

Boondall State School

ELFs at Work



Early Literacy Fundamentals

Submission for Early Phase of Learning

Showcase 2006

Awards for Excellence in Schools

Showcase 2006

Awards for Excellence in Schools

Submission Cover Sheet

Title of submission: ELFs at Work – Early Literacy Fundamentals

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Showcase Award for Excellence in the Early Phase of Learning |
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SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL _____ DATE _____

To be completed by the Executive Director (Schools) after completion of the checklist:

I support this submission and its entry in the Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools 2006.
This submission meets the requirements set out in the Executive Director's Checklist.

Signature of Executive Director (Schools)

Date

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Submission overview: Boondall State School recognises the importance of providing a strong start in literacy for the diversity of students attending the school. Our Early Years' teachers and the Support Teacher for Learning Difficulties (STLD) were motivated to establish and sustain an early years literacy intervention framework which has an emphasis on early identification of literacy problems in order to prevent them presenting in middle and upper year levels. This early intervention framework was based around the University of Queensland Early Literacy Fundamentals (UQELF; commonly known as the Elf Program) Program which focuses on accelerating the early literacy skills of students considered 'at-risk' for future literacy difficulty. Boondall was introduced to the UQ-ELF intervention programme through collaboration with speech and occupational therapists from the University of Queensland. The school developed this strong professional relationship whilst participating in 'CONNECT: Enhancing Resiliency in School Aged Students', a University of Queensland research project funded by Queensland Health.

Description:

The Boondall State School community is becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse with approximately 26% of the student population where a language other than English is spoken at home. More than 26 non-English speaking groups are represented, with Asian and Pacific Islander backgrounds the most dominant. The school community also consists of a range of socio-economic backgrounds, varying from economically depressed to middle income earners. Approximately 36% of students live in a single parent family and 35% live in jobless households. All parents, regardless of background, have high expectations of the school in terms of its performance. Serving a highly diverse population, the vision of the school is to promote both excellence and equity.

Motivation

The school was motivated to improve early literacy intervention for numerous reasons. Consistent numbers of students identified in State-wide testing as having literacy skills below the State benchmark was of concern to both teachers and administration, as was the observation that literacy difficulties increase as students move up through year levels. For example, in 2003, 28% of Year Two students, 29% of Year Three students and 41% of Year Five were identified for literacy support. These figures are consistent with research that shows that students in Year One may have undetected literacy difficulties which are only exposed with the challenges of the middle grades. Many of these young children's difficulties may be transitory in that, given appropriate early learning experiences, they are able to catch up with their peers. Additionally, research has shown that when students start school with reduced literacy skills, they often demonstrate progressively lower literacy skills as they move through the grades due to the impact of reduced self-esteem.

Links with Other Strategies in the School

The UQ-ELF Program is implemented concurrently with a number of other strategies for improving learning outcomes in the early years including the Preschool Metalinguistics Program, Preschool to Year One Transition Program, Years One and Two Gross Motor Program, Jolly Phonics Program for Year One and Reading Recovery in Year Two. Teachers have undertaken professional development in literacy pedagogy, Early Literacy Fundamentals Program, Guided Reading/Writing instruction, Early Years Literacy and the latest Literacy Strategy 2006-2008 from Education Queensland.

Objectives

The main objective of the Boondall early literacy intervention framework, using the UQELF program, is prevention/intervention. This entails:

- Early identification of students that may develop future literacy difficulties
- Provide early support to 'at risk' students in order to boost the literacy skills identified by research as being essential to growth in reading and writing. Early intervention enables at risk students to keep learning at a similar rate as their peers, rather than falling behind.
- Provision of a program which recognises the importance of both the phonological awareness skills needed to understand the alphabet, and the sensory motor (gross and fine motor) skills needed for posture, pencil grip and letter writing.
- Provide positive reinforcement and emotional support to counteract the development of poor self-perception and to encourage perseverance with new and challenging tasks.
- Provide teaching staff and support personnel with the knowledge and skills to identify and support students at risk of experiencing literacy difficulties

Early Literacy Fundamentals (ELF) Framework

Year One and Two Screening

The emphasis of the collaboration between the UQ and Boondall State School staff was to create a sustainable and flexible screening process. This involved professional development for the STLD and classroom teachers, demonstrations of screening techniques, and feed-back to classroom teachers on the link between observed difficulties during the screening and literacy difficulties observed in class. In 2004, all the Year One students were screened using tests suggested by the UQELF team. Following this period of consultation, the STLD at the school has continued to screen many more students in Years Two and Three and will continue the screening Year One and Two students.

The ELF Intervention Framework

Three levels of intervention are provided within the framework employed by Boondall State School. A model for the intervention framework can be found in Appendix One.

1. 'At-Risk' Students

The UQELF programme contains 12 weeks of activities. Each hour-long session contains 6 activities which follow a consistent order:

1. A gross motor activity to build tone in student's postural muscles (e.g., animal walks, being space aliens)
2. A listening activity that is usually combined with a fine motor task (e.g., listening to sounds in words and bending pipe-cleaners)
3. A desk task combining a listening activity with an activity to build tone in hands and fingers (e.g., breaking words into syllables while poking a play dough snake)
4. Another quick gross motor activity to provide a muscle wake-up (e.g., jumping as students sound out a word)
5. A reading task combined with a visual perception task (e.g., finding the correct letter to complete a word, by matching geometric shapes)
6. A letter formation task which is integrated with a spelling task.

Students attending intervention sessions

	2004	2005	2006
Year 1	24 students	25 students	24 students
Year 2 & 3	8 students	8 students	9 students

All sessions are conducted by the STLD, which represents a very serious time commitment towards the Early Literacy Fundamentals Program.

2. Classroom Level Intervention and Parent Information Sessions

The sustainability of the intervention framework at the classroom level was promoted through professional development for classroom teachers about the research underlying the UQELF program, as well as strategies for identification of students with particular developmental issues (e.g., reduced postural tone, reduced finger dexterity, ineffective pencils grips, and unsustainable reading strategies).

Teachers were provided with a set of classroom activities that mirror the activities conducted during UQELF sessions. Activity examples include: strategies for spelling and reading individual words, particularly nonsense words (e.g., lof, bip) which promote alphabetic skills; specifics of how to effectively hold a pencil for writing (e.g., what happens when you hold the pencil too tight or too loose). The classroom aspect of the UQELF program also used a highly novel approach to the introduction of movement, handwriting and phonological awareness concepts with the use of a music CD with supporting activities. (See appendix two for the Program outline for classroom activities)

A significant component of the implementation of classroom activities is that 'at-risk' students who are withdrawn from class for UQELF sessions are then able to experience the same activities again with their whole class. This provides a mechanism for allowing 'at-risk' children to experience a level of success in the classroom, promoting motivation and enhanced self-perception and self-esteem.

Boondall State School also elected to deliver a series of parent workshops in 2004 on topics such as preparing children for Year One, and helping with handwriting and forming letters. The workshops proved to be successful and in response to community requests the workshops were repeated in 2005.

3. Children with Severe Difficulties.

The third aspect of the framework relates to students who are considered to have severe difficulties with literacy development, often compounded by low English proficiency or speech language impairment. Many of these students were already receiving learning assistance.

The focus of this level is consultation with parents in order to facilitate referral for further assessment with Paediatricians and/or community developmental assessment centres. Professional development seminars, developed by SLP and OT from UQ, aimed to make this aspect of the framework sustainable within the school by discussing individual children with teachers and STLD, and identifying and discussing the presenting symptoms which would indicate referral was recommended.

The framework provides these students with a multivariate intervention programme when they have moved into Year Two:

1. UQELF group sessions
2. Continuing English as a Second Language or Speech Language Impairment support
3. The opportunity to participate in the Reading Recovery Program
4. Support with a teacher aide

Sustainability and Transferability

Boondall State School is currently implementing the UQELF with Year Two students, with Year One screening and intervention to commence term two. The Pre-school, Year Two and Three teachers, as well as new teachers to the Early Years of Boondall State School have also participated in all in-service activities to promote transfer of understanding and skills between the year levels. The new Year One teacher has an 'ELF mentor' (or head Elf!) for support. This allows the school to be more flexible with staffing the early years classes and to promote longevity of the program within the school. Teacher aides will be undergoing training in 2006.

Boondall State School has taken an active role in promoting the transferability of the framework and UQELF program to other schools. This been achieved though the Geebung District STLD network. A well-attended professional development seminar presented by the authors of the programme was organised in term 4, 2004 for STLDs within the region, and several STLD's have shown interest in organising professional development at their schools.

Connection to QSE – 2010, Destination 2010 and/or Education and Training Reforms for the Future:

The UQELF program focuses on early assessment and intervention in the very beginning of children's education. This is supported by *The Education Training Reforms for the Future – A White Paper* (2002) which affirms the critical nature of the early years of schooling to children's

ongoing learning and development. The UQELF program assists children to develop firm foundations for learning, which *The Education Training Reforms for the Future – A White Paper* (2002) believes will lead to a greater learning capacity for each student.

Premier Beattie's foreword in the *QSE 2010* (p3) document refers to the reshaping of the life chances and opportunities of young students. The UQELF program does this by supporting students before they experience academic hardship and failure. The program meets one of the central purposes of State Education, as outlined in *QSE 2010* (p13) by assisting students, irrespective of their personal circumstances, background and starting-point, to participate fully in the education and social experiences offered by schools and achieve outcomes according to their potential.

The *Destination 2010 – 2006-2008* objectives addressed in the implementation of the UQELF program are as follows:

LE1: *Improved learning outcomes for the diverse range of students in Education Queensland schools.* The students identified as 'at risk' had improved learning as evidenced by individual and group results on the Burt Word Reading Test, Spelling tests and the alphabet writing task (see Appendix Three). The UQELF program identifies and supports those students that are 'at risk' for future literacy difficulties and in doing so assists in promoting both a positive self-perception and a positive view of learning, essential for becoming a lifelong learner.

SC1: *Schools have innovative and distinctive strategies responsive to community and student needs.* Boondall State School has implemented an innovative literacy program that has responded to identified needs of students, parents and teachers and the school. The students are receiving learning assistance before their difficulties have significant impact on their learning and self-perception. Parents are pleased with the proactive approach of the program and teachers are impressed with the improved learning outcomes of the students involved in the UQ-ELF program. The school has reduced numbers of children requiring further learning support and improved State-wide testing results. In 2005, 86.4% of parents and 90% of students were satisfied or very satisfied that they were getting a good education at Boondall State School.

SC2: *Schools have productive partnerships with their community and with business, industry and other government agencies to implement the Education and Training Reforms for the Future initiatives.* The establishment of the on-going partnership with University of Queensland Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Psychologists has assisted Boondall State School to deliver a more complex, flexible and quality literacy program.

WO1: *The workforce has the capability and flexibility to deliver the strategic objectives of the Department through ongoing professional development opportunities.* Since the commencement of Boondall State School's professional relationship with University of Queensland staff professional development experiences have been bountiful and the school itself has become a networked learning community. Parents, classroom teachers and specialist teachers have actively participated in in-service opportunities and the STLD has shared this learning with her District STLD Network. In 2005 87.5% of the school workforce engaged in professional in comparison to only 78.65% of the State workforce.

Outcomes

Quantitative Outcomes

Student Performance: Reading, spelling, and letter formation tests conducted with at-risk students were repeated following the UQELF Program and all the outcomes are very positive and statistically significant. For example, average scores for reading tripled over the time of the intervention. A summary of the data is presented in Table 1, and Graphs 1-4 in Appendix 3. Two case studies are presented in Appendix 6 to demonstrate the effect of the intervention framework for individual students. The case studies outline the improvements in reading, spelling and letter formation.

Teachers' recording of reading levels and referral to Reading Recovery all showed that the literacy skills of the group of student's who attended early intervention, those "lagging behind", had all

considerably improved. Students that were considered at risk are now achieving the class average in reading.

Parent Satisfaction: The 2004 and 2005 Parent Satisfaction Surveys showed Boondall's parents are more satisfied (than in previous years) with opportunities to participate in school life, the school's efforts to improve students' literacy skills and in preparing them for their futures, and reported that students are happy to come to school. Boondall State School rated higher in these and other aspects of the survey than the State Mean. Graph 10 (Appendix 4) represents these great results. In 2005 86.4% of parents reported they were satisfied or very satisfied that their child is getting a good education at Boondall State School.

Teacher Feedback: Teachers were asked to complete questionnaires at the end of the ELF Trial in 2004. They reported that they had gained knowledge after participating. In particular, teachers noted that they had gained a lot of information about how gross and fine motor difficulties contribute to handwriting difficulties, and how to provide specific class based activities to promote handwriting and phonological awareness (see Appendix 5 for a summary of the questionnaire results). The percentage of staff involved in professional development has increased from 74% to 88% from 2004 to 2005, while the State and Like Schools percentages have decreased (see graph 11, Appendix 4).

Behaviour Management: Since implementing the UQELF program with the Year One students, behaviour has improved. Both the number of minor and major incidents has reduced. Students have improved self-perceptions and are more able to deal with situations not going their way. With greater literacy skills and confidence, students are more engaged and motivated to learn. Graph 12 (Appendix 4) signifies this improvement in Year One behaviour.

Qualitative Outcomes

Student Comments: Anecdotal evidence clearly demonstrates improvement in positive self-perceptions. Montana believes *"I used to never be good at spelling, but now I am. Cause of Mrs Lancaster and the practise"*. Michael said *"I am a good little reader, everyone says, I used to be wasn't good, but now I am good, at reading, reading even them hard books from the library"*. Keith thinks *"I am better at writing 'cause I hold my pencil with the driver in the front seat and only one passenger, cause that's how you're meant to, I'll show you, see. You're doing it wrong, I can tell! I'll show you. (hee hee hee, giggles...)"*.

Teacher Comments: Kathy: *"ELF helped boost the children that were just behind and boosted them over that low baseline. We're anticipating these children will not be caught in the Year Two Diagnostic Net for reading or writing. Because of the ELF program, we had increased contact with parents and greater support both in the classroom and with home programs"*. Sharon agreed with Kathy's comments, following it up with *"ELF is another piece in the puzzle of figuring out why certain kids just don't get it. ELF was fun to do in the classroom, only took a few minutes each day and really seemed to make a difference to those kids that didn't have big problems, but you knew they would by grade Three or Four."* Denise spoke from a Grade Three perspective stating *"it is great to see the school nipping it in the bud, not waiting till the problems are big and having to spend thousands on intervention, supporting these kids for the rest of their schooling"*. *"The in-services were good"*, Kathy continued, *"we are now more aware of what to look for with posture, muscle tone, etc, what is a problem, what isn't and what to do about it"*.

Evidence:

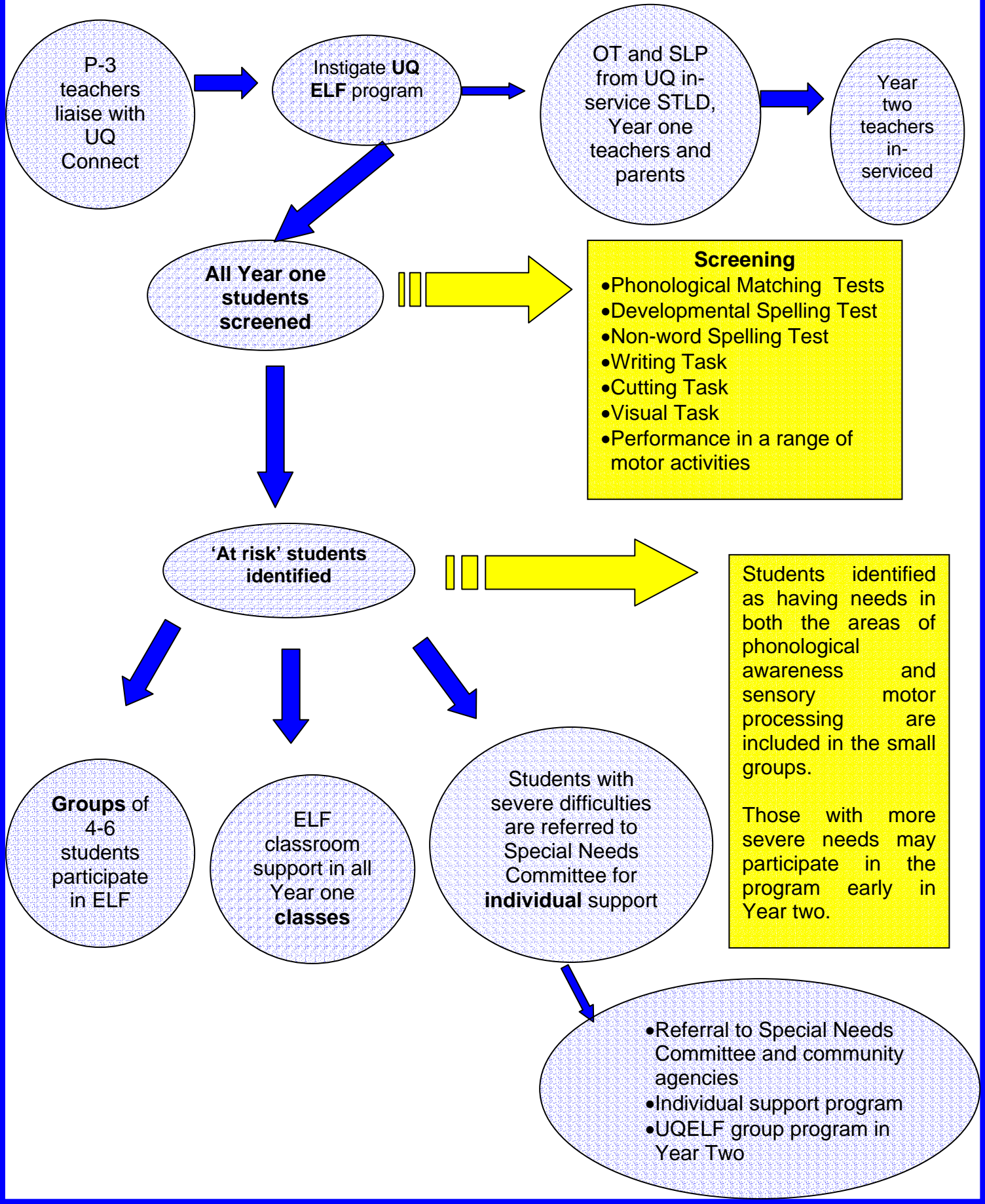
When comparing data from Boondall State School to control schools, researchers from the University of Queensland identified that Boondall State School has made statistically significant reading gains in comparison to other schools not implementing the ELF Program. This can be evidenced in the 2005 Queensland Year Three Tests.

Year 3 Queensland Literacy Testing: Boondall's Year 3 literacy test results have significantly improved since the commencement of the ELF program. The initial cohort of students that participated in the ELF Program underwent the Statewide testing in Year 3 2005 and the school's overall literacy results were considerably higher than both the State Mean and the Like Schools Mean (as shown on Graph 8, Appendix 4). Not only is Boondall State School now surpassing the

State and Like Schools Year 3 overall literacy averages, but it is significantly improving in all three areas of literacy – reading, writing and spelling (see Graphs 5, 6, 7 & 8, Appendix 4). Since the introduction of the ELF program at the school, the percentage of students identified as being in the bottom 15% of the state for Literacy has decreased substantially, from 21.6% to 3.9% (Graph 9, Appendix 4).

When compared to National Literacy Benchmarks, 97.4% of Boondall State School Year Three students (in 2005) were identified as achieving *above* the national literacy benchmarks in reading and 96.1% in writing.

APPENDIX ONE: THE ELF PROCESS AT BOONDALL STATE SCHOOL



APPENDIX TWO: UQELF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Following screening, Year One 'at-risk' students were grouped mostly with their classmates or with members of other classes if required. There were four-six students in each group who were withdrawn for one hour per week. For Year One students, the UQELF programme was conducted in terms 3 and 4 of the school year in order to allow students time to settle into Year One. For Year 2 and 3 students, the intervention can occur at any time.

The program itself has been written by Speech Pathologists and Occupational Therapists using relevant research on literacy and handwriting development. As a result of the current international research finding about the best methods for preventing literacy difficulty, the program focuses on boosting young student's literacy skills in two main ways.

1. Phonological awareness, including alphabetic and phonic skills to improve reading and spelling of individual words, and
2. Sensory-motor development required for posture, pencil grip, letter formation, and cutting.

The authors of the programme also acknowledged the relationship between a student's self-perception of themselves as a learner, and their motivation and persistence with new and challenging tasks. For this reason, the program has a strong emphasis on providing students with simple strategies for reading, spelling and handwriting that are easy to recall and are over-practised in each session, as well as an equally strong emphasis on providing positive support and reinforcement for effort. When mistakes are made, the program also suggests methods for helping students to overcome their difficulties.

Gross and fine motor tasks and handwriting

Each of the 12 sessions is based on a language theme, like Pirates, Spacemen, or Circus, so that students practise gross and fine motor activities that are based around the theme (eg, animal walks or circus balancing). Often the activities also contain specific movement goals such as paying attention to the right and left sides of your body (e.g., when putting on your spacesuit). The emphasis of the program is to give children cues about how to move their bodies more accurately (e.g., using markers on the floor to show how big a jump or hop should be).

The program provides gross and fine motor tasks appropriate for Preschool and Year One developmental stages (e.g., balancing, sequencing several motor activities, cutting, finger dexterity and coordination tasks). The choice of activity order listed above is designed to gradually build muscle tone in student's postural muscles, shoulders, hands and finally fingers in order to assist children hold their pencils as well as they can when handwriting. Students are encouraged to learn and own the explicit strategies for improving pencil grip and posture for handwriting. Specific letter formation tasks (eg where to start and end letters, which lines to start on) are also provided.

Phonological awareness, reading and spelling

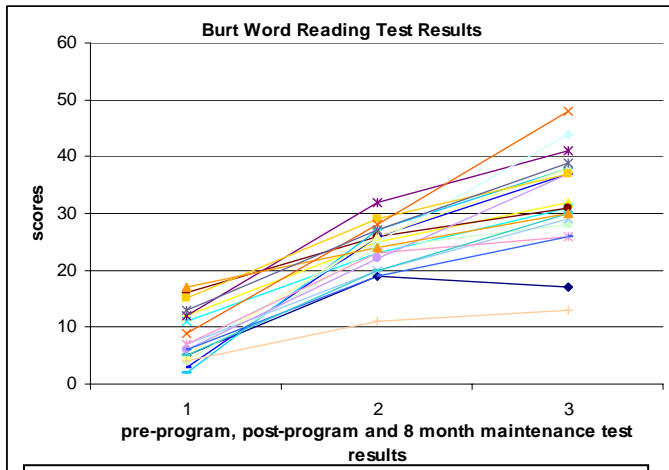
The programme also uses a developmental sequence of phonological awareness tasks. It starts with the skills usually developed over the preschool year. The programme then provides practise at the developmental level appropriate for Year One (e.g., segmenting words into sounds, isolating last sounds in words). Students also learn to apply phonological awareness skills for reading and spelling of individual words (and in particular nonsense words) using easy steps and strategies.

The main focus of the intervention framework is 'at-risk' students in Year one, with some Year Two and Three students also accessing the UQELF program if they need continued assistance. The focus in 2004 was to commence intervention for 'at risk' Year One students. Teachers felt these students could have long-term learning success from early intervention. Despite individual support from the teachers, these students were still having difficulty learning and mastering literacy fundamentals.

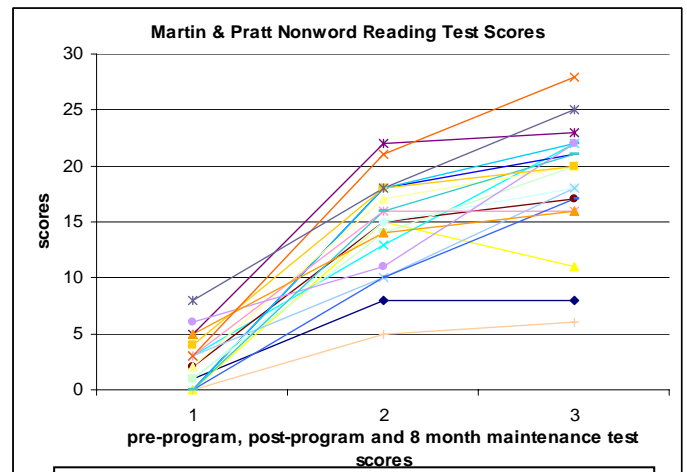
APPENDIX THREE: PRE AND POST SCREENING TEST RESULTS

Table 1: Summary of results for students accepted into UQELF Program

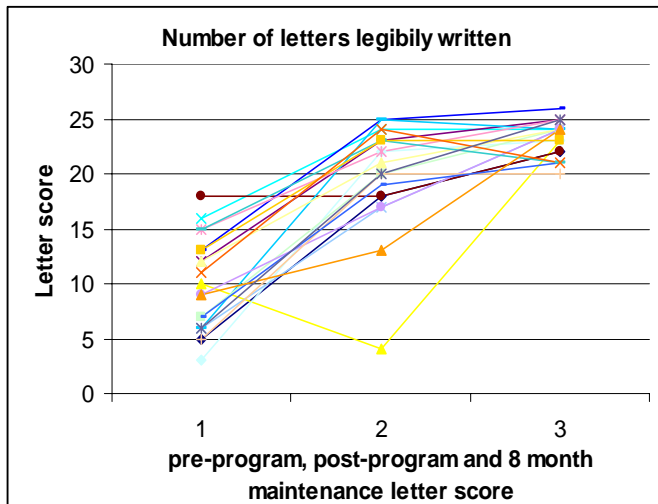
Test	Average score for at risk students prior to programme (July, 2004)	Average score for at risk students following programme (November, 2004)	Average score for at risk students 8 months post programme (July, 2005)
The Burt Word Reading Test	7.95	23.69	32.60
The Martin & Pratt Nonword Reading Test	2.09	14.74	18.55
Spelling test of nonsense words from the Sutherland Phonological Awareness Test (max score of 42)*	20.86	33.91	37.26
Spelling test of 5 real words (max score of 30)*	14.95	23.04	25.21
Alphabet writing task – number of letters correctly formed	9.39	19.77	23.25



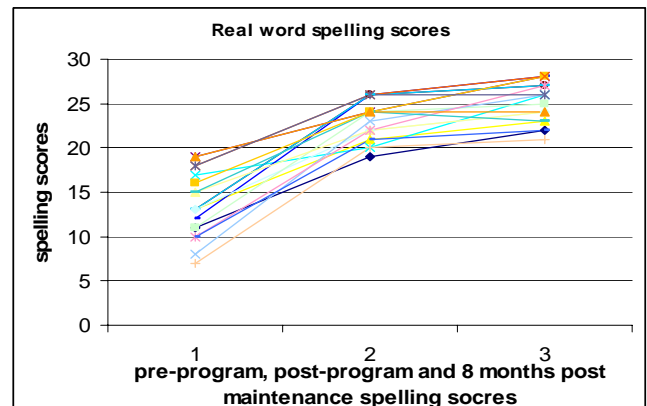
Graph 1: Burt Word Reading Test



Graph 2: Non Word Reading Test

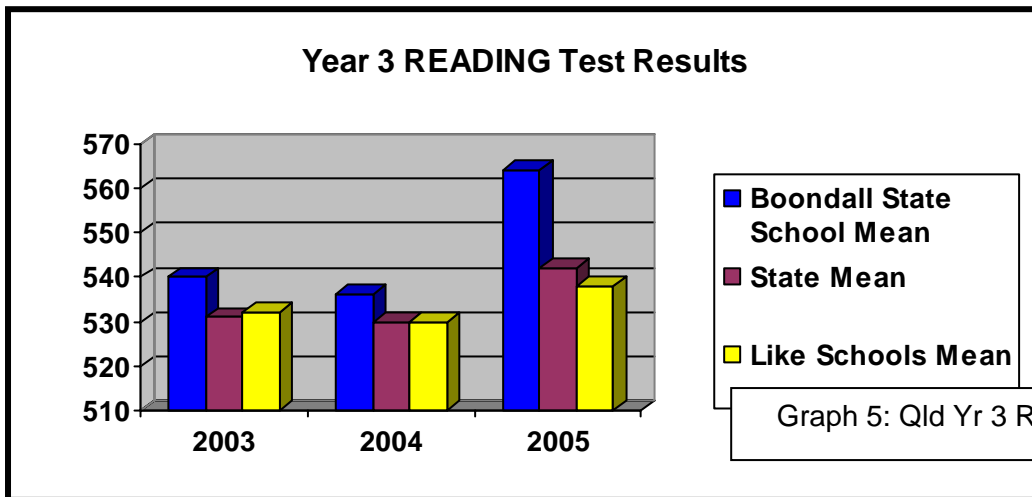


Graph 3: Alphabet Writing Task

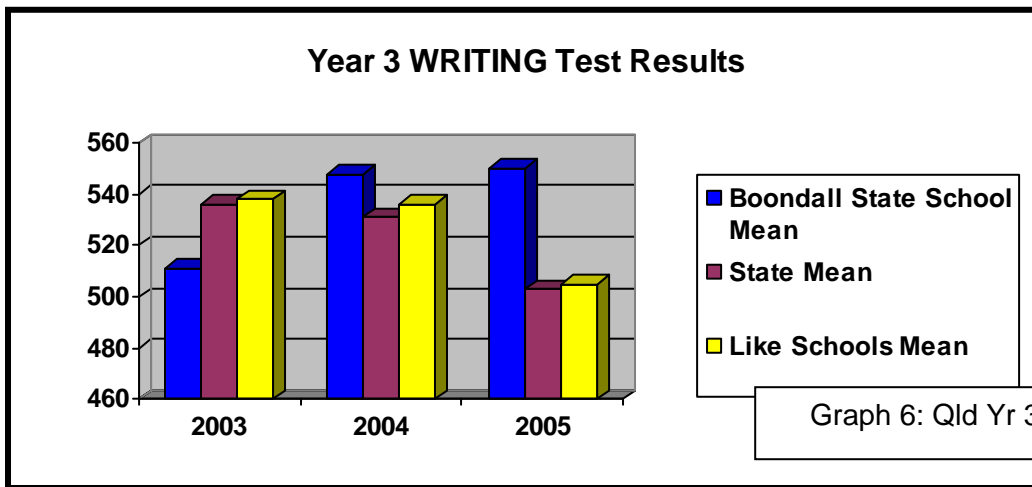


Graph 4: Real Word Spelling Test

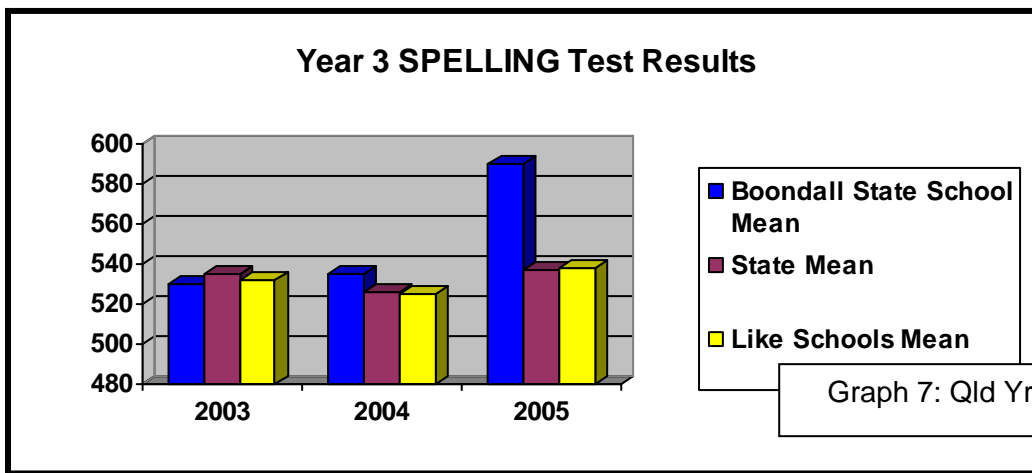
APPENDIX FOUR: QUEENSLAND YEAR 3 TEST RESULTS; QUEENSLAND PARENT SATISFACTION; STAFF OPINION SURVEY RESULTS; AND BEHAVIOUR INCIDENTS



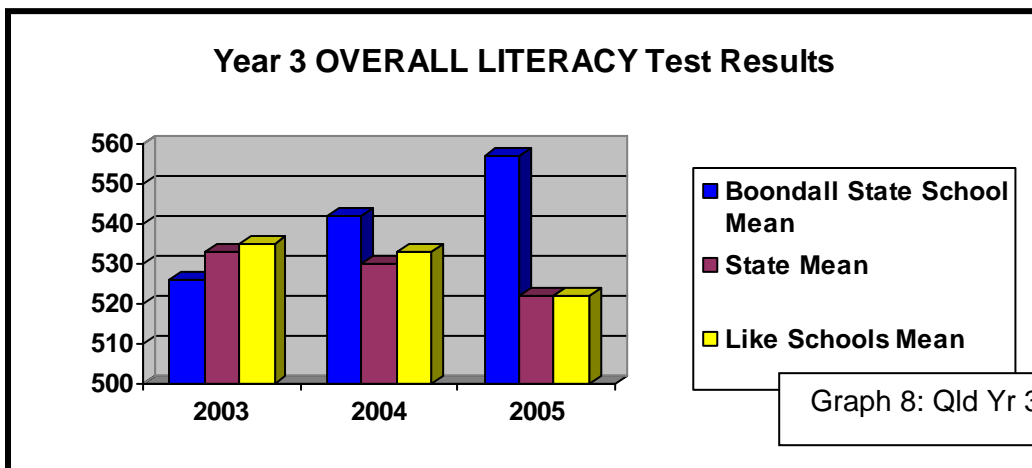
Graph 5: Qld Yr 3 Reading Test



Graph 6: Qld Yr 3 Writing Test

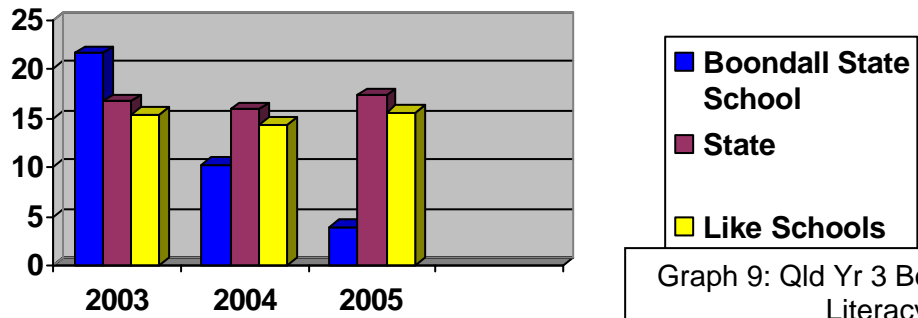


Graph 7: Qld Yr 3 Spelling Test



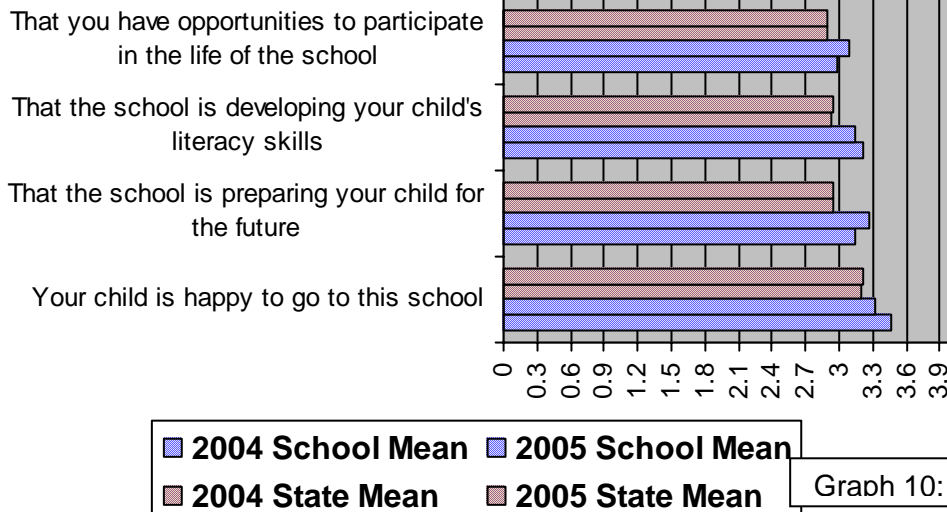
Graph 8: Qld Yr 3 Overall Literacy

Percentages of Year 3 Students identified as being in the bottom 15% for Literacy



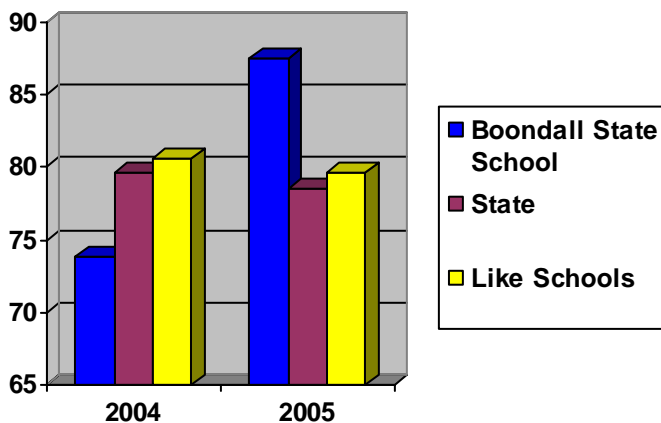
Graph 9: Qld Yr 3 Bottom 15% for Literacy

Parent Satisfaction Survey 2004-2005 Comparison of Boondall State School with the State Averages



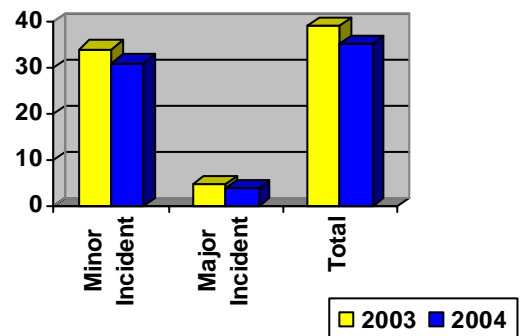
Graph 10: Parent Satisfaction

Percentage of Workforce Engaged in Professional Development



Graph 11: Professional Development

Playground Incidents involving Year One Students



Graph 12: Playground Incidents

APPENDIX FIVE: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table 2: Results of teacher questionnaire following implementation of UQELF and early intervention framework (percentages of teacher response)

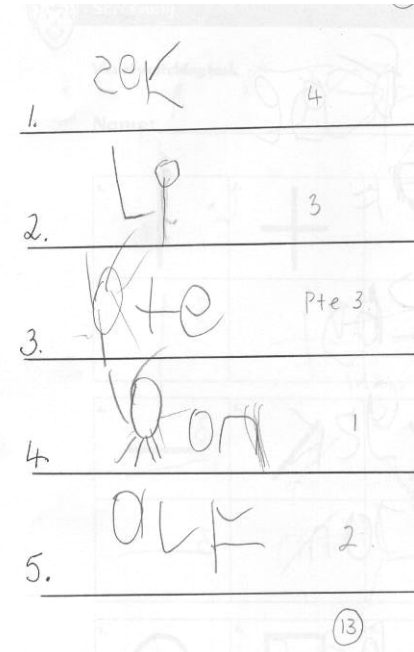
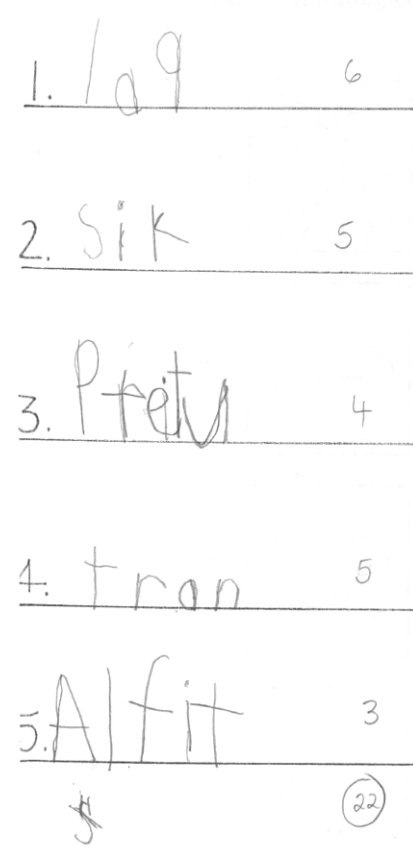
Please circle the number that best describes how your knowledge base and level of awareness has changed or not changed as a result of your involvement with ELF for the following topic areas below:	1. more confused than before ELF	2. no change in knowledge or awareness	3. gained a little knowledge or a small increase in level of awareness	4. gained some knowledge or some increase in level of awareness	5. gained a lot of knowledge and have substantial increase in level of awareness
1. awareness of how phonological awareness difficulties contribute to slower literacy development.			33%	66%	
2. awareness of how gross and fine motor movement difficulty contributes to handwriting difficulty.				33%	66%
3. awareness of how pencil grip contributes to handwriting and letter formation skills.			33%	66%	
4. knowledge about methods for identifying students with phonological awareness difficulties.			100%		
5. awareness of specific indicators that I could use to identify students with phonological awareness difficulties during normal classroom activities.			66%	33%	
6. knowledge about methods for identifying students with gross and fine motor movement difficulties.				100%	
7. awareness of specific gross and fine motor indicators that I could use to identify students with difficulty during normal classroom and sporting activities.			33%	66%	
8. awareness of specific handwriting, indicators that I could use to identify students with difficulty during normal classroom activities.			33%	33%	33%
9. awareness of specific tasks for the whole class that promote listening to sounds in words.			33%		66%
10. awareness of specific tasks for the whole class that promote segmenting and blending of sounds in words.				33%	66%
11. awareness of how activities based on nonwords may promote phonological awareness.				66%	33%
12. awareness of how reinforcing correct pencil grip can promote handwriting skills (e.g., writing for longer times without fatigue).			33%	33%	33%

APPENDIX SIX: CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Alex. During screening, Alex appeared to have understanding some of the instructions and needed individual assistance. Her spelling showed that she had continued to spell using pretend spelling common in preschool and early year one. She had not yet learned that each sound in a word should be represented with a letter. She made great progress with a combined effort from her classroom teacher, greater involvement of her mother, and the intervention program.

Testing term 2 prior to intervention	Testing term 4 following intervention
<p>Reading: Burt Word Reading test: 3 Teacher test of reading level: 0</p>	<p>Burt Word Reading test: 26 Teacher test of reading level: 9</p>
<p>Letter formation: Number of alphabet letters formed correctly: 13</p>	<p>Number of alphabet letters formed correctly: 25</p>
<p>Spelling: 1. Spelling 5 real words: sick. Lap, pretty, train, elephant Score: 12</p> <p>2. Nonsense word spelling from the Sutherland Phonological Awareness Test Score: 13</p> <p><u>Example of spelling:</u> Nonsense word spelling: af, rog, speg, visk, strom, bouse, makidos</p>	<p>1. Spelling 5 real words: sick. Lap, pretty, train, elephant Score: 26</p> <p>2. Nonsense word spelling from the Sutherland Phonological Awareness Test Score: 41</p> <p><u>Example of spelling:</u> Nonsense word spelling: af, rog, speg, visk, strom, bouse, makidos</p>
<p><u>Note:</u> inaccurate spelling with pretend spelling (preschool and early year one spelling developmental phase)</p>	

Case Study 2: Jasmine. During screening, Jasmine was observed to have difficulty with the gross and fine motor tests. She was quite clumsy and needed a great deal of time to write her alphabet, often forgetting letters and writing illegibly. Throughout the intervention, Jasmine needed assistance to form letters and she persisted writing very slowly. She responded well to the intervention, and by the end showed greater speed and accuracy of her letters which helped her spelling immensely.

Testing term 2 prior to intervention	Testing term 4 following intervention
<p>Reading: Burt Word Reading test: 6 Teacher test of reading level: 0</p>	<p>Burt Word Reading test: 25 Teacher test of reading level: 9</p>
<p>Letter formation: Number of alphabet letters formed correctly: 3</p>	<p>Number of alphabet letters formed correctly: 22</p>
<p>Spelling: 1. Spelling 5 real words: sick. lap, pretty, train, elephant Score: 15</p> <p>2. Nonsense word spelling from the Sutherland Phonological Awareness Test Score: 23</p> <p><u>Example of spelling:</u> 5 real words</p> 	<p>Spelling: 1. 1. Spelling 5 real words: sick. Lap, pretty, train, elephant Score: 22</p> <p>2. Nonsense word spelling from the Sutherland Phonological Awareness Test Score: 35</p> <p><u>Example of spelling:</u> 5 real words</p> 
<p>Note: poor letter formation of letter p, k, f, and reversals</p>	<p>Note: improvements in handwriting, accuracy of spelling</p>



BOONDALL STATE SCHOOL

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To Whom It May Concern:

Finding the best and most appropriate way to meet student literacy needs has been a school community and professional development priority. Over the 2004-2006 triennium, Boondall State School has been working cooperatively with personnel from the University of Queensland to implement the UQ ELF Support Program.

Whilst the Early Years teachers at Boondall are aware of the importance of phonological outcomes and sensory motor development in the acquisition of early literacy skills, upskilling was required on how to combine the linguistic and motor skills components of the intervention to mutually support each other.

The teachers are now able to screen children for decoding difficulties and implement a program with skill dimensions, consisting of 12 separate themes, each representing one hour of developmentally appropriate early literacy activities.

This prevention/intervention program leads to accelerated development of literacy skills (sounds, sight words, decoding and encoding skills, phonological awareness skills, letter formation), enabling students to participate in classroom programs with appropriate independence.

In 2005, Boondall enjoyed a significant rise in Year 3 Literacy Test scores with the School Mean above the State Mean in all dimensions. 97% of Year 3 students were above the National Benchmark in Reading and Viewing; and 96% of Year 3 students achieved above the National Benchmark in Writing.

The UQ ELF Program is a building block in promoting improved literacy outcomes for students through the development of phonological awareness and associated reading, writing and spelling skills.

This submission has my support, acknowledging the very high levels of interest, concentration and persistence of the staff in the UQ ELF Program.

Yours sincerely,

C. Campanaris (Principal)