

Aboriginal community
from the
gumbaynggirr tribe
essay sample



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The topic of Community and Remembrance provides a study of identity and diversity for students in both a local and broader context. Throughout the topic, students will gain understanding of the importance of Country and Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples (NESA, 2012), focusing on those who belong to the local lands, being the Gumbaynggirr tribe for this region. Students will also develop an understanding of another person's view, life and decisions, as well as identify with the languages spoken within the local area and the importance of events by responding to stories from guest speakers.

By incorporating the teaching of Indigenous cultures and resources into our schools, students will have an enriched understanding of our history as well as Australia's (Shipp, 2009). The inclusion of indigenous perspectives within the teaching of Community and Remembrance allows for a better understanding of histories, culture, traditions, beliefs and values in order to enrich the appreciation of the Indigenous culture among all students. First Contacts The topic of First Contacts introduces students to world history and the movements of people.

Throughout the topic, students learn about the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and examine the European colonisation within Australia (NESA, 2012). Students will have the opportunity to focus on the changes to the lives of Aboriginal people with the arrival of the first fleet, as well as how things have changed in their local community since that time and the cause and effect of these changes; focusing on events, decisions or developments in the past that have produced actions, results or effects.

Throughout the students learning, as a sign of respect teachers should acknowledge the historical foundation of the school's location in regard to its indigenous heritage (Perso, 2012). By studying the nature of contact between Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islanders and the Europeans, students will begin to understand a range of effects these interactions had. Through meaningful learning experiences students will have the opportunity to engage with historical content, concepts and skills.

Describe the nature of contact between Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and others, including Aboriginal resistance explain the term terra nullius and describe how this affected the British attitude to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples use sources to identify different perspectives on the arrival of the British to Australia outline the impact of early British colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' country (NESA, 2012, p. 47)

Part Two:

Resource One: Community and remembrance Aboriginal Community Member from the Gumbaynggirr tribe Guest speakers have become an important part of the educational experience for students, they have the ability to expose students to real-world life experiences from the position of someone who has been there (Cox, 2017). Using a guest speaker as an educational resource within a Stage 2 classroom allows for students to see the insight and perspective of another person who has direct knowledge of a topic. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, oral histories are a major form of communication as well as a valuable medium for gaining knowledge and

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understanding about people, families, places, events and history (QCAA, 2002).

Marsh (2010) states that involving Aboriginal community members and elders into school activities; including local community history, will allow for enhanced quality teaching and learning for all students. Within Indigenous cultures, oral histories embrace more than storytelling, they exist in a number of interwoven forms and are intricately incorporated in diverse and sophisticated dances, songs and mime. Oral traditions are the principal historical and day-to-day records of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and should be regarded as a significant part of Australian society (DET, n. d).

Oral traditions include, but are not limited to:

- narratives, facts and spiritual beliefs that relate to the ancestral beings, creation times and the tradition
- family and clan relationships and responsibilities to the land, seas, waterways, the sky and the universe
- rights and responsibilities around art forms including song, dance, music and visual arts in describing world views and relationships
- scientific knowledge, including classification of environmental elements, seasonal patterns and conditions
- stories of early contact with colonists
- personal and community histories of lived experiences and events

- biographical stories of individuals
- kinship structures and community obligations.

These oral traditions are established as significant historical records informing written history, the arts and current cultural practices. The term ‘dreaming’ refers to all that is understood by Aboriginal people about the origins of the environment, themselves and their cultures (DET, n. d). It is a non-Aboriginal word applied to Aboriginal world views. The world views described in Dreaming and creation stories are very complex and continue to relate to the values and beliefs of Aboriginal people in all Australian lifestyles.

It links with their past and present to determine the future (DET, n. d). All students within this class will be aware of the traditional language used by the tribe, their diet and a range of their customs. The use of the Aboriginal community member visiting will enable the member to practice traditions with the students through Dream Time stories, songs and native dance. Success is genuinely derived from a partnership of these parties to the educational process (McRae, 2002).

Introducing students to the histories of the Gumbaynggirr tribe using a guest speaker is important in showing respect to the tribe as well as teaching appreciation and understanding to the students of another’s way of life. Throughout one’s teaching, all Dreaming and Dreamtime concepts should be treated the utmost respectful manner (McRae, 2002). Having dreamtime stories, language and a range of customs taught by an Aboriginal community member will enhance the students’ educational experience as they

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essentially get a glimpse into the everyday life of the speaker, which they are unable to receive any other way.

Resource Two: First Contacts The Rabbits written by John Marden and Shaun Tan The Rabbits is a children's book portraying a partly symbolic story about the colonisation of Australia, told from the viewpoint of the colonised. This sophisticated and compelling book will provide an abundance of ideas and discussion for students. It is an excellent example of how a picture book can challenge and engage the student's minds. The story makes a powerful statement about colonisation through an unseen narrator describing the coming of 'the rabbits' in the most minimal of details.

An encounter that is at first friendly and curious, however, as the story progresses darkens as it becomes apparent that the visitors are actually invaders. The style of the book has been deliberately created sparse and strange, with both text and image conveying an overall sense of bewilderment and anxiety as native numbat-like creatures witnessing the environmental devastation under the wheels of a strange new culture. The parallels with a real history of the colonisation of Australia are obvious, and based on detailed research (Tan, n. d); despite the overt surrealism of the imagery and the absence of direct references.

Controversy surrounded The Rabbits as it is a picture book, and therefore thought to be children's literature, however it has also been conceived as a book for older readers, therefore generally difficult to categorise. Graham (2000) suggests that these resources – picture books – are 'simple vehicles' & useful as an entry point before students engage with more complex texts.

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Miller (1998) also suggests that picture books can be used as an introduction to topics, activate students' background knowledge & stimulate curiosity about subject matter.

Also, as Miller (1998) exemplifies, some topics, such as History & Geography, are usually removed from students' familiar experiences & perspectives, & can thus be made more real for students by drawing in picture books as resources. *The Rabbits* raises numerous points for discussion in the classroom, as it deals with so many issues. It can be used in conjunction with many different KLA areas such as English, Art, Drama, Geography and Technology. There are various lesson activities that can be completed upon reading the book. An overview of some suitable lesson activities are as follows:

As the book is clearly not about rabbit. Without prompting or prior discussion, what do they think the story is about? Create discussions around the book while leading students to talk about their feelings about the story, using their own words. What effect does the illustrations have on the reader throughout the book? How are symbols used throughout the book?

Discussions surrounding the animals in the book and how they relate to Australia and nativity of our country, while learning about other unique Australian marsupials as rabbits are not native to Australia.

As the book is clearly not about rabbit. What do they think the story is about? Children break into groups and choose an illustration to act out that part of the story. Part Three: Resource One: Community and Remembrance Aboriginal Community Member from the Gumbaynggirr tribe Educational

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Value: The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (DET, 2014) aims to improve the availability, responsiveness, effectiveness and overall participation of indigenous students in learning.

Through further exploration of the policies' outcomes, three goals stood out prominently in relation to this teaching resource. They include; To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal traditional and contemporary cultures. To enable Aboriginal students at all levels of education to have an appreciation of their history, cultures and identity. To achieve the participation of Aboriginal children in education for a period similar to that for all Australian children.

In seeking to meet these outcomes, the use of a Community member would be extremely effective, especially as Wiley (2016) highlights that identity is an important factor in the teaching of indigenous students. By incorporating indigenous aspects and culture into the classroom learning routines, the students may feel more involved and included in class activities as students are known to work best when they feel comfortable and safe in their learning environment (Marsh, 2010). Cultural Appropriateness:

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (DET, 2014) suggests culture and identity as the key factors to be addressed when choosing learning activities and teaching strategies. It states that through the delivery of the Australian Curriculum, the education process acknowledges, respects and reflects the histories, values, languages and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The inclusion of resources such as Aboriginal community members within one's teaching

routine will assist in engaging all students in understanding cultural perspectives and the histories that have shaped the indigenous tribes.

The necessity of involvement of community voice is highlighted in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (DET, 2014) and the involvement of Aboriginal community members adheres to this idea. Recommendations for other Teachers: Cultural support, recognition and acknowledgment can only be achieved by active and effective relationships between Indigenous communities and those who work in schools both parties have a role to play in Indigenous education.

To ensure positive outcomes for all students and adequate levels of participation, it is important to create a welcoming and accepting classroom in which students and visitors are happy to express themselves. Resource Two: First Contacts The Rabbits written by John Marden and Shaun Tan Educational Value: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders recognise themselves through their land, language and relationships with others (Marsh, 2010). Cultural Appropriateness: Wiley (2016) suggests that making the teaching content culturally relevant, an improvement in academic achievement will result.

In addressing this idea, the Closing the Gap policy places further emphasis on the need to bridge the gap between Westernised and indigenous education practices. Recommendations for other Teachers: Due to the sensitive nature of some of the content within The Rabbits, setting classroom ground rules with your students before viewing is an important step in creating a safe space and helping develop mutual respect and understanding

between all students within your classroom. Possible rules could be: Be respectful: Each person has their own beliefs and values

Value diversity: Each person has their own world views, experiences and opinions. Listen politely: Each person has a right to contribute without pressure or intimidation Act with honour and courage: Be brave in sharing experiences, ideas and opinions Appreciate privacy: Each person has the right to uphold their privacy Act responsibly: Share feedback with thoughtful consideration and a positive attitude towards others.

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