

GIVE GET INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

GAGAL's GIVE program is based on the premise that if you can interest students as young as grade four in trade skills, then you will have them actively involved up to grade 10 and beyond.

Local industry, schools and GAGAL identified a lack of suitable apprentices for Gladstone's future skilled workforce so GAGAL established "What's My Trade?" for primary schools. The GAGAL GIVE program, encompassing literacy, numeracy and science teaching as well as trades experiences, grew out of positive reactions to "What's my Trade?" particularly in Indigenous communities. This integrated program can be used in any school with access to a qualified trade supervisor. Rio Tinto (Alcan) provided funding for Gladstone Central State School to pilot the classroom and workshop curriculum which is designed around the everyday problems and experiences of the students with a focus on workshop projects. Learning is tailored to (a) the characteristics of the particular school community (b) the *Australian Curriculum* guidelines; and (c) the local industries that become partners in the GAGAL GIVE Program.

Trainers from GAGAL go to the school classroom each week to work with students on theoretical ideas, and later in the week the students go to the GAGAL workshops to apply the theoretical ideas in a 'hands on' practical way. Units run for one term and include:

Design and Engineering

Designing and building billy-carts introduces engineering and fabrication principles and underlying mathematical and physics concepts.

Hospitality and Retail

Students undertake cookery projects as well as develop skills needed to work as wait-staff at large catered events.

Robotics

Lego robotics challenges give tangible and observable representations of gearing levers, pulleys, and simple machines, electronic sensors and automated systems.

Horticulture

Students propagate plants and sell the produce to commercial outlets.

Construction

Primary students design and construct a variety of wooden toys and small pieces of furniture and secondary students design and construct furniture and a small water raft.

There is professional development for both teachers and trainers – teachers are required to be tradies, e.g. to understand the skills of being a carpenter or painter or tiler, and the GAGAL trainers become teachers of young children. The students are able to explore mathematical concepts in a workshop environment supervised by trade trainers and the teachers learn not only the trade skills with the students but another way of looking at how to teach maths concepts. This 'learning as we learn' experience has a powerful impact on the students breaking down the 'us and them' divide.

GAGAL GIVE has had a significant impact upon student motivation and engagement towards learning with increased attendance and a general improvement in behaviour. Parents report improvements in students' attitudes to school work, confidence and taking pride in their accomplishments. The GAGAL GIVE Program is also a research project in the YuMi Deadly Centre (YDC) within the Faculty of Education at Queensland University of Technology. Lead researchers are active in monitoring and assessing the impact on the students, teachers, trainers and wider community of parents and apprentices.

A comparison of NAPLAN results pre and post program proves that the GAGAL GIVE program has significantly impacted students' literacy and numeracy by accelerating many students to beyond the National Minimum Standard. The GAGAL GIVE program has been recognised by Education Queensland as a Showcase 2011 State Finalist – Middle Phase of Learning.

The most outstanding evidence is from the students themselves.

“I am learning to learn”

Mount Morgan Central State School

“I am looking for a bigger challenge, now. I can do this!”

Gladstone Central State School



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