

HOW MAINSTREAM SCIENCE STUDENTS EXPERIENCE LEARNING ABOUT INDIGENOUS SCIENCE

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A mixed methods approach was used to understand the experience of mainstream science students completing an elective interdisciplinary science unit “Indigenous Science: Science through the eyes of Australia’s First Peoples”. Post an introductory two weeks focused on Indigenous cultural competency in a science context, we looked at student reflections on learning ($n = 72$). We combined this with a quantitative instrument to look at students’ impressions on Indigenous issues pre/post the unit as an indication of changes in attitudes (Bodkin-Andrews, Page, & Trudgett, 2019). Lastly, this was paired with an instrument to evaluate the presence of Indigenous opinions, works and voices that the students perceived to be part of the class.

Analysis of the reflections shows a high number of students including negative emotions in their reflections. We also see a high number of students planning to become more familiar with Indigenous issues and literature in order to improve their understanding. Often this is coupled with an understanding that they need to upskill before interacting with community in order to have a higher baseline competency on Indigenous issues. We will present the detailed interactions of themes across the different aspects of the reflection and what it means for those working to teach in this space.

REFERENCE

Bodkin-Andrews, G., Page, S., & Trudgett, M. (2019). Working towards accountability in embedding Indigenous studies: Evidence from an Indigenous Graduate Attribute evaluation instrument. *Australian Journal of Education*, 63(2), 232-260. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0004944119863927>

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