

Cgna Education Package - What's in a Name? Australia's Geographical Names

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SUMMARY

The paper *CGNA Education Package - What's in a name? Australia's Geographical Names* discusses an on-line education resource created by the Committee for Geographical Names of Australasia (CGNA) to educate, share information about, and promote the significance of, geographic place names in our daily lives. The resource provides classroom ready lessons across a number of curriculum strands using the importance of place names as the focal point.

This paper discusses the various components of the E-learning package and how the CGNA promoted and marketed it to curriculum experts and schools across Australia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia (CGNA) provides a coordinating role in Australasia place naming activities.

Membership comes from Australian state and territory naming boards and committees, New Zealand and other organisations with a role and interest in place naming, including the

- Australian National Placenames Survey
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority,
- Australian Antarctic Division
- Australian Hydrographic Office; and the
- Department of Defence.

The committee's mission statement is:

"As the national focus group, to coordinate and communicate the consistent use of geographic place names, to meet community requirements, the CGNA will:

- *Develop and encourage the addition of a national ASDI compliant Data Model for Geographic place names.*
- *Utilise Internet web sites as a prime mechanism for the (two way) sharing of information about geographic place names.*
- *Develop and deliver an educational program to promote the significance of geographic place names in the community.*
- *Develop and promote the adoption of National standards for the naming of geographic place names."*

As a consequence of the committee's mission statement, the committee produced *What's in a Name - Australia's Geographical Names*: <http://www.icsm.gov.au/icsm/cgna/lesson/index.html>. This paper describes the content of this innovative educational package and its promotion to curriculum experts and schools across Australia.

The design brief focused on two main things; firstly, the message – the importance of place names and their history; and secondly that the resource be classroom ready requiring little to no preparation by the teacher.

What's in a Name? provides a number of opportunities across varied curriculum to highlight the importance and significance of 'names' be they geographical, personal or of place. It invites the community to become involved in place naming via the CGNA and its resources.

2. COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATION PACKAGE

2.1 Video – What’s in a name?

Central to the entire teaching package is a short 15-minute video called *What’s in a Name? Australia’s Geographical Names*. Ernie Dingo, a highly respected Australian Aboriginal actor, narrates the video. He takes the viewer on a journey around Australia telling them about the significance of place names and how they affect our lives.

He explains the importance of capturing & recording the data of historic names, particularly those of Aboriginal origin. He encourages Australians to become involved in this by sharing their knowledge of place names & their history with the CGNA and he outlines how they can do this.

The video has been designed to explain the importance, provenance and formal recognition processes of place naming. Where do names come from? Who determines what name should be given? What can we learn from the names of places all around us? How would we manage if there were no place names?

The role of the CGNA and its achievements, which include the *Guidelines for the Recording and Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Place Names* and the *National Gazetteer of Australian Geographical Place Names*, is also covered.

Use of the video as an engaging introduction to the idea that place names are important, and that they come from somewhere, is a useful way of introducing the subject into the classroom and indeed to the community.

The video can be viewed online from the website. However, for teachers or groups requiring the ability to pause the video (for question, answer and class discussion), or who need better resolution and larger screen display, copies of the cd-ROM or videocassette may be obtained free of charge by emailing cgna@ga.gov.au or telephoning +61 2 62499677. Most schools in Australia have been supplied with a copy of this resource for their library.

2.2 Teaching Notes

The Teaching Notes booklet has been designed to accompany the video and links the colour coded lesson plans and worksheets to the narration. It is provided as a downloadable PDF file and consists of:

- background information and instructions on the design features of the booklet;
- the narration text, presented in the video is reproduced as the central column of the booklet (the narration column)
- the narration column also shows the elapsed minutes of the video and, by using the counter that forms part of the video display, helps the teacher locate particular segments of the program;

- pertinent questions, answers and activities are proposed at appropriate points in the columns, at either side of the narration column. These are colour coded to match the associated lessons in one of the four curriculum strands.
- Together these provide the teacher with an opportunity to pause the video and pose questions and promote discussion at appropriate intervals throughout the viewing of the video.

2.3 Colour coded lesson plans and worksheets

The teaching package includes *colour coded lesson plans and worksheets*. These are designed to further develop the students' broad understanding of the subject through various curriculums.

Each curriculum has been provided with up to four lessons designed for upper primary to mid-secondary. They include:

- The home page outlines the relationship between the broad topic (place names) and the curriculum area;
- The lesson plan outlines the lesson, aim and objectives; and the materials needed;
- The worksheet to deliver the lesson to the students.

2.4 Students Section

The Student Section provides several projects that can be undertaken without supervision. They are ideal as homework projects or group class work.

Each project is set out with a scenario and project task, questions for the student to keep in mind and outlines steps they need to take to complete the project.

The projects are designed to be fun, drawing on students' creativity and knowledge gained from watching the *What's in a Name?* video and their own understanding of 'place'.

2.5 Articles and Resources

The Articles and Resources section contains subject-relevant articles and resources which include:

- *Guidelines for the Consistent Use of Place Names*
- *Production of National Gazetteer of Australian Geographical Place Names*
- *Guidelines for the Recording and Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Place Names*
- *Glossary of Generic Terms*

2.6 What is the CGNA?

This page of the website provides information about the membership of the committee.

2.7 Links

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The links page provides links to Australasian websites related to placenames, mapping, geography, and the environment.

3. PROMOTION OF THE PACKAGE TO CURRICULUM EXPERTS

As I have already outlined, [What's in a Name](#) provides resources and ideas that teachers can implement with minimal out-of-school time, research and learning. However, CGNA experience has shown that providing a good product does not necessarily mean that it will be used, nor the message it is meant to convey, heard.

3.1 Promotional package

Recognising this, the CGNA provided a promotional package to all state heads of education along with a request that the resource be appraised by them and aligned with their curriculum framework.

3.2 Meetings with state curriculum areas ('The Whistle Stop Tour')

This was followed up with a face to face meeting with each state's curriculum area. This provided an opportunity to create valuable working relationships and positive outcomes in each state.

All the meetings, while covering the same content material (*What's in a Name*), were quite different. There were a number of reasons for this: in some cases the resource material had not been reviewed by the curriculum area before the meeting and in others it had not only been reviewed but arrangements had already been made to include it in their curriculum and advertise it in their newsletters to their teaching staff.

3.3 Outcomes

These promotional activities led to the following outcomes:

- The resource will be linked to curriculum outcomes so that teachers can see where this resource can help them achieve ELA (essential learning achievement) outcomes with their students.
- Teachers will be given a number of ways to access the resource (it will be linked to a number of different websites).
- The resource will be provided to all schools.
- The resource will be promoted in education newsletters which go out to all schools (both private and public); a one page flyer has been created for this purpose. A postcard has also been created for dissemination by jurisdictions as opportunities arise.
- Geography & History Teachers' Associations were heartened by the provision of such rich data and they have organised to distribute references to the CGNA resource on their Internet sites and newsletters.

3.4 Results

Following what we in CGNA dubbed ‘the Whistle Stop Tour’ the statistics of ‘hits’ or ‘visits’ to the *What’s in a Name* website clearly demonstrated the success of the tour. There was also a marked increase in requests for more information about the resource at each jurisdiction contact point across Australia.

Each meeting differed depending on how well the resource had been reviewed beforehand. However, at the end of each meeting a commitment was established between the education departments and CGNA that the resource would be aligned with state curriculum and promoted to school teachers in Australia.

4. CONCLUSION

The creation of this resource is seen as an important step to bringing the value of geographical place names and their consistent use, especially in the spatial world we live in today, to the community through education and engagement in an entertaining way.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Lorraine Bayliss is the Place Names Officer for the Australian Capital Territory and a member of the Committee for Geographical Names of Australasia.

Lorraine has worked in nomenclature for the ACT for over ten years, undertaking research for new place and road names, providing advice on place names to the Government and community and maintaining the ACT Gazetteer and nomenclature database.

CONTACTS

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