Plants for People Multimedia

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Project Title	Plants for People Multimedia Pilot Project – A New Paradigm
Project Team	Professor Louis Evans, (Curtin University), Professor Sue Trinidad (SiMERR WA)
Period	2007
Funding Agency	Australian Schools Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics (ASISTM – Round 2)
Organisational Base	SiMERR WA

Description

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This project aimed to enhance the teaching and learning of science, technology and mathematics through a focus on the traditional knowledge of plants, ecological systems and natural resilience that are emphasised in Indigenous communities. Thus, while aiming to improve science, mathematics and ICT learning outcomes for Years 6-9 students, the project also aimed to foster a greater understanding and valuing of Indigenous culture, and increased self-esteem and cultural pride for Indigenous students.

The Indigenous and non-Indigenous Teacher Associates assisted teachers from the schools to design multimedia learning activities to develop knowledge and understandings about Indigenous sustainability principles and practices. This included the development of a CD containing materials for lessons on building a school Noongar Garden based on the Noongar six seasons. An additional component of the project was the provision of professional development for the teachers involved, to support them in their implementation of the teaching materials.

Many activities supported student learning, including: a field trip to a local dam to learn about Noongar culture; creating a garden based on the six Noongar seasons; collecting wattle seeds and making wattle seed bread; using plants to dye silk; and using plants for medicinal purposes.

Participants

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Five schools that represented regional as well as remote locations within WA participated in the project. All the schools had high enrolments of Indigenous students. A network of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Teacher Associates assisted teachers. One project coordinator; one critical friend, five School Leaders; six teachers; 67 students; five Teacher Associates; three consultants; two partner organizations.

Findings

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Outcomes

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This project has enabled the support and production of resources for teachers and students in regional and remote Western Australia. The CD produced allows teachers and students to better understand and develop knowledge and understandings about Indigenous sustainability principles and practices.

Conference paper and presentation (in progress)

- Trinidad, S., Broadley, T., & Smith, M. (2009, February). Building on sustainable education in science, mathematics and ICT in Western Australia. Paper submitted to the National Centre of Science, Information and Communication Technology, and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia's national symposium on innovation for equity in rural education, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

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The project has fostered a greater understanding and valuing of Indigenous culture. At the same time increased self-esteem

and cultural pride have been engendered in Indigenous students as well as a set of valuable resources.

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