

harmony



community

Experiential Learning Program

diversity

"Diversity: We Are Who We Are"

**Glenorchy City Council's
Living in Harmony Project 2006**

understanding



goodwill

This project is proudly supported by the Australian Government's *Living in Harmony* initiative. Administered by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, the *Living in Harmony* initiative aims to promote community harmony. It recognises that, whatever our backgrounds and beliefs, we are united as Australians and want to live in a country that is free of racial intolerance.
For more information on the *Living in Harmony* initiative, visit www.harmony.gov.au

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...Background...

This Experiential Learning Program was devised by the Glenorchy City Council as part of their 2006 *Living in Harmony* project "Diversity: We Are Who We Are."

For Harmony Day 2005, Glenorchy City Council, led by their Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee, held a forum with more than 100 residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Participants at the forum identified issues of discrimination, which limit their ability to access and engage in education and public transport services. The impact of discrimination towards people from diverse backgrounds in Glenorchy, especially young people, is significant, affecting individual health and wellbeing, as well as reducing the capacity of both people and communities. The "Diversity: We Are Who We Are" project was devised in response to these issues and was funded by the Australian Government's *Living in Harmony* initiative.

The Glenorchy City Council is committed to exploring, promoting and celebrating the benefits of cultural diversity in the city and the "Diversity: We Are Who We Are" project aimed to:

- Build connections, trust and harmony in the community
- Bring people together in new and mutual learning environments
- Offer people from diverse backgrounds opportunities to participate in mentoring and role modeling with the broader community
- Generate new understanding and empathy of cultural difference
- Foster the development of new, and ongoing, relationships between cultures and generations

This project happened in four phases with this Experiential Learning Program being the third phase. The project was run with five schools in the Glenorchy area in the first half of 2006 (three High Schools and two Primary Schools). The four phases were as follows:

1. Students from each school participated in an interactive session led by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to explore the benefits of cultural diversity.
2. Students from each school experienced cultural foods, music and traditions from visits with established cultural organisations/clubs and with newly arrived communities.
3. Five selected students from the five schools participated in an Experiential Learning Program to further explore and experience cultural exchange.
4. Photographs and stories from each of these experiences were documented by a community artist and produced as posters on Metro buses to showcase the project and facilitate broader community awareness of issues of discrimination and the benefits of cultural diversity.

This project was run with the support of a Steering Committee made up of project stakeholders. Our appreciation is extended to these stakeholders for their involvement:

- Tasmania Police
- Glenorchy City Council Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee
- Department of Education
- Multicultural Tasmania
- Metro Tasmania

Our appreciation is also extended to the students and teachers from the five participating schools who embraced this project:

- Mt Faulkner Primary School
- Springfield Garden's Primary School
- Cosgrove High School
- Claremont High School
- Rosetta High School

Project Manager: Julian Northmore
Project Co-ordinator: Alison Hines

Experiential Learning Program devised by Alison Hines

...Experiential Learning Program...

...Program Overview...

This Program takes students on a journey to explore cultural diversity.

The Program is set in a fun and creative environment and challenges students to form a cultural group with specific fictional attributes.

The students are set tasks to complete within their cultural groups while maintaining their fictional cultural attributes.

Students then form different groups and complete the same tasks. They are challenged to maintain the cultural attributes of their original group while participating in a group activity with people with differing cultural attributes. The second groups are divided to create a mix of dominance for the students to understand the dynamics of being in the majority or minority.

The learning for students happens within the set tasks but is particularly explored in the debriefing following the set activities.

The success of the Program is dependant on how it is set up with the students and how it is debriefed.

...Program Aims...

This Program aims to:

- explore the interaction of cultures
- explore being in the majority or minority, and how this effects our participation in society
- highlight the arbitrary nature of culture and explore how our identity and values are formed by our cultural heritage
- encourage learning within a fun environment

...Pilot Program...

This Program was delivered as a pilot on 23rd May 2006 at the Glenorchy Civic Centre.

There were 25 student participants from Grades 6-8. (Five participants were chosen from each of the five schools participating in the whole "Diversity: We Are Who We Are" Project of which this Program is one component.)

The Program, as written, took two and a half hours to deliver including debriefing and evaluation.

Evaluation comments about the Pilot Program by the participating students and support adults are included.

...Facilitator Notes...

The success of this program depends on the confidence and skill of the facilitator.

The facilitator sets the tone and the pace for the session. This program is based on the participants learning while having fun and it is the facilitator's role to ensure that the program moves at pace and that it is fun for the participants.

The briefing and debriefing/evaluation are crucial to the success of the program. The facilitator needs to confidently set up the learning environment at the beginning of the program and to ensure that there is enough time for a full debrief where the learning is made explicit prior to the completion of evaluation forms.

The name tags (attached as Appendix 2) have been devised to work with 25 student participants. The pilot program involved working with 5 selected students from 5 different schools. The students were initially split into groups to ensure that there was one student from each school in each group. This ensured that all groups were made up of participants with no prior relationships. The participants find their first working group by the number on their name tag.

While each of the 5 groups are working with support adults, the facilitator should move between groups reiterating the need to focus on the cultural traits of their group while completing the tasks. It is the ownership that each participant will have of the cultural traits of this first group which help them to realise that culture is arbitrary and random and that we all have ownership over that which is familiar to us.

The make up of the second groups took a lot of work. For the participants to explore the dynamics of being in the majority and minority, these groups are configured to include differing numbers from the initial groups. Participants find the relevant second group they are to work in from the symbols on their name tags. It is essential to the program that each participant retain the traits of their initial group while working in the second group.

...Pre-Program...

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES	NOTES
10.30 – 11.30 (1 hour)	Room set-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the pilot program we used a very large room where there was a circle of chairs in the middle and the 5 work stations spread around the edges of the room. • Enough chairs in a circle for <u>all</u> participants. • All five work stations prepared, including a sign indicating the group number (Attached as Appendix 1) and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * sticky tape * scissors * glue * coloured card * coloured paper * fun craft bits • Video camera set up to record program 	Leaving a fair amount of time to set up for a workshop ensures you have ample preparation time and space to focus.
11.30 – 12.15 (45 mins)	Briefing for support adults		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the Pilot Program, this included briefing the support adults on the entire project to understand the context of this session. • The Experiential Learning Program was explained in detail. • It was explained that the main role of the support adults was to model the cultural group traits, not to facilitate the group. The students were encouraged to facilitate themselves to explore the dynamics of working in a group.

...Program...

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES	NOTES
12.15 – 12.25 (10 mins)	Nametags, welcome and introduction to afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-prepared nametags with participants' name and the numbers/symbols which organise them into groups. (Attached as Appendix 2) • Enough chairs in a circle for all participants. 	The introduction should include an expectation of behaviour and group rules.
12.25 – 12.35 (10 mins)	<p>Icebreaker</p> <p>(There are numerous icebreaker activities the facilitator can select depending on individual preference)</p> <p>One example – ask all students to introduce themselves using an adjective which describes them which has the first letter of their first name. (Eg Jolly Jenny, Fun Fred etc.)</p>		This program item was not included in the pilot and should have been. The facilitator thought enough preparation had been done with the students but the first group activity was slow to start as student's were uncomfortable with one another. An icebreaker activity should set the scene, the learning climate and relax the mood.
12.35 – 1.00 (30 mins)	<p>First group activity</p> <p>Students are asked to go to the numbered group sign which corresponds with the number on their name tag. Support adults are asked to read out the instruction page and the groups are to follow the instructions.</p>	<p>All five working stations should include the sign indicating the group number (Attached as Appendix 1) and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * sticky tape * scissors * glue * coloured card * coloured paper * fun craft bits <p>Group instructions attached as Appendix 3</p>	The tasks are devised as a way for the students to practice the cultural traits of their group. For the program to achieve its' goals, the students must be encouraged to practice, own and display the cultural traits of their group.

1.00 – 1.15 (15 mins)	Showcase of totems Invite all participants back into the group circle to share and explain their totems.		All participants should continue to display the cultural traits of their first group at all times.
1.15 – 1.30	BREAK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOOD & DRINK • CUPS, PLATES & NAPKINS 	During the break, replace numbered group signs with symbol group signs. (Attached as Appendix 1)
1.30 – 1.55 (25 mins)	Second group activity On their return from the break, participants should be invited to move to their new group indicated by the new group signs that correspond to the symbol on their name tags. Participants need to complete the same tasks with the remaining resources available.	All five working stations should have the sign indicating the group symbol (Attached as Appendix 1) and whatever resources remain from the first group activity.	<p>Again, the tasks are devised as a way for the students to practice their original cultural traits of their first group. For the program to achieve its' goals, the students must be encouraged to practice, own and display the cultural traits of their first group.</p> <p>Groups have been organised into a mix of new groups. Some have 4 from an original group with 1 different. Some have 2 from one group and 3 from a different group. In one group all have different cultural traits.</p>
1.55 – 2.05 (10 mins)	Showcase of totems Invite all participants back into the group circle to share and explain their totems.		All participants should continue to display the cultural traits of their first group at all times.

2.05 – 2.35 (30 mins)	Group debrief		<p>This part of the program is essential, so ensure that you leave enough time. Some prompting questions to guide discussion are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you think of the Program? • What do you think was the purpose of the Program? • How did you feel being in your first group? • What was it like in the second group? • How did you feel being in the majority/minority? • Did you feel attached to the cultural traits of your group? • Did you want to change your practices when you were with other people who had different ways of doing things? • What did you learn about yourself? • What did you learn from the program today?
2.35 – 2.45 (10 mins)	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation sheets • Pens 	<p>Ensure that participants understand the purpose of evaluation. It is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. To encourage honest feedback, participants need not put their names on their sheets.</p>

...Evaluation sheet...

(NB This evaluation sheet was printed as one page and is in context with the whole Project. Facilitators may want to adapt the evaluation to suit individual delivery of this Program.)

Evaluation - "Diversity: We Are Who We Are" Experiential Learning Program

1. Today, when I was in my first group I felt...

2. To make my new group work (second group) we had to...

3. If I was a refugee in a new country I think I would feel...

4. I think it's important for people to keep their cultures because ...

5. I think Australia is a good place to live because...

6. In doing this project I learned...

7. The best thing about today was...

8. Today would have been even better if...

Any other comments??

Thank you! 🌈

...Resource List...

WHAT	HOW MANY
Enough chairs for all participants in a circle in a large room	31
Print up work station signs (numbers and symbols). Attached as Appendix 1	5 signs with numbers 5 signs with symbols
Print up name tags. Attached as Appendix 2	31
Print up cultural group trait lists. Attached as Appendix 3	5
Resources for making totems including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sticky tape • scissors • glue • coloured card • coloured paper • fun craft bits (feathers, pipe cleaners, egg cartons, metallic paper ... whatever the local \$2 shop has on offer!) 	Enough for 10 totems
Video camera	1
Food and drink for the break	Enough for 31
Cups, plates and napkins for the break	Enough for 31
Evaluation sheets	30
Pens to complete evaluation sheets	30

...Sample Evaluation comments from Pilot Program...

1. Today, when I was in my first group I felt...

- a bit shy at first but I opened up more as we went on.
- shy, weird, embarrassed and stupid!
- that I had made some new friends and talked a new language
- very strange because we had to learn a whole new culture and follow their rules but it was fun.

2. To make my new group work (second group) we had to...

- talk about our culture
- understand the different cultures we have in our group
- accept who they were and what their culture was
- communicate; discover how we behaved.

3. If I was a refugee in a new country I think I would feel...

- scared, shy and I would feel left out.
- alone, scared, weird and like I don't belong.
- pretty overwhelmed
- sad that I left my home behind and I thought we were going to be made fun of.

4. I think it's important for people to keep their cultures because ...

- it's how they were brought up and they shouldn't change just because people tease them
- otherwise there would not be anything to learn from one another.
- it makes us all different and our own person and other people can learn from your culture
- we all have identities that have been created by the culture we have been raised in
- they are unique and part of who we are

5. I think Australia is a good place to live because...

- everyone can do their own thing and they have freedom.
- we can be or do whatever we want.
- it is beautiful and has no war or famine.
- people may look different but are all the same in one way.
- I know it

6. In doing this project I learned...

- that it doesn't matter what culture you come from everyone is the same in one way or another.
- that everyone is different but we should respect them
- to respect others in the way they do things
- about how there are lots of cultures and they aren't as weird as they seem for them, but weird for us.
- everyone may look or sound different but on the inside we're all the same.
- that it is hard learning someone else's culture.

7. The best thing about today was...

- meeting people from different schools!
- we had lots of fun
- it was fun and I learnt heaps and I now respect other people
- meeting different people and learning different things
- learning about culture and difference

8. Today would have been even better if...

- Well, today was good. I don't think I would've wanted it to change.
- I was not so shy.
- I could have learned some more.
- we could continue the groups for longer

Any other comments??

- Well, keep up the good job! I hope that you'll keep this up and open this up to other communities.
- I had Fun, Fun, Fun
- Keep going it is important. Just teach us to respect others.
- I had a great time.
- I thought it was excellent
- It was great.
- I want to come back again.