



16 February 2015

Testimonial of Megs Murr, Head of Curriculum and Year 6 Teacher at Kawana Waters State College for the Macassan Unit

As Head of Curriculum at Kawana Waters State College, I was approached by our Indigenous Perspectives Educator to give feedback on the Macassan – Sharing Culture Unit. Recent to this, I had experienced Connection to Country learning experiences provided by Indigenous Perspective Educators. I was enthused and engaged by the delivery of information. Students in all year levels reported their excitement and interest. In order to give well informed feedback, I taught as much of the Macassan Unit as I could in the last 2 weeks of the 2014 school year.

Linking directly to History, Technology (design, create and reflect) and Literacy with incidental links to Science and Math, the unit allowed my students to experience real life historical and current learning experiences through non-threatening and engaging content. As a teacher without any specific training or experience teaching Connection to Country content, I felt safe and confident while being excited with the activities, language choices, media resources and actual historic connection to real people in real settings appropriate to this unit.

Specifically, learning about early means of travel for trade and survival through the creation of paperbark canoes is one thing. Imagine actually designing and creating these paperbark boats in miniature form and testing them in real water environments? My students were excited to complete drafts, conduct yarning circles and reflectively design 'the perfect' canoe. Testing them in our local lake provided a real life sink or float opportunity.

Resourcing for this unit was uniquely organised referencing multi-modal presentations and expectations of real people and real places. The presentation of the unit supports the ability for any teacher to access more information and teach the unit as it appears. While Macassan is historically stimulating, it is also non-threatening, interesting and safe to teach. The Macassan Unit was well received in my classroom by teachers and students.

I would recommend this unit as an alternative History Unit where links to the past, connecting to country and factual historical studies of Australia's past are the focus. Through my teaching experiences in Year 6 and 7 there are many opportunities for this content. The educational rigor and assessment requirements are supported and directly linked to the Australian Curriculum. The Unit offers a safe and sincere window into the traditional Yolngu life.

In my current capacity as a Head of Curriculum and Year 6 Teacher, I would recommend the inclusion of this unit as an entire unit to an Upper Primary / Lower Secondary year level. The opportunities for cross curriculum learning experiences are endless.

The Macassan Unit is a refreshing, real life learning experience about connection to country for everybody.

Handwritten signature of Megs Murr in black ink.

Megs Murr
Classroom Teacher / Head of Curriculum

Handwritten signature of Ruth Murray in black ink.

Ruth Murray
Principal – Primary Campus

