LOW SES MEETS HIGH EXPECTATIONS

A research-led approach to successful student research

INGRID LEES
Introduction
Resources available at the end 😊
Successful student research at PGHS

http://www.pghs.sa.edu.au/
PGHS Overview

33% School Card
10% NEP
24% EALD
22% NESB
6% ATSI students
Year 12 around Australia

- NTCE
- QCE/QCIE
- WACE
- HSC
- ACT-Yr12C
- VCE/VCAL
- TCE
The compulsory requirements are:

- Personal Learning Plan — 10 credits at Stage 1
- Literacy — at least 20 credits from a range of English subjects (Stage 1 or Stage 2)
- Numeracy — at least 10 credits from a range of mathematics subjects (Stage 1 or Stage 2)
- Research Project — 10 credits at Stage 2
- Other Stage 2 subjects — at least 60 credits from a range of Stage 2 subjects.
THE RESEARCH PROJECT

• Doesn’t assess content knowledge
• Assesses students research skills and processes including:
  Planning
  Analysis
  Synthesis
  Substantiation
  Evaluation

www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/research-project
Identifying a problem of practice
2011 – First year of the RP

- Focus on “it’s compulsory”
- Focus on “just pass it and move on”
- Shallow rather than deep learning & assessment
- Of a large Yr 12 cohort, only three students got A-band results (3 A-grades)
2013 – Third year of the RP at PGHS

Nick Zissopoulos and Ingrid Lees presenting at The Watershed, 21st Nov 2013

• Involvement in the 2013 Leading SACE Improvement Program
• One of eight LSIP schools in 2013 (PGHS = Research Project)
• Sharing our strategies for improving SACE/RP achievement
Actions taken to improve student achievement
What’s the key?
Evidence-based improvement
John Hattie
Dylan William
Lyn Sharratt
Victoria Bernhardt
Keys to Success

- Mindset
- Learning Intentions
- Success Criteria
- Feedback
To the RP teacher: What do you think?

- About the Research Project
- The place of RP in SACE
- Value of RP as a subject
- The meaning of ‘compulsory’
What do you think about your students?
...and the quality of the work they submit to you?
TEACHER MINDSET

How teachers view the value of the Research Project and how they view their students’ potential for growth in their achievement will affect how they teach the subject.

The mindset of the teacher WILL* affect their students results.

*(hopefully positively)*
+ STUDENT MINDSET
Learning Intentions = No mysteries

Refinement of question focuses on a specific age group, and one specific cause which is related to a specific effect [P1]
RESEARCHING A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

WHO is involved?
- age
- gender
- interests
- attitude
- cultural
- ethical

WHAT does it involve?
- peer pressure
- addiction
- get approval
- improve health
- time
- cost
- actions
- behaviours

Possible outcomes of doing it...
- physical
- psychological
- social
- financial

ATTITUDES of others
- like/approval
- dislike/prejudice

It helps if:
- Preliminary research shows you can find credible information about your chosen question.
- You can use more than just the internet for research.
- You’re interested in the topic you’ve chosen to research.
- You’re willing to conduct research outside of PGHS to get as much information as possible.

How do you know if you’ve chosen a good question?

- You can’t easily find the answer on Google.
- It doesn’t ask for just a YES or NO answer.
- You don’t already know the answer.
- You can answer the question in a few months.

Research Project class of 2014

What’s YOUR question?
Learning Intentions

• Clear tasks, broken down into discrete steps
• Purpose is always clear, never “just do it”
• Scaffolds available for low literacy students
• New processes involves new knowledge

• Show them what good → great looks like
Success Criteria

• What does an A grade piece of work look like?
• What are the features of C → B → A standards?
• Provide examples of high-level literacy writing
• Explain the standards & SACE language; don’t dumb it down
• Raise expectations
• Explicitly discuss executive functions that aid students willingness to improve their work over time (persistence / resilience / delayed gratification)
Feedback

- NON-GRADED formative feedback is at the centre of what we do at PGHS
- Formative = Promotes thinking & drives future action
- Not praise or effort or completion/achievement
- Definitely no grades, only use language of standards
- Don’t do everything at once
- Differentiate between feedback about topic content, research process, and any literacy issues
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Student/teacher comments</th>
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| **PLANNED** | ☑️ The student understands the difference between OPEN and CLOSED questions.  
|             | ☑️ The student has PLANNED which type of question to use to get answers of appropriate simple/complex detail. A mix of different question types may be used in the same survey or interview.  
|             | ☑️ If responses/answers are QUANTITATIVE (e.g. to be graphed) questions have been designed to make analysis simple: yes or no, checkboxes, Likert scales, or use electronic survey analysis tools like Survey Monkey to analyse responses. ALSO → An appropriate sample size of respondents has been determined.  
|             | ☑️ If responses/answers are QUALITATIVE, sufficient space has been allowed for a longer response.  
|             | ☑️ You have planned the right time and place to ask the questions (whether electronic or face-to-face).  
|             | ☑️ You have carefully planned WHO to direct these questions to; what do they know about your topic? |
| **RELEVANT** | Every question helps you answer a distinct part of your RP question. The questions may not cover ALL parts of the topic (depending on expertise of respondent) but none of the questions are irrelevant. |
| **IMPARTIAL** | None of the questions are “leading” questions. None of the questions are written in such a way to prompt a particular response, or anticipate what the respondent might choose to say. |
| **CLEAR** | The wording of each question is unambiguous and can only be understood in one way. Check this by giving a draft copy to someone who knows nothing about your topic first before asking others. |
| **SPAG** | Spell-check your work and make sure the spelling/grammar/syntax has been checked by a teacher as well. |
| **SAFE** | ☑️ All planned questions are safe and not personally revealing in any way.  
|             | ☑️ If you are to interview someone off school grounds, you have considered a safe time and place to do this. You may choose to take someone with you for the interview.  
|             | ☑️ Your teacher has been informed about any off school grounds research activities. |

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→ request a copy!
Literacy support
Making a difference
2012 = Three RP Merits

2013
Research Project students were awarded 3 Merits

2014
Research Project students were awarded 5 Merits

2015 = ?
HOW WE HAVE IMPROVED ALONG THE WAY

• We have focussed as much on supporting and developing student literacy/writing skills as we have on supporting their achievement of SACE standards
• We have learnt that developing a ‘growth mindset’ in individual students is both a daily struggle and delight
• We now know that there are distinct benefits when more than one teacher is responsible for a Year 12 subject.
• Making connections with other teachers is one of the best ways for teachers and schools to reflect on what they do and then to get better at what they do
• On reflection, specific school structures and leadership decisions have helped us to achieve success
SCHOOL STRUCTURES AFFECTING THE RP

• PGHS has a designated RP (Cross-Disc Std) Coordinator
• Research Project preparation occurs throughout the previous year (Year Eleven)
• RP is only formally taught at Yr 12 (greater student maturity)
• All classes are taught in a dedicated Yr 12 RP room
• Two of the six classes are taught by the RP Coord
• The Head of Senior School is also an RP teacher
• There is also active support for Yr 12 RP completion through weekly extended HG lessons
Sharing what we’ve learnt
Keys to Success

• Mindset
• Learning Intentions
• Success Criteria
• Feedback

plus one more...
5th of December, 2014 @ Parafield Gardens High School

facebook.com/theresearchproject

Today I ran a ‘Strategies and Ideas’ session for Research Project teachers from a wide range of schools; government and private, city and rural. The early feedback has been brilliant - thank you all - and I’ll post a longer reflection about the shared learning later tomorrow...

Last year I was very fortunate to be involved in the first round of the DECD Leading SACE... See More
Ingrid Lees
Senior Leader: Teaching and Learning
PARAFIELD GARDENS HIGH SCHOOL

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Thanks Sydney!

All photos in presentation taken by Ingrid Lees