

Rowena Public School

Learning from home

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation



Learning from home journey

Getting ready for disruptions to face-to-face teaching

- Consulted with the community (surveys, phone calls)
- Held whole-school meeting with all 16 families in attendance
- Held 'Learning at home' day for students

Learning from home

- 95% of students learnt from home from 23 March 2020
- School remained open for students who needed to attend
- Teachers attended school on a rotating roster with at least two staff members at school each day

Transition back to face-to-face teaching

- The majority of students returned to school one day per week between 11-22 May 2020; students who required continued remediation and additional learning support attended school two to three days per week during this period
- Teachers continued to attend school under a roster system between 11-22 May 2020
- All students and teachers returned to face-to-face teaching full time from 25 May 2020

Challenges to overcome

Student equity: Access to computers and mobile devices is not consistent across the student population.

Unreliable internet: Internet access across the community is 'sketchy' at best and sometimes there are days of no internet access at all.

Irregular school hours: The region had recently had its best rainfall in five years, which meant many students were working on farms during traditional school hours to take advantage of the upcoming growing season.

School context

Rowena Public School is a small primary school located approximately 1.5 hours west of Moree in far north NSW. It serves a local agricultural community that has been affected significantly by the recent drought. The school has a FOEI¹ of 40, and it currently has 28 students across two composite classes: Kindergarten to Year 2, and Year 4 to Year 6. Rowena Public School has established itself as an integral part of the local community, always welcoming parent and community involvement in the many activities the school provides.

¹ Family Occupation and Education Index – a school-level index of educational disadvantage with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 50. Higher values indicate greater levels of need.

What has worked to maintain learning continuity

Taking early action to prepare for disruptions to face-to-face teaching

Rowena Public School started planning for all possible contingencies relating to COVID-19, including school closures, well before the NSW Premier encouraged parents to keep their children at home to contain the spread of the virus. The school consulted with all families so they would be ready to make a smooth transition to learning from home if required. Consultation included:

- parent surveys: to review technology access and gather information about the needs of students and their families
- phone calls from the principal: to discuss the individual needs of every student
- whole-school meeting: to present, discuss and answer questions about the school's draft learning-from-home plan.

In addition to consulting with families, the school also put considerable time and effort into ensuring that the students themselves were ready to make a successful transition to learning from home. For example, teachers spent a full day at school explicitly preparing students for the changes ahead. This day involved establishing clear rules and expectations for learning from home, teaching students how to log in to online learning platforms on different devices, explaining how the weekly learning schedule would work, and giving students ideas about how to manage and organise their time. As part of their preparation, the school also identified students who did not have access to a computer at home and loaned them a school device.

Providing students and their families with flexible learning options

Rowena Public School recognised early in the preparation phase that a one-size-fits-all approach to learning from home would not be effective and that they would need to take into consideration the lifestyle needs of students and their families, as well as the unreliable nature of internet access in the area.

Recent drought-breaking rain in the community meant it was likely that many students would be working on family farms during traditional school hours and that their parents and carers would have limited time to assist with schoolwork. The school responded to this challenge by developing a personalised weekly learning schedule for each student. The schedule was included in a hard copy

learning pack that also contained an outline of the activities to be completed and the resources required to do so. Students also received links to video-recorded lessons in which classroom teachers used explicit teaching practices to explain, model and scaffold learning. This approach allowed students to do their schoolwork as time allowed, and the inclusion of hard copy materials reduced the need to access the internet. All work was to be completed by Friday morning, when parents returned it to school or teachers collected it from students' letterboxes. Students were encouraged to contact their teachers for support whenever needed.

Giving students meaningful feedback and support in a timely manner

Providing all students with effective feedback and support that was timely, specific and forward focused was an important component of Rowena Public School's learning-from-home approach. The school constantly refined its practices and experienced success with a variety of methods, including:

- Photographs and text messages: Students could send photos of their work to the school mobile phone. Teachers reviewed the work and provided prompt feedback.
- Weekly FaceTime calls: All students had a one-on-one video call with their classroom teacher each week where they received individualised support and specific feedback about their progress. The call was scheduled at a time that suited each student and their family.
- Teacher time: 'Teacher time' at Rowena Public School was a set time each day when teachers made themselves available for additional one-on-one sessions with students via telephone or video. Students booked a time with their teacher to ask questions and get the immediate feedback they needed to complete their schoolwork successfully.
- Check-in days at school: Students could attend school for two-hour blocks to receive in-person support and feedback from their teacher.
- Feedback sheets: Students received a detailed feedback sheet each week that was photographed and sent by teachers via text message. The hard copy feedback sheet was stapled to the following week's learning schedule for students to review.

Dropping off and collecting learning packs



Instant teacher feedback



“The reality is many of our kids are helping out on farms so we recognise that it’s not a normal 9-3 day for them. Some kids are getting up at 4am, doing schoolwork until 9am and then going out to plant.”

Paul Cecil, Principal

Sample personalised weekly learning schedule – Year 5

Monday 30 th March	Tuesday 31 st of March	Wednesday 1 st of April	Thursday 2 nd of April	Friday 3 rd of April
<p>Writing Session 1</p> <p>Modelled writing session of 'Building Suspense' in a narrative using short sharp sentences and descriptions.</p> <p>Video: Introduction to a Persuasive text https://youtu.be/Wp1U43jblQM</p> <p>Pack Resources: English Book</p>	<p>Writing Session 2</p> <p>Guided writing session of 'Breath by Breath' paragraph. One scene, one paragraph using body reactions and time connectives.</p> <p>Video: Introduction to a Persuasive https://youtu.be/Wp1U43jblQM</p> <p>Pack Resources: English Book</p>	<p>Writing Session 3</p> <p>How to hook a reader with a setting. Using similes and imagery to place a reader within a story.</p> <p>Video: Introduction to a Persuasive https://youtu.be/Wp1U43jblQM</p> <p>Pack Resources: English Book</p>	<p>History: Game Changers</p> <p>Lesson 1: Historical Significance</p> <p>Using the videos, links and resources, complete pages 2, 3 and 5 of your bookwork.</p> <p>Link: http://inq.co/class/72j code 1665</p> <p>Pack Resources: History Unit</p>	<p>Art: Painting - Lighthouse</p> <p>Using your art pack, you will have two weeks to complete your painting of a Lighthouse. Can't wait to see them!</p> <p>Video: Painting a Lighthouse https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rT9cMxXlHwo&feature=emb_logo</p> <p>Pack Resources: Art pack and supplies.</p>
<p>3 Levelled Comprehension</p> <p>Students to read the passage and complete the three levels of comprehension. Any activities that can't be done on the sheet, can be done in English books please.</p> <p>Group 1: Easter Show Group 2: How Platypus was Named</p>	<p>Rigorous Reading 1: 'Through the Break'</p> <p>Students to watch the video and complete the recording sheet.</p> <p>Video: Through the Break https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOcP3htvuU0</p> <p>Pack Resources: Through the Break reading and recording sheet. English book for response.</p>	<p>Comprehension Unit:</p> <p>Pack Resources: Group 1: Biomes of North America Group 2: How to Train a Dragon</p> <p>Read independently and complete. Remember: Answers that are FULL and give all the information you know.</p>	<p>Science: Sudden and Extreme Changes to the Earth's surface</p> <p>Lesson 1: When the Earth Quakes</p> <p>Using the videos, links and resources, complete pages 1, 3, 4 and 5 of your bookwork.</p> <p>Link: http://inq.co/class/72j code 1665</p> <p>Pack Resources: Science Unit and Mini Mars Bar</p>	<p>Art: Photography - Shadows</p> <p>Head outside and get your photo for the Rowena Photography Competition. This week's focus is: Shadows (shapes, lines, patterns). Good luck! Be creative!</p> <p>Video: Playing with Light in Photography https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgGvCBA4R8M</p>
<p>Literacy Skills:</p> <p>Pack Resources: Punctuation Activity. Re-write the passage fixing all the errors – spelling, punctuation, grammar. And then finish off the story!</p>	<p>Literacy Skills:</p> <p>Pack Resources: Adjectives Complete Adjectives Task on Grammarsaurus – set and ready.</p>	<p>Literacy Skills:</p> <p>Pack Resources: Cloze Passage. Complete and read.</p>	<p>Maths Mentals</p> <p>Pack Resources: Mentals Book: Complete next column in your maths mentals. Send a picture to Mr Cecil for marking if you like.</p>	<p>Art: Drama/Talking and Listening</p> <p>In either term 3 or 4, students who signed up for eisteddfod may head to the Namoi 'Pop Up' Drama Day. A great chance to practice those poems on this day and get those performances perfected. If you'd like to learn a poem to enter, get in touch and we will get organised. (not compulsory)</p>
<p>Spelling:</p> <p>Pack Resources: Complete your next spelling lesson.</p>	<p>Spelling:</p> <p>Pack Resources: Complete your next spelling lesson.</p>	<p>Spelling:</p> <p>Pack Resources: Complete your next spelling lesson.</p>	<p>Spelling:</p> <p>Pack Resources: Complete your next spelling lesson.</p>	<p>PE Challenge</p> <p>Film yourself doing as many skip ropes in a row as possible and send to me! I will record your numbers and we will go again next Friday and see who can jump rope the longest!</p>
<p>Maths Lesson: Fractions</p> <p>Can you: Order fractions with differing denominators.</p> <p>Video: Maths Lesson 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtlCqa09TXA&t=14s</p>	<p>Maths Lesson: Fractions</p> <p>Can you: Recognise, represent and create equivalent fractions.</p> <p>Video: Maths Lesson 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtlCqa09TXA&t=14s</p>	<p>Maths Lesson: Fractions</p> <p>Can you: Simplify fractions to the lowest common form.</p> <p>Video: Maths Lesson 3 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtlCqa09TXA&t=14s</p>	<p>Finish off</p> <p>Anything that you haven't completed ready for tomorrow's drop off. Remember all the videos will still work, so you can go back and re-do if you've missed anything along the way.</p>	<p>Weekly Activities</p> <p>Typing Tournament - Online Handwriting Textbook – in packs (1 page) Mathletics – Activities are assigned.</p>
<p>Maths Mentals</p> <p>Pack Resources: Mentals Book: Complete next column in your maths mentals. Please mark, or send a picture to me for marking.</p>	<p>Maths Mentals</p> <p>Pack Resources: Mentals Book: Complete next column in your maths mentals. Please mark, or send a picture to me for marking.</p>	<p>Maths Mentals</p> <p>Pack Resources: Mentals Book: Complete next column in your maths mentals. Please mark, or send a picture to me for marking.</p>	<p>Book Club Sessions Today!</p> <p>Info in pack.</p>	<p>'Book Club' Facetime</p> <p>Read chapters 1-2 of Bubble Boy and be ready to discuss at Book Club on Wednesday.</p>
<p>Maths Strand: Time Workbook</p> <p>Pack Resource: Complete pages 1-4</p>	<p>Maths Strand: Time Workbook</p> <p>Pack Resource: Complete pages 5-6</p>	<p>Maths Strand: Time Workbook</p> <p>Pack Resource: Complete pages 7-8</p>		

CESE would like to thank the Principal, Paul Cecil, for his valuable input to this snapshot.