

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [I] Brindley, Lucy

Reference Type: Teacher - School

State or territory: Qld

Serial Identification Number: 476161

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Need to enforce the higher standards with assessment so university is not a shock. This includes, enforcing referencing from year 7, and using technology like safe assignment, particularly for year 10-12.

C2C resources were too difficult and needed to be simplified for my remote students. The language particularly. The focus in these resources were often global or metro issues, unrelateable to a remote student.

My students in Mt Isa were far removed from metro and regional issues and few kept up to date with global and national issues; unlike metro students who tended to know what was going on in the world.

Rating: 7

Teachers and teaching

As a teacher in Mount Isa myself and my colleagues were predominantly recent graduates. There was a total lack of support or understanding for not only the challenges of being a new teacher but also the social-emotional needs of a grad teacher living in a remote community with no support network.

The kids were quite resilient due to the fact most teachers only stayed for 2 years. This created other issues though, mainly students not willing to build a student-teacher relationship as a way of protecting themselves from rejection. The behaviour also issues that come with any new teacher; students test the waters to see what a teachers limits are.

I had no individual professional development in my three years in Mt Isa. The school was unwilling to pay for a teacher to be released and fly to the events. This was also due to the fact that there were no supply teachers in the community so absences had to be internally filled. I had to source my own PD hours, using mainly free webinars supplied by QCT or other professional bodies.

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

A focus on leaders and leadership with the students, in terms of a school captain, I feel is not . The students however, did enjoy the process and responsibility believing it would help them with employment in the future.

The leadership team of a school however is vital to student outcomes. The attitude from the top trickles down to staff and poor leaders results in frustrated teachers. My old school in Mt Isa has lost several good teachers due to poor leadership and their lack of support and action.

Rating: 5

School and Community

This is really important for remote communities. Students need to see the benefits of job and higher education opportunities. My remote town was a mining town and the mine did a lot for the students including talking at careers days, providing mentoring and traineeships. This support showed the students that if they achieved a certain academic level there were job opportunities at the mine for them. Students need to know there are jobs in their local community to stay focused and empowered to achieve.

Rating: 7

Information and Communication Technology

I think too much emphasis is placed on this. Remote kids do not need to know how to code, they need to know how to use MS office so they can get a job. If IT is of interest to them, great, learn how to code but for most knowing how to word process and use spreadsheets is more important.

Rating: 4

Entrepreneurship and schools

Rating: 1

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

This is really important for remote communities. Many families removed their children from local high schools in year 10 or 11 and sent them to boarding schools for a better education. Many parents think in order for their child to do well they need to attend a metro or large regional school.

In Mt Isa the only options for secondary education were the Catholic high school or State high school. If students were expelled from these schools there was no alternative option for them. Flexible learning centers were already full and school of the air was for the more remote students (cattle stations). The only higher education facility in town was the TAFE college. Students had no option but to do distance ed or move to a regional centre for university - VERY daunting for a 17 year old who has lived a fairly insular life in a remote community. The closest university for my students was a 10hour drive away.

School enrollments was not an issue as there were only two school options for secondary.

Rating for enrolments: 0

Rating for clusters: 0

Rating for distance education: 7

Rating for boarding: 5

Diversity

Diversity was not an issue in Mt Isa. My school had many different cultures and numerous ESL students. We had a large Indigenous community which accounted for approx. 20% of enrollments. The students in Mt Isa were very welcoming and accepting of other cultures. Some racism was present between white students and Indigenous students. This attitude from students was bred from racism in their home and educating the students on stereotypes and celebrating our Indigenous students was vital to stamp out this prejudice.

Rating: 3

Transitioning beyond school

Really important. This is daunting for most kids but even more so when your support network is a long way away from the university you need to go to. Students need to know if the many pathways to further education and jobs. They need to know if they don't get a good OP it's ok, there are alternative paths. Students need to be exposed to the harsh realities in the workplace and in universities. This goes from the lengthy IEP support for verified students, which disappears once school is finished - employers do not care, they just need the job done.

Indigenous students particularly needed to see that they had an indigenous community to be part of while at uni and that it was achievable for them to attend. Many remote kids think uni is too expensive for them to attend, they need to know about the Gov support available to help with the costs.

Rating: 6

Additional Comments

Remote kids deserve better access to quality teachers and learning. The financial benefits of living in these remote communities, for me was not enough to cover the high cost of living there. As a mining town the rent was very expensive for average housing and the cost to come home for the holidays was exorbitant. The lack of PD available to me was another factor for me leaving after three years. Many of my colleagues left after 5 years service as the financial benefits provided ceased after 5 years making it no longer financially viable to stay out there.