

Kylie/Rural Area/Primary

TERM 1 2008

First term has been an extremely busy one, and has involved a huge learning curve for me. Even though I have only been living and teaching here for about three-and-a-half months, it feels like years.

When the time actually came to move to my new town and school, I realised what a huge change it was actually going to be. At the end of January, all the new staff members met with the teachers who had been assigned as their mentors in order to complete two days of orientation. At this stage I did not even know which class I was going to be teaching. However, I soon found out that it was year 3, and my mentoring teacher was the teacher who was to teach the other year 3 class. Without her guidance and help this term, it would have been a much more difficult transition for me.

The orientation consisted basically of learning about how the school functions, and it was a lot to take in over only two days. At the end of these two days, we had a staff dinner at the principal's house with all the staff from kindergarten to year 12. This was a fantastic opportunity to meet everyone and get to know the people I would be working with for the rest of the year.

We had the weekend to get ready and then school started on Monday. There was no more time for preparation; it was just straight into the teaching! I still remember the first day, seeing 20 eight-year-old faces smiling up at me, and thinking 'What do I do?'. My class, however, is fantastic; they are keen to learn and most have responded very well to me. It's hard to believe how quickly it is that as a teacher you form such a good relationship with your class. Even though it has only been a term, I have seen how the students have grown and matured in only 11 short weeks. It is such a big jump from year 2 to year 3, as the students are moving into a new stage, but the students have adjusted well to having a new teacher, more work and lots more new concepts than they did last year.

On the first day, I had the opportunity to meet many of the parents of the children in my class, and was soon to discover what a lovely and supportive group of parents they were. Over the term I got to know them very well. At the end of the term I had my first parent/teacher interviews, and the parents were absolutely fantastic, most wanting to know what they could do at home in order to improve their child's progress at school.

I have been fortunate enough that Kerry, my mentor, has all her programs from the previous years and has been kind enough to give me these; however, I have enjoyed changing some of these activities and adapting them in order to meet the needs of the students in my class. I think it has been beneficial for the students in year 3 to be mixing within classes and to have a different teacher for certain subjects, as it gives them to opportunity to get to know both teachers and all the students in their year, as opposed to just their class.

By the end of Week 5 in Term 1, we were required to hand in to the principal our teaching programs showing everything we planned to teach for the term. Although this was extremely stressful and a lot of work, it did make the remainder of the term a little less work, as my program was already written.

I have also become very involved with the sport in the school. Along with Tim, who teaches year 4, I take sporting teams to their matches/competitions, as well as coaching these various teams. This has been fantastic as sport is a passion of mine, and I look forward to becoming more involved in terms of the administration side of things.

Overall, it has been an enjoyable first term of teaching for me. The staff have been very welcoming and helpful, and as I said before, without the support from Kerry and the rest of the staff, it would have been much more difficult.

Term 2 looks to be a very busy one! In terms of my class, we have new content to learn, sports involvement, a four-day camp and we are putting on a class play for the dramatic

society competition. I am looking forward to these new challenges that are arising and to continuing to gain experience in teaching and watching my students learn and develop.