

Sue Mullen

Braemar College

s.mullen@braemar.vic.edu.au

Leanne Little

The Kilmore International
School

lgj@kilmore.vic.edu.au

Keywords:

Collaboration,
Curiosity Week,
Immersion

Learning areas:

Science,
Digital Technology,
Entrepreneurship &
Education,
Work Studies

Curiosity Week: A Steam Based Immersion Week

Theme: Teaching approaches, strategies, activities, or resources relating to STEM subjects and/or entrepreneurship

Proposal:

Leanne was noticing an increase in disengaged students. She identified the need for students to become immersed in the real world so that they could see the connection between their learning and real life.

Early in 2019, the concept of "Immersion weeks" was proposed. The school had not yet stepped into the Project Based Learning environment and ultimately the immersions were based on Michael McDowell's 'Transfer of Learning' concept and Hatties 'Visible Learning framework'. An immersion week allows the timetable to be 'shut down' with the student becoming immersed in a range of activities, focused at a specific learning area.

Curiosity week provided the perfect environment for students to be involved in interdisciplinary problem solving. Students used both fundamental skills (reading and writing) combined with 21st century skills (teamwork, problem solving, research gathering, time management).

Using various platforms of technology, students became directors and managers of their learning process, which was a unique experience for staff and students alike.

Immersion weeks can only happen with the support of the school, the teachers and of course the students. We wanted the students to be able to take control of their own learning throughout this week, but also allow them to experience some real life scenarios.

Program outcomes

- Reduction of assessments for students and teachers. Curiosity week allowed multiple assessment opportunities and staff collaboration across faculties.
- It provided the opportunity for students to stand out and demonstrate a different skill set often unseen in the traditional classroom setting.
- It develops the child's ability to work with others outside their peer group building teamwork and group skills
- It allows the teacher to learn more about the child as a person. Teachers were able to interact with students on a different level during the process.
- It highlighted the benefit of feedback to the learning process.
- It enabled the transfer of surface learning in the classroom to real life learning.
- Enhanced student awareness of the need for organisation to manage time and project outcomes.
- Students were 'busy', engaged and happy. Students often worked through lunch time and breaks, as they were unaware of the time.