



# Olympic Themed Education Resource

for

- Secondary school students with low literacy skills;
- Special school populations;
- Young adults and adults with intellectual disabilities.

## Final Evaluation Report

Funded by the Queensland Olympic Council  
through  
The Queensland Sports Foundation



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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The resource was developed by academics at the University of Queensland, namely Dr Karen Moni, Dr Anne Jobling, Ms Jan Lloyd and Ms Michelle Morgan of the Latch-On Program in the School of Education; and Dr Ian Jobling, Director of the Centre for Olympic Studies, with the collaboration of Aidil Effendy and Carolyn De Souza, two senior students in the School of Human Movement Studies course, 'The Olympic Movement and Society'. Members of the Project Team thank the Queensland Olympians – Steven Bradbury, Kim Cooper, Fiona Hannan and Susan O'Neill, for so generously giving their time for interviews for the audio-visual resource.

The resource was piloted across three sites namely, Brisbane, Townsville and Bundaberg through the Literacy and Technology Hands-On (Latch-On) program and evaluated with the support of Kim Cooper, Chair of the QOC Education Commission.

Special thanks must also go to the Latch-On students for their enthusiastic participation in the pilot and Latch-On teachers namely Rebecca Gilmore and Dani Axford (Brisbane), Jill Lyle (Bundaberg) and Sandra Scarborough (Townsville) who implemented the resource and provided invaluable feedback.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Olympic Movement provides an ideal medium to promote and encourage life long enjoyment of physical activity and deliver important messages through the ASPIRE concept and the Movement's ideals and philosophies. An opportune meeting with academics from the University of Queensland Literacy and Technology Hands-On (Latch-On) Program in the School of Education and Dr Ian Jobling, Director, Centre for Olympic Studies, identified an expressed need to develop an Olympic themed education resource specifically tailored for students with intellectual disabilities and special needs.

To confirm this need, a scan of current Olympic themed education resources revealed that the majority were targeted at mainstream primary school students, with limited resources directed to those students with special needs. Subsequently, it was proposed to develop a resource to cater for the needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities and special needs, given this group should have similar aspirations to learn about cultural and sporting events as their peers. Furthermore, there was overwhelming evidence to suggest that it was important for this group to continue to develop friendship, social and community networks beyond those of the family. The development of literacy skills and knowledge across oral, print and multimedia texts was seen as paramount to maximizing their participation in the community and to fulfil their potential as informed citizens. Learning about community events such as the Olympic Games was one way to contribute to this.

The resource was designed for students with high support needs in literacy and was themed around the Olympic Movement and its ideals. The aims of this resource were to:

1. Develop literacy skills,
2. Promote and increase awareness of the Olympic Movement and its ideals,
3. Promote and increase awareness about the importance of physical fitness and healthy lifestyle choices, and
4. Promote social and community participation.

The resource was piloted using the Latch-On Program in three Queensland sites, namely, Brisbane, Townsville and Bundaberg. Results of the evaluation confirmed that based on student portfolios, the resource was successful in developing students' literacy skills and knowledge across oral, print and multimedia text. Results of the pre and post knowledge quiz confirmed that students gained additional knowledge about the Olympic Movement and its ideals and philosophies. Complementing this were opportunities where students engaged both socially with each other and with the local community. It is unclear whether the resource was able to promote and increase awareness about the importance of physical fitness and healthy lifestyle choices.

The resource was well received by teachers and was reported as providing them with a great start in developing an Olympic unit for their students. The resource provided teachers with a wider scope of the Olympic theme from which to study, something that they reported they had not achieved utilising their own materials. A key feature noted by teachers was the flexible nature of the resource for meeting the needs of their students and sequencing the activities around the term times and the Olympic event. Overall feedback about the resource indicated that, with some minor refocussing, they provided good support to the corresponding modules and activities. A range of enhancements by teachers have been suggested and captured in the recommendations.

The results of the pilot indicate that there is enough supporting evidence to seek funding in progressing to Phase 2 of the project in order to enhance the resource by utilising the recommendations and developing a marketing plan for the promotion and distribution of the resource.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 1. Pre-Planning

- a) Develop an example(s) of a program plan and timeline that incorporates the Olympic Modules as a guide for teachers.

### 2. Evaluation

- a) Review and enhance the knowledge quiz by including pictures, symbols, multiple-choice questions and the use of simpler language.
- b) Provide pre and post quiz however make this resource optional for future implementation.

### 3. Booklets

#### a) *Formatting:*

- i) Utilise both sides of the booklets so that text can be captured on one side and corresponding photographs on the page opposite.
- ii) Enlarge photographs throughout all booklets and provide captions for each.
- iii) Produce the Olympic resource in electronic format.

#### b) *Content:*

- i) Review each booklet to ensure teacher feedback and recommendations captured in Table 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in this report are considered and incorporated where appropriate.
- ii) Ensure answers to quiz questions can be found in the corresponding module.
- iii) Review the Ancient Olympics Module and provide additional support to teachers suggesting how this module might be taught. Include additional photos and supporting resources, including movie footage set in this time, and relevant books for teachers to reference.
- iv) Review all text for any grammatical and spelling errors.
- v) Review all photographs to ensure copyright laws are met.
- vi) Develop a booklet on the Paralympic Games and incorporate activities within the modules where appropriate.

### 4. DVD

- a) Reproduce the DVD to capture common themes by grouping interviewee's answers to assist student access this information more easily and quickly.
- b) Include an interview with a Paralympian into the DVD.

### 5. General

- a) Include key Olympic contacts across Queensland to assist teachers incorporate guests into the Olympic unit.
- b) Develop a marketing plan for the resource once enhanced.

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

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Good health is paramount for everyone. Children and young adults especially require optimal physical, social and emotional well-being to grow, develop and mature to their full potential<sup>1</sup>. The Olympic Movement is an education movement and provides an ideal platform to promote and encourage life long enjoyment of physical activity, and deliver important values based education through the ASPIRE concept and the Movement's ideals and philosophies.

A scan of Olympic themed education resources revealed that there was limited availability for those targeting individuals with intellectual disabilities and special needs. These individuals have similar aspirations as their peers and should have opportunities to learn about cultural and sporting events to enable them to maximise their participation in the community and to fulfil their potential as informed citizens<sup>2</sup>. Young adults and adults with intellectual disabilities also need opportunities to continue to develop their literacy skills and knowledge across oral, print and multimedia texts<sup>3 4 5</sup>. Furthermore, with their progression into adulthood there is an increasing need to develop friendship and social and community networks beyond those of the family<sup>6</sup>. This resource addresses these needs.

### The Resource

The resource was designed for students with high support needs in literacy and was themed around the Olympic Movement and its ideals. The aims of this resource were to:

1. Develop literacy skills,
2. Promote and increase awareness of the Olympic Movement and its ideals,
3. Promote and increase awareness about the importance of physical fitness and healthy lifestyle choices, and
4. Promote social and community participation.

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<sup>1</sup> Abbott, RA, Macdonald, D, Mackinnon, L, Stubbs, CO, Lee, AJ, Harper, C, Davies, PSW. *Healthy Kids Queensland Survey 2006-Summary Report*. Queensland Health Brisbane, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Moni, K.B., & Jobling, A. (2000). LATCH-ON: A literacy course for young adults with Down Syndrome. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 44(1), 40-49.

<sup>3</sup> Moni, K.B., & Jobling, A. (2000). LATCH-ON: A literacy course for young adults with Down Syndrome. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 44(1), 40-49.

<sup>4</sup> Moni, K.B., & Jobling, A. (2001). Reading-related literacy learning of young adults with Down syndrome: Findings from a three-year teaching and research program. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 48, 337-394.

<sup>5</sup> Lloyd, J., Moni, K. B., & Jobling, A. (2006). *Breaking the hype cycle: Using computers in a literacy program for young adults with Down syndrome*. Down syndrome Research and Practice, 9, 3, 68-74.

<sup>6</sup> Jobling, A. Moni, K.B., & Nolan, A. (2000). Understanding friendship: Young adults with Down Syndrome exploring relationships. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 25(3), 235-247.

## 2.0 EVALUATION METHOD

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The resource was piloted using the Latch-On (Language and Technology Hands On) Program in three Queensland sites namely, Brisbane, Townsville and Bundaberg. The evaluation instruments were designed by the project working group and included:

### Knowledge Quiz

Students completed an Olympic Quiz before and after the completion of the Olympic unit to determine their Olympic knowledge. All students completed the quiz individually and received varying amounts of teacher support to comprehend the quiz depending on their needs. Teachers provided considerable feedback about the Olympic Quiz, which has been captured in this report.

### Session Logs

Teachers were invited to complete a session log at the conclusion of each teaching session. The Log contained three parts. Part A sought to determine what modifications (if any) teachers made to the session and supporting resources, Part B sought to determine how difficult or not the students found the session, and Part C rated the overall effectiveness of the activities for meeting associated objectives, overall student enjoyment and comments about what support teachers would welcome if teaching the session again in the future.



### Classroom Observations

Two people, external to the teaching team, completed three classroom observations at the Brisbane location. These observations sought to document where the activities took place, what happened in each of the sessions, rate student engagement and propose opportunities to enhance the activities. No observations were made at the Townsville and Bundaberg locations.

### Teacher Debrief Meeting / Debrief Telephone Call

A debrief meeting was conducted with the Brisbane teachers by the Project Officer to capture feedback about elements of the Olympic Resource and its implementation. A debrief phone call was conducted with each of the teachers in Bundaberg and Townsville to capture the same.

### 3.0 RESULTS

#### THE MODULES

The Olympic resource comprised four modules. In each module there was an introductory activity and four suggested teaching activities. The first module *Peace and Goodwill across the World* provided an introduction to the history and philosophy of the Olympic Games and was a prerequisite for the other modules. The remaining three modules could be completed in any order. The following tables capture the feedback obtained by teachers at each site.

**Table 1** *Peace and Goodwill across the World Module Feedback and Recommendations*

	Feedback	Recommendations
<b>Introductory Activity</b>	Student knowledge did improve when comparing pre and post quiz. Very time consuming to administer. Administered one on one (B).	Required multiple choice and pictures of symbols and not words on some. Use of vocabulary too high for students eg: landmark more simple language needs to be used. Better to complete early in the day for maximum student engagement.
<b>Session 1</b>		Add simple activities such as matching pictures to words as a comprehension activity.
<b>Session 2</b>	Ancient Olympic concept difficult to grasp for some students.	Is the Ancient concept really necessary?
<b>Session 3</b>	Used Google Earth to help understand concept of countries and life outside of Bundaberg (B). Difficult to compare sport between time frames. Some terminology was difficult for students (B). Used Winter booklet as extra activity as time allowed and complete page 20 (B).	Ensure that answers to the questions can be found in the booklet.
<b>Session 4</b>	No modifications made (B) but used the Latch on symbol to get activity going. Exploring the Latch on symbol gave students a greater appreciation of being part of this group (B).	

**Table 2** *Fair Play Module Feedback and Recommendations*

	Feedback	Recommendations
<b>Introductory Activity</b>	Students found acrostic poem easy (B)	Include other examples of acrostic poems on different topics to nurture student ideas. Scaffolds were good match.
<b>Session 1</b>	Students found it hard to link China to food (B). No reading texts or scaffolds provided so it was necessary to create these. Some students found reading too challenging.	Resource needs simple easy to read information or web sites references that present key information about the people and culture of the city hosting the Olympics. Use of pictorial stimulants and video integral to lesson.
<b>Session 2</b>	Following the medal tally was well received by students. Some students updated their medal tallies however others did not as the information was readily available in the media (B). Students worked well and produced work of a satisfactory standard (B).	Information from current Olympics needs to be used to create reading texts (provide sample as an example to modify with up to date info).
<b>Session 3</b>	Used articles from magazines to assist students begin research on athletes.	
<b>Session 4</b>	Found interview responses great (B).	Interviews could be shortened/segmented into parts for teachers and students to better manage discussion.



**Table 3** *Swifter, Higher, Stronger Module Feedback and Recommendations*

	Feedback	Recommendations
<b>Introductory Activity</b>	Used this module to develop skills using powerpoint (B). Ideas about dreams better generated through group discussion (B).	
<b>Session 1</b>	Had to create scaffold to review highs / lows of games. Students selected the sports and athletes they liked. Students gained good knowledge of the games from watching it on TV (B). Some found it hard to recall one highlight of a competition (B).	
<b>Session 2</b>	Questions didn't flow well with interview (B).	Sequence questions on page 50 to match interview.
<b>Session 3</b>	Found this activity very good (B). Really useful activity for students to check progress against days and week's goals (B). Good fit with previous work earlier in the year (B).	
<b>Session 4</b>		

**Table 4** *Being a Part Module Feedback and Recommendations*

	Feedback	Recommendations
<b>Introductory Activity</b>	Good recall on quiz (B).	
<b>Session 1</b>	Worked in pairs to develop event program but didn't physically participate in it (B). Students really enjoyed putting together the Latch-On/Clue Mini Olympics	
<b>Session 2</b>		
<b>Session 3</b>	Mini Olympics was worthwhile to build in teaching and Olympic concepts.	Best to conduct the mini Olympics during the Games themselves.
<b>Session 4</b>	Newsletter Article template provided good structure to write about their interviews (B). Some found interviewing easy others harder (B).	

(B) = Bundaberg Feedback. All other comments provided by the Brisbane site.

## **THE RESOURCE BOOKLETS**

Three resource booklets supported the overall resource and included:

- Booklet 1 The Ancient Games
- Booklet 2 The Summer Games
- Booklet 3 The Winter Games

Each booklet contained background information about the Games and a series of short articles on different events. The booklets were written for learners with high support needs in literacy. The booklets were designed to be used as reading material, supplementary sources of information and to provide a stimulus and models for other reading and writing activities.

Table 5 Strengths, Weaknesses, Recommendations of Resource Booklets		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Recommendations
Resource provided a good starting point for teachers.	Booklets were too wordy	Need introduction to each section of the resource booklets.
	Photographs need more captions.	Booklets need more work in general eg: use captions to identify photographs.
	Pictures need to match Ancient/ Modern elements.	Simplified texts with more pictorial content.
	Picture need to be larger and clearer (less is best).	Reduce size of booklets in light of time frame leading in and after Olympics.

## OLYMPIAN INTERVIEW DVD

The DVD contained four interviews with Australian Olympians, namely Susan O’Neill (Swimming 1992, 1996, 2000), Kim Cooper (Softball 1996), Steven Bradbury (Speed Skating 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002) and Fiona Hannan (Basketball 1996, European Handball 2000). The interviews were conducted to motivate students, to model how to conduct interviews and explore what type of questions might be asked. It also provided a source of information about what it meant to be an Olympian. Specific feedback about the usefulness of the DVD has been captured in the tables above.

## KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

A comparison of responses before and after the Olympic Unit indicated that students had increased their Olympic knowledge. Specific feedback was provided from teachers about how to enhance the knowledge quiz and this has been included in the above tables.

## SESSION LOGS

### *Part A: Modifications*

All teachers were complimentary about the flexible nature of the resource. Some minor adjustments were made to the existing work sheets and teachers also developed a selection of additional resources and/or activities to compliment these. As one teacher stated the resources *“provided a good starting point and enough guidance for me to develop a program to suit the needs of my students and the time available for the unit”*. A copy of these modifications and additional resources are included in Appendix A.

### *Part B: Difficulty Rating*

Teachers overwhelmingly rated the modules and activities they implemented as being ‘about right’ for their students. Most comments about what the students found easy and difficult were related to their skill level, however some were related to the resource directly and have been captured in the above tables. In order to challenge and support students, a range of teaching strategies were observed namely, supported reading, brainstorming, supported writing, large and small group discussions and computer work. One teacher noted that teaching strategies using visual cues and group work were more effective for engaging students and enhancing the activities.

### *Part C: Activity Rating and Student Enjoyment Rating*

The activities implemented by teachers were overwhelmingly reported as having either ‘worked okay’ or ‘worked very well’ during the session. Student enjoyment levels were overwhelmingly rated as ‘about right’ by all teachers. A key factor for engaging students noted by one teacher was her ability to enthuse and motivate students about the topic. Furthermore she also believed that visitors (eg: Olympians and others with varying Olympic experiences and roles) also enhanced her engagement and the program overall. Feedback about what support teachers would welcome in the future have been cross-matched with the relevant sessions and included in the above tables.

## **CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

The activities observed during sessions supported a range of strategies supporting the development of literacy skills. These included supported reading, brainstorming, supported writing, large and small group discussions and individual computer work. Overall, students were engaged and enthusiastic about the activities, however it was noted that the use of additional visual aides might have been helpful to promote further discussion. In all sessions observed, activities were time intensive which restricted the full use of the resource in the time teachers had allocated for the overall unit.



## TEACHER DEBRIEFING MEETING / DEBRIEFING TELEPHONE CALLS

The debrief meeting and telephone calls captured feedback about specific elements of the Olympic resource implemented in Townsville and Bundaberg which have been documented in the above tables. A range of general comments and recommendations for the resource also included:

- The resource would be good to burn on CD so that teachers could access electronic copies of the activities to enable changes/formatting to meet the needs of their students.
- Links provided to www addresses were found to be beneficial. However, due to copyright laws, students were unable to copy and paste photographs from these to include in their work.
- On completion of the Olympic resource students were motivated to follow the Paralympic Games. One teacher stated she would like to see a booklet and module devoted to this event.



## 4.0 DISCUSSION

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Based on student portfolios, the resource was successful in developing student's literacy skills and knowledge across oral, print and multimedia text. Results of the pre and post knowledge quiz confirmed that students gained additional knowledge about the Olympic Movement and its ideals and philosophies. Complementing this were opportunities where students engaged both socially with each other and with the local community. It is unclear whether the resource was able to promote and increase awareness about the importance of physical fitness and healthy lifestyle choices.

Overall the Olympic education resource was well received by teachers and students. Teachers stated that the resource provided them with a great start in developing an Olympic unit for their students. Prior to this support one teacher stated that she had utilised her own materials and focussed on the event rather than the country, and the Modern rather than the Ancient Olympics. Based on this feedback it appears that the resource was successful in providing teachers with a wider scope of the Olympic theme from which to study.

No one pilot site implemented the entire resource. Program plans incorporating the activities of the Olympic resource were developed by the Latch-On teachers to meet the specific needs of each student group. Implementation of program plans varied over a 3-6 week time frame and between 6 and 11 sessions between sites. From teacher feedback it was apparent that students' ability varied between the three pilot sites, which may have determined the extent of work covered during this time. The scheduling of the Beijing Olympics shortly after Term 2 holidays may have reduced teaching time prior to the event also. Furthermore, the resource was not finalised for piloting until the second week of school holidays, which may have also delayed implementation. Nevertheless a key feature noted by teachers was the flexible nature of the resource for meeting the needs of their students and sequencing the activities around the term times and the Olympic event. In light of this, any enhancements to the resource and future marketing to relevant stakeholders needs to retain and promote this feature. Furthermore the provision of program plan examples and timelines may assist teachers to increase the extent to which the resource is used.

Overall feedback about the resource booklets indicated that, with some minor refocussing (see Table 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) they provided good support to the corresponding modules and activities. Of particular mention, however, were the comments relating to the challenge students experienced when exploring the Ancient Olympics. All teachers noted that their students found the Ancient Olympics a difficult concept to grasp. One teacher in particular stated:

.... *'for our purposes I think the concept was wasted. It really did not register with the students. I would be happy to see a couple of lines reference to the Ancient Games as part of the introduction to the summer and winter Games. This module however may be more relevant in schools perhaps'*.

This finding, however, is not surprising as ancient history is an abstract entity and may be difficult for students in this population group to grasp. Nevertheless, with additional support resources for teachers and additional sessions devoted to the topic, students may have grasped the concept more readily.

Study of this Olympic unit was also successful in motivating students to follow the Paralympic Games following the conclusion of the Olympic Games. Therefore, consideration should be given to providing a booklet on the Paralympic Games with associated activities.

At the Brisbane pilot site teachers invited two visitors to contribute to two sessions. Both shared personal stories and participated in group discussions and activities with the students. A key feature of these presentations was the use of props to provide visual stimulation about the topic. Given the success of these sessions for motivating and engaging students it would be beneficial for teachers to utilise visitors with some Olympic connection or experience to enhance the unit.



## 5.0 CONCLUSION

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Based on teacher feedback, classroom observations, results of the Olympic knowledge test and portfolios of work completed by students, the Olympic-themed resource has been successful in utilising the Olympic Movement to assist develop literacy skills and knowledge across oral, print and multimedia texts. Furthermore students have gained additional knowledge about the Olympic Movement and its ideals and philosophies. Complementing this were the opportunities for students to engage socially with each other and with the local community. It is unclear whether the resource was able to promote and increase awareness about the importance of physical fitness and healthy lifestyle choices.

The resource has provided teachers with great support in developing an Olympic unit and offered them a wider scope of the Olympic theme from which to study. A key feature has been the flexible nature of the resource to assist teachers meet the needs of their students and sequence the activities around terms times and the Olympic event. With further support through the provision of examples of project plans and timelines incorporating the modules, teachers and students are set to gain maximum benefit from the resource.

Although the resource booklets require minor re-focussing they provided good support to the corresponding modules and activities. Further deliberation about the delivery of the Ancient Olympic Games module and the addition of supporting resources is required if special needs students are to grasp this abstract concept. In light of the interest and motivation of students to follow the Paralympic Games following the Beijing Olympics, consideration about developing and including a booklet and associated activities on this event may be beneficial.

In conclusion the results of the pilot indicate that there is enough supporting evidence to seek funding in progressing to Phase 2 of the project in order to enhance the resource by utilising the recommendations captured in this report, and developing a marketing plan for the promotion and distribution of the resource.

## 6.0 REFERENCES

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Abbott, RA, Macdonald, D, Mackinnon, L, Stubbs, CO, Lee, AJ, Harper, C, Davies, PSW. *Healthy Kids Queensland Survey 2006-Summary Report*. Queensland Health Brisbane, 2007.

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## **APPENDIX A**

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All documents have been burned on the CD attached.