

## Students learn social skills at the dinner table

**BETHANY HIATT**  
EDUCATION EDITOR

An increasing number of schools are teaching teenagers dinner table etiquette, how to tie a tie and make polite small talk to give them social skills many do not learn at home.

Seventeen schools — nine public — have signed up to teach the course which the Curriculum Council endorsed to count for the WA Certificate of Education.

The program, designed for students aged 13 to 17, also covers personal hygiene, dress codes, cultural differences, deportment and dining skills.

Image Power director Natalia Josephs, who wrote the course, said it was not snobbish but about learning to get along with people.

"The program is about creating relationships and being able to communicate with people from anywhere in any situation," she said. "A lot of kids today are struggling with face-to-face interaction."

Teachers who have taught the



**Table manners: Warwick Senior High School Year 11 students, Santana Tana, left, Jackson Yapp and Taria Dann taking part in the etiquette course.**

Picture: Nic Ellis

course said many families no longer shared an evening meal.

"A lot of students are not used to sitting at a table and having their dinner with anyone," Warwick

Senior High School teacher Janet Martin said. "So we cook something together and then afterwards we all sit down to eat."

Year 11 student Jackson Yapp,

16, said he learnt to eat with chopsticks and to converse.

"That was a big one for me," he said. "Things like asking 'How are you' and trying to find some

common ground to make conversation on."

Jackson said he also learnt about manners in different cultures.