The Special PREP Program:
Its evolution and its future

A descriptive report and evaluation of the
Special Preparatory Program

Prepared for DIMA as a special research project
by Sue Noy, consultant,
on behalf of AMES Victoria

National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research
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Table 1.1 ‘Core recovery goals’ on page 13 from the paper by P Aristotle The role of the AMEP in building a holistic settlement and multicultural program: Responding to the needs of refugees and survivors of torture and trauma 2000

Table 1.2 ‘Blocks to the learning process and classroom participation’ on page 14 from Rebuilding shattered lives’ 1998, Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc, page 77

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# Acronyms

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMEP</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW AMES</td>
<td>New South Wales Adult Migrant Education Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMES Victoria</td>
<td>Adult Multicultural Education Services, Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARMS</td>
<td>AMEP Record Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASLPR</td>
<td>Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLO</td>
<td>Bilingual Officer (AMES Victoria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSWE</td>
<td>Certificate of Spoken and Written English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIMA</td>
<td>Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLPA</td>
<td>English Language &amp; Literacy Placement Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FECCA</td>
<td>Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Language Testing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant(s)</td>
<td>For the purposes of this study, where the term <em>immigrant(s)</em> is used to distinguish between immigrants and refugees, it refers only to those categories of immigrants who hold visas which entitle them to register under the AMEP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSIA</td>
<td>Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRC</td>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre</td>
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<td>NMIU</td>
<td>National Management Information Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPP</td>
<td>Special Preparatory Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>VFST</td>
<td>Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture</td>
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Executive summary

The SPP

The Special Preparatory Program (SPP, also known as Special PREP, and 'the extra 100 hours') was established to assist newly arrived refugee and humanitarian migrants who were suffering from the after effects of trauma and torture. These students had been observed to be struggling with language learning in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and had a high drop-out rate. In response, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) agreed to fund an orientation, or preparatory program and developed specific guidelines for the program.

The program was to be offered as a low intensity orientation (pre-AMEP) class, delivered by experienced teachers to small groups (7–12) in comfortable settings. The course was to focus on the beginnings of language learning within the CSWE framework. Home tutor support was to be available when possible. The students' initial assessments were to involve case workers or relevant community agencies. Providers were to liaise with other support services to coordinate English tuition with other settlement support, including counseling services. Bilingual support was to be used as appropriate.

Fourteen providers were funded by DIMA to deliver the SPP. Because of consortia and sub-contracting arrangements, the actual number of organisations involved was 20. By approaching the lead agency in these cases, all provision was accounted for in this research. Providers have delivered a range of programs to 9598 students over the two and a half years of the program. The number of clients per provider varied from 10 (limited contract provider) to 2969 (provider with no competitors in area, multiple venues and learning options delivered through consortium partners).

The research

This research project was designed to discover the best ways to deliver a transition program for English language learning to newly arrived humanitarian entrants, especially those showing signs of trauma. It aimed to describe what had been happening, including an examination of the criteria for entry, interpreted goals of the SPP, teaching and learning methods, integration with settlement services, and information about who is accessing the SPP. The project also attempted to identify ways of measuring the impact and outcomes of the program.
The research comprised:

- a review of literature relevant to survivors settling in a new country and their experiences of English language learning, and recommended approaches to teaching this group;
- statistical analysis of the SPP group, using the AMEP Record Management System (ARMS);
- a telephone survey of the 14 providers;
- a mailed survey questionnaire of a sample of teachers chosen for their experience and innovative teaching strategies;
- social research into the dynamic of three separate classes, which consisted of interviews with the key individuals and agencies involved with that class including teachers, settlement services and the students.

The audience for this report is DIMA and service providers themselves.

**Findings**

The program has achieved its goals: the provision of SPP hours has given thousands of SPP students a successful start to their English language learning.

Providers and teachers have evolved programs—primarily integrated AMEP/SPP low intensity programs—which reflect their clients' needs and their own resources. These are primarily integrated AMEP/SPP low intensity programs.

There are opportunities for building on the factors that seem most helpful to clients. The most critical components of the additional support appear to be:

- the existence of a supportive, secure environment enlivened by laughter;
- low intensity (less than 16 hours per week), non-pressured teaching strategies;
- a focus on everyday English language learning which assists with settlement;
- physical orientation and assistance with mastery of settlement (especially use of public transport, maps);
- bilingual support within and outside the classroom;
- volunteer support (within the classroom or through home tutors).

A number of individuals contribute to providing this supportive environment—the administration staff (directors, counsellors and bilingual workers), the teacher and volunteers, and the students themselves who are encouraged to develop social relationships.
The findings from this report are consistent with other organisations’ and researchers’ experiences, as described in the literature review. This group of students has particular learning issues and practical problems, especially health, which affect their learning. The report strengthens the evidence for providing a low intensity, well supported program for this group, with access to bilingual support and a focus on everyday language and orientation.

Providers’ experience

Providers have, through their own experience, suggested slightly modified goals which place greater emphasis on assisting clients to operate in the community, through the development of language skills and knowledge/information appropriate to their settlement needs. The fact that the SPP provided extra time was also seen as important.

Providers identified the following features as key factors in the success of the SPP as a program for helping vulnerable clients. A program that provides:

- a bridge from initial settlement and learning difficulties linked with past trauma to formal AMEP learning (the SPP time establishes routine, structure, and social network);
- connections to and information about support and settlement services (links and referral processes);
- extra time in a formal AMEP program to settle in and develop strategies for learning in a formal learning environment;
- a supportive, non-threatening environment (an additional settlement support system).

Most commonly the program was delivered in low intensity AMEP classes with a small number of SPP students mixed with other AMEP clients. SPP students were given between 50–100 hours each. Classes varied in pace, intensity, level of bilingual support and venue. Teachers reported that most of their students had access to a home or classroom tutor, and to an independent learning centre. Bilingual support occurred in about half the classes. Half the classes were in community venues.

Few providers offer the SPP hours to all refugee and humanitarian clients. Most use a selection process, although few have developed a formal set of guidelines and one who did found it an inadequate guide in practice. Most rely on the depth of experience of the interviewers, usually teachers or counsellors, in conjunction with information from the client, a case worker or relative where available. Many, but by no means all, interviewers had some training in issues relevant to survivors of torture and trauma.

Most teachers used a range of strategies to monitor students’ wellbeing, the most common being observation and referral of students to the provider’s educational counsellor or coordinator, and direct referral to services.

The teachers surveyed described a wide range of teaching situations and practices. Teachers constantly created resources or adapted materials to
suit student needs. Their approach was tailored to suit the needs of the individuals in each group they taught. However, the methods they adopted to meet the needs of SPP students were based on common aims, namely to:

- promote security;
- encourage interaction;
- acknowledge personal and cultural contexts;
- acknowledge limitations on learning;
- use humour;
- base curriculum around students' current experiences (concrete not abstract).

Teachers believed they were moderately successful at meeting their goals, especially the provision of a supportive classroom environment. Half were very successful with building personal and learning skills, and providing extra time. Most felt they were moderately successful at assisting with settlement issues.

Providers have had difficulty managing the logistics of the program due to the sporadic arrival of refugees, the lack of notice of their arrival, and the need to quickly place them in a class. Philosophically, some believe that integrated classes are preferable to solely SPP classes, and many have found that there are a number of groups besides traumatised clients who are also suited to low intensity classes. These are students with little or no formal learning, older students and those from a non-roman script background. However, some providers prefer to run a dedicated SPP class when the opportunity allows.

The majority of providers have chosen to provide settlement information or sessions, usually with interpreters present, as part of the SPP. They believe this to be the most appropriate way to meet their objective of providing a bridge to settlement services. However, in practice they also provide practical support to enable students to overcome settlement difficulties and focus on learning.

The provision of bilingual support has been less prominent than was envisaged. Support at initial interview occurred in a minority of cases, but support through the course of the program tended to be in the form of occasional help from bilingual aides. Support from bilingual staff was popular with teachers and students. The availability of a bilingual worker appeared to facilitate the solving of problems or the clearing up of confusion related to learning and to settlement issues, such as child care, which were impacting on language learning.

Small class size was mentioned as important by some providers and half the teachers. Volunteer tutor support was also considered valuable.

Issues of gender and religion were the most common cultural issues teachers faced. Most described the cultural issues that arose occasionally as minor, and had strategies for resolution. However, nearly half found teaching SPP more stressful than AMEP, and two thirds wanted more
professional development. Most providers offered informal staff support but few had formal protocols or debriefing mechanisms for teachers.

The students’ experiences

The students’ experiences, gleaned from the case studies, provided a human element to the research. The stories closely echoed the issues defined by the literature and providers’ general experience: that is the desire to learn is affected by anxiety, ill health, and settlement issues. The students’ language learning and social achievements were impressive.

The English classes were an important focus of students’ lives in the early stages of settlement, and the students’ commitment to learning was evident. Affection and gratitude for the teachers’ efforts were universal. The social aspect of the classes was mentioned frequently by students at the community class and the small provider.

Students appeared to be accessing a range of settlement services, sometimes through their on-arrival support officer, sometimes through the language provider. Settlement agencies clearly felt that the SPP/AMEP providers played a vital role in monitoring and referral, and in letting students know about their services.

The availability of bilingual support was an extremely important element of the students’ security, and was also the source of information for the teacher/provider about their issues.

The teaching methods most popular with students were the use of visual aides wherever possible, a focus on reality-based scenarios and the development of practical communication skills, and orientation to the local area. Mastery of public transport was of critical importance, and a major hurdle for a significant number of students. The ability to make medical appointments was also important, as health problems were common and ongoing.

The statistical picture

The ARMS data base provided statistics on SPP students’ progress through the SPP and the AMEP. Over the period January 1998 to June 2000, 14% of migrants received SPP support. The balance of clients varied for different states/providers, but overall the largest numbers were: former Yugoslavian, Arabic-speaking, Persian, Assyrian, Somali. Two thirds were 0 or 0+ level. As a group they were slightly older and slightly less educated than the total migrant group.

The vast majority (87.5%) of SPP clients made a successful transition from the SPP to the AMEP. In the AMEP, SPP clients’ initial progress compared favourably with other clients, which suggests that the SPP assisted them to adapt to the learning environment and to learn successfully.

In the first 100 hours in the AMEP, SPP clients achieved a greater number of competencies than those in the other groups. Whilst the percentage who completed the 510 hours is slightly lower than for other groups, those
who did complete the 510 hours did as well or better than students from other categories.

Despite these strong results for SPP clients, it would appear that a significant number of students remain vulnerable for the first 100 hours of the AMEP, and may merit further support. After 100 AMEP hours, those who remain in the program have a similar retention rate to other students. SPP students withdrew from the AMEP for reasons similar to other students, although slightly more SPP than other students withdrew due to health and family issues.

The evidence showed that regardless of entrant category, a student with Level 0 or 0+ (two thirds of the SPP sample) was very unlikely to achieve functional English within the 510 hours. Younger age and level of education in the first language remain predictors of success for all categories.

This report recommends that the program be maintained, and that it is acknowledged that it is the combination of the extra time along with the additional support, which seems to be the strength of the program. Future planning should also take into account that SPP students are commonly part of an AMEP low intensity class rather than a separate class, and that strategies to support them within the AMEP environment may need to be strengthened.

**Recommendations to DIMA**

1. That the Special Preparatory Program be maintained.

2. That consideration be given to expanding the eligibility criteria to include Band A, pre-literate, non-roman script students and others with significant barriers that threaten to impede learning.

3. That the pivotal role of English classes at this stage of settlement be acknowledged through adoption of the following key factors of the program.

   The SPP is a program for vulnerable clients which:
   - provides a bridge from initial settlement and learning difficulties linked with past trauma to formal AMEP learning;
   - establishes routine, structure, and social network;
   - allows extra time in a formal AMEP program to settle in/learn to learn;
   - provides a supportive, non-threatening environment (an additional support system) through relevant personal contact;
   - provides connections/information about support and settlement services (links and referral processes).

4. That DIMA maintain a separate funding basis for the SPP in acknowledgment of the practical difficulties and time consuming nature of managing the SPP.
5 That DIMA facilitate greater assistance to small providers for bilingual support.

6 That the SPP remain primarily an orientation program but that the current 50-hour limit be extended to 12 months eligibility.

7 That DIMA allocate funds to professional development of teachers and other staff involved in the SPP.

8 That DIMA facilitate greater dissemination of information about management and practice through providers and teachers involved in SPP delivery.

9 That future guidelines for the SPP acknowledge the need for flexibility of delivery, and that most SPP delivery occurs in combined low intensity classes.

Implications for professional development, resource development, methodology and curriculum

10 That best practice delivery for the future be characterised by the following:

- flexibility of delivery to suit changing client needs, and practical realities;
- an individual selection process to ensure that the most needy students are offered the SPP hours;
- bilingual support provided to SPP students, especially in the initial weeks to assist with explaining the teaching style and identifying classroom and settlement issues;
- volunteer tutor or bilingual support where SPP clients are in a full-size class;
- the option of part-time, low intensity learning;
- a focus on learning to learn, building resilience and acquiring English to meet everyday needs, and physical orientation to the local area—in particular, mastery of the public transport system, shopping, and making and getting to medical appointments.

11 That further research investigate the reasons some SPP clients drop out in the first 100 hours as AMEP students.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Parameters of the research

The Special Preparatory Program (known as SPP and ‘the extra 100 hours’) was established to assist newly arrived refugee and humanitarian migrants whose capacity to learn English was being adversely affected by the after effects of trauma and torture. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) agreed to fund an orientation or preparatory program for refugee and humanitarian entrants who, at initial interview, appeared to be suffering from their experiences and were likely to have difficulties with language learning. It was hoped that the program would enable survivors to begin the process of learning in a class more suited to their situation, and would encourage them to continue on into the AMEP.

Defining the SPP

The DIMA statement of requirement described the SSP as a program of up to 100 hours for humanitarian and refugee clients who have special needs arising from their pre-migration experiences of torture and trauma. In brief, the programs were to:

- be delivered before clients join mainstream tuition
- focus primarily on learning English
- be located in settings with which the client was comfortable, probably community venues
- be less than full-time intensity
- be delivered in classes of 7 to 12
- be staffed by qualified teachers
- provide a curriculum designed within the CSWE framework
- provide for the assessment of learning outcomes under the CSWE framework (measured via the ARMS data base)
- link with other support services under Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme arrangements to coordinate English tuition with other settlement support including counselling
- provide bilingual support where appropriate
- provide home tutor support where possible.
Providers could place SPP clients in a class with others of similar English language skills or ethnic background, or use different criteria for placement—taking into account client need and practical constraints.

The rationale for the program was based on the understanding that refugee/humanitarian clients were more likely than other arrivals to have difficulty learning English, and that their experiences often resulted in learning difficulties, such as poor concentration, interrupted sleep and other symptoms which are not conducive to learning. The potential of an early intervention program of a specialist class and extra hours was consistent with community perceptions that refugee/humanitarian clients needed more than 510 hours, and that attending a small, community-based class would provide preparation for acquiring English in the AMEP. At a practical level, the SPP is variously defined by providers as ‘the extra 100 hours’, ‘Special PREP’, and ‘the SPP’. These definitions were explored with providers.

DIMA was aware that the original concept of the SPP program had evolved in different ways according to local conditions and was genuinely interested to learn from the varied experiences that providers were able to contribute to the research.

**Aims of the project**

The goal of this project was to discover the best ways to deliver a transition program for English language learning to newly arrived humanitarian entrants, especially those showing signs of trauma. Its aims were to:

- identify and describe what had been happening, including an examination of the criteria for entry, the interpreted goals of the SPP, teaching and learning methods, integration with settlement services, delivery arrangements in place, and information about who is accessing the SPP;
- identify issues impacting on SPP practice and delivery, such as the relationship between the SPP and AMEP language instruction, and contextual issues impacting on SPP delivery.

Fourteen providers were funded by DIMA to deliver the SPP. Because of consortia and sub-contracting arrangements, the actual number of organisations involved was 20. By approaching the lead agency in these cases, all provision was accounted for in this research. These providers delivered a range of programs to 9598 students over the two and a half years of the program. The number of clients per provider varied from 10 (limited contract provider) to 2969 (provider with no competitors in area, multiple venues and learning options delivered through consortium partners).

The research team was also asked to evaluate and recommend future directions for the SPP, including a comparison of the original objectives with actual practice and providers’ own objectives, and to look for ways to
evaluate the impact of the program. Such a short intervention—less than 100 hours for the client—posed particular difficulty for DIMA and the team. The approach chosen by the research team combined a range of information gathering techniques, and encouraged providers, teachers and students to share their learning experiences and to try to quantify some of the achievements of individuals or groups. Teachers and providers were also asked to share their own vision for creating a better program for the future. Discussion revolved around identifying the key factors contributing to best practice, including delivery models, eligibility criteria, and the objectives of the program.

The information collection techniques together provide a rounded view of the Special Preparatory Program. The research comprised:

- a review of literature relevant to survivors settling in a new country and their experiences of English language learning, and recommended approaches to teaching this group;
- statistical analysis of the SPP group, using ARMS;
- a telephone survey of the 14 providers;
- a mailed survey of a sample of teachers chosen for their experience and innovative teaching strategies;
- social research into the dynamic of three separate classes, which consisted of interviews with the key individuals and agencies involved with that class, including teachers, settlement services and the students.

The audience for the report is DIMA and service providers themselves.

**Literature review**

The SPP Program was established to assist newly arrived migrants who were suffering from the effects of trauma and torture and were struggling with language learning. Government working party reports, such as the 'Position Paper L: English Language Provision and Refugee Resettlement', (Refugee Resettlement Working Group 1996) had highlighted the multiple barriers these individuals face as they grapple with language learning and settlement. While refugees often face learning difficulties resulting from their experiences, they are also more likely to be older, less educated, and unused to formal learning than entrants in other migrant categories. The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture's training manual describes in detail the social, mental and physical effects of torture (VFST 1998). These include ongoing health problems, anxiety, loss of trust, poor concentration, interrupted sleep and continual nightmares, and memory impairment—all of which can impact on a person's language learning. The manual, and similar literature produced by related organisations interstate, are valuable resources for professionals working with survivors (NCELTR Professional Development website).
Research about settlement and new migrants' needs

Burnett describes settlement as a process occurring over years not months, and being a combination of initial resettlement and longer term adjustment and integration (Burnett 1998). Numerous studies show that even apparently successful early adjustment may be followed by subsequent mental and physical breakdown (Eisenbruch in Burnett 1998). Literature on rehabilitation from torture and trauma similarly suggests that recovery is a long-term process, with crisis points at different times over years, frequently not in the first few months after arrival (McPherson 1997; VFST 1998).

English is central to the settlement process because it is the dominant language in Australia in all aspects of life. It is difficult, if not impossible, to participate successfully in Australian society without proficiency in both spoken and written English (Burnett 1998). New arrivals place great importance on learning English, but frequently encounter obstacles. Pittaway (1991) reported that 98% of a sample of 204 refugee women identified learning English as their priority need, but saw the entitlement constraints and difficulties with finding appropriate classes as barriers to successful language acquisition. Plimer and Candlin (1996) reported that English language learning for women followed settlement tasks such as housing, employment and settling children into school. Edwards (1996) explored poor participation rates for Vietnamese women and found that economic factors and family responsibilities were barriers to participation.

Studies from the classroom have suggested that students from a non-roman script language background or from low education background have greater difficulty learning English (McPherson 1997; Taylor 1999). Ross found that age, length of time in Australia and education level in the first language were the strongest predictors of language acquisition, that is, that being older, having less education in the first language, and not having been long in Australia correlated with slower gains in language learning. His study did not consider effects of trauma on language learning (Ross 2000).

The needs of survivors in English classes

Commentators working with survivors have emphasised the importance of the routine and safety afforded by regular attendance at English classes during the early period of settlement (VFST 1998, Hunt and Masters 2000, Hinshelwood 2000). ESL teachers are the professional group with the highest amount of contact time with newly arrived refugees, and language acquisition has a place in each of the core recovery goal categories outlined below (Aristotle 2000). Organisational attitudes and policies can also contribute to a student feeling valued and accepted (VFST 1998). Aristotle identifies the AMEP as a point of access to other critical services, and notes that, increasingly, relationships are being forged to facilitate this. A good teacher/student relationship which conveys a sense of interest in the well being of the student and fosters trust, contributes to the recovery process. Elaine Parks of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, cited in McPherson 1997, recommends a model with class sizes around 10, a quiet and pleasant learning environment, a trained volunteer component, outreach to encourage new students to come to class, and a curriculum
that relates language to the immediate needs of the learners in accessing community services (in McPherson 1997). Aristotle (2000) notes that classroom activities that are relevant to everyday life are vital, as are providing a routine and setting achievable goals for learners. Table 1.1 summarises the recovery goals Aristotle defines for survivors, and the mechanisms that English classes can activate to help their clients achieve them.

Table 1.1: Core recovery goals and mechanisms to assist in their achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Mechanism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restoring control and safety</td>
<td>Facilitating language acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing a supportive and predictable learning environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reducing fear and anxiety</td>
<td>Providing a point of access into other critical service types in the resettlement process</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Integrating learning objectives with practical day to day survival issues</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Developing curricula which provide routine, flexibility, set achievable goals, and accommodate learning and emotional difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoring attachments and connections</td>
<td>Facilitating language acquisition for communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming loss and grief</td>
<td>Providing potential for social activities which enable an experience of pleasure and fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing opportunities to undertake activities in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoring identity, meaning and purpose</td>
<td>Facilitating language acquisition as a way of restoring a sense of self or 'I'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing a sense of future in educational, vocational and social terms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing a safe environment to promote self esteem and the opportunity for use of coping skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoring value</td>
<td>Facilitating language acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing a program which is respectful and understanding of the effects of surviving human rights violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicating evidence-based advice to government policy makers about how to improve the program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: P Aristotle 2000. ‘The role of the AMEP in building a holistic settlement and multicultural program: Responding to the needs of refugees and survivors of torture and trauma’. NCELTR Professional Connections website feature spot: Teaching the survivors of torture and trauma

Studies from within the adult learning setting have identified a number of similar mechanisms for facilitating learning, or at least to ensure continued participation. Pam McPherson’s (1997) study of learner...
outcomes for clients with special needs outlines the issues most affecting survivors' learning and also the learning issues faced by older, less educated learners. McPherson recommends that courses should be grounded in concrete experience, focusing on real-life tasks and settlement needs, and that they should proceed in slow graduated steps.

VFST (1998) presents a table listing significant hurdles for survivors and describes their likely causes in Table 1.2.

### Table 1.2: Blocks to the learning process and classroom participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Causes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor concentration</td>
<td>Depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memory problems</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Intrusive images and memories</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Numbing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brain damage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Fear of authority figures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fear of refugees from same country</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bad news from home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trauma triggers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased arousal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>Physical injury</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>Grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suspiciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Controlling anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shame about illiteracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intrusive images and memories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger, Hostility, Disruptive Behaviour, Bullying</td>
<td>Frustration over inability to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asserting control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociative episodes</td>
<td>Exposure to trauma triggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self-esteem and sensitivity to failure</td>
<td>Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-concept shattered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.2: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor motivation</td>
<td>Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social withdrawal avoidance of failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiredness, exhaustion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Over-arousal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hyper-vigilance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness, depressed mood</td>
<td>Grief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


#### Bilingual support

Careful use of bilingual support has been recommended by a number of researchers. Taylor’s analysis of the use of bilingual support in the Victorian AMES emphasised the value of bilingual support for older students, and as an aide to providing information about settlement and English class organisation and content (Taylor 1999). Taylor points out the urgent need for adult learners to handle complex settlement tasks from the moment of arrival, and thus the importance of using their native language to facilitate understanding of more complex situations. Taylor notes that for most but not all students, bilingual support will and should be transitional. The Refugee Resettlement Working Group (1996) also described a multi-faceted approach to enable non-English speaking refugees to communicate speedily and effectively with the mainstream community. This approach would include opportunities for individuals to learn English and to access information in their native language, and to make use of interpreter and translation services during the transition phase between language dependence and functional fluency. A study of retention strategies demonstrated the success of offering bilingual classes as both an outreach and retention strategy, as new and former students heard about the class largely by word of mouth (Tolj and Noy 2000).

McPherson (1997) concluded that learners with very low oracy and literacy and no previous education are greatly helped by bilingual assistance. Teachers she surveyed recommended pleasant and comfortable physical surroundings and bilingual information sessions on course structure, assessment, content and the effects of symptoms of Post Trauma Stress Disorder on language learning. Studies by AMES in Western Australia and Tasmania (Smith 1997) also emphasised the value of bilingual support for settlement information sessions, and discussion of learning approaches and issues.

A Victorian study of the first phase of the SPP Program in Victoria emphasised the need for the SPP ‘to achieve a balance between welfare and learning needs, acknowledging the former while meeting the latter’ (Frain
To achieve close coordination between AMES and support agencies, Frain recommended a program coordinator be appointed to act as a contact point for support agencies to provide direction and consistency, to facilitate resource sharing and development and to provide teacher training. Taylor’s recent study of bilingual support in the AMES identifies the valuable role played by the bilingual officers who were subsequently appointed to support SPP student needs (Taylor 1999).

**Client satisfaction**

DIMA’s recently completed national client satisfaction telephone survey included a section for students who had taken up SPP hours. Preliminary findings suggest that the SPP is achieving its objectives of improving clients’ confidence to learn English and facilitating acclimatisation to the Australian way of teaching. Fewer clients than originally anticipated are receiving bilingual support.

AMES Victoria has just completed a client survey to assess the value to students of the settlement sessions it runs as part of the SPP program (Earp and Castleman, personal communication). Preliminary results from this survey suggest that students found information provided at settlement sessions useful. In particular, students found the information about health services and the range of services they offered very helpful, and reported positive experiences of using health services.

Client satisfaction reports commissioned by AMES providers show high levels of student satisfaction with the AMEP (AMES Tasmania 1998; AMES Victoria 1999b). In Victoria, feedback was also collected about student dissatisfaction, through open-ended client comments (in L1) as part of a questionnaire. The most commonly stated reasons for dissatisfaction were that 510 hours was insufficient, that the student was dissatisfied with his/her own pace of learning or that he or she was dissatisfied with the level of proficiency he/she has achieved (Castleman 1999). These findings have implications for the design of questions about satisfaction. Whilst building students’ self-efficacy is part of the teachers’ role, it is useful to distinguish between students’ satisfaction with their own performance and satisfaction with components of the program delivery.

**The needs of teachers**

Teachers in the McPherson study (1997) recommended consultation and collaborative provision with specialised agencies including teacher training providers, provision of counselling for learners, collaborative planning for effective provision and resources, collaborative development of course design practices, and ongoing participation and evaluation of courses. The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture’s training manual (VFST 1998) which is supported by training programs, provides a section on ‘worker skills’—including working with interpreters—and ‘professional issues’, both of which look at ESL teachers working with adult students.

The impact on teachers and other AMEP staff involved with survivors is a concern of the state-based organisations. Duignan, from the Service for the
Treatment and Rehabilitation of Survivors of Torture and Trauma, NSW, described the potential for teachers, home tutors and bilingual administrative staff to be exposed to disclosure about past experiences. The likelihood is extremely high where the educator and student share a common cultural background. Responses from the educator/worker may include a sense of lack of safety, a questioning of how the world and other people function, intrusive thoughts and feelings related to the other person’s experience, and feelings of frustration, anger and guilt that not all problems can be easily solved (Duignan 2000). As part of its training, VFST provides advice on ways to manage the constant tension between under and over involvement and describes the ideal range of involvement. Strategies for maintaining personal health include establishing boundaries, developing professional skills to assist interactions (eg reflective listening, increased cultural understanding, access to peer support and formal debriefing, (VFST 1998).

Summary

Settlement is a complex process, which is further complicated by former experiences of torture and trauma. English is critical to successful settlement and most newly arrived migrants see learning English as a priority. For all migrants, the pressures of settlement affect their ability to focus on language learning. However, those in the long process of recovery from trauma have the added weight of mental and physical difficulties. A number of commentators have attempted to define the classroom environment most conducive to meeting recovery goals including language mastery. The consensus is for courses grounded in concrete experience, focusing on real-life tasks and settlement needs, and proceeding in slow graduated steps.

The balance between language learning and bilingual support is complex. Bilingual support is important for newly arrived migrants, but is and should be transitional.

Barriers to participation in English language programs were explored briefly. Lack of knowledge about classes, inability to concentrate because of previous trauma, fear of public transport and anxiety about the pressure of a formal class were main concerns.

Contact between English language agencies and settlement services benefits both teachers and students. Students found information about agencies helpful, and teachers can benefit from the training, resources and support of torture and trauma agencies.

Finally, students’ evaluation of the AMEP language learning program was considered. From client satisfaction surveys we find that the key areas of client dissatisfaction are most commonly that the 510 hours is insufficient, that the student was dissatisfied with his/her own pace of learning or that he or she was dissatisfied with the level of proficiency he/she has achieved. These findings have implications for the design of the client evaluation component of this project.
Overview of research methodology

The Special Preparatory Program arose out of a concern about traumatised clients’ capacity to begin intensive language learning during the early phase of settlement. The program evaluation undertaken in this study considers factors such as retention rates, transition, learning and settlement outcomes.

Evaluations of other AMEP programs in general have been consulted to provide a framework for the evaluation of the SPP. In this context the following methodological features should be noted:

- The AMEP is monitored through comprehensive data collection and evaluation and through client satisfaction surveys. Information is collected nationally on participation rates, achievement of competencies and reasons for withdrawal (ARMS). ARMS has also collected data on SPP clients (reviewed in Chapter 4).

- Individual providers use market research techniques to collect feedback about a range of factors affecting students' performance and enjoyment of classes, although these tend to be internal rather than published documents. Overall, student satisfaction levels in the two reports viewed (AMES Tasmania 1999a, AMES Victoria 1999) were high. In Victoria, feedback was also collected about student dissatisfaction through open-ended client comments (in L1) as part of a questionnaire. The most commonly stated reasons for dissatisfaction were that 510 hours is insufficient, that the student was dissatisfied with his/her own pace of learning or that he or she was dissatisfied with the level of proficiency he/she has achieved (Castleman 1999).

Issues for research

Evaluation of a short program (up to 100 hours) such as the SPP has inherent difficulties, given the difficulties of demonstrating change over short periods of instruction. Completion rate is one simple measure often used to evaluate short courses. Within the TAFE sector, which has many courses of less than 100 hours, completion rates Australia-wide are about 80% and lower for NESB students. Achievement of a competency or skill within that time is rarely measured (Cleary and Nicholls 1998). Other methods may yield information about the experiences of those involved with the program. Interviews with providers, teachers and students were the main method used in this research.

Interviews

Qualitative research methodology provides an extra dimension to the quantitative data collected by ARMS and through surveys. Qualitative research methods use small samples and a variety of techniques (interviews, observations and group discussions) to gain an understanding of the context of people’s responses. Basic exploratory studies are designed to provide insights into and comprehension of a particular issue for a particular group. The focus of the research is the individuals themselves.
and their relationship to the issue, in this case the Special Preparatory Program.

In interviews, the process involved in both question and answer is complex. Interviewees respond to who they think the interviewer is, their skills and information needs. Providers and teachers, anxious about the future of the SPP and their own future as providers, must make decisions about what information they will share with a researcher funded by their funding body. For survivors of torture, the personal perspective may be critical: they are wondering why they have been chosen, what the rules of discussion are, what will happen to the information, whether there might be negative consequences. Awareness of these issues was integral to the design and conduct of the interviews. Piloting of each stage of the research, providing for anonymity, allowing respondents to check the researcher’s summary of discussions involving them and to make amendments, are some of the strategies which have been employed in acknowledgment of the sensitive nature of the interactions.

Use of interpreters creates a further barrier to open discussion. For the guided interviews, VFST guidelines for use of interpreters were utilised (VFST 1998). However, in some cases problems arose due to untrained interpreters, unavailability of interpreters, and the difficulty of managing focus group discussion with a number of different language groups at one time. Some studies have reported on the difficulty of running a focus group that avoided being an interrogation. Difficulties have been encountered in projects when a number of interpreters have been used concurrently. In a small number of cases interpreters have declined to communicate a participant’s comments to the researcher and the group because they believed it was said in confidence to them. In other situations, interpreters have failed to translate comments made by participants of a group which spoke a different language to the interpreter back to the interpreter’s own language, thus making it difficult for participants to respond to each other’s experiences. As a result, it would be more accurate to describe the groups where a number of interpreters were involved concurrently as a group interview rather than a focus group, as limited interaction occurred between participants.

**Delivery model case studies**

The provider survey was designed to provide an historical overview of activity around Australia. The teacher survey provided examples of some of the best practice in classrooms around the country. The case studies were designed to contribute to the evaluation of the program using a different methodology (Nunan 1992). The three delivery model case studies provided a snapshot of a class seen from a range of perspectives including the students’. The case studies aimed to explore the ways that the SPP hours benefited students, measured on four dimensions: developing learning skills, assisting mastery of settlement, building personal and social skills, and providing a secure environment. Achievement of competencies was also reviewed. It was hoped that this focused view might provide a unique insight into the dynamic of the SPP which would complement the survey and quantitative approach used elsewhere.
Chapter 2

Provider survey

Methodology

The first stage of the data collection was a guided telephone survey of the fourteen providers (see Appendix 1). The purpose of the survey was to gain an overview of the allocation of SPP funding including client profiles, overall delivery strategies and the involvement or otherwise of settlement services. Providers were also asked to define the key elements of the SPP, to identify issues in managing the SPP and to give their view of how the SPP could best function in the future. The questionnaire was designed as a series of largely open-ended questions.

Pilot

A pilot version of the survey was trialled with three providers. The pilot aimed to ascertain the acceptability of the questions to the providers given the sensitivity around commercial confidentiality, and to assess the flow of the questions and their value for yielding information. The pilot highlighted the differences between providers in terms of size, business activity, and willingness to share information. However, even the reticent provider was comfortable with what was asked.

Sample

The sample was the fourteen providers of SPP as identified by DIMA. They represent service provision in all the states and territories in Australia. Each provider Head identified a key contact person for the project and it was this person who was contacted to make a time for an interview. In some cases this person nominated another person who was more closely involved with delivery of the SPP.

Process

The provider Head and the contact person were sent a letter and a copy of the guided interview format. The contact person was invited to respond in writing to the questions, or to respond verbally in a telephone interview. Most chose the phone interview, although a number also sent a written response. The interviews were carried out in July and August 2000, over a period of three weeks. Each interview took between 30 minutes and an hour and a half. The interviewer took notes during the interview, which were then written up and sent to the respondent to check and verify. This provided an opportunity for respondents to add extra information or to...
reflect on and alter their comments. Respondents were enthusiastic in their involvement in the survey, and generous with their time. A number also followed up by sending teaching materials and other information to assist the researcher.

Contextual issues impacting on SPP practice and delivery

The following information was collected from providers as part of the survey.

The providers

The fourteen providers surveyed were the Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) in each state and territory, one large private provider, three limited contract providers—in each case a small private educational institution experienced in teaching English as a second language—and an independent assessment service with no role in the provision of tuition. In one state there are two providers: one services the lower level clients and all SPP clients while the other caters for the more advanced clients. The AMES providers have a wealth of experience in migrant education, while the newer, smaller providers are on a steep learning curve to master the AMEP, and refugees' needs in particular. Where providers represented a consortium of providers, only the largest agency was interviewed.

Access routes into the program

Clients arrive at English classes via a number of routes, with most providers mentioning more than one. The majority reported that clients came through settlement or community services, and were often brought along by case workers. Information from DIMA was also mentioned. In one state, the assessment service allocates clients to the providers, who then decide whether to offer SPP. Publicity or a letter from the provider were mentioned by a few as leading to their enrolment. Family or friends were also mentioned. One provider has an active outreach strategy which includes visiting potential clients who have not enrolled.

Role in settlement support

Providers have different views about the role they should or need to play in settlement support. In some states/territories, providers felt that information about settlement was adequately provided by one of the main agencies, and that they did not need to duplicate that role. Providers in larger states tended to feel the need to supplement settlement services’ activities with some bridging support, especially for those visa categories that tend to miss out, such as the Special Assistance category.

Background and distribution of clients

The range of language/cultural groups of SPP clients varied for different providers, and has varied over time as refugee intake changed in
composition and numbers. More detailed analysis of the client base is described in the statistical analysis (Chapter 5). Most providers listed Former Yugoslavian clients as their largest overall group, one provider listed Iraqi and two listed Sudanese. Providers in small states/territories reported that a greater proportion of their immigrants are humanitarian entrants and likely to be unskilled (e.g., refugees from the Horn of Africa are an important group for Tasmania).

The number of clients involved varied from 10 (limited contract, one venue, private provider) to 2969 (provider with no competitors in area, multiple venues and learning options delivered through consortium partners). Comparison between such different services is extremely difficult. Large providers offered a range of learning arrangements, and different centres had various styles, often linked to individual teachers. Small providers tended to have one or two venues, and managers had more contact with students. However, providers with limited contracts were not funded to offer services such as community-based classes or home tutor.

**Program organisation**

Each state has its own model for the SPP Program. Large providers have a coordinator at each centre, who may have broad responsibilities that include the SPP. Most providers have an SPP coordinator who may be a teacher or educational counsellor. One large provider has a central SPP coordinator responsible for setting directions and quality control (training, reporting against the available delivery budget, promoting innovation, teacher networking) as well as an SPP teacher coordinator at each centre.

**Training**

Torture and trauma organisations provide information about the needs of survivors. Some teaching and administration staff have attended training programs, others are simply given access to written information. Two larger providers had run ‘care for the carer’ sessions covering ethics, managing client relations, crisis management and knowing when to refer. The majority of AMEP providers have a body of staff with experience of working with humanitarian clients, although three expressed concern that their most experienced staff were getting older and that there was a need to be training younger staff for the future. Few providers were aware of the NCELTR Professional Connections web site feature on torture and trauma but were pleased to hear about it.

**Protocols and debriefing**

Torture and Trauma groups describe the importance of having clear protocols for working with clients, and opportunities for debriefing (VFST 1998, Duignan 2000). Such formal protocols were uncommon amongst providers, although one provider had developed a referral protocol with the local torture and trauma (TT) group.

Two had standard procedures for dealing with incidents, and identified standards of student behaviour. Most providers had informal debriefing
procedures. Two providers said their coordinator or a counsellor would intervene if they felt a teacher was getting too involved with students’ lives. The most common referral pattern was first to the educational counsellor on staff who could be approached by teachers on their own or a student’s behalf. This counsellor would refer the teacher to counselling at the local torture and trauma organisation if appropriate. A minority of providers offered external counselling to teachers if needed.

**Professional development and networking**

Peer mentoring, informal peer support, email, staff meetings and regular SPP network meetings were mentioned as mechanisms for support and sharing. Curriculum days, ongoing professional development programs for all AMEP staff and involvement in action research were identified. Arrangement of timetables to ensure all teachers had concurrent, paid preparation time was one example of management actively promoting opportunities for staff interaction and support, particularly important for casual staff.

There was surprisingly little contact between different providers by either teachers or administrators. Newer providers commented on the lack of support from established providers. All providers were interested in this research project and the opportunities it created for sharing information and finding out what others were doing.

**Recommendation**

8 It is recommended that DIMA facilitate greater dissemination of information about management and practice through providers and teachers involved in SPP delivery.

**Parameters of SPP activity**

Providers had interpreted the guidelines for the SPP in a variety of ways. Most providers had trialled SPP-only classes at some point, but low client numbers and staggered arrival dates had made this model unworkable for much of the time. One provider offered a holding class, a small, low-intensity class which began when students arrived part way through term, and ended with their placement in an appropriate class the next term. Providers offered a range of classes including community classes, SPP-only classes at a main venue, mixed SPP/AMEP classes, mixed low-intensity classes. Often a number of models ran concurrently. These variations made it difficult to define the program, as it varied widely from the model defined in the DIMA guidelines.

Comparison between providers was also complex. Providers’ contracts to provide the SPP ranged from those who first piloted versions in 1997, to limited contract providers who began in 1999.
Over the period of the SPP, refugee numbers varied sufficiently to cause planning and budgetary problems for all providers. In each state/territory there was a torture and trauma organisation which gave support to providers, particularly the traditional AMEP providers. The limited resources of these organisations was an issue.

**Competition and cooperation**

This evaluation has been compromised by the impact of commercial competition. Some providers were anxious about releasing details of their contract with DIMA, and DIMA felt unable to provide outcome measures by provider.

As mentioned above, private enterprise providers had found traditional providers unwilling to work together because of commercial competition. The role of settlement agencies in promoting one or other operator was also cause for concern. There was a disappointing lack of networking in general between providers.

DIMA has a valuable role to play in facilitating information dissemination.

**The range of criteria for entry into the SPP and how they are being applied**

The most common entry criteria, being used by nine providers, involved a selection process and the allocation of 100 hours or less. One provider had formal guidelines covering language assessment, assessment of factors inhibiting learning and input from case manager/support person. Most providers relied on their interviewers’ experience and, in some cases, additional information provided by the student, the case worker or community agency, or an accompanying friend/relative. One provider gave students a test using the ELLPA Kit. Another provider had developed a checklist with the torture and trauma organisation, but both groups felt that it had a limited role in practice.

Three providers offered 100 hours, four providers used a selection process and individual need, one provider linked offered hours with subsequent AMEP term start dates, and one used selection and then allocation of same number of hours for all. Two providers offered the SPP to all humanitarian clients: one was able to offer 100 hours to all, the other used a budgetary formula to allocate hours at each centre. Regular review of clients (small providers) has been used to determine readiness for AMEP transition or the need for further SPP hours (less than 100). Most staff involved in interviewing have trauma and torture training.

Information on the selection and allocation of hours and delivery models is summarised in Table 2.1. It was reported that budgetary/hours constraints are the strongest determinant of allocation of hours.

A number of providers mentioned their dissatisfaction with using information from the initial interview, or even the teacher’s experience of...
### Table 2.1: Selection and allocation of hours, and delivery models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prov Selection Criteria</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Bilingual or settlement officer at interview</th>
<th>SPP Hours allocated</th>
<th>Settlement sessions</th>
<th>SPP Orientation/ non-certificate</th>
<th>AMEP + SPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Yes</td>
<td>Experienced &amp; T&amp;T trained</td>
<td>Off site assessment if necessary</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Yes</td>
<td>T&amp;T</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yes: checklist</td>
<td>T&amp;T</td>
<td>Not usually</td>
<td>Varies (budget/nos.)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Yes</td>
<td>Counsellors</td>
<td>If needed</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Yes</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Inhouse</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 No</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Not usually</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Yes: Lang &amp; learning issues</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Choice given</td>
<td>Up to 100</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 No</td>
<td>EPRS does int.</td>
<td>Yes, bilingual</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Has criteria: selection</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No, but special group for needy</td>
<td>AMEP (no SPP at this provider)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 No</td>
<td>T&amp;T trained</td>
<td>Yes, bilingual</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Yes</td>
<td>T&amp;T trained</td>
<td>Bilingual if req: settlement officer</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, dedicated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Needs based</td>
<td>Experienced T&amp;T</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, dedicated</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Guidelines</td>
<td>T&amp;T trained</td>
<td>Bilingual as required</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, dedicated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Yes: testing</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Yes (bilingual advisor)</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>In-house</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the student in the first few weeks in class, to identify potential trauma-related learning difficulties. They spoke of the experience of seeing students who were coping well initially have serious problems some months into their AMEP learning. This concern, combined with the administrative and training issues related to a selection system, has led a small number of providers to allocate some hours to all humanitarian clients or the same number of hours to all selected clients.

One provider (No. 1 in table 2.1) is an assessment service and does not allocate or provide SPP; however, staff work closely with providers to ensure potential SPP clients receive follow-up and support.

**Recommendation**

6 It is recommended that the SPP remain primarily an orientation program but that the current 50-hour limit be extended to 12 months eligibility.

**The goals and objectives of the SPP as interpreted by the SPP providers**

Providers were asked to identify their goals for the program. The responses fitted into five areas or goals for the SPP:

- to assist with settlement
- to build up personal resilience
- to develop the capacity for learning
- to allow clients more time
- to provide a supportive environment.

Unless indicated, each description below refers to one provider’s response.

**Assist with settlement**

- Master settlement (3 mentions).
- Resolve problems and integrate educationally, socially, psychologically (2 mentions); physical health.
- Access to other services.
- Practise activities for daily living (eg public transport, shopping).
- Assist learning about culture.
- Provide information.

**Build up personal resilience**

Independence
Control
Confidence
Self-esteem
Develop capacity for learning

Learning about learning strategies to get into the mainstream esp high attendance and retention (4 mentions)
To get as many refugees as possible to come to class esp the least likely (build relationships before they come to class)

Allow clients more time

Extra time for language gains (2 mentions)

Provide a supportive environment

Supportive environment for English learning (2 mentions)

Other

Provide a bridge to accessing opportunities previously unavailable (eg driving, literacy, paid work).

These five objectives underpin the providers’ approach to the SPP program, and were used as key areas for investigation of clients’ experience of the SPP (client interviews, case studies, Chapter 3) and the teachers’ assessment of students’ gains (Chapter 4, Teacher survey; Appendix 2).

The defining factors of the SPP

A central issue for DIMA is to define the nature of extra support vulnerable clients need to succeed in their English language learning. As well as defining their program goals (previous section), providers were asked to comment on how well the following set of points defined the nature and value of the SPP program. They were also asked what other elements they thought were important.

The SPP helps vulnerable clients by:
• providing a bridge from initial settlement and past trauma to formal learning;
• providing connections/information about support and settlement services throughout program (links and referral processes);
• allowing extra time in a formal AMEP program to settle in/learn to learn;
• providing a supportive non-threatening environment.

Eleven providers agreed with all four points, with different order (no pattern) or all equal. There was general agreement with the notion of a bridge to consistent learning in the AMEP, and improvements in expressing it. On the whole, suggestions for changes were points of clarification. The following list represents a revised version of the key factors, incorporating providers’ suggestions (revisions appear in italics).
The SPP helps vulnerable clients by:

- providing a bridge from initial settlement and learning difficulties linked with past trauma to formal AMEP learning (it establishes routine, structure, and social networks);
- providing connections/information about support and settlement services (links and referral processes);
- allowing extra time in a formal AMEP program to settle in/learn to learn;
- providing a supportive, non-threatening environment (an additional support system).

One small provider listed just the second and fourth point. Other comments were: extra time (including time to deal with health issues), time to talk about work and life in Australia/cultural sensitivity and small groups allowing identification of needs more easily. One provider emphasised availability of childcare on site or assisted childcare as a key component of a supportive environment.

**Recommendation**

3 That the pivotal role of English classes at this stage of settlement is acknowledged through adoption of the following key factors of the program.

The SPP is a program for vulnerable clients which:

- provides a bridge from initial settlement and learning difficulties linked with past trauma to formal AMEP learning;
- establishes routine, structure, and social network;
- allows extra time in a formal AMEP program to settle in/learn to learn;
- provides a supportive, non-threatening environment (an additional support system) through relevant personal contact;
- provides connections/information about support and settlement services (links and referral processes).

**Delivery arrangements**

Providers have developed a number of delivery arrangements for the SPP. Most providers offer different types of classes at different times, depending on budgets, numbers, the ethnic homogeneity or otherwise of the SPP clients, and other student needs. The following list describes the main class types, and is summarised in Table 2.1. The majority of classes involve SPP and AMEP students in low-intensity classes.

**Non-certificate or orientation class solely for SPP students**

Currently six providers offer some, and two used to but now have insufficient numbers.
Non-certificate or orientation class mainly for SPP students but with some AMEP

Five providers offer orientation classes which fit into four different types:
- A stage 1 class: literacy program—small group, low intensity;
- One holding class;
- One offers tutorials;
- One offers one term at a low level.

An AMEP class with some SPP clients

For five providers, this is the main type of delivery; one provider offers it to higher level clients.

Settlement sessions

Five providers offer settlement sessions

Ethnic specific class

Three currently, one formerly.

Providers had difficulty providing an overall percentage breakdown of their delivery arrangements, because they change over time. Of the five who did, the breakdown was stated as: 50/50 AMEP/SPP; 100% mixed; majority integrated; 50% students in dedicated classes; 25% T&T venue (one class), 50% mixed, 25% home tutor.

Recommendation

9 It is recommended that future guidelines for the SPP acknowledge the need for flexibility of delivery, and that most SPP delivery occurs in combined low intensity classes.

Teaching and learning methods and materials being used by SPP providers

Providers were asked to describe the methods, materials and innovative practices being used with SPP students. The following list should be regarded as an underestimate of the range of methods and materials being used, as a number of providers suggested they did not have this information and that individual teachers would need to be approached. For further information, see Chapter 4, Teacher survey.
Table 2.2: Teaching practices

**Materials**

Teachers own (3). Examples given were: audio tapes, worksheets, materials with a practical focus, booklets (photocopied and shared)

Provider’s own publications (6). Examples were own literacy materials (AMES), settlement information (2), materials being developed (2)

Other providers’ or publicly available resources (3). Examples given were primary level material, NSW and Victorian AMES literacy materials.

**Standardised curriculum**

Three providers referred to CSWE, and others to competencies 1&2

A number emphasised that their curriculum was responsive to individual needs (see methodology below). One said it was individual, needs-based but focused on language needed for settlement, roles and responsibilities of a learning environment and learning strategies. A focus on practical survival English not grammar or phonics was mentioned by two.

Two providers offer a literacy program.

**Methodology**

A number of low intensity approaches were described, including: slower pace than AMEP; shorter hours, small groups, home tutors; break things into small chunks, slowly and no pressure; one-hour daily tutorials; focus on study skills. Three said the program was tailored to individual or group needs.

**Innovative practices**

The following innovative practices are listed as described by providers:

**Organisational**

Providing a detailed report of what the student has covered; or a certificate/report on basic competencies achievement pre-certificate

Use of teachers’ aides and bilingual officers

A volunteer tutor in each class, especially for literacy classes

A strong bilingual focus and role for childcare workers

Teachers given time to adapt and create

Class at trauma and torture organisation for the most fragile students, closely linked to support services

Keeping one teacher with the class

Gradual introduction of group work, a buddy system (another language group), and shared morning tea time for all Certificate 1 clients

A training kit for volunteer tutors
Table 2.2: Continued

Curriculum

Art activities
Relaxation and greeting activities
Gardening
Driving class and oral learning of language for obtaining learner’s permit
Extra phonics classes for Somalis
SPP sessions twice weekly in Independent Learning Centre with a tutor
Nutrition program
Language of childbirth for expectant mothers
Gaps (not all providers identified gaps)
Resources for SPP, and for teachers
Translated resource material
Explanations of SPP translated (esp. mentioned by small providers)

A number of providers mentioned difficulties getting translators or interpreters for newly emerging communities. A number also mentioned the difficulty of the interpreter knowing everyone’s business, and cultural and/or ethnic issues affecting some interpreter/student interactions. Small providers felt keenly their inability to provide translations of relevant material. Larger providers generally have the capacity to translate materials as needed.

Recommendation

5 It is recommended that DIMA facilitate greater assistance to small providers for bilingual support.

Integration of settlement services and learning arrangements

Most programs are organised to include both SPP and AMEP clients at a centre, rather than for SPP clients in particular. Seven providers run some sort of settlement session/s. Three bring in outside speakers, and two use in-house staff to provide the information (usually a counsellor). One organises a series of sessions, others run a session with the T&T organisation each term or semester; at one provider the T&T organisation goes into each class for a small group session. Two providers run a health information session with interpreters.

At three centres, the counsellor or facilitator is the referral point. Most stressed the immediate access to support services and that other counselling was explicitly available.
A few services have administrative links to settlement services but students are not directly in contact through the providers’ efforts, although the exception seems to be Centrelink, which visits most providers regularly. Centrelink’s Multilingual Officers’ efforts and the availability of interpreters were praised.

One provider holds interagency meetings; four are in regular contact with their local T&T for training and so on, and four with local health organisations.

Two providers felt that settlement was the responsibility of the sponsor group or settlement agency.

**Client profile**

Without detailed class lists and provider information this question cannot be quantified. However, Table 2.3 provides a guide to the types of classes and the client groups. The client numbers provide some perspective on the story. For reasons of confidentiality, provider names have been omitted.

Small states tend to have more unskilled refugees (eg from the Horn of Africa). The number of clients involved varies from 10 (limited contract) to 2969 (large consortium contract).

**Table 2.3:**  Provider client profile and types of classes offered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client country of birth or language</th>
<th>Type of classes</th>
<th>Client numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 N/R</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Not provided</td>
<td>Mixed groups</td>
<td>Not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Former Yugoslavia,</td>
<td>Most centres</td>
<td>2969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq, Horn of Africa,</td>
<td>integrated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan, Iran,</td>
<td>with extra SPP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka, Turkey,</td>
<td>settlement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan, Burma</td>
<td>sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 313 Serbian,</td>
<td>50% in dedicated,</td>
<td>967 since 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275 Bosnian,</td>
<td>50% mixed;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 Persian,</td>
<td>8 sessions with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57 Croatian,</td>
<td>a range of agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Albanian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Iraqi, Former</td>
<td>Holding classes</td>
<td>1268 since 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavian, Somalian,</td>
<td>mainly SPP;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horn of Africa,</td>
<td>community classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran, Afghani, Kurds</td>
<td>low intensity;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>occasional gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specific</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client country of birth or language</td>
<td>Type of classes</td>
<td>Client numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Sudanese, Arabic &amp; Dinka, Ethiopian, Bosnian, Former Yugoslavia</td>
<td>ILC 2 Sessions with tutor SPP and tutor— 10 hours/week</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Former Yugoslavia</td>
<td>SPP in one class; classroom tutors available for indiv. support</td>
<td>10 since Feb 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Sudanese, Ethiopian, Bosnian, Somali</td>
<td>SPP specific in the past, numbers too small now Integrated</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>No delivery</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10  Former Yugoslavian, Khmer, Sudanese, Afghani</td>
<td>SPP specific—mainly in one region with sufficient numbers Majority integrated Ethnic specific one area</td>
<td>1999/2000 1546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11  Former Yugoslavian 33%, Bosnian 13%, Afghani 9%, Burmese 9%</td>
<td>25% specific at T&amp;T venue 50% mixed orientation 25% home tutor</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12  Yugoslavian, Afghani, Iran</td>
<td>SPP in one class with non-humanitarian (1 per term) Integrated for higher levels</td>
<td>36 since Feb 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13  Yugoslavian, Horn of Africa</td>
<td>50/50 larger centres have specific; more in integrated now than initially as number of</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.3: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client country of birth or language</th>
<th>Type of classes</th>
<th>Client numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>venues has expanded; special sessions in half the centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Bosnian (mainly via Germany)</td>
<td>SPP with some AMEP Ethnic specific initially but it led to too many problems (see Chapter 4, Teacher survey)</td>
<td>44 since Mar 99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship between current examples of SPP delivery and the language instruction provided in the AMEP

The survey explored the availability of other language learning options and resources for SPP clients, in particular home tutors, bilingual assistance, distance learning, community programs and independent learning centres. Most providers offered home tutors or could refer clients to TAFE or a consortium partner.

Most providers said that bilingual support was minimal or limited. One provider used childcare workers as occasional bilingual aides, another used trained bilingual officers and a network of trained administrative staff across its centres. Some providers mentioned the difficulty of getting interpreters or aides for newly emerging communities, most used the Translation and Interpreter Service for individual and group activities as needed/available, and others mentioned some bilingual teachers and a student advisor.

Distance learning was not available to SPP clients under the contract. However, one provider had negotiated special exemption for two clients. Most had distance learning as an option for AMEP clients (not limited contract providers).

Community programs were available in most cases.

Independent learning and further learning options were also mentioned.
Evaluation and monitoring

Providers were asked whether they evaluated their program, and asked to share their methodology and results. Three providers did not collect any feedback, five collected informal feedback through individual discussion, feedback from settlement officers and bilingual officers, and at a counsellor session.

Seven providers described formal evaluation processes, and were happy to provide copies to the researcher. These included Client Satisfaction Surveys, and other surveys prepared by teachers. The method of administration included: translated and mailed to clients, translated by social worker, in English and administered by bilingual officers, survey in English sent home for family to fill in. The regularity of evaluation varied, with only the larger programs having consistent evaluation, action research and/or research around general AMEP issues but including the SPP.

Providers had mixed views about the effectiveness of surveys with their SPP groups. Most felt that the teacher’s/counsellor’s close relationship with SPP clients helped them to identify issues for individuals.

Providers were asked how they monitored student progress and wellbeing. A number of smaller providers had a counsellor in daily contact with all students, on an informal level. One provider had tried nominating a teacher as case manager but found the level of personal skills and lack of continuity a problem, and had opted to have close counsellor contact with students. The visibility of the counsellor or coordinator was frequently mentioned as vital to keeping the door open for students, facilitating assistance or referral when needed, and allowing observation of students. Follow up of non-attenders is done by these contact people, or at other centres by the teacher, providing another mechanism for keeping in touch with student needs. The teacher survey (Chapter 4) explores teachers’ mechanisms for monitoring.

Issues in managing the program

Providers were asked for their views about issues in managing the program. Respondents showed a great deal of passion and commitment to the continuance of the SPP. Table 2.4 summarises provider comments. Details of the provider client base and class types are provided for context. Issues raised can be divided into four main categories: timing, management difficulties, eligibility and labelling/isolation.

Timing

A number of providers felt that the option of a low-intensity, supported class should be available to clients at any stage, rather than solely at the preparatory stage. The 5-year limit was seen as disadvantaging some clients, especially women involved in childbearing and rearing children.
from the time of their arrival. The practice of enrolling clients as soon as possible meant that a dedicated SPP class was not always available.

Management

A common complaint from providers was the workload involved in administering the SPP program, which was out of proportion to the percentage of clients it represented. The decline in the client base had posed a problem for many, and the difficulty of anticipating numbers in a changing political environment. Client and community groups’ expectations that all students would get 100 hours had caused problems for a number of providers. The difficulty of evaluating the impact of the SPP was raised, as most felt pressure to assess in relation to CSWE competencies. The reluctance/inability of some settlement agencies to support the program, or to provide any insight into clients’ likely needs, was a problem for a small number of providers, especially private providers.

One provider sent a summary of the team’s views on the SPP. It highlighted the tensions between providing individual support in a small, low-intensity class and offering students learning opportunities appropriate to their needs.

Eligibility

A number of providers suggested broadening the eligibility to include more low-level students, and non-humanitarian students who were traumatised. The 50-hour grace period was seen as inadequate as providers’ experience was that problems frequently surfaced down the track rather than in the period frequently described as the ‘honeymoon period’.

Labelling/isolation

Providers had found that some clients were unwilling to be labelled with the SPP/refugee tag when they were trying to integrate into their new community. Involvement with more established migrants was also mentioned as aiding settlement.

Ethnic/cultural issues

Ethnic tensions were fairly uncommon; however, sensitivity to cultural needs was mentioned (no classes Fridays, need for a prayer room). A class with a dominant group was seen as more difficult than a mixed group.

Future directions

Each provider was asked for their opinion about the future of the SPP and, if they supported it continuing, what direction it should take. Providers were unanimous in their support for a program to meet the needs of
traumatised clients, but many believed that other groups—especially low educated, older, and non-roman script clients needed greater access to low-intensity, well supported classes.

**Flexibility**

Flexibility seemed to embody providers’ sense that the varying needs of this client group required a range of options. It should be offered as a preparatory program with the option of using the hours as an intervention program if needed. Suggestions included independent learning, special modules. The teacher’s role in monitoring students’ needs, and providing them with feedback on their progress, was highlighted by one person.

**Timing/eligibility**

The majority of providers favoured changes to components of the eligibility criteria—time limits or total hours. More than half recommended dropping the 50-hour limit, providing 100 hours for all, and dropping the 5-year limit.

**Class composition**

There was support for maintaining mixed as well as solely SPP classes.

**National coordination**

There was support for funding for professional development, resources and networks. Smaller providers were particularly aware of their limited resources for getting translations of information about the SPP, let alone resources. The opportunity to read this report was mentioned as a positive step to sharing information.

**Table 2.4: Providers’ views on management issues and future directions for the SPP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prov</th>
<th>Client country of birth or language</th>
<th>Type of classes</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Future directions and national cooperation</th>
<th>Client numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Missing client info</td>
<td>Mixed groups</td>
<td>HOURS: providing adequate hours &gt;510</td>
<td>SPP highly successful</td>
<td>Missing data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LABEL</td>
<td>More flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Broaden eligibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to low level students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38   The Special PREP Program: Its evolution and its future
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prov</th>
<th>Client country of birth or language</th>
<th>Type of classes</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Future directions and national cooperation</th>
<th>Client numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Sudan, Burma</td>
<td>Most centres integrated with extra SPP sessions</td>
<td>TIMING MANAGEMENT: differentiating SPP from AMEP; evaluation—some settlement agencies not cooperative ELIGIBILITY: non-humanitarian can be traumatised; LABEL</td>
<td>TIMING Focus on settlement sessions Drop 50-hour limit Need to build in monitoring /feedback systems to deal with client anxiety about progress</td>
<td>2969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>313 Serbian, 275 Bosnian, 97 Persian, 57 Croatian,</td>
<td>50% in dedicated class, 50% in mixed:</td>
<td>ETHNIC TENSIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td>967 since 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Iraqi, Former Yugoslavian, Somalian, Horn of Africa, Irani, Afghani, Kurds</td>
<td>Holding classes mainly SPP; community classes, low intensity; occasional gender-specific</td>
<td>FLEXIBILITY MANAGEMENT ELIGIBILITY WOMEN: five years not enough for some TIME LIMIT INFORMATION SHARING</td>
<td>100 hours for all Dedicated classes Distance learning Drop 5-year limit NATIONAL COOPERATION —More reports like this one; opportunities to share</td>
<td>1268 since 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sudanese, Arabic &amp; Dinka, Ethiopian, Bosnian, Former Yugoslavian</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT —staff getting too close to clients Rules are confusing Time consuming Lack of African interpreters Limitations of volunteer tutors ELIGIBILITY TIME LIMIT—5-year limit</td>
<td>Expand classroom assistance—paid not voluntary Automatic 100 hours for humanitarian category in AMEP programs. NATIONAL COOPERATION —resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov</td>
<td>Client country of birth or language</td>
<td>Type of classes</td>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>Future directions and national cooperation</td>
<td>Client numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Former Yugoslavia</td>
<td>SPP in one class: classroom tutors available for individual support</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT — need a statement from case manager re likely T&amp;T support; Lack of contact with colleagues; need networks Hard to establish study routine because of appointments with services etc</td>
<td>Maintain mixed classes Need guidelines on selection ELIGIBILITY 50 hours not enough Need more flexibility NATIONAL COOPERATION —yes</td>
<td>10 since Feb 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sudanese, Ethiopian, Bosnian, Somali, SPP specific in the past, numbers too small now Integrated</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT — mismatch between number of students and budget need decent migrant numbers for a sustainable program ELIGIBILITY — flexible options after 50 hours 100 HOURS — Clients sensitive re number of hours Lack of teacher training</td>
<td>NATIONAL COOPERATION — need money to get to professional development/ networking events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov</td>
<td>Client country of birth or language</td>
<td>Type of classes</td>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>Future directions and national cooperation</td>
<td>Client numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>No delivery</td>
<td>Students unhappy with changing institution to get SPP. ELIBILITY—50-hour limit a problem; defies classic curve of trauma reaction</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT—able to offer SPP in intermediate classes; at end if needed Need interview guidelines</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Former Yugoslavian, Khmer, Sudanese, Afghani</td>
<td>SPP specific—mainly in southwest with sufficient numbers Majority integrated Ethnic-specific at Blacktown</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT—planning impossible 100 HOURS—clients sensitive about not getting 100 hours TIMING—policy to enrol clients ASAP means dedicated SPP not always possible ETHNIC ELIGIBILITY—broaden criteria LABEL</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT—SPP can create isolation Integration allows for better pathways/more accurate placement ELIGIBILITY—Low ed/age stronger than TT re educational needs Research on ethnic groups NATIONAL cooperation—network of SPP teachers</td>
<td>1999/2000 1546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Former Yugoslavian 33%, Bosnian 13%, Afghani 9%, Burmese 9%</td>
<td>25% specific at TT venue 50% mixed orientation 25% home tutor</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT—ageing staff; potential loss of experience soon 100 HOURS Clients underestimate the demands of settlement and effect of trauma</td>
<td>Distance learning for SPP DIMA/SPP info translated NATIONAL COOPERATION—Staff development: materials/networking—develop information resources ELIGIBILITY broadened</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.4: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prov</th>
<th>Client country of birth or language</th>
<th>Type of classes</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Future directions and national cooperation</th>
<th>Client numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Former Yugoslavian, Afghani, Iran</td>
<td>SPP in one class with non-humanitarian (1 per term) Integrated for higher levels</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT —mismatch between number of students and budget allocated</td>
<td>ELIGIBILITY—expand and hours should vary Compare with DETYA Literacy and Numeracy program NATIONAL COOPERATION —development of resources especially ASLPR 0 to 0+ level</td>
<td>36 since Feb 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yugoslavian, Horn of Africa</td>
<td>50/50 Larger centres have specific SPP; Special sessions in half the centres</td>
<td>UNCERTAINTY —teachers reluctant to spend time developing resources Need for childcare Lack of bilingual African aides</td>
<td>Should continue FLEXIBILITY women with small children fewer hours/week Smaller classes, low intensity, skills—key focus on settlement</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bosnian (mainly via Germany)</td>
<td>SPP with some AMEP Ethnic specific initially but it led to too many problems</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT —community agencies unused to working with private sector; educating staff to different needs of AMEP curriculum ETHNIC—leads to dependence/reluctance to get out/interact with other groups</td>
<td>NATIONAL COOPERATION —lack of co-operation or national support; have tapped into NCELTR</td>
<td>44 since Mar 99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationship between original objectives and those identified for individual SPP providers

DIMA’s original objectives were the:

- development of skills for learning in a formal environment;
- improvement in self-esteem and confidence to promote independent learning and community life;
- development of English language skills;
- development of the ability to participate in group learning environment.

Providers have attempted to meet DIMA’s objectives for the SPP. They have, through their own experience, suggested slightly modified goals which place greater emphasis on assisting clients to operate in the community, through the development of language skills and knowledge/information appropriate to their settlement needs. The element of providing extra time was also important. As one provider said: ‘They want to learn and can’t help wasting time [due to effects of trauma].’

Providers have had difficulty managing the logistics of the program due to the sporadic arrival of refugees, the lack of notice of their arrival, and the need to quickly place them in a class. Philosophically, some believe that integrated classes are preferable to solely SPP classes, and many have found that there are a number of groups with similar learning needs who are suited to low-intensity classes, and they have attempted to provide these. However, others prefer to run a dedicated SPP class when the opportunity allows.

The SPP has been offered as a preparatory program by all providers. Some classes are low intensity, even the integrated low-level classes. Others are standard AMEP hours. The focus is on learning to learn and on acquiring simple every day English. Some providers work with the CSWE, others work at a very basic functional level.

The majority of providers have chosen to provide settlement information as part of the SPP, although this was not strictly in line with guidelines. They have identified their role as providing a bridge to settlement services and this has been the most appropriate way to achieve that goal.

Provision of bilingual support has been less prominent than was envisaged. Support at initial interview occurred routinely in a minority of cases but was more often available on request. Support during the program tended to be in the form of occasional help from bilingual aides. Difficulties with finding bilingual support at all for newly emerging communities or funding support especially for groups with small numbers were the reasons commonly cited for limited support.

Small class size was rarely mentioned by providers, and the option of community classes was not the norm.
The depth of experience and skill of teachers was mentioned by most providers, although it was acknowledged that not all teachers had had torture and trauma training, and a number expressed interest in national networking and professional development opportunities.

**Recommendations related to the information provided by the providers**

1. That the Special Preparatory Program be maintained.
2. That consideration be given to expanding the eligibility criteria to include Band A, pre-literate, non-roman script students and others with significant barriers that threaten to impede learning.
3. That the pivotal role of English classes at this stage of settlement be acknowledged through adoption of the following key factors of the program:
   
   The SPP is a program for vulnerable clients which:
   - provides a bridge from initial settlement and learning difficulties linked with past trauma to formal AMEP learning;
   - establishes routine, structure, and social network;
   - allows extra time in a formal AMEP program to settle in/learn to learn;
   - provides a supportive, non-threatening environment (an additional support system) through relevant personal contact;
   - provides connections/information about support and settlement services (links and referral processes).
4. That DIMA maintain a separate funding basis for the SPP in acknowledgment of the practical difficulties and time consuming nature of managing the SPP.
5. That DIMA facilitate greater assistance to small providers for bilingual support.
6. That the SPP remain primarily an orientation program but that the current 50-hour limit be extended to 12 months’ eligibility.
7. That DIMA allocate funds to professional development of teachers and other staff involved in the SPP.
8. That DIMA facilitate greater dissemination of information about management and practice through providers and teachers involved in SPP delivery.
9. That future guidelines for the SPP acknowledge the need for flexibility of delivery, and that most SPP delivery occurs in combined low intensity classes.
Chapter 3

Delivery model case studies

The purpose of the case studies was to collect information from the main parties (the provider, the teacher, the clients, and settlement support/community services) involved in a specific class. It was anticipated that the information would provide some insight into the dynamic of the SPP and its value for students.

The case studies form the third key component of the national evaluation. They were designed to provide a multi-faceted perspective on the SPP and complement the provider and teacher surveys.

Methodology

Three evaluative case studies were carried out. The three case studies were chosen from information given by providers about innovative practices in their SPP, and to meet DIMA’s requirement that one of the studies be a limited contract provider. The three case studies were:

- a limited contract provider with a volunteer tutor and buddy system in place;
- a large provider with a sophisticated outreach strategy and strong needs-based community program;
- a provider running AMEP classes including SPP clients, which is a model commonly adopted, especially when numbers are small.

The boundaries of the case studies were defined by including only those individuals and organisations which had direct contact with the class or with students as a result of linkages made by the provider. In a small number of instances, settlement agencies provided information about an individual in the class which assisted understanding of the health, personal or settlement issues that person was facing.

The case studies were carried out early in Term 4 2000 and related to the previous term’s class.

Social mapping diagrams

The social mapping diagrams for each case study provide a picture of the relationships between the students and those working toward their successful settlement, especially in relation to English language learning. For the diagrams presented here, the SPP class is the focus, and the links
show the flow of referral and input to the students in that class. The
information was compiled from a number of sources. Some information
about the systems and management of SPP clients was collected as part of
the Provider Survey. In addition, each provider was asked to complete a
checklist of people both within and outside the organisation who had been
involved with the class or individuals from that class. Follow-up interviews
with those contacts and the students form the basis of the social mapping
diagrams.

The classes

The three classes chosen involved teachers who had been nominated by
their provider as particularly experienced and/or innovative. Information
about their teaching approaches, goals and outcomes was therefore
collected from them, initially as part of the Teacher Survey. An individual
interview clarified information specific to the case study class.

Settlement/support services

Settlement or support services involved in the program were contacted or
visited and asked about their general involvement with the provider and
any specific involvement with the class or class members in question.

Students

Students from the classes were involved in a group interview process which
included responding to a short questionnaire read out by an interpreter or
bilingual officer, and participation in a group discussion with the
researcher and interpreters about their Term 3 class. The questionnaire
was used to identify potential issues for discussion. It involved a set of
agree/disagree statements modelled on those used in the national survey,
and questions about their confidence level going into Term 3, at the end of
Term 3 and going into a new class in Term 4. Students were also asked to
describe the most important thing for them about the class. The discussion
then looked at their experience of the class and issues around settlement.
Providers attempted to involve students who had left the class during the
term as well as those who had gone on to another class.

Students were told the purpose of the research—to look for ways to
improve the service given to new arrivals, and were asked to give the
researcher permission to tape the interview, for her own purposes. The
taping was an issue for some students but all were comfortable once they
knew that the tapes were for the researcher’s use only and that individuals
would not be identified in the report.

The client group discussion was piloted with a Somali group.

Findings

Not unexpectedly, the model described by each of the providers did not
exactly match the reality of the class under examination. In one centre, a
long-term relationship with the outreach program of the torture and trauma organisation had been suspended while the organisation established a different operational model. The experienced outreach worker who was part of the SPP program delivery had left and not been replaced, so the settlement sessions usually held did not occur. In one case, small numbers aggravated by attrition led to the splitting of the class during the term; in another, too many students led to a class split during term. In two cases, the organiser included students in the focus group who had completed their SPP hours but had stayed in the low intensity/low level class.

Case Study A: Limited-Contract Provider

Provider A is a small private organisation established in 1991 to provide a service to meet the educational, vocational and settlement needs of migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds. Initially its focus was vocational; however, in 1995 it was contracted by DIMA to provide a range of ESL/labour market programs, and from 1998 the AMEP. Provider A is the main provider in its state of Language, Literacy and Numeracy Training for migrants wanting to improve their English for employment purposes (funded by DETYA). In 1999 DIMA agreed to Provider A’s request to be allowed to offer the SPP, but under limited conditions; that is, with no home tutors or community classes, which are provided through the main provider, TAFE. Provider A has delivered the SPP to 36 clients. The SPP funding supports smaller classes and a component of the counsellor/liaison officer’s role. Students are allocated hours according to need, but are limited by the provider’s budget allocation. Normally a smaller number of hours is initially allocated and reviews are periodically undertaken to decide whether further hours are needed.

To obtain a picture of the class and its interactions with settlement services, information was collected from students, the refugee association settlement officer, Migrant Health, the Torture and Trauma agency, the director/counsellor and the teacher.

The class under review began with nine SPP students, eight from former Yugoslavia and one youth of Arabic background. Age varied from 17 to 53 years. One of the students interviewed had withdrawn, and the provider gave information about the others who had withdrawn. Four of the six continuing students were interviewed.

Social mapping diagram

The diagram shows the range of English language staff, settlement support services and any other groups/individuals who had contact with the class. The details of these relationships are described in the following pages. Solid lines indicate a relationship going from the organisation to another tier of that organisation, to another organisation or to the class or student. Dotted lines indicate a contact initiated from the other direction. Arrows have sometimes been used for clarity.
Social Mapping Diagram—Provider A

Refugee Association
Referral to T&I, Health, Refugee Association
Director
Teacher
Settlement Officer
Settlement and orientation assistance first few weeks, including advice on choice of AMEP provider
Referral to T&T, Health, Refugee Association
Two lots of fortnightly casework meetings
Medical, psychological help
Volunteer Tutor
Self-Referral
CLASS
Delivered/Delivered
From student

Social Mapping Diagram—Provider A

Refugee Association
Referral to T&I, Health, Refugee Association
Director
Teacher
Settlement Officer
Settlement and orientation assistance first few weeks, including advice on choice of AMEP provider
Referral to T&T, Health, Refugee Association
Two lots of fortnightly casework meetings
Medical, psychological help
Volunteer Tutor
Self-Referral
CLASS
Delivered/Delivered
From student

48 The Special PREP Program: Its evolution and its future
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Date of arrival</th>
<th>Home language</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years edn</th>
<th>SPP actual hours</th>
<th>Entry level</th>
<th>History Term 3</th>
<th>Competencies achieved</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
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<td>M 1</td>
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<td>Bosnian</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>S101, 102, 104, CSWE orientation to learning</td>
<td>Not enrolled but interested in returning</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>S101, 102, 103, 104, 107; CSWE orientation</td>
<td>Continuing in AMEP</td>
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<td>F 2</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>0+, -1, 1-, 0</td>
<td>Completed SPP; commenced AMEP late Term 3</td>
<td>S101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110, 111, 113, S1N14, S1N17; CSWE orientation and CSWE SPK/LST 1</td>
<td>Continuing in AMEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 2</td>
<td>June 2000</td>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Completed SPP; commenced AMEP late Term 3</td>
<td>S101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110, 111, 113, S1N14, S1N17; CSWE orientation and CSWE SPK/LST 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Date of arrival</td>
<td>Home language</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Years edn</td>
<td>SPP actual hours</td>
<td>Entry level</td>
<td>History Term 3</td>
<td>Competencies achieved</td>
<td>Term 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 4</td>
<td>June 2000</td>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Exit during term due to ill health</td>
<td>S101, 102, 104, S111, S1N17; CSWE orientation</td>
<td>Returned to SPP following term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 3</td>
<td>April 1999</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1, 1+, 0+, 0</td>
<td>Completed SPP hours: poor attender; stabbed during term</td>
<td>S103</td>
<td>Did not return; cannot be located by case worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 4</td>
<td>March 2000</td>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0+, 0+, 0+</td>
<td>Exit during term due to ill health</td>
<td>S101, 102, 110; CSWE orientation</td>
<td>Returned to AMEP following term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 5</td>
<td>June 2000</td>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Exit during term due to ill health</td>
<td>No competencies</td>
<td>Has not returned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The stories

Table 3.1 describes the students in the class and their achievements over the term. The students who were interviewed are the first five listed in the table. Interviewees included a middle-aged couple and their adult daughter (also SPP but not described here as she was in a higher level class), a young couple, and a young married woman with a child.

Settlement and health issues

The case worker (now counsellor/liaison officer) noted the initial buoyancy in new arrivals, and the later unravelling, especially in men. She had noted a common pattern of initial energies going into dealing with the urgent, practical aspects of settlement and then health problems, such as diabetes (mature onset, men especially) and migraines (women) appearing.

She spoke in particular of the group from the former Yugoslavia, where the men have the status as provider and head, although women are seen as partners. She noted the men’s inability to laugh at their mistakes, their impatience with the drill of language learning and their desire to get out to work. She felt they sometimes withdrew and got a health certificate to avoid class. Her description can be further explored through the description of Male 1 in the case study, who withdrew from his SPP class for health reasons.

Male 1 was over fifty, and developed adult onset diabetes. He described his nervousness and stress about being able to learn English and his difficulty focusing and concentrating. He was having trouble learning to manage his sugar levels at the same time as attending class; he couldn’t eat—which he needed to do regularly—because of feeling nervous at class. His appointments kept clashing with class and he didn’t like going out and coming back into class. He lost lots of time trying to find his way around to different doctors. He felt it was best to get his health under control and then come back to classes. He felt better at the time of the interview and raised the issue of coming back to class. The student, interested in returning, said: ‘Now the most important thing is to learn English… I get very nervous trying to communicate’. He didn’t want to have to rely on his daughter: ‘She’s got her own life’.

The story of another couple (Male 5 and Female 4), who withdrew for health reasons, was provided by a nurse at the migrant health service. Both were on anti-depressants. The husband was particularly unwell and had been referred to a psychologist but often did not turn up; the psychologist had tried going to his home or having the health liaison worker collect him. The children, teenagers, do not want to be separated from the parents to go to school. The teacher had observed him having headaches and being stressed.

Most students mentioned shifting house and ill health as the only reasons for missing class. However, the final member of the class had a different story. Male 3, the young man from Iraq, had arrived with his family and was quite streetwise. He had left home and got involved with a bad crowd,
which was when he was stabbed and there had been some police involvement. He had returned once after the class had been split and seemed intimidated by the changed class. The provider had tried more than once to follow up on his progress, but his case manager at migrant health was unable to find him.

The teacher and the class

_We understood the teacher very well; if we didn’t understand she would draw pictures on the board to help; she would go to great lengths to make it easier... she wasn’t just a teacher she was a friend also._

(F1)

The main teacher involved with this class had a community health/social work background prior to becoming an ESL teacher. One of the SPP students, who had a higher level of English, helped to interpret when she could. A volunteer also assisted students in the class, and the students found her very helpful. The teacher aimed to create a friendly, stress-free environment by using attractive posters and so on, and having clients in groups not rows. She also encouraged students to teach her some of their language. She monitored students’ progress and wellbeing through informal, one-to-one time, observation of learning and social behaviour, and referral to the educational counsellor when necessary.

Class relationships were assisted through an informal coffee morning as a get-to-know-you session. The provider’s aim of integrating students into the centre more generally was achieved by the common coffee break, by joint activities such as practising meeting and greeting with other class groups, and by introducing students to students of the same nationality in other classes.

The class ran for four sessions per week and focused on survival English, within the context of the CSWE syllabus. This included developing the skills to make appointments with health agencies, to find their nearest shops, to read a map of the local area, to use public transport, and how to ask for help. The teacher fostered personal skills (to develop the confidence to communicate with Australians and other nationalities in English, and to be prepared to make mistakes without loss of self-esteem). She used a range of print and audiovisual resources. Students commented that the audiovisual resources were helpful.

Within the SPP time, students learnt the roman alphabet, essential words, phrases and basic sentences. Her approach was very visual, for example describing a student’s clothing. All of the students commented on her willingness to use pictures to help comprehension, and the lengths to which she would go to make it easier for them to understand. She actively encouraged students to have a go in an atmosphere where no-one was made fun of.

This particular group did not have the usual number of excursions which would normally include the public library (the provider has only a small
in-house library), the hospital, migrant health, and the market. These classes do not have any involvement with computers.

The older students commented on the overwhelming nature of the first sessions. The older man described not being able to understand the teacher. He said he didn’t lack motivation to study by himself but he was unclear about which paper was which and what he was meant to be doing with his homework. He felt that it would be helpful to have someone to come into the class even once a week to explain in his home language.

**Achievements and outcomes**

The students’ responses have been organised under the goals of the program as defined by the providers (Chapter 2).

**Mastering settlement**

All the students who had attended class for the term reported on the importance of English for living in Australia, and their mastery of basic language. They also showed increased confidence in their ability to find their way around the city. They appreciated the focus on practising English for daily living, including making appointments, shopping and use of transport. They wanted to continue this focus on situational language to learn to deal with such things as schools, doctors, chemists and the post office. They found role playing useful.

Students commented on the disruption of having to move out of on-arrival accommodation and go into the private rental market. They also described the need to get to know yet another new environment—two people mentioned having moved more than ten times in five years. The settlement officer had assisted one couple to learn the new transport routes to the city/class, and others with childcare for class times. ‘I was terrified in the first few days when I shifted up there. I thought I’d never be able to find the bus, but now go backwards and forwards and to the doctor.’

**Building personal resilience**

One student (F1) initially found class hard but settled down after a couple of weeks. She reported that she had been in tears after the first few sessions and did not want to return to class but had been encouraged by the settlement officer to continue. Although she found it difficult she said joyfully that now the words were ‘sticking’ in her mind. Her assessment of her confidence in her ability to learn had increased in her new term’s class. The older male said he wasn’t so nervous any more. Other students were happy with their progress and commented that they had learnt to laugh.

**Developing capacity for learning**

Seven students were awarded the CSWE Orientation to Learning certificate, and three also achieved the CSWE speaking and listening modules. Seven of the nine have continued with their learning, either SPP or AMEP, including two who had withdrawn last term for health reasons.
Giving students extra time

No one specifically raised the issue of extra time; however, the issue of timing was raised by two people. The older male felt he should have waited to get his health under control (which in effect he has now done), and one young woman said she delayed starting because of ill health and concern about leaving a small child.

The disruption and stress of moving house suggests the value of less than full-time language learning being offered to humanitarian entrants during the early months.

Providing a supportive environment

All the students commented on the kindness of the staff at the centre, and their willingness to help with any personal situation. They specifically mentioned the director, their teacher and volunteer as particularly helpful. They chose this provider because it was smaller, with smaller classes which they thought would help them learn better. On their first visit the atmosphere seemed good. They mentioned the good atmosphere in the class between the teacher and the students.

Relationships with settlement and community services

The director and a very experienced nurse were interviewed at the Migrant Health Centre. The timing of the SPP/English classes was discussed. Like other agencies, they supported the new one month limit for on-arrival accommodation but felt it may cause more people to defer English class until they get settled. They felt there needed to be flexibility as some people were ‘busting to learn’ and went straight in while others, especially highly traumatised people, needed a gentler lead in.

Marriage breakdown, alcohol, isolation and domestic violence were common problems for people once they had finished with the English classes which had given structure to their day.

The bilingual case worker from the refugee association has since joined the provider’s staff as a counsellor and field placement worker. She has maintained close liaison with the SPP group and was their case worker last term. Formerly, she would alert the provider to client problems or the class teacher would consult the director who would alert the case manager about the problem. She would visit the client and they would try to resolve the problem together.

As this provider had only been running the SPP for a year, it was still establishing working relationships with settlement services. None the less, agencies spoke highly of the supportive environment provided by the provider, and noted students’ improved self-esteem as well as acquisition of English. Settlement services themselves were reorganising to implement new arrangements as a result of tendering for services. There was concern from a number of agencies that the new system, with services more dependent on volunteers than previously, would require them to provide a
greater level of coordination and support for clients. During the researcher’s visit to agencies there were discussions about Migrant Health providing an information session later in the year, and closer liaison with the torture and trauma organisation.

Summary

The first time we came, the atmosphere seemed very good.

(Student F2)

The students described a positive initial experience of English language learning, and their progress supported that. There were a number of instances of assistance with settlement that enabled students to continue with their English. Students were very comfortable with the provider, which appeared to run a well coordinated operation. Stronger interactions with settlement agencies will strengthen an already excellent operation. There seemed to be a good balance between providing support and maintaining distance. The willingness of two of the students to return after withdrawing, and the minimal disruption noticed by the splitting of the class partway through term further demonstrates that students feel secure.

Components contributing to the success of this class were:

- the goodwill between students, teacher and administration;
- the non-intimidating environment;
- the availability of the directors as well as the teacher, their genuine interest and the monitoring of all students;
- close involvement with the bilingual case worker, now a staff member;
- the teacher's teaching strategies, which put students at ease with learning;
- use of volunteer tutors;
- encouragement of student interaction within the class and with students in other classes (also an aid to transition).

Case Study B: Integrated class in an AMEP centre

Provider B is a large established provider operating without competition. It was involved in piloting an early SPP and now offers a range of learning options for SPP clients, including low and full intensity centre-based classes, community classes, a home tutor scheme and bilingual support. The management model allows for each centre to develop its own approach to delivery within general AMEP guidelines. Centrally administered client satisfaction surveys provide a quality control mechanism for improving performance at each centre. To provide as many students as possible with
access to bilingual support, the provider has trained a group of staff as bilingual aides. The list of these staff, who work at different centres, is available to all. Telephone and sometimes face-to-face contact can be organised to assist clients at any centre.

The SPP has a centrally based, part-time coordinator, who is responsible for supporting centres to deliver the best possible program. Central support includes the existence of a roving group of SPP bilingual officers, ongoing liaison with the trauma and torture organisation to provide training, and support for teachers of SPP students through a network of SPP support teachers (one at each centre). The network meets once a term to discuss SPP management issues (selection, allocation of hours etc) but is increasingly concerned with professional development around content and delivery strategies. However, each venue operates differently according to local management decisions.

At the venue used for the case study, students are interviewed and assessed for class placement by AMEP teachers. Potential SPP students are identified by the central SPP coordinator who advises on the total hours per term available at that venue. Humanitarian clients are offered an option of a low intensity (2x2 hours) class with up to 100 hours. Clients self-select for these, and only a small number per term choose this option. Other SPP hours are offered in a balance between budget and need. However, in general, priority is given to learners who show signs of difficulty in settling into class and they are again offered the low intensity class.

The SPP support teacher, who was also the teacher interviewed for this case study, informs teachers that they have SPP students, and sends information to each new SPP student, which outlines what the SPP entitlement means, and how many hours they have been allocated. She also liaises with the Migrant Resource Centre to run settlement sessions once a term. She also follows up students who stop coming during term, and offers options for learning. Some terms she organises an orientation coffee morning which tends to generate discussion about settlement issues. She also works with the Home Tutor Scheme to check whether students are ready to come to class. She noted the importance of informal contact with students at the settlement sessions both to give students access to a source of support and for the opportunity the session provided for students to voice issues.

For this case study, interviews were carried out with the SPP coordinator, the two bilingual liaison officers, the local Migrant Resource Centre, the DIMA case officer mentioned by the students, the torture and trauma organisation (unfortunately the relevant worker had left), and the students who had continued into Term 4. At the centre, the teacher of the selected class was also the SPP support teacher, so both her roles were explored.

The class was an integrated SPP/AMEP class. Most of the students had joined the class during 2000, one late in Term 3. Most of the class had continued into Term 4 and the AMEP. The class included students from a range of nationalities and language groups. Five of the students were
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<th>Client</th>
<th>Date of arrival</th>
<th>Home language</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years edn</th>
<th>SPP hours</th>
<th>Entry level</th>
<th>History Term 3</th>
<th>Competencies achieved</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>F 1</td>
<td>June 2000</td>
<td>Farsi</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>April 2000</td>
<td>Persian (Farsi)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>93 actual/98 offered</td>
<td></td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>S203, 204, 205, 207, 212, 213, S101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113 CSWE mix lng 2; CSWE SPR/LST 2</td>
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<td>S101, 102, 103, 104, 106, CSWE orientation 1</td>
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### Table 3.2:  Continued

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<th>Age</th>
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<th>Entry level</th>
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<th>Competencies achieved</th>
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</tr>
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<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>54 actual/plus 61 offered</td>
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<td>S101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, S201, 202, 204, 206, 207, 208, 210, 212, 213, 214, 215, S1N17; CSWE 1, 2</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commenced SPP late Term 3</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Commencing AMEP Term 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Iraqi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Part of SPP Term 3</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Accident; Had finished SPP hours elsewhere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interviewed (F1, F2, F3, F5, M2), with two interpreters. One student struggled without an interpreter but actively chose to be involved despite experiencing great difficulty with understanding the questions.

Social mapping diagram

The diagram shows the range of English language staff, settlement support services and other groups/individuals who had contact with the class.

The stories

Table 3.2 summarises the class members, their background and their progress in language learning. Students were not asked about past traumatic experiences or trauma recovery. The table includes students who completed their SPP hours earlier in the year but remained in the low intensity class. It is useful to see the progress they have made. Records are incomplete for two students, one of whom had recently arrived while the other left without completing SPP due to an accident.

The teacher and the class

I liked everything, especially the teacher... I expected it to be difficult; I didn’t think I’d be able to learn anything at the start.

(Student F2)

These SPP students joined a slow learners group. The teacher was a very experienced AMEP teacher who had worked with refugees and in the safe havens. Within the classroom she aimed to keep the class and the language highly predictable, and to work on mastery of a small area of English. For example, each day student would be involved in an activity about greetings, which allowed them to register variation in emotions from day to day. A second daily activity encouraged students to build sentences around attendance. Students’ individual level dictated what they would choose to write, thus meeting the needs of different paced learners. Both these activities had a secondary role in building trust and social interaction, and provided the teacher with a checking mechanism. Sometimes students opened up and told the teacher of difficulties such as sleeplessness, headaches, and she would suggest referral options for them.

Halfway through term, the class started using the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) once a week. Students could learn to use the computer, do dictation or reading/comprehension. The ILC teacher and a volunteer tutor, as well as the teacher, were available to assist. Two volunteer tutors each assisted one day per week with writing. Students were very enthusiastic about using computers.

The teacher’s intention was to make slow progress toward the CSWE 1, plus use Certificate in English Language Learning foundation level, which is linked to community/adult learning and defined in terms of practical achievements. In fact she found managing the two systems too complex.
The teacher was concerned about the impact of rolling enrolments on the class. During the term the class became too large and was reduced from 30 to 20 students. Some students moved into a higher intensity class. The teacher noted that some of those left behind felt angry, and some work needed to be done to deal with this (none of the students mentioned this event). She also mentioned that she needed to spend time settling each new student, which reduced her time with existing students.

Some of the students chose to remain in a lower intensity class for Term 4. This class met twice a week and allowed students to follow their interests. Some fairly traumatised students chose this option.

Achievements and outcomes

The students' comments have been organised under the goals of the program as defined by the providers.

Mastering settlement

Most students said it took a long time to adjust to a new country, but most said they felt settled now. Activities and skills linked to daily living—such as basic communication, being able to go to the market, regulations and laws, and how to get around on public transport—were seen as good aspects of their class: ‘Eventually I could conduct a conversation without an interpreter’. They felt that they had learnt a bit about the Australian way of life in their class.

Most people in the group were keen to get a job, either in the area they had formerly worked or at anything (someone with no experience). One woman wanted to do vocational English to get back into nursing.

Building personal resilience

All the students were happy with their progress in class. Two had started classes worried or nervous and felt OK or confident at the end of term. The others felt OK from the start. One Arabic student had ‘expected it to be difficult and that she would be unable to learn’, but found she could.

Another (F4) had learnt German before coming to Australia and kept mixing the two. Eventually she was able to manage basic conversation. The teacher described one high-level learner who lacked confidence about tackling challenges, but who agreed by the end of term to go up a level. The teacher’s strategy had been to give constant positive feedback and to withdraw any task if she seemed ‘blocked’ about doing it.

Developing capacity for learning

All the students in the class made gains in their language learning (see Table 3.2). Six achieved CSWE Orientation to Learning Certificate, and a number advanced rapidly. One Somali student, with no formal education, initially spent 10 minutes writing the day and date and now writes sentences. A Bosnian student with major memory problems passed a writing competency. One student who worked with a volunteer tutor to achieve recognition of sentence order is now an independent writer.
Students expressed clear short-term goals such as more reading and writing, working to bring speaking skills up to the level of aural comprehension skills, and being able to communicate better.

**Giving students extra time**

Students mentioned having to miss class to attend to childcare, to find new accommodation, take a sick mother to appointments, or their own appointments at DIMA or Centrelink.

**Providing a supportive environment**

Students recorded an increase in their confidence at the end compared to the start of the term. Some felt slightly less confident starting a new class in Term 4. A student with limited ability kept on coming. The students felt the teacher was great.

**Relationships with settlement and community services**

This class had less exposure to settlement services than would normally be the case. The settlement session organised to be held at the Migrant Resource Centre was cancelled due to lack of interpreter availability. Students from former Yugoslavia attended a session run at the centre. The MRC director expressed enthusiasm for running sessions as a way of physically bringing people into the MRC to meet staff and see what they do, which includes providing information about settlement services and an active sponsorship support program (all staff are qualified immigration agents). The loss of the established link with the trauma and torture agency through an outreach worker who visited the Centre was regrettable, however one student had found the T&T agency helpful.

Students also mentioned the help they had received from the MRC, two DIMA officers, a health worker and one from Centrelink.

**Bilingual liaison officers**

The bilingual liaison officers (BLO) on the provider’s staff played an important role for at least one student in this class. The former Yugoslavian worker visited once a month in Term 3, introduced herself to students and offered them support. Thereafter, they could speak to her informally or book a time to meet. Her main areas of work were assistance with matters relating to language learning: change of program, negotiating special arrangements, childcare, issues relating to health and Centrelink. The Somali worker listed a similar set of concerns (she also assists Middle East Arabic speakers) such as issues about classes, childcare, housing and health appointments. Both said that they also assisted clients with such matters as filling in forms and clarifying uncertainties about appointments.

Childcare issues were clearly important for students. The BLOs described two examples of childcare issues. The first concerned M 2, who described his difficulty in finding childcare for their children. As a result his wife was unable to attend classes. He was clearly very concerned about this situation but said that the BLO had ‘really been able to help, had made an
effort to sort out a preschool’. The second, described, by the Somali BLO, concerned a woman (who had been in the original SPP class) who could only get childcare four days of the week, and was unable to explain to the teacher why she could not attend the fifth day. The BLO was able to negotiate a different learning arrangement over four days.

The Bilingual Liaison Officers described their role as being more than information provision. They played an active role in facilitating learning and dealing with issues causing students problems. They made themselves available to students at the Centre and by phone contact at other times. They also followed up ‘no shows’ and people who had missed class. They felt that contact with someone of their own language gave students the chance to deal with reasons for non-attendance. Issues with childcare, frequently the reason for non-attendance, could be dealt with by finding a childcare place or, if that was not possible or suitable, BLOs could help students apply for a home tutor.

One BLO said her focus was on the sponsored migrants who do not have such easy access to settlement services. She felt it was important to let them know what services they could use.

Summary

The class appeared to be meeting the goals of the program. All students had made actual language gains, and had been regular attenders. The teacher used low-key activities and the Bilingual Liaison Officers as sources of feedback about students’ emotional state, educational and settlement issues. Her curriculum and delivery aimed for predictable, repetitive tasks which helped build students’ skills as learners. The students were extremely enthusiastic about their teacher and keen to continue with language learning. Students were provided with settlement information—although some may have missed out in Term 3 due to one session being cancelled. The Bilingual Liaison Officers played a critical role in assisting students with settlement and class needs which assisted them to manage settlement issues more easily and to continue participating in class.

Components contributing to the success of this class were:

- bilingual support;
- the teacher’s approach, including her strategies for opening communication about emotions and gathering feedback;
- the teacher’s ability to provide challenges/supports to suit individual abilities and needs;
- volunteer support, especially with the ILC.

Case Study C: Community class

Provider C is a large provider without competition from another AMEP provider. It was involved in an early pilot study of strategies for SPP
teaching. It has provided SPP classes to 1268 students since 1997. It offers a range of classes in the city as well as others at community venues, and a Home Tutor Scheme. It also manages a unique system of holding classes, which enable small groups of SPP and other AMEP students who enrol partway through a term to attend a low-intensity, low-level class rather than wait until the next term. Initial assessment of students' entry level is done by an independent service—one of the 'providers' that advises this provider of potential SPP clients. Students unable to attend class are offered a home tutor. The provider has a well-developed counselling unit with staff qualified to provide clinical counselling.

The SPP coordinator liaises with all students and has an outreach role to bring in potential clients. She has developed her outreach role to include publicity in multiple languages, phone calls and visits to known new arrivals, liaison with community groups to identify potential clients and design a program appropriate to their needs, and cold calling in areas where new communities have settled. To encourage timid migrants, who are more likely to attend class if they have physically visited the venue, she takes them to a class to meet teacher and childcare staff, and other students. To help support students when they first join a class, she liaises with home tutors, settlement workers and women's refuge workers to accompany the student to the first class. Home tutors can continue to support students while they are in the SPP. She liaises with the Home Tutor Scheme coordinator to identify students who could enter the low intensity class, and with the Community Program coordinator of higher intensity classes (part time: eight hours/three sessions per week) about students able to move out of the low intensity class.

The SPP coordinator works closely with a range of settlement agencies to assist clients with settlement needs. A number of innovative programs have been developed including a nutrition program, piloted in 1999, and a health awareness program. A popular community course run over two weeks in the term breaks enables clients to take their learners permit, or licence transfer test, either written or oral (negotiated with Centrelink and the police department). The pass rate for this program is 95%.

To overcome students' concern about finding acceptable childcare, the Provider employs a bilingual childcare worker of a language group that matches at least some of the students in the class.

The provider carries out regular client feedback surveys, translated/interpreted by the social workers. A survey is also sent home to the family asking for feedback.

Interviews were carried out with the director, the SPP coordinator, the home tutor coordinator, the volunteer tutor, the childcare worker, the teacher and all the students in two classes (in two sessions).
and trauma agency, and a worker at the Women’s Multicultural Refuge Service. The provider’s counsellor was overseas at the time of interview.

**Social mapping diagram**

Social mapping diagram: Provider C describes the connections between the class, the provider and settlement services.

**The stories**

*One of the reasons we come to this class is to interact with other students; we would rather study English this way…*

(older Bosnian woman)

Students reached this class by a variety of routes. Settlement agencies were mentioned, as was encouragement from friends or family. The SPP coordinator had suggested the class to the Bosnian couple.

Two of the students—M1, who was worried about travelling, and F1 (his wife)—had a home tutor prior to commencing classes. They were then taken by the coordinator to a convenient class. However, she later transferred them to the low intensity class as they found the pace too fast. He described his confusion when he joined the class:

*I prefer to have an interpreter first off to help us know what is going to be covered. It took two months to comprehend all that… I copied everything without knowing what I was doing.*

Barriers to learning were the disruption of moving house frequently, own or children’s sickness, appointments, feeling tired or being unable to get to class alone.

The orientation/settlement talk occurred during the term. One student had used the information to buy a washing machine. One student commented that it would be good to have input at various stages, but at the beginning to provide an offer of assistance and advice on physical and mental health. More positive comments were made about the teacher’s helpfulness with settlement issues.

Learning to drive or passing a licence transfer test was a priority for a number of students, both men and women. As part of the Community Program’s activities, the teacher offered a two week, 17-hour driving test program during the holidays. She felt it was a great incentive for students to learn to read (traffic signs). One student had passed his test in the holidays.

Table 3.3 describes the students and their progress. Achievements were provided in terms of ASLPR rather than CSWE competencies, as some students’ records did not record any competencies achieved.
The Special PREP Program: Its evolution and its future
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Date of arrival</th>
<th>Home language</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years edn</th>
<th>SPP hours actual/offered</th>
<th>Entry level</th>
<th>History Term 3</th>
<th>Competencies achieved</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>July 1999</td>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95/98</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td>SPP hours in a different low intensity class</td>
<td>0 comp. ASLPR 0+ 0+ 0 0</td>
<td>AMEP low intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>July 1999</td>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>98/100</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td>SPP hours in a different low intensity class</td>
<td>0 comp. 0+ 0+ 0 0 Client hard of hearing: started with home tutor</td>
<td>AMEP low intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Feb 2000</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88/98</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td>SPP hours in low intensity class</td>
<td>0 comp. 0+ 0+ 0+ 0+</td>
<td>AMEP low intensity: same teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>Feb 2000</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>78/82</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td>SPP hours in low intensity class</td>
<td>S104, 111</td>
<td>AMEP low intensity: same teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>Nov 1999</td>
<td>Saho/Arabic</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>95/97</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td>SPP hours in low intensity class</td>
<td>0 comp. 0+ 0+ 0+ 0+</td>
<td>AMEP low intensity: same teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3: Continued

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Date of arrival</th>
<th>Home language</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years edn</th>
<th>SPP hours</th>
<th>Entry level</th>
<th>History Term 3</th>
<th>Competencies achieved</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>actual/offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>18/66</td>
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<td>SPP hours in low intensity class</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td>AMEP low intensity; same teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>F5</td>
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<td>97/99</td>
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<td>S104, 107, 109, 111</td>
<td>AMEP higher intensity (8hrs/week); different teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>March 2000</td>
<td>Bosnian</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>94/99</td>
<td>0 0 0+ 0+</td>
<td>SPP hours in low intensity class; driving test passed</td>
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<td>AMEP higher intensity; different teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6</td>
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<td>86/98</td>
<td>1- 1- 0+ 0+</td>
<td>SPP hours in low intensity class</td>
<td>S104, 107, 111</td>
<td>Right ear damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Persian Iran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not formally enrolled but interested in joining class
The teacher and the class

The teacher was helpful, talked slowly, showed us, uses gestures (hand)... if we can't read, she shows us pictures...

(Arabic woman F2)

We learnt how to behave with outside people...

(Eritrean woman)

The teacher was a very experienced migrant English teacher who took a personal interest in her students. This mixed class included some very slow learners as well as ones who went on to a higher intensity class the next term. This class was a low-level class which included a mix of SPP, former SPP and some AMEP students unable to make the jump into regular AMEP classes. It ran for two, 2-hour sessions weekly. It was run in a church hall near the city centre, with good public transport access.

There were 17 students in the class, of whom nine were SPP students. Some of the others began as SPP students and have gone on to AMEP hours, but felt unable to move into higher level classes. A large percentage of that group had little or no formal education in their first language. The class contained students from a range of language and cultural groups, including from Somalia, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran and former Yugoslavia.

With basic students, the teacher focused on personal information (name and address) and greetings. With the more advanced students, she introduced conversation, reading and slightly harder work sheets. She took a functional approach, with little emphasis on tapes. In particular, she used visual aides to assist students. Many students commented that this approach was excellent. She also provided bilingual dictionaries for literate students.

There were two volunteers in the class. The regular volunteer was a woman who previously worked with the home tutor and literacy schemes. She helped the teacher by helping individual students with writing, carrying out administration tasks, and working with small groups. Her focus was on helping students to gain confidence, first to start talking and later to go on to other classes. The teacher felt it would be difficult to properly teach this size class without the volunteer tutor’s help. The second volunteer was a highly motivated former student (Bosnian) who assisted the Bosnian SPP students.

The informal child minding arrangement in a room adjacent to the class was popular with the women, both mothers of young children and older women. During the break they gravitated into the room and spent the time with the children. The bilingual childminder (Iraqi/Arabic speaking) saw her role as providing childminding close to the class. She felt that the women felt more comfortable leaving their children with her than with a stranger. She acted as interpreter in the class for the teacher on occasions, and also for students away from class. She felt they saw her as a confidante, and would talk to her about problems or ask for advice on
everyday activities, such as what to say to the hairdresser. She helped students gain confidence travelling to class by meeting them at the railway station to walk to class, and giving them strategies to help identify the right station. As she was a Shi’ite she was able to give advice about finding acceptable foods.

The teacher encouraged students to phone her personally if they could not attend class. This gave them practice at using the telephone as well as fostering a sense of the teacher's interest in their attendance.

This class had a range of views about what they had learnt about the 'Australian way of life' such as: peace and freedom, the discipline of the Australian way (eg being on time for appointments, and public transport that comes on time); the cleanliness of the environment; that girls were free to choose their husbands; how to call the police; how to communicate with neighbours; pay bills; do shopping. Students were impressed with the friendliness and helpfulness of Australians; one woman described an Australian neighbour who offered to help her with learning English and who had become a friend.

Achievements and outcomes

The students’ responses have been organised under the goals of the program as defined by the providers (Chapter 2).

Mastering settlement

We learnt how to come and go home...

(older Persian woman F1)

Students mentioned learning to use the telephone, to make appointments with the doctor, to find their way around the city, or simply to get to class. Being able to give their own personal information, and manage everyday life such as doing basic shopping were also mentioned.

We learnt a lot considering... we learnt much more than just English. A good introduction to every day life...

Building personal resilience

Most students who stayed in the low level group felt OK about their class from the beginning. The three students who were quicker learners began Term 3 worried about their English class, but gained in confidence by the end of term, and had maintained their confidence in the new class. One student (F3) had gone from being a beginner to assisting the teacher in class and interpreting for other students. Another wanted to improve her English so she was not dependent on her children.

Developing capacity for learning

Two of the students had moved, with two other students from the low intensity class, onto a higher intensity community class in Term 4. One student (M3), formerly a truck driver, was delighted that he had passed his licence test. Two women described the need to put English as a priority over family and cooking, which in their culture come first.
Students had clear short-term goals for English learning. For some, it was writing and reading, others wanted to improve their conversation skills. One wanted to learn to drive and a couple were keen to improve their English to get a job.

Giving students extra time

The extra hours gave clients the opportunity to ease into learning and gain confidence in their ability to tackle more. The older Persian couple had found a pace that suited them, and the Bosnian couple, with the confidence they had developed, had moved quickly into a higher intensity class.

Providing a supportive environment

Whilst students mainly came to learn English, they mentioned the social value of the classes as a motivator. They preferred to interact with other students than learn alone. They listed the teacher, both in and outside the classroom, the volunteer and a home tutor as particularly helpful people.

Relationships with settlement services

The strong outreach component of this program meant that the SPP coordinator knew every student in the program, and followed their progress into the AMEP. She was also aware of their personal circumstances and able to refer students to appropriate settlement agencies. In this class, there were two women (formerly SPP clients) who were clients of the Women’s Multicultural Refuge Service, and had ongoing fear and anxiety attached to their former husbands. Other clients had been helped with housing issues.

Groups involved with the students were: the migrant liaison officers at Centrelink, the torture and trauma agency, the local Migrant Resource Centre, the Women’s Multicultural Refuge Service, a church-run migrant centre which was a source of referral for students wanting to sponsor relatives, and other emergency relief and charitable groups.

The provider’s counsellor gave a settlement talk, with interpreters, mid-term which provided information on learner pathways, the 100 hours, class choices, and information on settlement procedures (eg where to buy second-hand white goods), bilingual doctors, emergency and crisis care, illegality of domestic violence including beating children, and refuges. The counsellors have produced a reference booklet which is given to students. Late in the term, the provider convened a focus group discussion with key settlement and ethnic community services, to discuss the services of the AMES, and their experience of its strengths and weaknesses. All participants were happy with the service provided, and have received positive feedback from students. Three mentioned the services of the SPP, and the benefits of community venues. All expressed concern about the 5-year eligibility, especially for women and severely traumatised clients. They were also concerned at the 510-hour limit for clients who had not achieved functional English.
Summary

Provider C had an extremely well run set of services with excellent connections between its different arms. Students were encouraged and supported from before enrolment through their early language learning. The personal commitment of the SPP coordinator to individual success was impressive, but involved long hours, including out-of-hours work. The links with settlement services were very strong, with referral and follow-up going both ways.

Students appreciated the practical assistance given by the bilingual childminder and the teacher, especially with mastering travel to and from class. The teacher’s warm, helpful approach, the availability of the childminder and the quiet supportive volunteer tutor were important factors in the class’s smooth running and the general sense of security. The teacher’s ability to provide visual cues was popular with the students.

Components contributing to the success of this class were:

- bilingual support linked with, but also apart from class;
- settlement support from teacher and other provider staff;
- the teacher’s strategies—the focus on everyday needs, including use of the phone, language for shopping/appointments, physical orientation, and the visual approaches she used;
- low intensity;
- use of a volunteer and links to the Home Tutor Scheme;
- creation of a friendly, secure environment;
- catering to individual needs.

Summary of case studies

The three classes under review were examples of the realities of running SPP classes. The case studies demonstrated the ingredients that go into the SPP cake to cater for a vulnerable student group.

Teachers and providers are providing different types of programs which none the less appear to be achieving DIMA’s and their own objectives. All three classes were low intensity classes with a mix of SPP/AMEP students, some bilingual and volunteer support. All combined the teaching of practical language linked to settlement and everyday experience and the development of students’ skills as learners (preparation for the AMEP). In a variation from the original DIMA guidelines, none of the classes was entirely SPP, only one was at a community venue, and all were larger than originally envisaged. All three had some volunteer and bilingual support. All provided some practical settlement support rather than information only. The practical difficulty of rolling enrolments and irregular attendance affected two of the three classes.
The English classes were an important focus of students’ lives in the early stages of settlement, and their commitment to learning was evident. Affection and gratitude for the teacher’s efforts were universal. The social aspect of the classes was mentioned frequently by students at the community class and the small provider, and observed between members of the third group.

Teachers succeeded in building up students’ skills and confidence to get to class and carry out everyday tasks. Even extremely slow learners showed a sense of achievement at mastering basic language and settlement. Equally, teaching strategies appeared to be building the confidence of anxious but potentially faster learners. In all three case studies, the students most likely to start term anxious were the faster learners with vocational goals. It was clearly advantageous to build up their confidence in a non-pressured environment and then move them on.

Students were accessing a range of settlement services, sometimes through their on-arrival support officer, sometimes through the language provider. Settlement agencies clearly felt that the SPP and the AMEP providers played a vital role in monitoring and referral, and in letting students know about their services.

The availability of bilingual support was an extremely important element of the students’ security, and also the source of information about their issues. Two older students suggested it would be useful to have an explanation of classroom procedure and more bilingual support at the beginning.

The teaching methods most popular with students were the use of visual aids wherever possible, a focus on reality-based scenarios and development of practical communication skills, and orientation to the local area. Mastery of public transport was of critical importance, and a major hurdle for a significant number of students. The ability to make medical appointments was also important, as health problems were common and ongoing.

**Recommendations**

The insights afforded by the case studies support the views of providers. In practice, these teachers were working to achieve the goals described by the providers, and their approach embodied the key factors described in Recommendation 3. These findings give further support for Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. In addition, they suggest directions for curriculum and methodology (Recommendation 9).

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1. **Evaluative case studies:** an investigation carried out in order to evaluate policy or practice. (Nunan, 1992, p.78)
Chapter 4

Teacher survey

Methodology

A teacher survey was carried out to:

- document different learning and teaching materials and methodologies;
- identify models which seem particularly successful;
- document how settlement services and learning arrangements are integrated in practice;
- document links to mainstream AMEP;
- identify issues for practice and delivery.

Survey

Providers were asked to identify one to three teachers who had extensive experience of the SPP Program, or were involved in innovative teaching approaches.

The teachers identified by their organisation were contacted in August, and asked to respond to a mailed/emailed questionnaire (Appendix 2). The questionnaire explored the type of classes being taught: content, language groups represented, access to other learning options, and links with settlement services. Teachers were asked to describe their goals and assess how well they were achieving them. They were also asked about how they monitor students’ wellbeing, and about the sort of support they receive themselves. They were invited to comment on issues in teaching the SPP, and on the components they felt were most important for the SPP. The questionnaire was piloted with two teachers.

Sample

Twenty-three teachers were nominated and sent surveys toward the end of Term 3. A total of 16 responded within the time limit. One late response could not be included in the analysis.

The language groups taught were consistent with the main SPP client groups nationally: predominantly students from former Yugoslavia, the Horn of Africa and Arabic speakers.
Learning arrangements

Teachers were asked about the types of class they had taught, and other learning arrangements available and used by students. Most teachers had taught an AMEP class with some SPP students in it (13) and four had taught an SPP or orientation class (multiple answers were possible).

Students had access to a range of learning options. The most common were:

- home and classroom volunteer tutors (11)
- independent learning centre (10)
- bilingual support in class (9) and
- programs at community venues (7).

Teachers indicated that students took advantage of these options, although a number mentioned that SPP students could not access distance learning options during their SPP hours.

Links with settlement services

Teachers were also asked to describe the relationship of the SPP with settlement services; in some cases more than one interaction existed. Most (13 out of 15) teachers said that settlement services were involved with their program for SPP clients. Providers most commonly provide information about services as part of their program for SPP clients (9). Referral of individual clients to services was the next most common link (8), followed by settlement sessions held at the provider’s venue for SPP and AMEP clients (7). Six teachers said settlement services held their own sessions. In two cases, SPP students visited settlement services as part of their program, and five teachers said SPP low-level AMEP students visit settlement services.

Teachers were asked what role they play in monitoring how students are coping. Most teachers ticked a number of responses. Observation of learning and social behaviour was most commonly mentioned (14), and referral to an educational counsellor or SPP coordinator in their organisation. Using one-to-one time (11) and direct referral (10) were also popular. Less common were individual interviews in response to concerns about a student (7) or regular individual interview (2).

The most important components of the SPP

The two most successful class types, in the teachers’ opinion, are SPP with AMEP and CSWE, or SPP only with a specific SPP orientation in a class of less than 16 hours per week. Half favoured 1–10 hours, the rest 11–15 hours. Reasons for their choice were that short (two-hour sessions) were as much as clients could cope with due to factors such as concentration problems, age and poor absorption of information. Teachers were divided about the timing of SPP, with slightly more seeing it as a preparatory rather
than an intervention program. Most believed SPP hours should vary according to need, although 51–100 hours was the most popular range.

Other factors which contribute to best practice included availability of volunteer tutors or aides, settlement sessions, and (small) class size. Volunteers helped with the disparate levels in the class, and in some cases focused on helping individuals or small groups model basic settlement activities such as shopping or banking. Some teachers felt that small classes were essential for highly traumatised clients; however, providing for a gentle pace of learning and shorter classes were seen as the more important strategies.

Teachers varied in their assessment of the importance of students staying with the same teacher for more than one term.

**Teaching goals and strategies**

Teachers were asked about their teaching goals and the teaching strategies they employed. They were asked to list these under the key factors agreed on by providers: mastery of settlement, personal skills, learning skills, extra time, and provision of a secure environment. Table 4.1 summarises their responses in relation to settlement.

Table 4.2 summarises teachers’ goals in relation to personal and learning skills, and the strategies they use to achieve these. There is some overlap between these strategies and those in Table 4.1 in terms of content, due to the emphasis by many teachers on a needs-based language focus.

Teachers aimed to create a relaxed, friendly, secure, supportive, humorous environment. Most mentioned a pleasant physical environment, which they variously described as including accessible coffee rooms, access to table tennis, availability of food, and an informal environment such as a community hall.

Some spoke of the importance of recognising students’ past life: qualifications, work, way of life, and acknowledging learning skills which may be affected at the current time.

**Table 4.1: Teachers’ settlement goals and strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement goals</th>
<th>Activities and strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To assist clients’ orientation to local area:</td>
<td>Excursions and visits, including actual travel by public transport, learning to read a map, to ask for and follow directions, buy tickets etc. shop, go out for coffee, learn banking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• public transport</td>
<td>Base class activities around a tourist booklet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• health centre or other services</td>
<td>Settlement sessions, visits to services or by services, print material, resource booklet, teacher’s own story booklets and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• shopping, handling money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to counselling: provide information about settlement services, to understand who provides what, how to access services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 4 Teacher survey 77
### Table 4.1: Settlement goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Activities and strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assist with getting client health needs met; network for best results for client; direct students to essential services when needed</td>
<td>Tapes about visiting dentist etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use general on-arrival materials with settlement themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up with referral agencies to ensure a positive outcome has been achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on basic English to cope with general settlement issues; to feel comfortable communicating in basic situations; to be able to make appointments; help clients gain control by being able to do things for themselves</td>
<td>Tape made for each student to practice personal information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan program in context of settlement, to build autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class based around shared experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk about families when appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping and cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give students knowledge and experience of living in Australia; the beginnings of feeling this could be a nice place to live, life could be good again, and that help is available</td>
<td>Excursions to the country or nearby beauty spots; Eatsmart program to teach good nutrition/shopping and cooking skills in an Australian environment; housing vocabulary and terminology; content with an Aussie social life focus; ‘Rewards’ pre-intermediate and intermediate for speaking and listening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.2: Teachers’ goals and strategies around personal and learning skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Activities and strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal skills</strong></td>
<td>Strategies to reinforce punctuality and regular attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in themselves, and in their ability to learn English</td>
<td>Low key assessment or reward for achievement of basic skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining a positive outlook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can express emotions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build self esteem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use teaching strategies which enable students to see their success</td>
<td>Use of group work/pairwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>Use of phone: call teacher if can’t come etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to interact with classmates and strangers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Activities and strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreation/relaxation</td>
<td>Use of individual language tapes for pronunciation and conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher uses stories/materials about people in the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Polite conversation: offering, inviting, accepting, declining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning skills

Improve study skills:
- reflecting on what has been taught/independent revision
- use of computer, ILC and library

Preparation for Certificate 1 CSWE

- Organise and keep a personal study folder
- Use of simple grammar/text book and bilingual or picture dictionary
- A booklet with tapes (written by teacher)
- Begin reading and writing

Teaching methods

Teachers were asked to describe the strategies they use to meet SPP clients’ needs. Although there was some variation amongst the group, there were a number of key elements. The goals and strategies were:

Promote security

- Be inclusive, make each student feel I want them there.
- Create a predictable class format.
- Avoid being authoritarian.
- Use non-threatening/neutral material.
- Avoid putting individuals ‘on the spot’.
- Give students ‘space’ and flexibility within the class environment.
- Be nurturing and encouraging.
- Be fairly teacher-centred and teacher-directed at this stage.

Encourage interaction

- Use breaks to build social contact and allow mothers to spend time with children.
- Encourage movement through use of music, and freedom to mix and practise speaking.
- Encourage group work/pair work.
Acknowledging personal and cultural contexts

- Work from an understanding of the individual’s situation—their culture, whether they have family support here, previous achievements and current potential.
- Respond to cultural preferences for particular learning styles.

Acknowledging limitations on learning

- Use a slow pace generally but allow quicker students to work at a different pace.
- Include lots of repetition and revision.
- Plan for limited concentration span.

Use humour

- Use gentle humour.
- Encourage students to have a go, and not fear being made fun of.

Base curriculum around students’ current experiences

- Be flexible; respond to students’ everyday experiences.
- Place emphasis on concrete not abstract.
- Use language experience, realia.
- Use visual material, drawings on board, videos etc.

Materials

Teachers mentioned using a range of materials including, in most cases, some of their own or colleagues’ creation. Some teachers assembled materials for each student, such as audio tapes made with each student’s personal information, for them to practise at home. Where teachers referred to using existing materials, they invariably mentioned simplifying or modifying the material to suit their clients’ needs. There was no single resource mentioned by more than a couple of people, nor recommended in its entirety. All teachers described using a variety of activities and resources with their classes. Games, work sheets, booklets, tapes and other activities made by the teacher were frequently mentioned.

Measures of success

Teachers believed they were moderately successful at meeting their goals. Most felt they did very well at providing a supportive classroom
environment, half felt they were very successful with building personal and learning skills and providing extra time. Most felt they were moderately successful at assisting with settlement issues.

As well as giving a general response about their perceived success at achieving their goals, teachers were asked what skills their students leave class with in terms of settlement, formal learning and social skills. Some provided individual examples, others commented more generally. These snapshots provide examples of the wide range of individuals and their learning capacity that teachers need to accommodate in the one class. They demonstrate the complexity of teaching such a diverse group, and the difficulty of devising simple outcome measures. Below is an example of a teacher’s comments; others are contained in Appendix 2.

Student 1 was a 19 year old Bosnian girl who has come with her mum (fairly traumatised), to live with a sister who has been here a few years, and is quite settled. This student has not missed a day all term and has gone from 0 to Level 1, and the best thing I can do is push her on to Level 2. The other extreme is a pre-literate Somali woman with young children who enrolled [in the same class] partway through term and has missed many days. The best I can hope to do with her, is to make her feel welcome and supported, and hope she wants to keep coming.

Teachers gave examples of small and large successes with students. In particular, observable gains in confidence and social interaction were mentioned by most. Teachers were also asked what they thought students most valued about being given extra hours. Most felt the extra time, combined with the relaxed pace and the attention were most important.

Issues

Teachers were asked if there were any factors limiting their capacity to make the most of the SPP hours. Lack of bilingual assistance was the most frequently mentioned, followed by the need to update cultural knowledge, and insufficient time for class preparation, handover briefings and reflection time. One teacher mentioned ongoing enrolments and having to continually settle new clients: ‘the new student has missed out on orientation excursions and initial language learning, and has to break into an established group’.

No other issues were common to more than two teachers. Curriculum and resource issues were mentioned, including addressing commonly occurring grammatical problems such as difficulty with word order.

Other issues reflected student constraints leading to non-attendance. The particular issues mentioned were health, and settlement and cultural values conflicting with giving priority to English classes.
Cultural

Teachers reported a range of experiences with cultural issues. Whilst some reported no significant issues which affected their approach, others reported particular issues, although most stressed they were minor not significant issues. Religious differences were most commonly mentioned, followed by gender issues, including hostility between husband and wife when the wife learns more quickly, and limited respect for a female teacher from some male students. Hostility between class members was dealt with through rearranging seating, using bilingual assistance to defuse situations, and discussion of religious differences within the Muslim religion.

Professional

Teachers were asked about informal and formal debriefing, support and supervision. Nearly half found teaching SPP more stressful than AMEP, although a third said neither was stressful. One teacher commented that she only had the SPP group for one term, which suited her. Informal support from colleagues was the most common support, followed by informal support from the organisation. Formal counselling and mentoring were uncommon.

Two thirds wanted more professional development relevant to teaching SPP clients. Most were interested in a network of teachers involved with the SPP.

Summary

The teachers in the survey represented all the providers. Small providers provided one questionnaire and larger providers two or three. The results therefore are not a random sample of classes but are a picture of the components most common to some of the 'best' classes.

The typical class was AMEP with some SPP students. Students had access to a home or classroom tutor, and to an independent learning centre. Bilingual support occurred in about half the classes. Half were in community venues. Most of the teachers were involved with settlement services. Most gave information as part of the program. Settlement sessions were either run at the provider's venue, or students visited agencies on student excursions.

Most teachers used a range of strategies to monitor students' wellbeing. Observation and referral of students to the provider's educational counsellor or SPP coordinator was common, as was direct referral to services. Teachers were less likely to organise interviews outside class time, either for regular feedback or as need arose.

Teachers believed they were moderately successful at meeting their goals. Most felt they did very well at providing a supportive classroom environment, half felt they were very successful with building personal and
learning skills, and providing extra time. Most felt they were moderately successful at assisting with settlement issues.

Issues of gender and religion were the most common cultural issues teachers faced. Most described the cultural issues which occasionally arose as minor, and had strategies for resolution. However, nearly half found teaching SPP more stressful than AMEP, and two thirds wanted more professional development. Most would like to be part of a national network.

Teachers believe the most important components of the SPP are the provision of extra time for language learning delivered in a relaxed way in low intensity classes. The most successful models, in their opinion, are SPP with AMEP and CSWE or SPP only with a specific SPP orientation delivered in a class of less than 16 hours per week (50/50 1–10 and 11–15 hours). Bilingual support, availability of volunteer tutors in class and the capacity of the program to provide assistance with mastery of settlement were valuable components. Teachers were divided about the timing of SPP, with slightly more seeing it as a preparatory rather than an intervention program. Most believe SPP hours should vary according to need, although 51–100 hours was the most popular range.

The teachers surveyed described a wide range of teaching situations and practices. They constantly created resources or adapted materials to suit student needs. Their approach was tailored to suit the needs of the individuals in each group they taught; however, the methods they adopted to meet the needs of SPP students were based on common aims to:

- promote security
- encourage interaction
- acknowledge personal and cultural contexts
- acknowledge limitations on learning
- use humour
- base curriculum around students’ current experiences (concrete not abstract).

The results suggest that teachers believe the SPP plays an important role in assisting survivors to master settlement, to begin their recovery, and to lay the foundations for English language learning.

**Recommendations**

The findings add weight to the observations from the case studies and the views of providers (Recommendations 1–6). In addition, teachers as well as providers are looking for greater professional development and sharing of information (Recommendations 7 & 8). Best practice, defined here by the approaches and recommendations of these teachers, is characterised as described in Recommendation 9.
Chapter 5
Statistical analysis

Purpose of the statistical review

The ARMS data on SPP and AMEP clients provides an excellent overview of the clients utilising the SPP. The following description is based on ARMS data provided to the project by David Tan of National Management Information Unit (NMIU). The purpose of the statistical analysis was to explore the progress of SPP students as they moved into, through and out of the AMEP. Measures of success able to be quantitatively measured were successful transition into the AMEP and evidence of capacity to learn, which could be measured in terms of consistent progress and regular attendance/use of hours. Achievement of functional English and of competencies was also reviewed.

Comparisons were made with the other two groups of clients: non-PREP humanitarian and non-humanitarian entrants. The sample covers all students who entered the AMEP between January 1998 and June 2000.

It should be noted that in most cases, SPP students are offered less than one hundred hours, and not all of those offered SPP hours are part of a separate SPP class. This variation in experience limits the usefulness of the data in identifying any particular effect other than allocation of additional start-up hours. The analysis would have been enhanced by the availability of data by individual provider, which was precluded by commercial in-confidence issues.

Definitions

SPP clients

SPP clients are students on humanitarian or refugee visas who have been allocated up to 100 extra hours for English language learning on the basis of concern that their previous experiences and current mental/physical health jeopardise their ability to manage English language learning. The extra hours may be used in a special low intensity class of some or all SPP students, or in an AMEP CSWE class. For the purposes of these data analyses they remain an ‘SPP’ student, and their progress is charted.
Non-prep humanitarian client

These clients are students on humanitarian visas who have been allocated the standard 510 hours. This group includes individuals who have been offered extra hours/special classes (because the interviewer felt they could benefit from extra time and support) but have declined to take up the offer. It also includes students who were not offered SPP as the interviewer deemed that they were not at risk of dropping out. These students have five years to complete their entitlement.

Non-humanitarian clients

These clients are students on a permanent entry visa (eg family reunion) or extended provisional entry visa who have been allocated 510 hours. These students have three years to complete their entitlement.

ASLPR

Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating (ASLPR) students’ level of proficiency in written and spoken English is determined at initial interview. The ASLPR is divided into 5 levels from 0 to 5, with 0 representing no proficiency in English and 5 being ‘native-like’ proficiency. The lower levels of the scale, from 0 to 2, include the gradations 0+, 1-, 1+, indicating steps in increasing proficiency.

Entry level band

Differences in learning pace of learners is recognised through three bands:

**Band A—slower pace:** Learners with limited learning experience in formal settings. Generally characterised by low levels of formal education, low levels of literacy in first language and possibly non-roman script in first language.

**Band B—standard pace:** Learners with some pre-existing learning strategies/resources. Learners have generally accessed secondary education in their home country and are literate in their first language

**Band C—fast pace:** Learners with a high level of learning resources and some post-secondary education and/or technical skills training. Literate in first language

Non-continuing

Refers to those students who do not re-enrol the following term. A non-continuing student may re-enrol at a later stage before their entitlement runs out; however, experience suggests that students are unlikely to re-enrol after six months (NMIU analysis).

Functional English

ASLPR 2 in all 4 macro skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing).
Client characteristics

During the period January 1998 to June 2000, 66,508 clients accessed the SPP/AMEP. Of the total, 9,598 (14%) were SPP clients, 10,451 (16%) were non-PREP humanitarian and 46,459 (70%) were non-humanitarian clients. At the time of analysis, 24% had completed their entitlement, 35% were continuing, and 12% had last participated in the current year (2000). The remaining 29% had last participated in 1999 (20%) and 1998 (9%).

Sex

The SPP group, the focus of this report, comprised 4,751 females and 4,847 males.

Age

The age of the SPP clients was weighted towards the 40–54 year band and under 25 years, compared with a slight weighting towards the 25–39 year band for the non-PREP humanitarian.

School years

The number of school years completed presents a mixed picture. At the lower end, 13% of the SPP group had less than 7 years schooling, compared to 10% of non-PREP humanitarian and 9% of non-humanitarian. A small number of SPP (209 or 2%) compared to 144 (1.4%) non-PREP and 269 or 0.6% non-humanitarian had no schooling.

Level of initial spoken English

An examination of the level of initial spoken English showed the majority of the SPP clients (6,550 or 69%) were at the 0 and 0+ level. In comparison, 4,954 (47%) of the non-PREP humanitarian and 21,445 (46%) of the non-humanitarian were 0 or 0+. Entry Level Band revealed a greater difference: 79% of SPP began in Band A, compared to 62% of non-prep humanitarian and 58% non-humanitarian.

Home language

Sixty-five home languages are given for the SPP clients. The largest groups of SPP clients (over 1000) by home language spoke Serbian (2,039), Bosnian (1,863) and Arabic (1,477). Other sizeable groups were Croatian (751), Persian (729), Assyrian (450), Somali (300), Vietnamese (199), Kurdish (171), Persian/Afghani (147), Turkish (145) and Tamil (140). Other groups were Russian (97), Albanian (93), Spanish (72) and Burmese (62).

Within different language groups, the balance of SPP/non-PREP humanitarian and non-humanitarian varies widely. For example, 38% of Persian speaking clients were SPP clients, slightly fewer were non-PREP humanitarian (34%) and the rest were non-humanitarian. Within the
Serbian group, almost half were SPP clients. By contrast, few Khmers (26 out of 885) were SPP clients. (This later figure may reflect a cultural unwillingness to take up an offer of help, or a perception of not needing help, or actually not needing help. Obviously it may also reflect the proportion of the whole language group who had experienced trauma/torture.)

SPP client transition to AMEP

The vast majority of SPP clients went on to enrol in the AMEP. Of 9306 potential AMEP clients, 8143 or 87.5% enrolled in the AMEP, 10.7% were non-continuing, 1.6% enrolled but were not assigned, and 0.2% went on to a home tutor.

Client retention rates

Seventy per cent of SPP clients who make the transition into the AMEP continue beyond the first 100 hours. However, the attrition rate thereafter is higher than for either of the other two groups. Completion of hours between 101 and 500 hours is similar to the non-humanitarian rate, and only slightly lower than the non-PREP humanitarian group. This suggests that the vulnerability for the SPP group continues for more than the first 100 hours, but thereafter evens out.

AMEP hours—offered and actual

SPP clients used fewer offered hours than non-PREP humanitarian or non-humanitarian. For the two and a half year period under review, the mean offered hours for SPP clients were 299, by non-PREP humanitarian 440, and by non-humanitarian 356. However, SPP clients' use of 'actual hours' (as a percentage of their total offered hours) is higher than for the other two groups (69% compared with 65% non-PREP and 66% non-humanitarian). This suggests that enrolled SPP clients are attending classes with similar or better consistency than other AMEP students.

Reasons for exit/non-continuing clients

The huge list of reasons provided makes simple comparison difficult. However, the following observations can be made. For all groups, family/personal reasons and health reasons, as well as overseas travel, are the most frequently cited reasons for not continuing. For SPP non-continuing clients, their own health is more frequently cited (13% compared with 9.5% of non-PREP humanitarian and 6% of non-humanitarian). Health issues relating to torture and trauma, not surprisingly, feature most often for SPP compared to non-PREP humanitarian or non-humanitarian, although people in all three categories are affected. Family/personal issues are fairly constant for all three groups at around 14–15%. Overall, family/personal and health issues account for 22% of SPP withdrawals, compared to 17% non-PREP humanitarian and 20% non-humanitarian.
Issues around employment feature slightly less strongly for SPP than non-PREP humanitarian clients and non-humanitarian (11%, 12%, and 14% respectively).

Overall, 20% of SPP/AMEP clients withdrew over the period studied for reasons not related to learning/eligibility issues. An additional 48 of the total group (0.5%) went on to other learning arrangements.

Looking at exit codes relating to achievement of functional English or end of entitlement, 66% of SPP clients recorded a ‘satisfactory—client achieved required goals’. However, there is some uncertainty about the meaning of this category.

**Achievement of functional English**

SPP clients were less likely than non-humanitarian clients to achieve functional English. Six hundred and ninety-three SPP clients (7%) achieved functional English. In comparison, 11% of non-PREP humanitarian clients, and 8% of non-humanitarian clients achieved functional English.

**Gender**

SPP women achieved functional English in 8% of cases, men in 6%.

**Age**

As expected, younger people were more likely to achieve functional English, with 11% of those SPP clients under 25 years achieving functional English, 8% in the 25–39-year-old range, 6% in the 40–54 and 0.9% over 55.

**Years of schooling**

Statistics focusing on years of education show clearly the slender chance of an SPP client with less than 8 years schooling achieving functional English (7 clients in all). The largest group had 12 years of school (494 clients—71% of the group), with others achievers having between 8 and 15 years of schooling.

**Home language**

Across language groups there is significant variation in the achievement of functional English. Table 5.1 looks at the main language groups for SPP students. In all three categories, Somali and Assyrian students were only marginally likely to achieve functional English. In comparison, migrants from former Yugoslavia had much higher achievement levels.

The data recorded in Table 5.1 suggests that clients from particular language backgrounds may have greater difficulty achieving functional English across all visa categories. Language distance has not been shown conclusively to be a significant factor in adult English language learning.
although a number of commentators have observed a connection between non-roman script language background and slow language acquisition (e.g., McPherson 1997, Taylor 1999, Ross 2000.) Further analysis would need to control for age, education, and length of residence to properly analyse the significance of the patterns observed here (Ross 2000).

Table 5.1: Achievement of functional English by language group for students entering AMEP January 1998 and June 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage achieving functional English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPP clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assyrian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnian</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entry level English

The final analysis reviews the relationship between ASLPR and Entry Level Band and achievement of functional English which is tabulated in Tables 5.2 and 5.3. Of the 6550 SPP clients entering with ASLPR 0 or 0+, 170, or 2.6%, achieved functional English. Of those entering with ASPLR 1 and above, 17% achieved functional English. For the non-PREP humanitarian group, the achievement rate for those starting at 0 and 0+ was 2.2%, and 20% for those above 1. This data supports the proposition that it is uncommon for students to achieve functional English from an ASLPR of 0 or 0+—which is the largest group in both SPP and non-PREP humanitarian categories, but especially significant in the SPP group. The marginally better result for the 0 and 0+ SPPs than for the Non-PREP humanitarian sample may be a reflection of the extra hours and support provided through the SPP.

Table 5.2: Achievement of functional English in relation to initial ASLPR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial spoken</th>
<th>SPP</th>
<th>Non-PREP hum</th>
<th>Non-hum</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0+</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>1165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>1512</td>
<td>2092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>1189</td>
<td>3818</td>
<td>5700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.3:  Achievement of functional English in relation to entry level band for students entering AMEP January 1998 and June 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry level band</th>
<th>SPP</th>
<th>Non-PREP hum</th>
<th>Non-hum</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>1146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>815</td>
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<td>3A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>1146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>1232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Competency outcomes

In the first band of hours (< 101 hours), SPP clients achieved a greater number of competencies than other groups (3.35 competencies compared with 1.67 for non-PRE humanitarian and 2.07 for non-humanitarian), suggesting that the SPP succeeded in encouraging acquisition of basic English language skills and presumably readiness to learn. This advantage was sustained, so that those SPP students who completed their hours achieved 21.19 competencies compared to 18.50 non-PREP humanitarian and 17.60 non-humanitarian.

A review of competencies achieved in relation to hours is complicated by the fact that SPP clients have already had some extra hours through the SPP. However, it should be noted that SPP clients who complete the 510 hours achieve slightly greater average number of competencies (11.76) than all clients combined (10.83).

Of the total sample, 6% of SPP clients achieved CSWE III compared to 7% non-humanitarian. Of the SPP clients who achieved functional English or used their hours, a higher proportion achieved CSWE III compared to the other groups (26%, compared with 21% non-PREP humanitarian and 18% non-humanitarian). Further details are shown in Table 5.4.

Conclusion

The data provide encouraging evidence that the SPP hours promote readiness to learn and the beginnings of actual language learning.

Transition

The vast majority of SPP clients made a successful transition from the SPP to the AMEP.
### Table 5.4: Competencies achieved in relation to hours used for students entering AMEP January 1998 and June 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMEP adjusted hours</th>
<th>SPP clients</th>
<th>Non-PREP humanitarian</th>
<th>Non-humanitarian</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 101</td>
<td>2931</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>9040</td>
<td>13059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101–200</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>1209</td>
<td>8045</td>
<td>10644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201–300</td>
<td>1128</td>
<td>1238</td>
<td>6734</td>
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<td>301–400</td>
<td>1012</td>
<td>1368</td>
<td>5974</td>
<td>8354</td>
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<td>401–500</td>
<td>1264</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>6968</td>
<td>10137</td>
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<td>501+</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>3643</td>
<td>9698</td>
<td>15214</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>9598</td>
<td>10451</td>
<td>46459</td>
<td>66508</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Competencies achieved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPP clients</th>
<th>Non-PREP humanitarian</th>
<th>Non-humanitarian</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 101</td>
<td>9829</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>18747</td>
<td>30388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11832</td>
<td>6691</td>
<td>50084</td>
<td>68607</td>
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<td>201–300</td>
<td>13228</td>
<td>10597</td>
<td>62152</td>
<td>85977</td>
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<tr>
<td>301–400</td>
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<td>15511</td>
<td>71942</td>
<td>102515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401–500</td>
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<td>28194</td>
<td>103865</td>
<td>155079</td>
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<tr>
<td>501+</td>
<td>39694</td>
<td>67396</td>
<td>170638</td>
<td>277728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>112665</td>
<td>130201</td>
<td>477428</td>
<td>720294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Average competencies achieved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPP clients</th>
<th>Non-PREP humanitarian</th>
<th>Non-humanitarian</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 101</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.67</td>
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<td>101–200</td>
<td>8.51</td>
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<td>201–300</td>
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<td>301–400</td>
<td>14.88</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>12.04</td>
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<td>401–500</td>
<td>18.21</td>
<td>14.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>501+</td>
<td>21.19</td>
<td>18.50</td>
<td>17.60</td>
<td>18.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11.74</td>
<td>12.46</td>
<td>10.28</td>
<td>10.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Competencies for the three levels (combined) Competencies achieved in SPP (SPP Clients) included

### Evidence of capacity to learn

In the AMEP, SPP clients' initial progress compared favourably with other clients, and demonstrates that the SPP assisted them to adapt to the learning environment and to learn successfully.

SPP clients were good at utilising their offered hours.

### Achievement of competencies/functional English

In the first 100 hours in the AMEP, SPP clients achieved a greater number of competencies than those in the other groups.

Those who completed the 510 hours did as well or better than students from other categories. Despite these strong results for SPP clients, it would appear that a significant number of students remain vulnerable for the first 100 hours of the AMEP, and may merit further support.
SPP students withdrew from the AMEP for similar reasons to other students, although they were more likely than other groups to withdraw for health and family issues.

During the period of the study, less than 10% of migrants achieved functional English (compared with 7% of SPP clients). The evidence shows that regardless of entrant category, a student with Level 0 or 0+ is very unlikely to achieve functional English within the 510 hours. The data suggest that entrants from some language groups may be less likely to achieve functional English, but this data needs further testing.

**Recommendations**

The data supports recommendations relating to maintaining the SPP (Recommendation 1), considering access for students with special needs, in particular older students and those with little formal education (Recommendation 2: eligibility criteria). This data also suggests the need for further research to explore the reasons for the high drop-out rate in the first 100 hours of the AMEP (Recommendation 10).
Chapter 6

Summary and conclusions

DIMA's original objectives for the SPP were:

- the development of skills for learning in a formal environment;
- improvement in self esteem and confidence to promote independent learning and community life;
- development of English language skills;
- development of the ability to participate in group learning environment.

Providers have attempted to meet DIMA's objectives. They have, due to their own experience, suggested slightly modified goals which place greater emphasis on assisting clients to operate in the community through the development of language skills and knowledge/information appropriate to their settlement needs. The element of providing extra time was also important.

Providers nominated the following elements as the key factors defining the SPP as a program for helping vulnerable clients:

- a bridge from initial settlement and learning difficulties linked with past trauma to formal AMEP learning—the SPP time establishes routine, structure, and social network;
- connections/information about support and settlement services (links and referral processes);
- extra time in a formal AMEP program to settle in/develop strategies for learning in a formal learning environment;
- a supportive, non-threatening environment (an additional settlement support system).

The most common class, according to providers and confirmed by the teacher survey, was AMEP with some SPP students, given between 50–100 hours each. Classes varied in pace, intensity, level of bilingual support and venue. Teachers reported that most of their students had access to a home or classroom tutor, and to an independent learning centre. Bilingual support occurred in about half the classes. Half the classes were in community venues.

Most teachers used a range of strategies to monitor students' wellbeing. Observation and referral of students to the provider's educational counsellor or coordinator was common, as was direct referral to services. Teachers were less likely to organise interviews outside class time, either for regular feedback or as need arose.
The teachers surveyed described a wide range of teaching situations and practices. Teachers constantly created resources or adapted materials to suit student needs. Their approach was tailored to suit the needs of the individuals in each group they taught. However, the methods they adopted to meet the needs of SPP students were based on common aims, namely to:

- promote security
- encourage interaction
- acknowledge personal and cultural contexts
- acknowledge limitations on learning
- use humour
- base curriculum around students’ current experiences (concrete not abstract).

Teachers believed they were moderately successful at meeting their goals. Most felt they did very well at providing a supportive classroom environment, half were very successful with building personal and learning skills, and providing extra time. Most felt they were moderately successful at assisting with settlement issues.

Providers have had difficulty managing the logistics of the program due to the sporadic arrival of refugees, the lack of notice of their arrival, and the need to quickly place them in a class. Philosophically, some believe that integrated classes are preferable to solely SPP classes, and many have found that there are a number of groups besides traumatised clients that are also suited to low intensity classes. These are students with little or no formal learning, older students and those from a non-roman script background. However, some providers prefer to run a dedicated SPP class when the opportunity allows.

Few providers offer the SPP hours to all clients. Most use a selection process, although few have developed a formal set of guidelines and one who did found it an inadequate guide in practice. Most rely on the depth of experience of the interviewers, usually teachers or counsellors, in conjunction with information from the client, a case worker or relative where available. Many, but by no means all, interviewers had some training in issues relevant to survivors of torture and trauma.

Providers have identified providing a bridge to settlement services as one of the aims of the SPP. The majority of providers see the provision of settlement information or sessions, usually with interpreters present, as the most appropriate way to achieve that goal. In practice they have also provided practical support to enable students to overcome settlement difficulties and focus on learning.

The provision of bilingual support has been less prominent than was envisaged. Support at initial interview occurred in a minority of cases. Support through the course of the program tended to be in the form of occasional help from bilingual aides. Support from bilingual staff was popular with teachers and students. The availability of a bilingual worker
appeared to facilitate solving problems or clearing of confusion related to learning and to settlement issues, such as childcare, which were impacting on language learning.

Small class size was mentioned as important by some providers and half the teachers. Volunteer tutor support was also considered valuable

Issues of gender and religion were the most common cultural issues teachers faced. Most described the cultural issues that arose occasionally as minor, and had strategies for resolution. However, nearly half found teaching SPP more stressful than AMEP, and two thirds wanted more professional development. Most providers offered informal staff support, but few had formal protocols or debriefing mechanisms for teachers.

Three different types of class were examined for the delivery model case studies: an SPP-only class at a small provider, a low intensity mixed class at a community venue, and an integrated low intensity class at a larger provider. The three classes were examples of the realities of running SPP classes. The case studies allowed exploration of individual SPP students’ experience, as well as providing examples of the practical relationships between the many players involved in the delivery of the SPP program.

The English classes were an important focus of students’ lives in the early stages of settlement, and the students’ commitment to learning was evident. Affection and gratitude for the teacher’s efforts were universal. The social aspect of the classes was mentioned frequently by students at the community class and the small provider.

Students appeared to be accessing a range of settlement services, sometimes through their on-arrival support officer, sometimes through the language provider. Settlement agencies clearly felt that the SPP/AMEP providers played a vital role in monitoring and referral, and in letting students know about their services.

The availability of bilingual support was an extremely important element of the students’ security, and also the source of information for the teacher/provider about their issues. Two older students suggested it would be useful to have an explanation of classroom procedure and more bilingual support at the beginning.

The teaching methods most popular with students were the use of visual aids wherever possible, a focus on reality based scenarios and development of practical communication skills, and orientation to the local area. Mastery of public transport was of critical importance, and a major hurdle for a significant number of students. The ability to make medical appointments was also important, as health problems were common and ongoing.

The student experiences gleaned from the case studies provided a human element to the research. The stories closely echoed the issues defined by the literature and providers’ general experience—the desire to learn
affected by anxiety, ill health, and settlement issues. The strategies adopted to meet those needs are supported by the literature.

**The big picture**

The ARMS data base provided statistics on SPP students’ progress through the SPP and the AMEP. Over the period, 14% of migrants eligible for the AMEP received SPP support. The balance of clients varied for different states/providers, but overall the largest numbers were former Yugoslavian, Arabic-speaking, Persian, Assyrian and Somali. Two thirds were 0 or 0+ ASPLR level. As a group they were slightly older and slightly less educated than the total of eligible clients.

The vast majority (87.5%) of SPP clients made a successful transition from the SPP to the AMEP. In the AMEP, SPP clients’ initial progress compared favourably with other clients, which demonstrates that the SPP assisted them to adapt to the learning environment and to learn successfully.

In the first 100 hours in the AMEP, SPP clients achieved a greater number of competencies than those in the other groups. Whilst the percentage who completed the 510 hours is slightly lower than for other groups, those who did complete the 510 hours did as well or better than students from other categories. Despite these strong results for SPP clients, it would appear that a significant number of students remain vulnerable for the first 100 hours of the AMEP, and may merit further support. After 100 hours, those who remain in the program have a similar retention rate as other students. SPP students withdrew from the AMEP for similar reasons to other students, although slightly more SPP than other students withdrew due to health and family issues.

Less than 10% of migrants achieved functional English (7% SPP clients). The evidence shows that regardless of entrant category, a student with Level 0 or 0+ (two thirds of the SPP sample) was very unlikely to achieve functional English within the 510 hours. Younger age and level of education in the first language remain predictors of success for all categories.

**Summary**

The program has achieved its goals. The provision of SPP hours has given thousands of SPP students a successful start to their English language learning. Providers and teachers have evolved programs which reflect their clients’ needs and their own resources. These are primarily integrated AMEP/SPP low intensity programs.

There are opportunities for building on the factors that seem most helpful to clients. The most critical components of the additional support appear to be:

- the existence of a supportive, secure environment enlivened by laughter;
- low intensity (less than 16 hours per week), non-pressured teaching strategies;
- a focus on everyday English language learning which assists with settlement;
- physical orientation and assistance with mastery of settlement (especially use of public transport, maps);
- bilingual support in and outside the classroom;
- volunteer support (within the classroom or through home tutors).

A number of individuals contribute to providing this supportive environment—the administration staff (directors, counsellors and bilingual workers), the teacher and volunteers, and the students themselves who are encouraged to develop social relationships.

The findings from this report are consistent with other organisations’ and researchers’ experiences, described in the literature review (Chapter 1). This group of students has particular learning issues and practical problems, especially health, which affect their learning. The report strengthens the evidence for providing a low intensity, well-supported program for this group with access to bilingual support and a focus on everyday language and orientation.

**Recommendations**

This report recommends that the program is maintained, and that it is acknowledged that it is the combination of the extra time together with the additional support which seems to be the strength of the program. Future planning should also take into account that SPP students are commonly part of an AMEP low intensity class rather than a separate class, and that strategies to support them within the AMEP environment may need to be strengthened.
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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Guided interview for providers of SPP
Appendix 2: SPP teacher survey
Appendix 3: Teachers’ observations of students’ gains in the SPP
Appendix 4: Student focus group questionnaire
Appendix 1

Guided interview for providers of SPP

To the nominated contact person

The information collected from this survey will be presented as part of a descriptive report of SPP activity in Australia. You will have the opportunity to review the information that I collect from you.

This is the format for a guided interview. I will phone you in the next few weeks to go through the interview, or arrange a more convenient time. You might like to provide a written response to the simple questions, and a verbal one for those requiring a more detailed response. The questions cover the full range of SPP activity from assessment to classroom. You may not feel that you are the best person to answer all sections. If that is the case, could you either find out the relevant information before we speak on the phone, or refer me to the appropriate person? For example, you may be an SPP teacher but you may not be involved in assessment interviews.

Some of the information I will be asking for may be contained in your reports and client surveys. If you are happy to provide these to me, it will shorten the time we will need for the interview.

The aim of this interview is to build up a picture of your activity in relation to the SPP. The overall aim of the research project is to build up a picture of the different practices which have developed around Australia and, based on your experiences and insights, to recommend to DIMA the most appropriate way forward.

I appreciate you taking time to participate in the project. Your assistance with this process is invaluable.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Noy
Project Consultant
Respondent information

1 Contact name
2 Job title
3 Contact details
   Organisation name
   Phone
   Fax
   Email
   Address
4 Status
   AMEP Program Administrator
   Teacher
   Co-ordinator (administration role)
   Other
5 Involvement with SPP
   How long?
   What roles/experience?

Organisational information

6 History of SPP provision (overview)
   Date SPP started
   Number of centres running classes
   Numbers of teachers/clients over the time
   Main ethnic groups
7 How do you organise your SPP program?
   Dedicated central co-ordinator
   Network of teachers
   Specified key contact teacher at each centre running the program
8 Training for teachers
   Training to assist selection process
   Training around the specific needs of the client group
   Course content
   Training Resources
   Protocols (eg crisis management, debriefing, peer supervision etc.)
9 Peer support and sharing
   Networks
   Newsletter
   Electronic networking (emails/web sites etc.)
   Peer supervision
10 How do your SPP clients get to you?
   Community based (family, community worker??)
   Refugee (via settlement services)
   Letter from provider
   Other
11 How do you allocate your SPP hours?
   All humanitarian clients receive a set number of hours.
   Please state the number of hours allocated. ________hours.
   All humanitarian clients receive a number of hours, but the number
   varies. Please explain.
There is a selection process for SPP clients (how many hours are they offered?)
Other

12 Selection process (ignore if you do not use a selection process)
Do you have a set of criteria governing who can do interviews? Y/N
Are all teachers interviewing Humanitarian clients experienced or had training in identifying victims of trauma? Y/N
Do you provide a set of guidelines to teachers doing interviews? Y/N
Is a bilingual aide or interpreter present? Y/N
Is the settlement services officer or a case manager present? Y/N
How much time is allocated for interviews? ________
Could we have a copy of any selection criteria or guidelines you are using?

13 How do you decide how many hours to offer prospective SPP clients?
Budgetary constraints
Individual need
Your own Provider policy on allocation
Other

14 Delivery
Can you list the delivery mechanisms being used by centres/teachers, and give an indication of how many of each you have run?
SPP specific programs (mixed groups)
Integrated programs
Integrated with extra SPP specific sessions offered
Ethnic group specific SPP programs
Other
Currently, what is the approximate breakdown of delivery mechanisms?

15 Program content
Have you developed, imported or adapted any materials or teaching methods to address the needs of this group? Y/N Please describe.
Do you have standardised curriculum for SPP?
Innovative practices or ideas being used
Are there any gaps in resources?

15a Do you think there is any potential for co-ordination/development of resources amongst providers?

16 Links with other services
What are the key settlement services involved with your program?
State organisation dealing with survivors of torture
Health organisations
Migrant Resource Centres
Centrelink
Other

17 Links with other AMEP/ESL options
Home tutor scheme
Bilingual support
Distance learning
Community programs
Other
Goals and outcomes

18 What are your overall goals for the SPP program?
19 Have you collected any client feedback either informally, using a quantitative methodology, or through a survey? Please comment

Defining the SPP Program

How well do you think these points define the nature and value of the SPP program?

The SPP helps vulnerable clients:
• by providing a bridge from initial settlement and past trauma to formal learning
• by providing connections/information about support and settlement services throughout program (links and referral processes)
• by allowing extra time in a formal AMEP program to settle in/learn
• by providing a supportive non-threatening environment

What other elements do you think are important?

Issues

21 Could you comment on any issues for you in running the SPP program (past, present or emerging)?

Future directions

22 Do you think the SPP should continue? If yes, in what form would you like to see it continue? (The following is just a prompt to use if you wish: dedicated classes special support, 100 extra hours for all humanitarian entrants, dollars needed to run an effective program, skills and training, linkages to support services, DIMA objectives and guidelines, other resources needed).
If no, why not?

Description of the past three years of the SPP in Australia

To enable the report to document the range of models which people have been using, I plan to survey a cross section of teachers/centres.

Could you please provide contact details for two or three teachers/centres representing the different approaches in delivery and content within your group? I will contact some of these people by email/mail within the month, to ask them to fill in a short questionnaire describing their teaching method for the SPP.
We would appreciate a copy of any other descriptive or evaluation reports which could help with this research report.
Appendix 2

SPP teacher survey

PART 1: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
In this section, we are interested in the types of SPP programs you have taught, and the links with other support services.

1. Please tick the program models you personally have delivered since 1998.
   - [ ] Non-certificate, PREP or orientation class solely for SPP clients
   - [ ] A non-certificate or orientation class mainly for SPP students but with some AMEP students
   - [ ] An AMEP class with some SPP clients in it
   - [ ] Other (please describe).

2. Please list the main language groups of your clients.

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. What other learning arrangements do your SPP students have access to, and which ones do they use? Please tick

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<th>LEARNING OPTION</th>
<th>AVAILABLE</th>
<th>USED BY STUDENTS</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent learning centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual support in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer tutor in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program at community venue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please describe briefly)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Are settlement services (e.g., trauma support, health, migrant services) involved with your program for SPP clients?

Yes □ No □

If you answered No to Question 4, continue to Question 5. If yes, please tick all options available to students in your class:

- Sessions are held by settlement services at your venue primarily for SPP clients
- SPP clients visit settlement services as part of their Program
- Information about settlement services is provided as a component of the program for SPP clients
- Sessions are held by settlement services at your venue for combined SPP/AMEP clients
- SPP/AMEP low level clients visit settlement services
- The provider refers clients on an individual basis

Other (please specify)

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

5. What role do you play in monitoring how your students are coping, including linking clients to settlement services/counselling etc.?

- Regular individual interview (e.g., formal progress interview each term)
- Individual interview in response to concerns about student
- One to one time (informal)
- Observation of learning and social behaviour
- Direct referral to an external agency
- Referral to educational counsellor or SPP coordinator in your organisation
- Other

PART 2: TEACHING MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGIES

In this section, we would like you to describe your approach, and to highlight any issues you have encountered in teaching SPP students. If these goals vary for different groups, could you please briefly describe each type of group and your goals for that group.

What are your goals for your SPP clients? Please describe using the relevant categories.

Settlement:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Personal skills:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

The Special PREP Program: Its evolution and its future
Learning skills:

Extra time to top up the 510 hours:

Classroom environment:

Other:

7 How successful do you feel that you have been in achieving those goals? Please indicate your success for each relevant category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A little successful</th>
<th>Moderately successful</th>
<th>Very successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlement</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal skills</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning skills</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra time</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom environment</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you wish to comment on any of your ratings please make a note on the back of this page.

Are there any factors currently limiting your capacity to make the most of the SPP hours for your clients? Please describe briefly (eg learning resources, preparation time, cultural knowledge, lack of bilingual assistance, inadequate professional development). You might like to relate your comments to your responses in Question 7.

Have you experienced any significant cultural issues which affected your approach to your classes? (eg. hostility between class members, religious issues/differences, gender issues).
In your experience, what are the components of the most successful models for working with SPP clients? Please tick components. Please use the back of this page to comment about different models for specific groups.

a) Type of class
- SPP only with specific PREP/orientation curriculum
- Separate SPP with AMEP students and PREP/orientation curriculum
- SPP and AMEP with CSWE
- Other (please specify)

__________________________________________________________________________

b) Intensity/pace of class
- 0–10 hrs per week
- 11–15 hrs per week
- 16–20 hrs per week
- Other key factors
- Volunteer tutors or aides
- Settlement sessions
- Class size
- Other (please describe)

__________________________________________________________________________

Please comment on the reasons for your preference:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

When do you think the SPP is most effective?
- As a preparatory program (with the 50 hour window of opportunity)
- As an intervention program (available at any point in the 510 hours)
- Varies for different clients (please expand)

__________________________________________________________________________

How many hours do you think the SPP allocation should be?
Number of hours per client  0–50  51–100  100+
- The number of hours should vary (please comment)

__________________________________________________________________________
13 Can you describe the methods and materials that you have chosen to suit SPP clients’ particular needs?

Contact and/or activities:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Materials preparation (ie. worksheets, OHTS, audio visual, use of existing materials):
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Teaching strategies:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

14 One of the goals of this project is to make the range of materials and ideas more widely known. Could you describe any other materials and/or activities you have developed?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

PART 3: PROGRAM OUTCOMES
In this section, we are looking for any comments you can give us to help us better understand the value of the SPP. Please provide a brief answer to the following questions about small and large gains that you have noticed in your students.

What specific achievements have your students made in terms of settlement and/or community access? You might like to give an example of a specific student.
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What do your students leave class with in terms of development of formal learning skills and strategies? For example, motivation, more regular attendance, actual learning gains.
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

17 What benefits have you noticed for your students in terms of personal and social skills?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
18 What do you think your students value most about being given extra hours?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

PART 4: PROFESSIONAL ISSUES
In this final section, we are interested in identifying any professional issues which may have arisen for you.

19 Do you find teaching SPP students more or less stressful than teaching other AMEP students?
☐ Neither are stressful ☐ SPP is less stressful ☐ Both the same stressful ☐ SPP is more stressful
Comments
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

20 What support is available to you?
☐ Formal counselling
☐ Formal mentoring
☐ Informal support from your organisation
☐ Informal support from colleagues
Other (please describe)
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

21 Do you feel the need for further professional development relevant to teaching SPP clients?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please describe:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

22 Would you be interested in a network of teachers involved with the SPP?
☐ Yes ☐ No
Comments
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Appendix 3

Teachers’ observations of students’ gains in the SPP

Mastery of settlement

One student with almost no education (in El Salvador) learned to use an ATM and a phonecard with the help of a volunteer tutor. It took patience (and two months) but he can now cope very well by himself.

At the Health Centre [class visit with interpreter] a Somali woman learnt things she was surprised not to have been told about—despite having a baby at a major teaching hospital recently.

After a visit to the local Health Centre, two students made appointments to see the doctor.

Some students have passed their driving test and have their own car.

I traced SPP clients and found a high percentage continued to access English classes. Most use the local migrant centre for translations etc.

Some students can now fill in important forms with little help and if they need help, know what questions to ask.

They tune in to the news and to Australian conversation.

Orientation to Formal Learning

One former Yugoslavian couple went from 0 to understanding and using basic spoken and written English in 4 weeks. They also gained confidence in meeting people.

The majority leave the class with the desire and motivation to continue learning English.

One client, highly motivated, has gone on to work in ethnic television. He is also doing very well in a political sciences course.

More regular attendance, better motivation, punctuality, do their homework.

Students leave SPP as confident students.

Students have been introduced to a communicative style of learning English.
We are noticing that students who deferred on medical grounds for up to 2 years are coming to classes and attending regularly.

As vocational counsellor, I have seen many SPP students go on to further study or find work.

**Personal and social skills**

Noticeable differences in gradual relaxation and lessening of tension. Many students enter class within weeks of arriving in Australia. They are quiet and furtive. By the end of 100 hours, open, joking, happy to participate—change in body language.

I have seen students start off unwilling to make eye contact, really gain confidence.

There is a huge development from heavy depression, sadness, physical pain to laughing, joking, more confidence, better health.

They gain self-confidence and self esteem; more independent.

Have learnt that making mistakes is OK, are able to take risks.

Friendlier, more outgoing and supportive of others, particularly new students. Have learnt tolerance, became comfortable interacting with a multicultural group; are willing to participate in activities; they develop networks across nationalities.

**Teachers’ assessment of the value of the SPP from the students’ perspective**

*Students in our centre seem to love coming to school!*

Teachers were also asked what they thought students most valued about being given extra hours. Most felt the extra time combined with the relaxed pace and the attention were most important. Time to deal with the inevitable settlement disruptions without losing too much class time reduced anxiety about wasting opportunity. The acknowledgment that they needed time to recover from past trauma was also valued. The social support and the sharing of experiences with others in the group were seen as important for some. Time to ‘adjust’, to ‘settle in’, and to start learning English with a low key approach were thought to be particularly valued by students, and built confidence for further learning.
Appendix 4

Student focus group questionnaire

Format

Introductions and explanation of the purpose of the research. Short questionnaire with limited number of items, worked through as a group with the interpreter.

Follow up discussion of the class and settlement issues that might impact on student language learning (taped if students are comfortable).

1 Questionnaire

We are interested in your English class last term, and whether it helped you to settle into Australia.

I am going to read out statements about last term’s class. The interpreter will then translate the statement. Please decide whether you agree or disagree and put a circle around AGREE or DISAGREE. If you are unsure, put a circle around UNSURE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The lessons helped me learn English for day-to-day life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The lessons were too difficult for me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The class helped me to adjust to the Australian way of teaching.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Some of the course material upset me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The class improved my confidence to learn English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 The teacher helped me with other needs in my life besides English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 The mix of students was not comfortable for me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statement Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The class helped me to understand the Australian way of life.</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The room where the class was held was pleasant</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The class was enjoyable.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I am not happy with my progress in English class.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The teacher and other staff helped me to contact services I needed (eg health, housing).</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now I will ask you how you feel about your English class. Please circle one answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How did you feel before you started classes?</th>
<th>Nervous</th>
<th>Worried</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>How did you feel at the end of the term?</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15a</td>
<td>If Yes How do you feel about your new English class?</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16a</td>
<td>If No What was the main reason you stopped coming to class?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16b</td>
<td>Do you hope to go to classes again?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 What was the most important thing for you about last term’s class?

If you would like to, please write your name on this form.

2 Discussion topics

The following list is an outline for the focus group discussion. I will make a comment or ask a question, and ask students to respond. The main questions are in bold. I may not need to ask all the questions if the students have plenty to say.
Do you have any thoughts about the statements you've just been looking at?
   Go over them for discussion

The class

What were the good things for you about last term's class?

What did you learn?
   English language gains
   Australian way of learning—what is that like?
   New skills for learning English—library, independent study, computers etc.

Was that what you expected to learn?

What people or equipment did you find helpful last term?
   Access to library/computer
   Bilingual officers
   Teacher
   Other students
   Videos/TV presentations

What do you need to learn now?

Barriers and Motivators

Why did you want to come to class?
What did/do you look forward to?
Were there times you could not come to class?
What sort of things make it hard to get to class?
   (personal, family, childcare, health, transport)

Where there times you didn’t want to come to class? Any reasons you can share with us?
   (class composition, religious or gender reasons, personal anxiety, tiredness, difficulties around settlement etc.)

Is it easier or harder to get to class now?

Settlement

What did you learn about the Australian way of life in your class?
Did you go to the settlement sessions (at the MRC)?
What did they tell you about?
Have you used any of the information they gave you at the sessions?
   eg to contact a service

Resettlement

Have you had to move out of the flat/your original accommodation recently?
Is it taking very much time to get settled again?
Do you feel unsettled by having to move?
What extra things do you need to organise at the moment?