Integrated assessment and academic writing in an Indigenous health course

Michelle Dickson
Jo Lander
Sydney School of Public Health
Darkinjung

Central coast, NSW

(Gosford, Brisbane Waters)
Ngarigo

- Cooma Monaro, Snowy Mountains, New South Wales, Australia
Ngarigo

- Cooma Monaro, Snowy Mountains, New South Wales, Australia
Diversity
Urban
Regional
Rural
Remote
Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion  2013

![Group Photo of Students]

The University of Sydney
Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion
2014
Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion
2015
What is the Graduate Diploma in Indigenous health promotion (GDIHP)?
Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion (GDIHP)

- 1998 established the GDIHP
- One-year full-time block-release postgraduate course
- Teaching preventive health & harm minimisation
- Across all health issues: FASD, diabetes, sexual health
- Focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts but transferable to mainstream
- Provide pathway to higher education & career progression
- Graduates now in higher positions, more $$, Masters & PhDs
- 19 years and still going strong…
Enrolment and completion rates 1998-2013
Celebrating success
Overview of GDIHP content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 1</th>
<th>INDH5211: Community Profile and Setting Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block 2</td>
<td>INDH5212: Health Promotion Program Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 3</td>
<td>INDH5213: Goals, Objectives &amp; Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 4</td>
<td>INDH5221: Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 5</td>
<td>INDH5224: Research &amp; Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 6</td>
<td>INDH5227: Art, Science &amp; Politics of Prevention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community engaged knowledge exchange – alumni project

- Specifically, it developed and piloted an innovative approach to enhancing the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student progression and experience by embedding collaborative knowledge exchange into the entire program curricula.
Creating a collaborative learning community – making health promotion short films

Outside the classroom – Framing Health – Souths Cares, Compass & high schools

- Practical knowledge and skill development - making short films with a health promotion message
- Developing community learning partnerships
- Communicating health messages
Outside the classroom - Developing radio stings

- Established collaborative learning partnerships not-for-profit community organisation, peak health body (NSW) and a community radio station

- Developed a radio sting over 6 blocks

- Recorded the radio sting in studio

- Developed supporting print based materials
Integrated academic literacies: Rationale

• Communication central to workplace, community engagement and study
• Variety of audiences
• Authentic
• Explicitly taught, not by osmosis
• Integrated with content: cognitive, efficiency
• Integrated with assessment: motivation
• Contested:

‘You mean we’ve been telling our kids all along that Aboriginal English is OK and now we find out it’s not?’
From reactive to proactive

- Stage 1: Academic writing narrowly defined
- small scale writing support based on common grammatical errors
- largely online exercises
- small gains
Stage 2: Integrated with content/ assessment

- Opportunistic, driven by assessment
- Whole text approach, genre-based + grammatical features
- Nexus language/ knowledge: academic genres structuring argument
- Disciplinary specificity – lexis, text types
Stage 3: Introduction of other communication skills
- Presentations (Slides and delivery)
- Visual + text communication eg web sites, fliers
## Integrated academic literacies: examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Activity/ies</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective journal</td>
<td>Reflective vs recount writing</td>
<td>Ass 1 Part B: Reflective journal (all blocks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report (in all cases using model report from former student)</td>
<td>Structuring your report – general; macro and hyperthemes.</td>
<td>Ass 1 Part A: Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>Writing about data: describe, compare, contrast; attitude.</td>
<td>Ass 1 Part C: Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report – identify priority health issue</td>
<td>Cause and effect; persuasive writing</td>
<td>Ass 1 Part D: Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Design of ppt, delivery of presentation</td>
<td>Presentation – Block 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 4 Proactive: Students as researchers (2015, 2016)

- Design survey
- [Run survey in community]
- Identify research paper structure
- Analyse and critique research papers
- Analyse survey data
- Writing a research paper (intro!)
- Flipped classroom approach

- Assessment adapted
And…we evaluated.

- End of block evaluations:

The session I learnt most from this block was academic writing- I look forward to these sessions each block because I know I walk away with more confidence to get in and get my work done, to write and talk and know people will stand up and take notice of me.
Evaluations

– [The academic literacy sessions] have given us a chance to combine our Uni learning with our assignments. Every time Jo walks in to teach I know it is connected to our assessment work, and that really helps. It has been awesome.

– I never thought I would be able to write about statistics or write critically about a published article- who would have thought?

– Ah, I can really see the connection between the sessions Jo teaches and the skills and knowledge we need for our assessments- they are a clever mob, these teachers!
On balance…

- Knowing cohort – increasing sophistication
- Collaborative – ‘third space’
- Cultural safety, respect
- Authentic – bridged study and work
- Close connection with disciplinary content and assessment
- Cohort, lock step progression
- Time available

- ‘Small scale initiatives which are not sustainable’
- For mainstream: no lock step progression, wide range of electives, S1 or S2 start, crowded curriculum ... academics providing individual assistance esp international students