

Waratah Framework: Outcome 4

Activities:

- How to make and play the didgeridoo workshops,
- Clap stick workshops,
- Basket weaving,
- Weekly lunchtime culture workshops,
- Weekly visits to local Indigenous culture park,
- Weekly Indigenous dance workshops

Cultural activities delivered through the Project provided opportunities for students to learn about and connect to Indigenous culture.

Workshop activities were incorporated into NAIDOC Day celebrations to give **students an opportunity to be experts in this area whereas in other areas they may not be**. It was noted that these activities **grew awareness amongst the staff and students...and helped to make the school more inclusive for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders learners and it has given them more pride in their culture**.

The year 9 cohort organised and conducted an Indigenous Games tournament, which included the whole of school and broader community. Community members conducted workshops for years 7-10 such as clap stick painting, playing the didgeridoo, making damper, and Indigenous dance. The day culminated in a ceremony with Indigenous dancing from students and Indigenous staff. There was an overwhelmingly positive response from staff and students as **the ceremony highlighted the unity and support for diversity in our community. The dance was really impactful, and the school community loved it. The students involved displayed a real sense of pride...** Local community members running the workshops on-school grounds has also strengthened school and community links and relationships, which contributes to outcome 6.

A student survey found 90% of students are interested in learning more about their culture, 100% (n=10) of students participated in cultural activities, with most popular being visits to the Cultural Park and the Indigenous dance and didgeridoo workshops, **with one teacher commenting that didgeridoo workshops [were a] a big hit for students and an intrinsic motivator for them to attend**. After the event, students from other years began asking to be involved in the next workshops.

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Pedagogy is changed to create learning experiences that engage students: Project Based Learning (PBL) at Kempsey Adventist School

Purpose

To improve student engagement across Years 7 to 10 at Kempsey Adventist School, through pedagogical change characterised by cross-curricular Project Based Learning (PBL) and whole-school cultural shift. The implementation of PBL was specifically designed to improve engagement in learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with the knowledge that progress towards this outcome would result in increased engagement for all students.

Target group

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (n=47) and all non-Indigenous students enrolled in Years 7 to 10 in 2019 and 2020. All teaching staff were also targeted to assist in implementing pedagogical change.

Activities

Teaching staff at Kempsey Adventist School had been developing PBL practices since 2016, and this project significantly assisted in continuing and strengthening this learning journey in 2019 and 2020. Activities included:

- Participation of all secondary teachers in *PBL 201* professional development, designed to develop teaching practices and strategies that help strengthen the quality of student work in a PBL classroom.³⁵
- Planning and delivery of PBL projects throughout Terms 3 and 4, 2019 and Terms 1 and 2, 2020 – for example, the ‘Festival of Cre8tivity’, a week-long initiative where PBL projects replaced traditional classes. With support from their teachers, students were responsible for coming up with project ideas, and planning and running their projects.
- Additional implementation of PBL in specific subject areas including Science, Geography and Visual Arts, as well as cross-curricular projects.

Outcomes

Pedagogical change was achieved through the implementation of PBL, with staff successfully planning and delivering PBL as part of their teaching programming and practice. Evidence from Indigenous students supported increased interest and engagement in learning, with 75 per cent (n=15) of students surveyed rating their enjoyment of PBL as 7 out of 10 or higher.

Learnings

We learned the importance of maintaining the essence of a strategy such as PBL when applied at a whole-school level. We also acknowledge that changing pedagogy and therefore school culture takes many years. Our results show that this initiative is achieving what it set out to, and we must now continue improving the rigour of the projects, supporting staff to embed skills, and improving opportunities for student voice in the process.

“We are committed to striving to be a ‘best practice’ school in Aboriginal education, with a focus on ‘how we do it here’ for everyone, rather than as an isolated strategy.”
(Project report)

Feedback from teaching staff:

“Students seem very engaged in PBL and are attending classes more regularly.”

“Some of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to draw on relatives as ‘experts’ to help them design and express culture.”

Feedback from Indigenous students:

“I like it because I can choose something I am passionate about.”

“I find PBL very hands-on and I can work at my own pace.”

Sculpture created by a Year 9 Aboriginal student during a 2019 ‘Festival of Cre8tivity’



³⁵ Buck Institute for Education PBLWorks, 2020. PBL 201: Improving the Quality of Student Work, <https://www.pblworks.org/pbl-201-workshop-improving-quality-student-work>