

Report-bush school essay



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Acknowledgement: I respectfully acknowledge the Elders and custodians of the Wulgurukaba and Bindal nation past and present, their descendents and kin; the Mungalawurru nation of which this assignment speaks. Townsville city is located in Bindal country which is of great cultural significance and sustains the life and well-being of traditional custodians past and present. I recognise the impacts of colonisation on Indigenous Australians and value this place of shared learning. In reconciliation I am committed to participating and learning more about the local custodians and culture in a spirit of mutual honour and respect.

Introduction Support for inclusive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education increasingly improves outcomes of learning and retention of schooling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian schools (The Australian Curriculum, 2009). This task endeavours to identify key aspects and links between Aboriginal traditional learning and teaching in remote Aboriginal communities, such as Warrego Bush School and teaching Aboriginal children in mainstream classrooms.

Part A). Describe the links between the Bush School experience and the weekly unit topics in reference to Indigenous Education in Australia, citing specific example from course learning material and themes with the DVD.

The Bush School experience highlights inclusive Indigenous education within the Australian education curriculum. Morgan and Slade (1998) emphasise Indigenous education in Australian schools curricula and education for teachers about Indigenous history, culture and learning styles. By incorporating traditional classroom learning with traditional Aboriginal

culture as demonstrated in the Bush School program, results in positive learning success by Aboriginal students (Bush School, 2005).

i. Acknowledging Country – Aboriginal Terms of Reference Learning about Aboriginal culture begins with acknowledging country, either, the country a school is situated on or the country a town or city is situated on.

Acknowledging country shows respect, acceptance, and understanding, kinship and alliance of Aboriginal culture and history. Acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander countries opens communication of cultural protocols, to improve working relationships between non-Aboriginal Australians and Aboriginal Australians. Working relationships values culturally appropriate practices as well as valuing cultural diversity (Oxfam, 2012). Valuing cultural diversity paves the way for promoting individual differences in school, creating mutual respect and understanding, enhancing Aboriginal student's self-efficacy and avoiding racial stereotyping (Craven, 1999).

ii. Cultural Knowledge in Education – Aboriginal History Aboriginal culture is holistic, spiritual and contextual (Morgan and Slade, 1998). Hughes (1988) describes Aboriginal learning as circles with no specific reference points as compared to European mechanistic learning, in squares, with clear reference points. According to O'Brien, a Kauma Elder, Aboriginal learning begins with the reality of the Dreaming, with many inseparable aspects including, identity, spirituality, knowledge, truth and value, focussing on the interconnectedness of all facets (Morgan and Slade, 1998).

European methods differs by acquiring knowledge separately from differing parts. The “ Bush School” program demonstrates a holistic learning program for Aboriginal children through incorporating traditional cultural learning from elders as well as integrated subject learning across the curriculum. For example, using horse-riding skills as part of the learning, Colin Baker was able to incorporate teaching Mathematics and English (Bush School: 2005, 51: 23).

Part B). How does the Bush School experience cater for the student’s physical, emotional, social and academic well-being effectively? Discuss (300 words) i. Physical well-being – Indigenous Health and Well-being

Demonstration of catering for student’s physical well-being is evident when Sandra Baker talks about providing hot meals daily for the children as well as running a health program in conjunction with the Aboriginal Health Congress (Bush School: 2005, 17: 16, 18: 19).

Providing hot meals and/or breakfast’s at school, enables students to have more energy, focuses student’s attention on studies and maintains overall good health. Sandra Baker also explains that many of the Bush School student’s suffer hearing loss with perforated and damaged ear drums, as a result of recurring early age ear infections. Hearing aids as well as encouraging nasal hygiene are provided to improve the children’s hearing that assists with their learning (Bush School: 2005, 18: 51). This is in line with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs where catering student’s for physiological needs enables them to concentrate more effectively on learning (McInerney and McInerney, 2006).

ii. Emotional well-being - Identity, Culture and Stereotypes Bush School student's emotional well-being is catered for by encouragement to attend school, from Colin and Sandra Baker and Colin Freddie, discussion of feelings between children, and contact with Aboriginal elders, Marie and Eva (Bush School: 2005, 14: 36). Learning Aboriginal culture from Marie and Eva highlights the holistic learning Aboriginal people participate in. By having the children live with the elders and learning from them, returning to their parents only on occasion, demonstrates the importance of connectedness, language and Aboriginal culture in learning, emphasised by Linda Bonney in EDP370, 2013 lecture (Bonney, 2013).

iii. Social well-being - Indigenous Health and Education Colin and Sandra Baker provide a safe and supportive atmosphere in the Bush School environment through their caring, no-nonsense attitude and temperament. Providing a safe and supportive environment and placing children's holistic needs at the centre of learning allows for a willingness to learn and harmonious, deep learning by students (Bonney, 2013). Through teaching swimming and having children participate in swimming carnivals in Alice Springs, demonstrates provision for social well-being where Bush School children learn to socialise with other children and demonstrate appropriate social behaviour at these gatherings (Bush School: 2005, 35: 34).

iv. Academic well-being - Contemporary Issues - Indigenous Literacy Strategies Student's academic well-being is catered for by incorporating Aboriginal knowledge across key learning areas as well as collaborating learning needs with local Aboriginal members (Craven, 1999; MYCEETA, 2010). The Bush School demonstrates these statements thoroughly through <https://assignbuster.com/report-bush-school-essay/>

examples of incorporating horse-riding, swimming and local Aboriginal culture in the school curriculum. Colin Baker (2005) states that melding horse-riding skills with other subject areas, such as Mathematics and English, provided a holistic learning approach that related to children's differing learning styles.

Part C). Compare and contrast Bush School experience with your Indigenous education experiences on your most recent classroom teaching practice.

(600 words) a. Similarities i. Safe and Supportive Environment The Bush School demonstrates several similarities to mainstream classrooms from my previous education experiences. For example, Colin and Sandra Baker provide a safe and supportive education environment that is non-threatening, caring as well as catering for diverse ages and learners. My most recent school experience at a local school showed similarities to the Bush School experience where there were two Aboriginal children in the grade three classroom. The teacher was most supportive of the children by ensuring they had had breakfast and also had a packed lunch.

She would often talk to the parents before school commenced and included me in the conversation. The parents were at first reluctant and suspicious of the teacher's intentions but they soon realised the teacher was genuine in her conversations and after a while began to be more open and talkative. The teacher also encouraged lessons that were based around Aboriginal history and storytelling. For example, one of the stories I read to the class, centred on the location of the school before white settlers, and was called "My Mob going to the beach" by Sylvia Emmerton, illustrated by Jaquanna Elliott (2004).

The teacher also encouraged the parents to come to the classroom and participate in the storytelling, often encouraging them to talk about their school experiences. Through this interaction, I was able to build rapport with the two students resulting in their striving and being willing contributors within their groups. Their literacy and numeracy skills improved as well as eagerly participating in classroom activities. As Craven (1999) suggests, providing a safe and supportive classroom enables children to be relaxed and happy to learn where they are understood and valued, which encourages channels of communication. Bonney (2013) also suggests enlisting parents and the wider Aboriginal community as well as working closely with AEIO's in the classroom incorporating Aboriginal cultural perspectives, to facilitate meaningful learning for Aboriginal students.

b. Differences: ii. Contemporary Issues The Bush School (2005) demonstrates several differences to my local school experience. At the Bush School, Colin and Sandra Baker were involved entirely in the children's learning for nearly the whole day, five days a week and for much of the weekend. At the Bush School, for example, Colin Baker utilised the horse-riding experience to integrate learning across subject areas. He incorporated Mathematics and English with local Aboriginal culture, marrying the three topics together to create holistic learning for the Aboriginal children. Applying measurement, geometry, addition, and multiplication to where the horses were housed, the length of a riding field, the circumference of the riding circle; the gathering of bush food, naming the animals and food collected using correct spelling; learning the times tables while riding to school on the school bus, all serves as examples of differences to mainstream schooling.

At the local school, learning was done most of the time with the teacher at the front of the classroom, using an interactive whiteboard or blackboard and the children doing a large amount of pencil and paper work. The children worked in small groups with the Aboriginal children assisted by a Teacher Aide or a more capable peer. Very little learning took place outside the mainstream classroom and learning ceased at three o'clock when the school bell rang. Education programs for the Aboriginal students took place once a term in consultation with an AEIO; however, this was not always possible as the staffing of an AEIO depended on the school's current funding.

When it was not possible to consult with an AEIO, the teacher merely compiled information from the internet and the Queensland Studies Authority as well as the Australian Curriculum. Subject integration was minimal and some subjects such as Science and SoSE were taught by other teachers in another classroom. As Morgan and Slade (1998) state, European learning consists of separated parts taught in isolation from each other as opposed to Aboriginal learning that consists of holistic learning integrating with other elements.