

Learning

One island, one teacher

Teacher Andrew Hughes prepares to go it alone in the name of education

HOW much food do you need in a month before your body starts to eat into vital organs?

Does a starving body, in fact, eat into vital organs or did I just make that up?

These are not rhetorical questions — I need to know the answer before heading off on the Crusoe Project in August.

For the latest Bookend Trust/Expedition Class adventure learning project, students voted to maroon me on a (nearly) deserted island.

Last year I tried to find a Tassie tiger... and didn't.

The year before that I tried to climb the highest peak in each state and territory... and didn't, but only through an administrative technicality.

The aim is not to do everything perfectly, but be perfectly happy to have a go regardless.

Each year's expedition has a learning theme and the whole adventure is shared through a website that brings students and experts together while the journey progresses.

The island has been found in Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea.

It's about 1km long and half that wide. It's surrounded by reefs and has a sandy, coral spit that looks like a dolphin's nose when viewed from space.

An old man named Kaukauli lives there as a hermit and has agreed to let me attempt to survive on the other side of the spit as a visiting, or partner hermit, if you like.

The job at hand is not all frolicking in the sand and fishing for dinner. The purpose

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is to bring science inquiry into primary school classrooms around Australia.

During each of the four weeks I will run an experiment that students can do in their class at the same time.

For example, in the third week of my monkish solitude I will find out what a seed requires to germinate, because by then I will desperately want to eat it.

An expert on the subject,

James Wood from the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, will be available on the website to answer questions and give us all advice.

There is a 40-page student workbook and a teachers' guide which will be freely available to download from the website in a week or two.

All classes are freely invited to be involved, and some are going a step further and getting a pre-expedition school visit and resource kit. Let me know very soon if you want to know more about that.

There is also a professional development workshop at Learning Services South on Friday, July 1.

To book a place, email philippa.clymo@education.com.au.

Tasmania is becoming known as the adventure learning capital of Australia thanks to the Bookend Trust, an Innovative Flexible Education Grant from the Tasmanian Education Department, *Mercury* Newspapers in Education, UTAS SET and Australian Geographic.

Email andrew@expeditionclass.com if you have a good bean sprout and fish recipe.

RIGHT: An island off Papua New Guinea close to where Andrew Hughes (inset) will conduct his next learning adventure. Main picture: BOOKEND TRUST.

