

Stage 4 – Personal Development, Health and Physical Education

Exploring My Country

Intellectual Quality

This unit presents multiple, contrasting and potentially conflicting forms of knowledge. Knowledge is treated as problematic and recognised as socially constructed and open to question. Throughout this unit, students are regularly engaged in forms of thinking that require them to analyse, interpret and evaluate information, and they are required to refer to specific language and how it works. In particular, the investigation of terms such as ‘multicultural’ and ‘native’ as examples of metalanguage is evident in the discussion questions. Communication, with sustained interaction, focuses on the substance of the lessons throughout the unit. Questions are framed in such a way as to elicit in-depth responses, encouraging students to move beyond recount to critical reasoning. Students are encouraged to share ideas about lesson topics through small group discussions and other communication opportunities and structures provided in the unit.

Quality Learning Environment

Students participate in challenging work throughout the unit. They investigate their sense of self and ideas about connectedness beyond themselves and their own environment, and how these concepts apply to Aboriginal people. The unit encourages conceptual challenge by providing discussion questions that require students’ depth and breadth of thought. The unit provides substantial opportunities for all students to contribute and collaborate, for example in cooperative activities and small group work. The teaching and learning activities are purposeful and interesting and several learning resources are used. In many lessons, students are given choices and are able to take responsibility for how findings are presented.

Significance

Throughout this unit, students’ background knowledge is connected to the unit’s content. There are opportunities for students to recognise and value cultural knowledge and challenge the ways of the dominant culture, and to look beyond the stereotypes used to describe different social groups. Integration of knowledge is evident in the connections with Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) and the exploration of the displacement of Aboriginal people. This unit broadens students’ knowledge of the ‘stolen generation’ by including the effect of these events on the health of individuals and communities. The assessment activity provides opportunities for students to propose solutions to social problems and to assist people beyond the classroom and school. The picture book ‘The Arrival’ is an unusual and powerful use of narrative that enhances the significance of the key concepts of the unit.