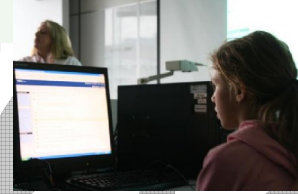


E Kids : Science Program

Project Outline

EKids Science

2010



Background

The Country Education Project Inc has supported a range of education initiatives that utilise digital education tools to support learning in rural communities over the past twenty years. Examples of these initiatives include LOTE programs, VCE programs, science programs and extension learning programs.

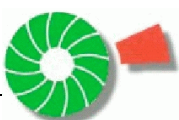
During 2007, CEP (in partnerships with the Helen McPherson-Smith Trust), facilitated a pilot project delivering online extension learning for grade five and six students in rural and remote communities. This program involved over 90 young people from across Victoria. It also involved 60 trainee teachers from two universities who provided a valuable mentoring role in the program.

After an evaluation of the program, discussions with rural school communities and the increasing role that information technology is playing in education, CEP Inc has developed a three year digital education program for rural clusters within Victoria. The Helen Macpherson Smith Trust has once again provided valuable support for the three year program.

Purpose:

In partnership with rural school clusters enhance the learning for young people in rural communities utilising digital education approaches that:

- Provide an online learning environment for rural young people.
- Develop digital learning programs in identified curriculum areas of need.
- Build the capacity of rural teachers through professional development and the sharing of teacher skills and knowledge.
- Engage teacher training organisations in supporting the provision of digital learning approaches.



E Kids : Science Program

Project Outline

Overall Program Framework:

The Country Education Project Inc, in partnership with the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and rural schools will facilitate a digital learning approach aimed at enhancing the learning provision within rural Victoria.

The program has a number of elements including:

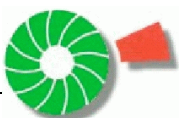
- Supporting rural clusters of schools to work collaboratively in the development and provision of on line learning for young people in a curriculum area of identified need.
- Staff will be responsible for developing and providing learning activities and programs online through a Web 2.0 approach in an identified curriculum area of need.
Staff will develop learning activities and programs and provide them to young people from all the schools within the cluster.
- Developing links with key resource organisations that will offer expertise, special knowledge, or skills to enhance the on line learning program. Eg Scienceworks, Museum, etc.
- Provision of professional learning activities for staff and community members from the two rural clusters in the use of digital education approaches.
- Links with teacher training organisations (where relevant) to involve teacher trainees in the provision of learning utilising a digital approach as part of the studies.
- Documenting the initiatives developed and the learnings gained to circulate amongst other rural communities.

2010 Program Outline:

From the Expressions of Interests gained from rural schools towards the end of 2009, a group of six/seven primary schools will be involved in an upper primary science and technology program developed and provided utilising a blended technology approach.

The schools are from all over the state and will be linked through a range of strategies including:

- an online learning management system
- use of elluminate
- skype
- blogs, etc



E Kids : Science Program

Project Outline

Curriculum Focus:

Based on the information we gained from those who expressed an interest to be involved, Science was seen as an area of focus for the year.

This will also build on the work already undertaken in a similar program that operated in 2009.

Professional Development:

Central to this initiative is the provision of professional development for staff involved in the program.

It is expected that the program will provide a couple of opportunities for professional development:

- an initial forum for all staff involved to outline the program, develop the framework and being developing learning activities
- a forum during the program to allow people to gain further information and to share learnings.

Program Components:

Within the program there will be a number of components to support the learning of students:

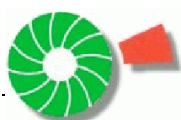
1. On Line Learning Environment:

- a. An online learning environment (or learning management system) will be developed in consultation with those involved and will encourage the use of a blended approach. The environment will contain learning activities; resource materials; a number of "group areas" where the groups of students will be able to access learning, share information with others within their learning group and upload work; podcasts, etc.
- b. CEP will provide technical support in the development and management of the online learning environment.
- c. The online learning environment will be developed to allow expansion into other areas of technologies – eg ipods, podcasts, skype links, mobile phones, etc. This will allow the program to develop links with other key stakeholders such as Scienceworks, Museum, etc.

2. Learning Activities

- a. Each staff member involved will be responsible for the development and provision of a learning unit within science that will be made available to all young people from the rural schools involved. This means that there will be a range of learning activities available for the young people involved.

This approach also reflects the aim of the project of building the capacity of teachers within rural school settings in utilising digital learning.



E Kids : Science Program

Project Outline

- b. A number of learning areas will be identified thus allowing for students to be involved in a range of learning areas during. Activities and resources will be developed to support the students learning.
The learning will have a focus on individualised learning and therefore, young people will undertake a number of learning areas responsive to their needs and interests. It is expected that most young people will be involved in these learning activities for about 4 to 6 weeks and then move onto another learning area.
- c. Learning activities will be developed utilising a common framework to support student learning and placed on the online learning environment. These will take the form of written activities; resource materials; links to other websites; podcasts; assessment tasks; etc.
- d. Guest presenters could be utilised through a range of ways including, guest presentations through podcasts; setting learning activities; or linking in on the learning environment through chat rooms, etc.
- e. Students will upload their work and assessment tasks onto the online learning environment to share their learnings with other students in their learning teams and also allow staff to assess their work. This could take a range of forms including podcasts, powerpoints, movies, written reports, etc.

Project Co-ordinator:

CEP Inc will support the program through employing a co-ordinator of the project to:

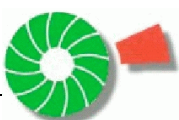
- support the online learning program and operation
- provide professional technical support to staff and teacher trainees involved in the program
- provide ICT expertise in the development and provision of the program.

Students:

- a. Students in upper primary school (eg Year 5 and 6 areas) be the focus of the program in 2010.
- b. Students will have the opportunity to enrol in a program they wish to study.
- c. Students will be able to move from one area of learning to another.

Staff

- a. Each staff member involved will be responsible for the development and provision of learning in a learning area they have chosen.
- b. Staff are required to provide an outline of learning activities, the development of resources, and the development of assessment task.
- c. Staff will be required to participate in an online discussion forum to allow for review of program and further development.
- d. Staff are required to monitor involvement of their schools in the program through a mentoring role.



E Kids : Science Program

Project Outline

Assessment

- a. Assessment tasks within each of the learning areas, will be developed by the staff member responsible for this area.
- b. Assessment will utilise the assessment rubric and detail links to VELS.
- c. Through the use of the technologies, staff will provide feedback and reports on the learning of students within their learning area.

Guest Presenters

- a. Through the development of learning activities, staff are encouraged to link with key partners to enhance the learning program
- b. Involvement of key partners could be through provision of learning activities, pod casts, online presentations, discussions with learning teams, etc.
- c. Possible partners could include museum, scienceworks, etc.

Timeline:

- Term I
 - Initial professional development activity for all staff involved.
 - Each staff member develops learning materials within the area identified
- Term II
 - Students are supported in enrolling within the learning activities they choose
 - A second professional development forum held later in Term II to review program.
 - New materials and learning activities are explored and developed.
 - Teacher trainees could assist in the development of the learning activities.
- Term III and Term IV
 - Program implementation continues.

Contact:

- Phil Brown

Mobile: 0428171145
Email: admin@cep.org.au

