

Primary school science

Nancy Lane has been talking to teacher-librarians about this innovative program

The Australian Academy of Science is developing *Primary Investigations*, a national program for primary schools that provides an integrated science, technology and environment curriculum and professional development for teachers. It will be available in 1995.

Much thought and effort has gone into the development of the program, designed particularly to cater for the interests and learning styles of girls as well as boys.

Emphasis is on hands-on activities undertaken in the foundation for learning. Activities have been selected for their high interest level and use of simple equipment, such as pipe cleaners, straws, marbles and balloons.

The program is being developed on a whole-school basis. It consists of teacher resource books for seven years, student books for five years, equipment kits, in-service education for teachers, and continuing support from a qualified trainer.

The program was trialled in 38 schools in Australia and 3 schools in New Zealand in 1993, and involved approximately 600 teachers and principals and 12 000 students. All teachers, principals, and teacher-librarians were involved in the in-service workshops that were run in conjunction with the trialling.

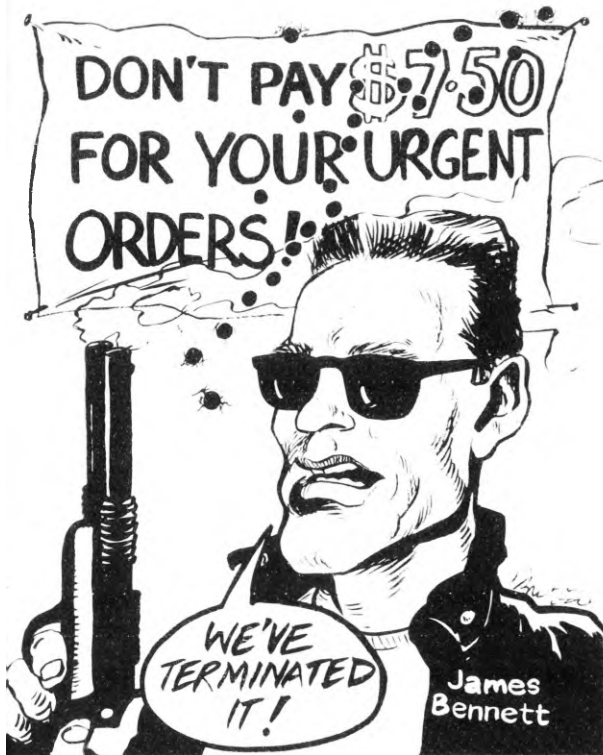
At the end of each term, teachers sent their written comments to the Academy, and at the end of the year, the teacher-librarians also provided detailed responses. These responses, along with the learning outcomes from the National Profiles, are providing input to the revision of the program.

Teacher-librarians suggested a range of library resources to supplement many of the hands-on activities, particularly those having to do with colour, energy, life cycles (silkworms, earthworms, and butterflies), building technology, inventions, weather and environmental constraints. They also suggested lessons where they felt

students could gain by carrying out library-based investigations. These covered topics such as astronomy, pollution, famous buildings (including design and materials), environmental decision-making, famous scientists and inventors, and recycling.

Teacher-librarians recommended useful general resources, including the magazines *Investigating* (published by the Australian Science Teachers Association), *Let's Find Out* (Science Teachers Association of Victoria) and *The Helix* (published by the CSIRO Double Helix Club). They also thought that the *Young Scientist* reference set (a World Book publication), and the Gould League publications were valuable.

The Academy believes the Primary Investigations program will be richer for the input of teacher-librarians, and is attempting to provide opportunities within the program to build bridges between the science program and the school library. ■



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