



Name of project	Koori Outreach Options for Learning (KOOL) Programme
Location	Griffith, New South Wales, Australia
Organisation leading the project	TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, Griffith Campus

Project purpose

The Koori Outreach Options for Learning (KOOL) Program was developed by Technical and Further Education (TAFE) NSW Riverina Institute, Griffith Campus, in consultation with the Griffith Aboriginal Community, with the aim of addressing the needs of 'at risk' Aboriginal Youth (age 15-19). Many of this group leave school before completing year 10 (age 16), and the unemployment rate for Aboriginal Youth (15-24) in the area is 37%. The programme aims to provide opportunities for them to acquire the skills and abilities to continue with education and training, and to enter the workforce. Participants gain a qualification in Access to Work and Training, and have the chance to access social support from health and community development agencies through the programme's network.

Project approach

The KOOL programme recognises that students' other problems affect their ability to engage in learning. The programme focuses on what students need to realise their learning, work and personal goals. Teachers use flexible, student-centred approaches to learning within the classroom, giving individual learning support where required, and following up on absences personally. Real example, including problems, risks and successes are used in teaching to bring the learning to life. Not only does the programme address students' educational needs, but it also offers wider support systems including individual learning plans, accommodation options, referrals to other agencies and court support. They are able to do this by working in partnership with local agencies and organisations beyond the educational environment, including health, youth support and justice organisations, which are committed to working in a culturally appropriate manner to address the concerns of Aboriginal Youth in the area.

Key benefits and impact

- The KOOL programme has excellent retention rates: over the six year period up until December 2006, 93% stayed in the programme, and 87% completed it successfully.
- The programme provides good pathways to further training and work: 87% went on to further education, and 18% gained work directly after the programme. Those that continued into further education ultimately found work in a variety of occupations, including health, building, plumbing, education and retail.
- Students learn a variety of problem-solving skills, and develop a better understanding of the resources that are available in their community to help them through future challenges.
- Family members of the KOOL students have also enrolled in the TAFE, increasing the number of Aboriginal students at the TAFE.

For more information, please visit <http://www.tda.edu.au/resources//OccQ12009.pdf>