

Taking Action: Students as Global Citizens

Project flow chart

Motivation

Planning

Starting
PBL
process

Resources

Planning
solutions

Publishing
&
presenting

Reflection



1 MOTIVATION

What was your (teacher) motivation for joining the project?

We wanted to create an opportunity to allow our students to immerse themselves in a cross-curricular project. We also wanted to have a project based on a real world problem rather than an isolated or artificial construct. This project allowed us to achieve aspects of the AITSL standards and network with other like-minded professionals at other schools.

2 PLANNING

How did you (teacher) plan – for immersion, explicit teaching, etc.?

We began our planning by focussing on the primary idea of 'immigration'. From this key concept we mapped out cross-curricular links in History, Maths, English and Art and identified areas in our timetable to allow the time needed to achieve the depth of understanding we were looking for. We were fortunate to have had some school-provided professional development in a design-thinking process model that we used to form the structure of our programme. We met on a weekly basis to ensure that we had covered the required content and to reflect on whether more time was needed or whether we were all ready to move to the next stage.

3 STARTING PBL PROCESS

Teacher/student negotiation around driving question/problem, student voice and choice

We began by creating an immersive environment where students were surrounded by a variety of information at differing levels. After 4-5 weeks, we moved to the Synthesis phase, where students were able to connect their understanding of the concepts covered in the Immersion phase by linking them through hexagons. From here, students looked for potential problems that emerged through their synthesis on the concept. Once a problem was identified, students were able to generate potential ideas/solutions to the problem. They were then able to choose their favourite or best idea and embark on a prototyping phase that allowed them to refine their solution via an iterative peer feedback process. At the conclusion of the Prototype phase, the students were in a position of 'experts' about the topic and their own solution. They were then able to pitch their idea in a 3-minute presentation to their peers on the validity and usefulness of their solution.

4 RESOURCES

Who and what (eg, guest speakers, One World or Taking Action booklets, use of 21st skills, etc.)?

- The primary resource for the structure of the model we used came from NOTOSH. www.notosh.com
- We utilised the Australian Bureau of Statistics for graphing in Mathematics.
- We used Shaun Tan's book 'The Arrival' as the basis for many of our English writing activities.
- We used two reading books, 'No Gun for Asmir' and 'Natasha's Will', as class reading books.
- We used the 'In Search of Safety' work package from The Red Cross as the basis for creating empathy.
- We went to the State Library and Art Gallery and examined historical paintings and pictures on the topic of migration.
- We invited migrants from different backgrounds to visit our school and be interviewed by the students.
- During the Prototype and Pitch phases, we looked at some online resources, 'Austin's Butterfly' and an Australian Story episode on 'The Flow Hive'.

5 PLANNING SOLUTIONS

Student innovation, creative problem-solving, etc.

The students came up with a variety of ideas, from designing life jackets for children through to hostels for migrants. The difficulty came in filtering potential ideas as to whether they were new, useful or feasible. The students undertook this filtering through a process of self-reflection and discussion to determine their 'best' idea. During the Prototype phase, students were explicitly taught feedback techniques in order to provide kind, specific and helpful feedback to their peers on the solution they were designing. These techniques continued through to the Pitch stage where the same model was used to refine students' pitches.

6 PUBLISHING AND PRESENTING

Digital product and showcase presentation

The students used a visual presentation tool on their iPads, keynote, to present their problem and solution to the class. The students verbally presented their pitch with accompanying keynote in order to convince the class of the relative merit of their solution. The best pitch was then selected and presented to the AISWA seminar at the State Library.

7 REFLECTION

Teacher, student and community responses

As teachers, we found the process both daunting and rewarding. We initially found it difficult to get the time to plan the entire unit of work and where the cross-curricular links would be. When we did get into the detail and met on a regular basis, it became easier. We found the Immersion phase was longer than we planned and found some difficulty in generating student empathy with refugees. The entire project ran for 15 weeks, which was longer than we originally planned, but if we had reduced the length of the Immersion phase, the project would have been shorter. The students definitely achieved a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the concepts on immigration than they would have with a standard stand-alone unit of work. The students were also very engaged with the topic and wanted to be working on their projects, which reduced off-task behaviour and resulted in high-quality solutions. The feedback we received from the Taking Action showcase was very positive and many teachers asked for more information on the NOTOSH model and some of the specifics of it.