

Waratah Framework: Outcome 10

Activities:

- Relationships with families and the community
- Language and art programs

One school has taken a holistic approach to enhancing the acknowledgement and value of Indigenous perspective and culture across the whole of school and community. They have actively engaged with the local community to ensure the activities and initiatives **are appropriately and respectfully informed, especially in relation to the Wiradjuri Country [they] are on**, recognise the **shared history and build on the knowledge of [local] First Nations People**.

The Project has allowed this school to implement a First Nations Language Program for primary students that is set within their local cultural heritage context and has been developed and delivered by an Indigenous support worker/teacher and the Head of Indigenous Studies. Teachers are supporters of the lessons and learn alongside students. During remote learning families were also engaged too.

There are overwhelmingly positive results that indicate students are invested in learning about language, grammar, and conventions of language in relation to speaking, listening, and writing. They also have **awareness and knowledge of the place, space, and world in which they live in relation to a First nation context and are accepting, appreciative and hold greater knowledge and understanding of what it is to be First Nations, and how it can and should be celebrated**. Interestingly, it quickly became evident that **students were grasping parts of language quicker and more fluently than the adults**.

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Our students know what it is to be [name of community redacted], what the totems are, what are men’s and women’s sites and other culturally specific information. They know who the local Elders are, they are aware of the local names and the significance of these.

The program will be continued for a second year in 2022 and will roll the program out to secondary students. There are also plans to have an outside classroom with a traditional yarning circle and for Wiradjuri language classes.

The program is also woven into First Nations art projects by using language in art, on canvas’, kangaroo skin cloaks, woodwork projects and flora and fauna projects. Further still, the school has Boys and Girls Dance groups who have performed in community and at school events and have broader community engagement and participation. Additional activities, including wellbeing days are held On-Country with smoking ceremonies, traditional art, and yarns with Elders.

For all that is being done, though, there are still areas where some students feel their culture is not present in school culture, for example only being celebrated during NAIDOC week. As a collective they also expressed the need for additional Indigenous staff, with one commenting that they would **benefit from another Indigenous support person**,

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preferably female. That way we can go to a female support. Someone that we can relate on a person level.

The school talks big about culture, and I know COVID has impacted that a lot, but since being here I haven't seen much culture (student)

The school has identified outcome 6 as one of their priorities but included detail on outcome 10 in the report. Their approach is also directly supportive of outcomes 6,7 and 9, which again demonstrates the interconnectedness of the Framework.

Improved literacy, numeracy, and other academic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Kinross Wolaroi School

Purpose

To improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' literacy, numeracy, and other academic outcomes through the *Wambinya Tutoring Program* (a Wiradjuri word meaning 'support'), developed in response to students requesting additional academic support in areas they were having difficulty.

Target group

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7 to 12 (n=26).

Activities

All Years 7-12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students received Maths tutoring and Years 10-12 students English tutoring, with the sessions conducted in the boarding houses in appropriate areas for study. Years 7-9 students also attended 'homework club' every Monday afternoon for 1.5 hours, supervised by Student Academic Services. Students were given support to be better prepared for assessment tasks and examination periods through targeted and strategically planned sessions. Collectively each week students received over 18 hours of tutoring, with the sessions divided into 45-minute blocks conducted as one-on-one, pairs or small group sessions of up to four students.

Outcomes

The program has been very well received by students and parents and carers. Eighty-nine per cent of students reported they wished to continue with tutoring, indicating they could see improvements. Ninety-four per cent of students strongly agreed/agreed they had access to a range of support for their academic progress, with six per cent feeling neutral (n=18, Term 1 2020). Students reported feeling less 'stressed' and more confident to be able to contribute during class and are better prepared for assessment tasks and examinations. An unintended outcome was the growth in parents' confidence in the support students were receiving. In Term 4 2019, 67 per cent parents strongly agreed/agreed their child had access to a range of academic support, with 22 per cent feeling neutral. However, in Term 1 2020, 100 per cent parents strongly agreed/agreed their child had access to a range of academic support, with one parent commenting "Just so happy with everything provided so far" (n=9).

Learnings

The program has highlighted the need to support our boarding students after hours, and that students enjoy interacting with their tutors and the affirmation they receive as they improve. Clear expectations need to be set for both students and tutors regarding what it required for a successful program, including students' arriving prepared for the sessions, and tutors aligning areas of work with the current scope and sequence for each year group to allow for more targeted and strategic approaches to the sessions.

"Hey (English Tutor) Just thought I'd let you know how the English assessment task went. I got a total score of 17/20 85% and ranked equal 2nd. Thank you for all of your help this term. It has made such a difference to my confidence, I much appreciated it. Kind regards Student."

When asked if students would like to continue with tutoring:

"Yes because it makes things sink in and makes Maths and other things seem and feel easier."

"Yes please but not just maths. English because I struggle a bit with English."

"Yes because it was somewhat beneficial and knowing I have the extra support keeps me less stressed."

Yes, I feel it has helped my understanding soooo much!"

"Yes I would like to continue because of my choice of extension maths as an elective in years 9 and 10."

"Yes because it helps when assessments come."

"Maybe. Depends on the timetable and my workload."

"No, as I feel like I gain more independent study time and I get more work done."

Parent emails in response to school's tutoring update email:

"Thank you. The support and organisation is fantastic!"

"This is great, thank you!"