

SCREEN AUSTRALIA  
AND  
SBS AUSTRALIA  
PRESENT  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH FILM VICTORIA  
A BLACKFELLA FILMS PRODUCTION



SERIES II

IN PRODUCTION MEDIA KIT

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# SYNOPSIS

## Logline

Six out of ten who call Australia home have had little or no contact with Indigenous people.

28 days. Six well-known Aussies. One life-changing journey.

## One Pager

Six out of ten who call Australia home have had little or no contact with Indigenous people.

The provocative, controversial and dramatic television event, **First Contact**, returns to SBS with Ray Martin as host.

The 3 x 1 hour constructed documentary series takes a group of six well-known Australians, with strong opinions on a unique journey into Aboriginal Australia.

The group meet face to face with individuals, families and communities who define Indigenous Australia today. They are immersed into Aboriginal culture and experience what life is really like on the ground for the nation's First Peoples.

Leaving their high profile lives behind, the six are taken deep into a world far away from their everyday reality. They are confronted and challenged by the stories they find and the people they meet. It is an experience that reveals the beauty, hope, history and trauma of Aboriginal Australia.

In this second series, the six question themselves, one another and their Indigenous hosts, to try and find answers to some burning questions.

If you are Indigenous you will die more than a decade before other Australians. You are 12 times more likely to suffer from Hepatitis A. If you are an Aboriginal woman, you are 25 times more likely to be a victim of domestic violence. And if you're an Aboriginal teenager in W.A, you are forty times more likely than the rest of the population to end up in prison.

Selected for their strong opinions, the group vigorously debates the burning issues. From Aboriginal identity to welfare. From juvenile incarceration to the Stolen Generations. From healthcare to alcohol. Education to employment.

Through the heat of argument, light is shed. As stereotypes are broken, a process of education, understanding and conversion begins.

Guided by award winning journalist Ray Martin, the group are tested in extraordinary situations, their beliefs are tested, their emotions pushed to the limit

28 days. Six well-known Aussies. One life-changing journey.

# FIRST CONTACT SERIES I - THE BACKGROUND

## How It Came About

Upon hearing the statistic that 6 out of 10 Australians have had little to no contact with Indigenous Australians, Blackfella Films began exploring new ways of interrogating the relationship between “white and black Australia”.

With a referendum on the question of Aboriginal recognition in the Constitution on the horizon, there seemed no better time to examine the extraordinarily complex race relations in this country.

SBS was the perfect partner for this endeavour. Having commissioned Blackfella Films to produce the landmark history series *First Australians* to great acclaim, SBS continues to seek out programs that ignite national debate and challenge our perception of ourselves in one of the most culturally diverse nations on the planet.

Aware of the risk inherent in broadcasting racist commentary towards Indigenous Australians in a way that has never been seen before, Blackfella Films consulted esteemed academic Marcia Langton who supported the project from its inception and agreed that the time was right to confront the issue head on.

## The Show

Hosted by Ray Martin, the first series took 6 ordinary Australians from a diverse range of backgrounds on an immersive journey into Aboriginal Australia. Over 28 days they visited remote Arnhem Land communities, the Pilbara and Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia, Alice Springs, Uluru and, surprisingly, Sydney - home to Australia’s largest Aboriginal population. While one of the six failed to complete the journey, the remainder were profoundly changed by their experience.

## The Response to First Contact

Broadcast in November 2014 over 3 consecutive nights, with a live studio panel show hosted by Stan Grant and featuring the participants and the Aboriginal people they met during their journey after the screening of the final episode, **First Contact** went viral, trending number one on Twitter in the world during its broadcast.

**First Contact** achieved outstanding audience ratings for SBS, and received the 2015 Logie Award for Most Outstanding Factual Series.

It is now used as a key educational tool in an Outreach partnership between SBS and Reconciliation Australia.

Series consultant and renowned Indigenous academic and spokesperson Professor Marcia Langton said this of **First Contact Series I**:

*'First Contact' is extraordinary and sure to incite a national debate on how Aboriginal people are perceived by 'ordinary Australians' and how very different the reality is, and how diverse it is across the continent.*

*As a 'reality show' series that follows a group of ordinary Australians on a series of visits to Aboriginal communities and families, the reality exposed is complex, emotionally and intellectually disturbing, and ultimately redemptive.*

*Their adventures include life with ordinary suburban hard-working Aboriginal people, with a family in a remote homeland in Arnhem Land where hunters and gatherers contend with modernity to maintain their traditions, with Aboriginal alcohol and drug liaison workers in Alice Springs where we are given a glimpse of the cycle of incarceration and the harsh reality on the streets at night, and with a proud Aboriginal woman in the Pilbara, where the mining industry has transformed the lives of Aboriginal people.*

*The responses of the adventurers ranges from repulsion to tears of grief, and the emotional roller-coast ride they experience is touching...and changed my mind about what to expect from white Australians in these situations.*

*No one could watch this series without rethinking their attitudes, but whether one is Indigenous or not, it is not possible to look at Australian society in the same way again.*

*As an Aboriginal woman, I felt some compassion for the white Australians who had never met an Aboriginal person in their lives, and felt that their extreme responses to close and personal contact for the first time was a matter that I need to give more thought to. I can't now think 'get over it.' I will be more tolerant of white people having watched these episodes. I learnt that their ignorance is genuine, and that more contact of this kind might be a good thing for all of us.*

*Every Australian should watch this series. It will teach them insights about the country they live in they could not suspect, given the hateful, untrue myths that they believe about the First Australians.*

*I am so glad that Blackfella Films has made this series. I will show it young Indigenous Australians and use it as an aide to teach them that they need have no fear of the hate and prejudice they encounter so often. They will see the true nature of the ignorance they face, and that it can be surmounted in some circumstances. If a white Australian can change his or her mind about a lifetime-long set of prejudices, so can we'.*

## PARTICIPANTS

### RENAE AYRIS



Renae Ayris is one of Australia's most naturally beautiful and engaging personalities.

She has built a reputation for the highest level of professionalism and down to earth manner with a unique and natural style that makes her a modern day Aussie icon.

Renae is committed to a firm focus in the fitness / wellness categories and first came to national then international attention during her reign as Miss Universe Australia in 2012, subsequently achieving 3rd Runner Up in the worldwide competition.

Building on that early success, Renae has dedicated herself to charities that are close to her heart and ambassador roles of genuine association.

Renae's beauty and charisma have landed her profiles and covers in numerous publications including Vogue Australia, Who Weekly, Cleo, Cosmo, The Daily Telegraph, The Herald Sun, Fitness First Magazine, Women's Health, The Sunday Telegraph and OK Magazine.

Renae has attracted considerable media attention as the face of numerous brands including Solar D, Emma & Roe and Holster, and has a strong international presence gracing the cover of Maxim Magazine and being featured in Sports Illustrated Lovely Lady of the Week.

With a huge social media following Renae epitomises the ability to provide true influence while also demonstrating the skills to produce and deliver outstanding visuals and engaging content from live experiences and video.

## TOM BALLARD



Tom Ballard is a stand-up comedian, writer, actor, broadcaster, philanthropist and philanderer. He co-hosted the triple j breakfast show for four years and won an ARIA for his trouble. In 2014 he got his own shiny panel show **Reality Check** and has twice fronted SBS's coverage of the *Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras*. He's guest hosted two episodes of **Q&A**, launched his own hit podcast and supported the likes of Will Anderson, Stephen Merchant and Danny Bhoj.

Last year, Tom performed alongside Wanda Sykes and roasted Jimmy Carr in Montreal and he bagged a nomination for the Best Newcomer Award at the biggest arts festival in the world, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

This year (so far) Tom has toured two brand new shows; an hour of stand up, and a 70min comedy lecture about the state of the Australian immigration system. His body of work gained him a nomination for the prestigious Barry Award for Most Outstanding Show, and he was awarded the inaugural Pinder Prize, named in honour of the late great John Pinder.

Tom has eczema and is bad at running.

## IAN DICKSON



Ian 'Dicko' Dickson is a former BMG record company executive who made his TV debut in 2003 as talent judge on the number one record-breaking show **Australian Idol**. Dicko was judge on Idol for five series.

Since then, Dicko has also been a talent judge on **The Next Great American Band** and **Young Talent Time**, he has presented three breakfast radio shows on FM and AM radio, hosted **Celebrity Survivor**, **My Restaurant Rules** and his own TV talk show **Can of Worms** and won **The Celebrity Apprentice** in 2012. Dicko has also donned lipstick and a dress playing Widow Twanky in **Aladdin and his Wondrous Lamp** on stage in 2015.

In 2016 Dicko made his return to the judges' chair on **Australia's Got Talent** alongside fellow superstar judges Kelly Osbourne, Sophie Monk and Eddie Perfect.

Working in the record industry, worked inside iconic labels such as Creation Records, Sony, A&M and BMG. He has worked alongside Ozzy Osbourne, Celine Dion and Primal Scream. As Head of International at BMG UK he worked on the career development of artists such as Pearl Jam, Jamiroqui, Westlife and Natalie Imbruglia.

Never far from controversy, Dicko's the bloke to tell it like it is, be it good or bad, give you a hug and shout you a pint.

## NATALIE IMBRUGLIA



Natalie Imbruglia was born and grew up in Australia. At 17, she appeared as Beth Brennan in the hit Aussie TV series "Neighbours."

Natalie followed her small screen success with a move to London where her music career flourished. Four studio albums followed with Natalie selling over nine million albums worldwide. In 2003 she appeared onscreen in the British spy spoof **Johnny English**, and she starred in the critically acclaimed 2009 drama **Closed for Winter**.

In 2014, she made her UK stage debut in **Things We Do For Love** by Alan Ayckbourn. She is currently on tour with **Simply Red** off the back of her latest album release **Male**.

Natalie is also a global ambassador for Virgin Unite and spokesperson for the UN Campaign to End Fistula.

## DAVID OLDFIELD



David Oldfield is a prominent Australian who has worked in all three levels of government, and been elected to two of them.

He is well known as an opponent of 'political correctness', which he sees as an assault on freedom of speech.

David owned his first business at 21, but the red tape and dirt of politics he encountered as a small businessman resulted in him being elected to the City of Manly Council where he spent 7 years battling bureaucracy.

As well as council, David worked in state politics and spent time in federal politics as the key portfolio advisor to then Liberal Party Minister The Hon Tony Abbott MP.

In 1997 David co-founded the Pauline Hanson's One Nation political party and David became the best known political adviser in Australia. In 2000 he established the splinter party One Nation NSW serving as its leader until he became an independent in 2004. David served 8 years in the NSW Legislative Council from 1999 to 2007.

In 2006 he was a contestant on Celebrity Survivor - finishing in the original final three.

After retiring from Parliament in 2007, David began a career in the media, which included five years hosting his own daily talkback program on Sydney radio stations 2UE and 2GB.

David is married to Lisa Oldfield, a successful business executive who also co-hosted more than 250 episodes of the daytime television show, The Catch-Up. David and Lisa have two young Sons, Henry and Albert - David now considers his most important responsibility to be: "Teaching my Boys everything I can".

David's had an active sporting life including winning multiple Australian titles and he remains relatively fit. He cellars wine, studies history, shares his life with many animals and is especially at home on a Horse. Here and there he still pops up in the media, though these days, Family is his priority and takes up most of his time.

## NICKI WENDT



Nicki graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), and has since worked continuously in all aspects of the industry.

Nicki's theatre credits are extensive, having just toured in **Fiddler on the Roof** and the theatre adaptation of the smash hit, **Mother and Son**. She appeared in dozens of productions for the MTC, including leads in **Rockabye**, **Three Days of Rain**, **Romeo and Juliet**, **Company**, **Our Country's Good**, **The Recruiting Officer**, **Measure As You Like It**, **The Cherry Orchard**, **Les Liaisons Dangereuses**, **Private Lives** and **The Memory of Water** (for which she was nominated for a Green Room Award as Outstanding Female Artist). She has also worked with Playbox, Sydney Theatre Company and Black Swan. For the Production Company, Nicki has appeared as Millicent Winter in **Nice Work If You Can Get It**, **Gypsy**, **Mame**, **42nd Street**, **Thoroughly Modern Millie** and **Annie Get Your Gun** (for which Nicki was nominated for a Green Room Award as Best Female Artist in a Supporting Role)

Her television credits include the role of Catherine in **The Ex-PM**, and the series **Rush**, **City Homicide**, **Society Murders**, **MDA** and **Seachange**.

Nicki has recently moved into directing opera, winning the 2013 Green Room Award for Best Opera Direction for **Midnight Son** for the Victorian Opera.

Nicki also works extensively in radio, and has narrated novels and many documentary films.

## HOST

### RAY MARTIN



Ray has been a journalist for print and TV media since 1965. After starting as an ABC cadet working in Sydney, Perth and Canberra, Ray was posted to New York where he would be the North American correspondent for the next decade.

In 1978 he switched to the Nine Network, launching **60 Minutes** with Ian Leslie and George Negus. For the next 20 years, Ray was the face of both **Midday** and **A Current Affair**, along with Nine's coverage of federal elections and **Carols by Candlelight**. In 40 years of journalism Ray has won five Gold and over twenty Silver Logie awards.

He has been the Chairman of the Fred Hollows Foundation and the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, and is currently the patron of the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. In 2011, Ray was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to Indigenous Australians, charities and the media.

## SERIES CONSULTANT

### PROFESSOR MARCIA LANGTON



#### **Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies The University of Melbourne**

Marcia Langton has held the Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne since February 2000. An anthropologist and geographer, she has made a significant contribution to Indigenous studies at three universities, and to government and non-government policy and administration throughout her career.

Her research has concerned Indigenous relationships with place, land tenure and environmental management, agreement making and treaties in the Northern Territory and Cape York Peninsula.

Her work in anthropology and the advocacy of Aboriginal rights was recognised in 1993 when she was made a member of the Order of Australia. She became a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia in 2001 and was awarded the inaugural Neville Bonner Award for Indigenous Teacher of the Year in 2002.

## KEY CREW

### Producer DARREN DALE



Darren has been a company director of Blackfella Films, Australia's premier Indigenous production company, since 2000.

In 2008 Darren, together with Rachel Perkins, produced the landmark multi-platform history series **First Australians**, broadcast on SBS to over 2.3 million viewers and accompanied by an internationally acclaimed interactive website. Amongst the many accolades for **First Australians** were AFI, TV Week Logie, AWGIE and Australian Director's Guild Awards. The 2010 SBS documentary **Lani's Story** was the recipient of a United Nations Media Peace Award; the second consecutive year Darren was awarded this prize.

In 2011, Darren produced the feature documentary **The Tall Man** for SBS, based on the award-winning book by Chloe Hooper. Premiering at the Adelaide Film Festival, the film screened at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) and the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), and received the AWGIE Award for Best Broadcast Documentary and the inaugural Walkley Award for Documentary.

The acclaimed telemovie **Mabo**, produced for the ABC, screened at the Sydney Film Festival in 2012 ahead of its national broadcast to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark High Court decision.

In collaboration with Emmy Award-winning UK writer Jimmy McGovern and Miranda Dear, Darren has produced two series of the ground breaking **Redfern Now** for the ABC, and the telemovie **Redfern Now: Promise Me**, which was the first drama series on Australian television to be written, produced and directed by Indigenous Australians. In 2013 and 2014 it won the Logie Award for Most Outstanding Drama series, and in 2014 the AACTA Award for Best Television Drama Series, among numerous other nominations and accolades.

In 2014 Darren produced **First Contact**, a 3 part documentary series for SBS, which generated outstanding ratings, audience response, media attention and critical acclaim. **First Contact** received the 2015 TV Week Logie for Most Outstanding Factual Program.

He was executive producer on the ABC3 children's television series **Ready for This**, winner of the 2015 AACTA Award for Best Children's Television Series and the 2016 TV Week Logie for Most Outstanding Children's Program.

For SBS in 2016 Darren is currently producing a feature documentary and a 4 part crime drama series, both titled **Deep Water**.

Darren currently serves on the board of Sydney Festival, is the Deputy Chair of the Council of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS), and in 2012 was the recipient of the prestigious AFTRS Honorary Degree.

## Writer and Series Producer JACOB HICKEY



Jacob started his career in BBC current affairs and worked on many award-winning projects, including hard-hitting investigations, primetime observational documentaries and historical series. After almost ten years at the BBC, Jacob moved to Melbourne.

In 2009 Jacob wrote and directed **Inside the Firestorm**, a feature length documentary for the ABC telling the story of Australia's worst bushfire disaster 'Black Saturday'. The documentary won Jacob the 2010 AFI Award for Best Direction in a Documentary.

Jacob's next project was **Immigration Nation**, on which he was both series producer and director. The 3-part documentary was broadcast on SBS in January 2011, and nominated for Best Factual Series at the 2011 AACTA Awards. Jacob then took up the post of series producer and writer on **Once Upon a Time in Cabramatta** for SBS, which told the dramatic and tumultuous story of the Vietnamese community synonymous with the western Sydney suburb. The production attracted one of the biggest audiences ever for an SBS documentary, and won Gold and Silver Medals at the New York Film Festival's International Television and Film Awards. 2012 saw Jacob series producing, directing and writing **Dirty Business – How Mining Made Australia**.

In July 2013 Jacob joined Blackfella Films in Melbourne as Head of Factual, responsible for the development and production of the company's factual slate.

Jacob was the writer and series producer of **First Contact**, which screened on SBS in late 2014. The series attracted a total audience in excess of 2 million, and won the 2015 TV Week Logie Award for Most Outstanding Factual Program.

Jacob's most recent projects are **DNA Nation**, the 3 part science documentary series for SBS on which he was the writer and producer, and he is executive producer of the feature documentary **Deep Water**, also in production in 2016, which explores the epidemic of gay hate crime in Sydney in the 1980s and 1990s.

## Director DAVID GRUSOVIN



David Grusovin started his career in feature films as an assistant editor and sound editor. In 1996 he wrote and directed the short documentary **The Christmas Cake** which won the Dendy Australian Short Film Award for Best Documentary at the Sydney Film Festival, which was followed by the documentaries **Taking Care of Elvis**, **The Animated Leunig** and **Magic Millions**.

In a television career spanning over 20 years David has produced and directed a multitude of lifestyle programs, music shows, documentary series and specials across all genres, including **Big Brother**.

He directed the adventure reality series **The Lost Tribes**, documentaries **Lockdown Oz - Australia's Hardest Prison**, **Warrior Road Trip** and **The Tsunami Line**. He has worked as a series producer on **Surf Patrol**, senior producer on **Make Me a Supermodel**, and directed **Restaurant Bobby Chin** for Discovery Networks Asia.

Most recently David has directed the factual series **Class Of** - for Network Ten, the adventure travel series **Gem Hunt** for US Travel Channel, **River Cottage Australia Series One**, and **Living with the Enemy** for SBS.

## Director BRUCE PERMEZEL



Bruce Permezel is a multi-skilled television maker - director, cinematographer, editor and producer.

Coming from a publishing and graphics background, Bruce entered the industry as a video editor, cutting music videos and commercials. In 1993 he moved to broadcast television, working as a director on the ground breaking ABC youth current affairs show **Attitude**.

After that Bruce worked with both the ABC and numerous independent production houses developing and directing television programs. He also continued to work as an editor and gained skills as a cinematographer.

Bruce's projects have aired prime-time across all major networks, as well as being sold internationally. In 2006 he directed the observational series **Choir of Hard Knocks**, still known for winning the hearts of TV viewers across the nation.

His extensive output includes adventure travel (**Peking to Paris, Pirate Patrol**), natural history (**Possum Wars, Chris Humfrey's Wild Life**), lifestyle (**Bill's Holiday**), comedy (**The Games, Hessie's Shed**), current affairs (**Attitude**), documentary series (**Sporting Nation, The Problem with Men, Bodyline, Making Australia Great**) and observational series (**Choir of Hard Knocks, Jail Birds**).



blackfella films

## ABOUT BLACKFELLA FILMS

For over twenty years Blackfella Films has created innovative and high quality content across factual and drama in both series and feature formats for theatrical, television and online platforms. Its award winning productions have screened at the premier international film festivals including Sundance, Berlin and Toronto, and distinguished its team as creators and curators of distinctive Australian content.

The company was founded in 1992 by writer/director/producer **Rachel Perkins** who was joined by producer **Darren Dale** in 2002. In 2010 Blackfella Films was a recipient of Enterprise funding from Screen Australia and former ABC Television Head of Drama Miranda Dear joined Blackfella Films as a producer with a brief to develop the company's drama slate. In 2011 Rachel Perkins and Darren Dale as directors of Blackfella Films were ranked number 16 in the **Encore Power 50**. In 2013 producer Jacob Hickey was appointed Head of Factual, based in the company's Melbourne office.

A standout achievement for the company was the award-winning 7 part documentary series **First Australians**. The landmark multi-platform history series, broadcast on SBS Television to over 2.3 million viewers, was accompanied by an internationally acclaimed interactive website. First Australians was awarded Australia's top honours for documentary including the Australian Film Institute (AFI) and IF Awards, the UN Media Peace Prize, TV Week Logie and Australian Writers and Directors Guild Awards. **First Australians** has sold throughout the world, and is the highest selling educational title in Australia.

In 2011 the powerful documentary **Lani's Story** about Lani Brennan's battle against domestic violence won the Gold EVA (Eliminating Violence Against Women Media Awards) for Best Media Across Categories, as well as Best Television Current Affairs Award (More than 20 minutes).

The feature documentary **The Tall Man**, produced by Darren Dale with executive producer Rachel Perkins and directed by Tony Krawitz, received the inaugural Walkley Award for Documentary and was nominated for four Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) Awards including Best Feature Documentary. It screened at the Toronto Film Festival in 2011, was released in cinemas nationally by Hopscotch/eOne, and broadcast on SBS Television in 2012.

**The Tall Man** was followed by the telemovie **Mabo** for ABC1, produced by Darren Dale and Miranda Dear and directed by Rachel Perkins, featuring Jimi Bani as Eddie Koiki Mabo and Deborah Mailman as his wife Bonita. It was broadcast on ABC1 in June 2012 to mark the 20th anniversary of the landmark High Court decision on native title. Among numerous accolades, writer Sue Smith received the 2012 AWGIE for Best Original Telemovie Screenplay and Deborah Mailman received the 2013 TV Week Logie Award for Most Outstanding Actress.

In 2012 Blackfella Films also completed production on the groundbreaking 6 x 1 hour ABC drama series **Redfern Now**, developed in collaboration with renowned UK scriptwriter Jimmy McGovern as Story Producer. The series was the first Australian drama series written, directed and produced by Indigenous Australians. A further series was produced in 2013, and a final telemovie installment **Promise Me** featuring Wayne Blair, Deborah Mailman, Rarriwuy Hick and Anthony Hayes was broadcast in 2015. Deborah Mailman won the 2016 TV Week Logie for her performance.

**Redfern Now** received the 2013 and 2014 TV Week Logie Award for Most Outstanding Drama Series and the 2014 AACTA Award for Best Television Drama Series. In 2013 writer Steven McGregor received the AACTA Award for Best Screenplay in Television and Leah Purcell received the AACTA Award for Best Lead Actress in a Television. Director Rachel Perkins also received Australian Directors Guild (ADG) Awards for Best Direction in a TV Drama Series in 2013, 2014 and 2016 for her work on the series.

In 2014 Blackfella Films produced the 3 x 1 hour factual series **First Contact** for SBS which won the 2015 TV Week Logie Award for Most Outstanding Factual Program. The series garnered national attention and acclaim for its treatment of contemporary Australian attitudes towards Indigenous Australians. A further series is in production.

The recently released 14 x half hour teen drama series for ABC3 **Ready For This**, a co-production with award winning **Dance Academy** producer Joanna Werner, received the 2015 AACTA Award for Best Children's Television Series and 2016 TV Week Logie Award for Most Outstanding Children's Program.

Broadcast on SBS in 2016 is the 3 x 1 hour big science factual series **DNA Nation**, featuring Ian Thorpe, Julia Zemiro and Ernie Dingo.

In production is a multiplatform event for SBS titled **Deep Water** - comprised of a 4 x 1 hour drama series starring Noah Taylor and Yael Stone, a feature documentary and complementary online programming.