

RUN LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS 2023

Name: Dr Karen D'Aietti

Institution: CQUniversity

Title: Working with and for First Nations Students

Application Category: Indigenous Engagement

Abstract: I am the Unit Coordinator/Lecturer for 2 Indigenous Studies units which are compulsory components within the Bachelor of Education. These courses are important as Indigenous voice and a stronger recognition of Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum has gained much momentum in recent years. The unit core topics include history; policies; languages, cultures, and teaching strategies for First Nations students. I am responsible for teaching circa 350 online students. I work with five tutors across CQU campuses and coordinate and support about 15 markers.

2020 feedback revealed that students wanted more assistance in embedding Indigenous perspectives in the classroom. I therefore took the initiative to indigenise the curriculum by providing practical Indigenous teaching tips; culturally sensitive Indigenous behaviour management tips; strong First Nations role models; appropriate Indigenous teaching resources. I introduced Indigenous guest speakers to share their experiences in tutorials. I created a safe space for students to discuss sensitive topics, adhering to correct protocols for addressing First Nations peoples.

Student and colleague feedback showed increased learning, experience, and engagement. Failure rates in both units were dramatically reduced and I recently received a Teaching and Learning award for Best Practice in Indigenous Engagement.