of entry for the students' parents/carers to engage with their child's curriculum learning in outside-of-school time. As the students researched their chosen politician and created the storyboards, they also needed to consider the costumes and props for the drama scenes. The students reported that when they were asking parents/carers for permission to bring their "Sunday-best outfits" (Source: researcher fieldnotes) to school, along with formal Western outfits such as men's suits and ties, and ladies' frocks and hats, the parents/carers wanted to know more about the project. Students drew on content knowledge from the HASS unit to make specific requests, and parents/carers in turn asked clarifying questions to better understand the requests. Such an approach aligns with Indigenous world views which consider that knowledge of the individual comes through the knowledge of others, an essential foundation that non-Indigenous teachers must respect when teaching Indigenous students (Exley et al., 2016). Goodall and Montgomery (2014) highlight how exchanges of this kind shift the relationship parents/carers and community members have with the school from one of passive recipients to one of actively connecting with the students' content learning, albeit, in outside-of-school spaces.

By facilitating the transformed practice component in this way, the students in Miss Lizzy's class had a purposeful and personalised reason to listen to, engage with, and speak to their parents/carers about the HASS unit. Table 4 lists the Literacy Progressions practised as students engaged with their parents/carers.

Table 4. Listening, interacting, and speaking Literacy Progressions practised as the students engaged with their parents/carers (drawn from ACARA, 2022)

Speaking & Listening Sub-elements	Literacy Progression Indicators Typical for Year 5	Literacy Progression Indicators Typical for Year 6
Listening	**Progression 6 Indicators**: • identifies main ideas of a spoken text using supporting details • identifies purpose & intended audience of a spoken text • asks relevant questions to extend understanding	**Progression 7 Indicators**: • selects appropriate listening strategies for planned & unplanned situations
Interacting	**Progression 5 Indicators**: • explains new learning from interacting with others • initiates interactions confidently with parents/carers	**Progression 6 Indicators**: • interacts within the broader community, adjusting language & responses to suit purpose & audience with parents/carers • synthesises ideas from group discussion into a common theme
Speaking	**Progression 5 Indicators**: **Crafting ideas** • controls tone, volume, pitch, & pace to suit content & audience	**Progression 6 Indicators**: **Crafting ideas** • creates spoken texts responsive to audience, clearly articulating words & ideas

	• speaks audibly & coherently about school work to a less familiar audience (i.e., parents/carers) • adjusts register according to purpose & audience

Conclusion

Posey-Maddox and Haley-Lock (2020) use the term schoolcentric (Lawson, 2003) parent involvement to describe the situation when "teachers and school staff define and delineate the ways in which parents/carers can and should participate in their children's schooling" (p. 672). Goodall (2022) maintains that over the last quarter of a century understanding of the value and realities of parental engagement has grown such that parents' engagement in the broad sphere of their children's learning which concentrates on the family, and by extension, the community, rather than the school, is now recognised to most fully support students' outcomes—at school and later life—especially children from different backgrounds (p. 76). Whilst well-intentioned, when traditional parent/carer involvement is the only relationship set up with the school (i.e., schoolcentric parent involvement), it is ladened with [in]visible power differentials that may inadvertently further disenfranchise parents/carers who are already disconnected from the school. In contrast, the parent/carer and community engagement facilitated in the HASS unit detailed in this article orientates to opportunities designed for parents/carers and community members to actively contribute to students' learning based on their unique "funds of knowledge" (e.g., the Councillor) which, for parents/carers, also includes particular knowledges gained from "nurtur[ing] children in the complex act of childrearing and in the complex context of a home and family" (Pushor, 2023, para. 2). According to one teacher participant in Posey-Maddox and Haley-Lock's (2020) study, the implications for teachers' practice are that while "some parents don't feel that they have anything to give … we have to show them that they do" (p. 683).

In line with Baxter and Toe's (2021) research, the parents/carers and community members did not have to be physically present at the school site or in the classroom to engage in the students' HASS learning in culturally responsive ways. Similarly, as viewed through the "Pedagogy of Multiliteracies" framework, parents/carers' physical presence at the school was not essential to afford the students valuable opportunities to experience the Literacy Progressions in line with their learning in the AC: E. Together, and across time, the "key players", namely students, parents/carers, community members, and Miss Lizzy (Willis et al., 2019, p. 45), created what Putnam (2000) refers to as bonding ties, that is bonds between people who are like each other, in this case, citizens of the same community. Miss Lizzy's role was quite different to the teacher as the metaphoric sage-on-the-stage; on this occasion, her approach to parent/carer and community engagement is that of a bridging tie—a fitting pedagogical approach to a HASS unit titled *You, The Citizen!*. As such, Miss Lizzy restructured the relationship between knowledge practices, systems of thought, experiences, and people. She did so in low-impost ways at the start of the HASS unit with the Councillor, and at the end of the HASS unit with the parents/carers. Indeed, her approach resembled the principles underpinning Willis and Exley's (2023b) Parent Engagement SSOOPP Framework: **S**hort (the students visited the nearby local council chambers as part of their everyday classroom work); **S**harp (the focus of discussions during the visit was on how government works and the relationship between citizens and government structures); **O**ften (opportunities for community and parent/carer engagement were integral to the design of Miss Lizzy's unit); **O**ptional (the opportunities for parents/carers to assist the students with costumes and props for the drama scenes in their PechaKucha presentation were open, invitational, and welcoming); **P**urposeful (parent/carer and community engagement

opportunities directly connected the students' lifeworlds to their HASS curriculum and assessment); and **P**ersonalised (the opportunity for parent/carer engagement was inclusive of all families and contexts, while simultaneously particularistic to each parent/carer and their child).

Rigney (2024) charges that culturally responsive pedagogies work best with Indigenous Australians when the teacher's instructional practice adopts the position that there is no single Aboriginal experience, identity, or language; hence, the specifics of what worked for the Tortol Island community may not work for all Indigenous contexts, or indeed for all classrooms. Nevertheless, the example of engaging parents/carers and community in Middle Years HASS and literacy in this article illuminates how teachers might more critically create purposeful, personalised connections with students' lifeworlds to enhance their curriculum learning in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts.

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Dr Beryl Exley is an experienced classroom teacher who is now a Professor of English Curriculum and Literacies Education with the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University, Queensland, and a researcher with the Griffith Institute for Educational Research at Griffith University, Queensland. In 2019 she was awarded ALEA Life Membership for services to ALEA local councils, ALEA Queensland, the ALEA Publications portfolio, and ALEA National Council, including two years as National President. Beryl recently co-edited *International Perspectives on Literacies, Diversities, and Opportunities for Learning: Critical Conversations* (Routledge, 2024), with Professor Cynthia Brock (University of Wyoming) and Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney (University of South Australia). Beryl is a Chief Investigator on an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Grant DP190100518, *Quality Teaching Work and Reducing Educational Inequalities*, awarded to Singh, Exley, Heimans and Ivinson.

Dr Linda-Dianne Willis is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer and a member of the Griffith Institute for Educational Research (GIER) at Griffith University, Queensland, Australia (2022–2026). She is also an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at The University of Queensland (2020–2025). Linda has a PhD in parent-teacher engagement which is complemented by extensive experience in schools as a Senior Teacher and Middle School Leader and in universities as a Program Director and Senior Lecturer in English and Literacy and Humanities and Social Sciences education. Supported by GIER, Linda was Lead Chief Investigator and Senior Research Fellow on the longitudinal project, *Engaging Parents in Inquiry Curriculum* (EPIC) 2021–2023. Linda's research specialties include parent and community engagement, English and Literacy, multiliteracies pedagogy, inquiry curriculum, initial teacher education, and dialogic pedagogies and methodologies. She is lead author on the international publication, *Principal Leadership for Parent Engagement in Disadvantaged Schools* (Springer, 2021) (https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-1264-0). Linda served on ALEA National Council as an Executive Member and National Publications Director from 2019 to 2023. She was awarded The ALEA Medal in 2024 and is an active member of ALEA's Meanjin Local Council Committee.