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CPL Podcast: Aboriginal Studies 11-12

Host: Carly Boreland

With: Cath Jeffrey

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Carly Boreland: Welcome to the CPL Podcast for the NSW Teachers Federation, I'm Carly Boreland, and I'm the Assistant Director of the CPL. Today I'm talking with Cath Jeffrey, and we are talking about a really important subject called Aboriginal Studies and why this is such a good subject to have at your school and why there are benefits for the students who take it for the HSC, but also, for the school and their relationship with the wider community.

Cath Jeffrey: Hello.

Carly Boreland: Cath, welcome. We should say welcome back to you as well. We have had you on a fantastically popular CPL Podcast called Beginning Teaching in Country Schools and you're coming to us from Inverell where you have established a fabulous program around Aboriginal Studies, not only for the HSC, but junior school as well. Can you tell us a bit about that and a bit about yourself and how you became involved in Aboriginal Studies and why I think it's so, important?

Cath Jeffrey: Thank you, Carly. I started teaching it in at Inverell High School in 2005. I was very fortunate to be given the opportunity in 2006 to start a subject called Aboriginal Studies, which is in stage five. So, we started off with a Year 9 class. We then built it up over the years to have a very strong representation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who take the subject in Years 9, 10, 11, and 12. The benefit is we've also, established a really, really strong alumni of students who have gone off in diverse fields. Tertiary study, TAFE study, business fields, real estate, and their feedback is that Aboriginal Studies helps them in their vocations, which are very varied and very widespread. So, I think that's the value of the subject. Also, in relation to community relationships, we've been fortunate to be able to use a lot of our own community stories and community history in the studies, and also, use the strengths of our local Aboriginal organisations, such as our local Aboriginal healthcare service, who also get buy-in into the curriculum. So, we use the expertise of a wide range of community members and also celebrate their achievements and what they have brought to the history of our region.

Carly Boreland: And Cath, you're an Aboriginal woman and it's not necessary to be an Aboriginal person to teach Aboriginal Studies or to study Aboriginal Studies but it is really important that we acknowledge your heritage and what you bring to the subject. And I wondered if you could talk a little bit about that and what it means to you?



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Cath Jeffrey: I think, well, I have been fortunate in learning so much about my culture. I think we came through in the 1980s, I finished high school in 1988, and I studied History all the way through. I took an elective history in Years 9 and 10. I took Ancient and Modern History for my HSC and they didn't explore a lot. If you looked at the curriculum back then there was not a lot of exploration in relation to early Australian history. I came through in the eras of where you learned Captain Cook came out, then Arthur Phillip, then the gold rush, squatters and happy days here we are. So, I think what is really important is to provide students with the opportunity to learn about our history and to learn about Australian history. I think from there, it then carries on in relation to them having a better understanding as to why we still, perhaps, have issues in today's society that are linked back to history.

One of the most amazing things that I have seen over the progression of probably my teaching career has been the increasing willingness and acceptance and even expectation of people to do Acknowledgement of Country. We have it now in our assemblies, and I know a lot of other schools do it as well. You only need to have a look around now in relation to a lot of sporting events, a lot of cultural festivals, even when we all go to conferences and stuff like that, that people do Acknowledgement of Country. Acknowledgement of Country is where you acknowledge the traditional owners of the land. And that's linked back to that diverse map of Aboriginal nations. So, prior to 1788, there was an excess of 500 nations. So, myself, I am teaching on Gamilaraay Country, but I am a Kamilaroi woman. So, people do move around. Some people have blended countries that they like to acknowledge as well. So, I think that there's an increasing acceptance. I noticed today, Australia Post have now, as part of their NAIDOC week celebrations, launched the fact that you can now, write the country on your address of your mail, which I think is a huge step forward. Again, it's a positive way for all Australians to acknowledge where we came from and the original people who were here.

Carly Boreland: And the centrality of place in learning about Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal history is so important, but it has such an impact today as well. And I suppose that's what Aboriginal Studies is all about. It's the blending of an appreciation of the past, but understanding what that means in modern society, right now?

Cathy Jeffrey: Yes. And I think if you look at any contemporary issue, there is a link to the past. So, I think, I suppose, because I'm a history teacher, your passion comes from history, but we can learn so much from those who have before us. And I don't only mean that in a negative point of view. I think if you look now in relation to land management, environmental science, indigenous knowledges are featuring very, very prominently. When we look, they kept the environment pretty well for about 60,000 years. So, I think a lot of their techniques, their knowledges, their understandings, are now making a resurgence and we're learning from each other.



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Carly Boreland: Well, you're amongst history teachers here, which is always a great place to be. Could you give us an example? Because sometimes I think people can worry about Acknowledgement of Country. They don't want to sound superficial, but they also worry that they'll say too much or say the wrong thing. Can you give us an example of what's an appropriate thing for an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal person to do when they're acknowledging country that's respectful, that's in the right setting for something like a podcast here where we're in different locations, the listener is in a different location and how that can sound?

Cath Jeffrey: Quite simply, I would just start with, *I'd like to Acknowledge the Gamilararray people, and the land on which I work today and pay my respects to elders' past, present and emerging.* I love the fact that they add emerging because I think if we look now at our students in our classrooms and our preschool students, the ones that are coming through, they're the leaders of tomorrow.

Carly Boreland: And to say it with feeling, I guess you don't have to add too many things, but you can hear it in the voice, and you can see it in the smile.

Cath Jeffrey: And I think also, protocols can sometimes make people a bit hesitant. So, I do think in a way if we are able just to embrace it and learn as we go, I know that I have made mistakes before doing it. You learn as you go. And I think that way, it is just to acknowledge who we are and how we are connected to the people who came before us.

Carly Boreland: Now, I want to ask you a lot about teaching Aboriginal Studies, but I think before we get into that too much, I want to talk about how you get it going in a school because it is about place a lot. And it's connected in a lot of ways to knowing what's going on in your local area and getting in contact with Aboriginal people who are in your local area, connecting that to the wider world as well. But if it's not at your school, it's part of a very big HSIE suite of options and I want to know how you get it going when there's so many fabulous subjects that it's competing against in HSIE and there's some other good disciplines, of course, as well. But if you're say a school principal and you think this is something that should happen at my school, or if you're a teacher who doesn't have any experience teaching this, but is in the HSIE family, what can you do to get this up and running at your place?

Cath Jeffrey: I think start a conversation. I think you need to be equipped as to exactly what the subject is. I think one of the biggest myths is that it's only for Indigenous students, far from that, especially the Stage 6 module. If you have students who are going into health, education or law, definitely Aboriginal Studies, when they go to university, are some of the mandatory subjects that they have to do. I find that once you start that conversation and increase your knowledge in relation to the actual topics that you cover, when you explore preliminary Aboriginal Studies, which is Year 11, you



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look at traditional times right through to the 1960s. So, it's all about colonisation. It's all about how, as a nation, we evolved. It's also, an opportunity to explore those other perspectives of history. Then, when you move into the HSC course, you really get a grounding in relation to the issues in contemporary Australian society.

So, if you look the statistics, where if you're going in to become a teacher, you look at the statistics in relation to the disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. They're becoming better, but there's still more work to do. So, I feel if you're, and I've seen it, I've seen my students who go into universities and have that grounding and that deep understanding of the issue. It makes their tertiary studies, just that little bit richer. From there, I find that a lot of my students put their hand up and they will lead in terms of the other students that they're working with because they have that solid grounding. It's also, in relation to community. It's a great avenue, you don't have to have those links before you start it. It's such a positive element to approach your local Aboriginal community and say, we would like to really get this subject up. How can you help us? So, then it builds relationships which are authentic. So, it embeds the local community into four years of schooling where they can contribute to the curriculum. With that I find, some people try to think of Aboriginal perspectives, what do we do? And they can get, the focus can be on, okay, what do we do for NAIDOC week? What do we do for Reconciliation week? What do we do for Sorry Day? That's fantastic. And that's very important. But Aboriginal Studies offers that opportunity for community to have a day-by-day involvement into curriculum and perspectives, which has been delivered.

Carly Boreland: And we can mention here, we've got another fabulous podcast about Introducing and Beginning with Aboriginal Education in your School with Natalie Pierson and Sue French. And they talk about how all those, one-off or weekly events are really important, but the importance of going back to the syllabus and saying every student in our school needs to learn this as part of the syllabus every day, that all their teachers are implementing it. And that might mean a bit of professional learning for everybody, but making it not an extra, but a built-in part, and that's already required and helped for through lots of syllabuses or all of them in fact.

Cath Jeffrey: I think that's another advantage of Aboriginal Studies and my students definitely comment on that. The advantage is what you study in Aboriginal Studies also intertwines in relation to other subjects. So, take the PE syllabus, for example, one of their cases is health disparities. This is the health disparities in Australia. So, my students who go from doing Aboriginal Studies where they've studied the health option, go into their PDHPE class and their confidence just increases because they have that background knowledge. It was very interesting last year, a student of mine talked about their English novel. They did, *Not by the Moon*, and that's what they felt that they had a deeper understanding of the novel because they had that background knowledge. So, there's lots of opportunities for cross-curricular benefits. So, the students who are studying the HSC have that



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increased depth across subjects, such as Community and Family Studies, Society and Culture, PDHPE and Legal Studies.

Carly Boreland: Yeah. I was just thinking, I have a lot of experience teaching Society and Culture and the crossovers are really perfect there. And also, you know, it's so important when you're thinking about talking to students about the HSC in general and subject selection because they do that by Term 3 of year 10, they've really decided already. So, you have to start early and to talk to them about how it's going to fit together. You know, what are we trying to achieve here? Overall, of course, yes, pick subjects that you like, but also, think about subjects that are going to be complimentary. And of course, being the faculty that can achieve great HSC results is just essential and the more you can cross over and work together in those ways, I think the advantages for students are really, really high. And as a HSIE head teacher, I've never missed an opportunity to point out that you could take 4 HSIE subjects easily as part of an HSC. And I certainly have had students who have done that and really thrived and had excellent results and gone on to fabulous study pathways at the universities.

Cathy Jeffrey: It also assists them in cutting down that workload as well.

Carly Boreland: So, how do you build it up then? You mentioned that once you get a class going you can have students who've had success and talk about that. What about your Year 7 and Year 8, 9 and 10? What are some options there?

Cath Jeffrey: So, we've just started a new syllabus this year for Stage 4 and 5. What's exciting in that syllabus is the diversity of topics that you can study. I love it when we do, you know, Aboriginal people in sports and you get all your sporty kids involved and, you know, from a country town with a very strong, rugby league background, they get to study their heroes. The people that they look up to. The performing arts component is again, amazing it harnesses Bingara, but it also illustrates to students that diversity of Aboriginal performing arts, Aboriginal visual arts, that's another exciting option that the students can do. So, I think it's the diversity of what you can study in that stage five. And it gives you that flexibility to really engage in some authentic partnerships with community, take, for example, the Aboriginal technologies and environment option. That's a fantastic opportunity to get involved with your lands council and the students have those amazing opportunities to go on country, to learn some of those technologies where I think we may dismiss and go all, you know, that's from centuries ago, but they're still being used today. Take medicines, for example, how many of us have eucalyptus oil or Vicks or Euky Bearub_in our medicine cabinet? That comes from traditional Aboriginal culture.

Carly Boreland: Can I just say eucalyptus oil, fabulous for getting pen off desks, there's nothing better. I started every school term of my career with a thorough wiping over with eucalyptus. So, satisfying.



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Okay, so, once we've got our class, then we've got a group in year 11. What are the key things to be looking out for to set them up for success for HSC, for Aboriginal Studies? Are there some tips about how you might structure options or things to think about that fit well in Year 11 as a pattern to go through to Year 12? And, my memory as a student of Aboriginal Studies a while ago now was that, you really couldn't read a newspaper or follow the news in the same way ever again. And that's true of a few of those subjects, Legal Studies and Society and Culture. What are some tips that you've got for us for setting students up for success in Year 11? And then through to Year 12?

Cath Jeffrey: I think one of the, the most important things to establish straight off is that your classroom is a learning environment where any question is welcomed. I find sometimes we can get a little bit afraid of asking the wrong questions or being perceived that that is racism or politically incorrect. So, one of the first things that I like to do at the beginning of Year 11 is really start those conversations in relation to this as a safe space. This is a space where you can feel comfortable asking questions, talking to your colleagues, having authentic discussions. And once you have those authentic discussions, it's a way for people to increase their understanding, which is a positive thing. So, therefore, if you're looking at Year 11, you do Aboriginality and the Land and then Aboriginal Heritage and Identity. And from there you do your local community case study, again a fantastic way for everybody to have buy-in for the whole community to have buy-in in relation to what the students are learning.

We're very fortunate here in, Inverell. We have a fantastic Inverell Memories Facebook page. So, my students, when they start their local community case study asked to join the page and then what they love, they're not only learning about the Aboriginal perspectives in their community, but they're learning about their community history. I remember a few years ago, we have some memorial gates, which were erected in honour of a Lebanese immigrant that came out and became a very, very prominent member of the football community. So, they erected gates in memory of him and his son. And two of my students were - Oh, I walked through every time I go to footie; I understand where they come from now. So, the students really get buy-in into the local community case study that you can do, and it can be as diverse and reflect where you live, then moving into it really sets up the key themes in Year 11, really sets up what you study then in the HSC course, the social justice aspect, the human rights aspect, the understanding of the legacy of the stolen generation.

Also, understanding how traditional technologies, traditional ways are still embedded and shared in contemporary Australian society today. I think what's really important is it gives students an appreciation for the contribution of Australia's First Nation people in relation to our identity. If you look at us on an International stage, there is more and more. I see Aboriginal aspects coming in to represent Australia in relation to who we are.



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Carly Boreland: And I think in a modern Australian workforce, more and more their capacity to include the diversity of people in Australia and to be willing to be part of the world actually, is going to be terrifically important and to understand where Aboriginal Australia fits into that is going to be more and more highly valued. I think we're only just really at the beginning of that.

Cathy Jeffrey: I love to acknowledge shared experiences. One aspect of our local community case study that we do is we look at the experiences of the Italian people who came to a town about 40 minutes from here and how that mirrors the experiences of the Aboriginal people, as well as our Chinese migrants under the assimilation policy. So, it's really exciting to see students who might have that mixed heritage have buy-in too, because they can share their story and share it in relation to the experiences of the Aboriginal people and go, okay, my family were Chinese, they had to pass a dictation test when they came. So, it's a way to share experiences and celebrate the resilience and the triumphs of all people who live in Australia.

Carly Boreland: And valuing the diversity of that whole population that makes us who we really are. So, once we're into Year 12, what are the big-ticket items? We've got HSC examination. What's that looking like these days and what do we need to be preparing students for?

Cath Jeffrey: I think one of the best things before the HSC is the major project. The major project is an opportunity for students to really harness and utilise their strengths. So, the major project is an opportunity to explore any topic you wish presented in any medium you wish. So, I have had artworks, I've had songs. I've had very in-depth written reports. One of the most exciting ones that have come through as I've had a student develop a teaching resource pack for preschool teachers, which is now being utilised. So, she planned lessons, developed resources, everything like that. I've just had this year, another student who went out into the community and got community input in relation to what they would like to see in lessons, addressing the cross curriculum and priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. He then developed a manual to assist teachers in delivering Aboriginal content in their subject area. It's exciting. I've had students develop videos and mini documentaries. And what I find empowering is when students come to me with this idea, you have to sit and go, oh no, that won't work. And I find when you go, okay, show me what you've got. They literally blow you away in relation to what they produce. So, if you're looking at a class with diverse students with diverse learning needs, but also, diverse learning abilities, the major project is a fantastic opportunity for them to really show us what they can do.



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Carly Boreland: I think that's so, important when you're describing those projects, I think, oh, wow. You know, HSIE subjects, you know, we make the best people. I think they're just terrifically useful. That project, that's such a tricky balance to manage as a teacher. You know, I think the most exciting thing to do is write a really good essay, but that is not what the world needs lots of necessarily. How long do you let that process of a student trying things out go for, in terms of the calendar year, before you sort of have to say, all right, enough experimentation, it's time to make a decision and we need to get down to deciding and then moving on?

Cath Jeffrey: That's where the project log comes in very handy. So, the project log is worth a third of the marks and it's their chance to reflect. I tell them the messier the project log is the better. So, that is something that you monitor and then it gives you a concrete grounding to have those conversations and go, okay, I can see here, you've done this, you've done this, you've done this, you've done this now. And it's time to centre it down. So, it gives you that foundation to have that discussion with the student in relation to now it's time to really get on that track and do what needs to be done.

Carly Boreland: And projects for Aboriginal Studies are internally marked they're marked by the teacher?

Cath Jeffrey: They're also marked by a panel. So, it's the teacher and then representatives from the local community. So, generally I will have probably, four or five people who will sit on the panel and mark the project. And that's so, exciting in the way that it brings a non-teacher perspective. I have had the experience where I've looked at a project and thought, okay, it's about a Band 4, whereas two of my other community members really engaged in it. And therefore, the student got higher marks because they're bringing that outside perspective into the classroom.

Carly Boreland: So, you can talk it through together. It's an interesting way of doing things, I think. And when does that typically happen? When's that due? Because I know that the pressure on school projects, or major works around HSC is pretty big. And if a student has three big things going on at the same time, that might be about enough when you're choosing subjects.

Cath Jeffrey: The syllabus does recommend that the major project is concluded by Term 2. So, that's the end of Term 1 in the HSC year. So, unlike those other major projects, like in your major works in Visual Arts or Design and Technology, or those Industrial Tech subjects, which the major project and portfolio are due in Term 3, ours are generally out of the road by Term 1 of the HSC.



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Carly Boreland: So, you've got to hustle a little bit there to get it done. And what's the weighting for that?

Cath Jeffrey: I'm just trying to think. Well, I know in my HSIE, it's 30%, so, it's the same as the trial.

Carly Boreland: So, with these HSC subjects, there is a lot of them in HSIE and it's a little bit unique compared to a lot of the rest of the school, where you can take on these subjects and you don't have the same requirement for background knowledge, as you do in some of the other ones. And it's a product of the faculty or the KLA being so hugely diverse. You might find yourself starting out with Aboriginal Studies and you haven't taught it before, and you haven't studied a lot about Aboriginal history or, you know, it's not a degree necessarily that you would take. What's the place to start with for those teachers? And have you got any tips for good pathways in terms of options that you might select or focus studies, case studies or key themes that you might take on when you're starting out?

Cath Jeffrey: I would definitely say use your strengths as a teacher. If you're a Legal Studies teacher, teaching Aboriginal Studies, do the criminal justice unit, if you're a PDHPE teacher, or if you have a strong background in relation to, Geography where we examine in Year 10, you know, well-being and humanities definitely take that health option. So, you choose to two options. I always say to teachers do the education option. It's what we live, it's what we work. So, you've got that grounding and also, utilise your partnerships. If you have an Aboriginal Education Officer in your school, use them speak to your local AECG. If you don't have a local AECG, there's the state AECG that are more than willing to give you some tips. The Aboriginal Studies Facebook page is fantastic. The amount of people who, when they start, will put a post-up and we're a great online community where we share a lot of our resources and our programming.

So, definitely in relation to that is just have a think of where not only your expertise, but where your passions come from. I think that's another way that it gives you a good foundation and it's not as scary as what a lot of people think. I think when we are going to teach something that we haven't, go through the syllabus and you'll find that you'll be ticking boxes as you read through, because a lot of the content in Stage 6 Aboriginal Studies is addressed in those junior mandatory courses, your junior History, it's now addressed in junior Geography. So, you will be pleasantly surprised that as a teacher, you already have a very strong foundation from which to work on.

Carly Boreland: Once you've been doing it for a while, where are the challenges, you know, sometimes you've got to get out of your comfort zone a bit. I think when you've been teaching these things for a long time, for the students and for yourself, what's your next goal with Aboriginal Studies? What are you going to take on next?



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Cathy Jeffrey: The big topic at the end is you do Aboriginality and the Land or Heritage and Identity, and it's worth 30 marks in the HSC. So, it's a 10-mark question and a 20-mark question. Where I'm excited with exploring that is, I'm looking now at the way I teach writing. So, when you go into your RAP data at the end, after each HSC is to have that opportunity to analyse where your student's strengths are, but where you could have taught it a little bit better. So, definitely for me is I'm starting to explore the way my students write and the academic level in which my students write and really working towards upskilling that aspect of their performance in the HSC. I find that that's an exciting challenge. The other thing is I haven't taught Aboriginality and the Land for a very long time. So, I'm thinking maybe is it time for me to get out of my comfort zone and to explore that topic and give Heritage and Identity a bit of a rest.

Carly Boreland: It's so important to acknowledge and do that for yourself. I think that extra challenge and, um, oh gosh, the art of the perfect sentence. I could spend a 40-minute lesson on that any time. Working together in a pair and let's make it better, let's make it better. I think that's just the best of HSC, and lessons with those students can be so important when you talk about just one sentence instead of one essay. I think that makes a huge difference.

Cath Jeffrey: And I think it also challenges you professionally, where you start to take ownership of literacy and numeracy. So, I think all too often we hear it. All, you know, literacy for the English teachers. Numeracy is for the Math teachers. Whereas if you look in Aboriginal Studies the diverse and varied opportunities to really explore those key skills and it's those key skills that students need, once they leave school, irrespective of what career they take, we need to have our students to have strong literacy and numeracy skills that they can utilise in the workforce. So, in Aboriginal Studies, there's a lot of opportunities to utilise statistics, graphs also, to have that ability to analyse a source effectively. So, I think that's a life skill. I think let's have a look at this resource that we're using. Okay, where's the bias, what's the intended audience and that's just not at school or university or TAFE. That's a life skill to use.

Carly Boreland: And in a modern media world it's really important. It's not just a technical task anymore. I think with the HSC and online marking the importance of the opening sentences, if any response, has been surely elevated to be terrifically important. I think they always were, it's very hard once a strong start has been made for marker to change their mind but now, I think the nature of reading online and the way we are trained to read, I think those strong starts are really important.

Cath Jeffrey: I have a saying which my students, I think, get really sick off, but it's like, don't shock the marker.



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Carly Boreland: No, no.

Cath Jeffrey: And so, it's like you put your capital letters where you're supposed to, use your full stops, use paragraphs because as you said, online marking, it's a difficult task. So, if the students can communicate their knowledge effectively, they're going to get higher marks. It might not mean that they know more than their competitors and let's face it, it's that competitive setting, the HSC because you're competing against everybody in the state. But if you can effectively communicate your knowledge, you're a little bit further down the path, I think.

Carly Boreland: Absolutely. And teachers are people too, and they appreciate it when a student makes their life easy. So, I think that's really, really important to remember. All right, now what about resources? So, we've talked a lot about reaching out to your local community and making the most of that. Of course, there are textbooks and you know, every teacher you talk to has got their favourite and it depends on what, what cohort you've got really as well. But what about other resources, especially I'm thinking online resources that people could get a hold of. What's some good ones to go to?

Cath Jeffrey: The Teachers Federation have a fantastic resource in relation to our people that are on the Aboriginal Education Committees. There's also the library. So, definitely get onboard. I would also, go to your local town library. You will uncover a huge collection of resources and the people who work there will be able to point you in the right direction. A lot of the universities, the national museums, the War Memorial, all those things online have, and I'm finding it's more and more emerging. You'd take, for example, Australian War Memorial, they have a whole website or web page, which is now, dedicated to Aboriginal serviceman. So, definitely reach out, interact with those national bodies because I'm finding more and more of those entities and institutions are jumping on board and have so many resources out there. I think the challenge is actually trying to navigate the plethora of resources that are there. I know when I first started teaching, I got bogged down in information because there is so much, so definitely have a play on the net, but then contact a lot of the universities, your War Memorial, your museums, your art galleries have people who specialise in that Aboriginal perspective. So, getting in touch with those people, and it will make your journey so, much easier.

Carly Boreland: Okay, and so, sounds like some quality resources well explored that can possibly be used across the case studies and key themes is going to benefit you more than getting overloaded or overwhelmed.



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Cath Jeffrey: Definitely. And I found a few really authentic and really well analysed resources and you'll end up collecting a little bag of tricks, which will be invaluable.

Carly Boreland: I am convinced that Aboriginal Studies is for every school. And if it's not at your school, you should do everything you can to get it into that broad curriculum that we think is so important. If I give a summary, can you have a listen and let me know if I'm on the right track. So, we want to start by talking at your school about the importance and benefits of subjects like Aboriginal Studies in Year 11 and 12, and how that fits into a broader pattern of study around the new Year 9, 10 elective, which everyone should have a look at because it's got a lot of things that will engage students beyond more traditional approaches, perhaps, to teaching Aboriginal culture and history in Australia. And, once you get that subject going to really make a big advantage of your students and use them as the ambassadors for the course to talk to younger students about the successes they have had as they move on to university and life beyond school and how it fit in for them. And we talked about how Aboriginal Studies could fit as part of an important pattern of study that might incorporate PDHPE or Society and Culture or CAFs or Legal Studies. And there's a host more including the benefits to English, especially. Then once you've got your class up and running, we want to have a look in Year 11 at case studies that incorporate local community and use them to find resources. And we want to make sure that our class is really open so that students feel that they can ask questions. And that no question is off limits. It should be an open discussion space. Then in choosing subjects or choosing pathways, as you make your journey through your first years teaching Aboriginal Studies, you should choose things that play to your strengths and passions, especially consider the education option, because that's something that you already know about and have a look at the community resources that are available to support you.

And from there have a look at the key themes that you're going to choose for Year 11, because they're going to be important for Year 12 and making a nice connection there between Year 11 and year 12 in that way, and thinking a lot about what a major project could look like and being open to a variety of ways of communicating that and getting the most out of your students, whatever it is that they have as their particular strengths and skills. And then as with all of our great HSC subjects that require writing, setting them up for success and focusing on how to communicate all of this knowledge that they've gained over their 12 years of education and getting that down in the clearest possible way. Does that sound about right?

Cath Jeffrey: That sounds good.

Carly Boreland: Cath, thanks so much for joining us today.



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Cath Jeffrey: Your welcome.

Carly Boreland: We love having you in our studio and talking to us remotely and to find out more and to listen to further podcasts, you can visit our website cpl.asn.au/podcasts

CONCLUSION:

I'm Carly Borland, and I'm the Assistant Director of the CPL. I've been talking with Cathy Jeffrey about Aboriginal Studies and to find out more and to listen to further podcasts, you can visit cpl.asn.au/podcasts

The CPL Podcast is produced by the Centre for Professional Learning and the New South Wales Teachers Federation, all opinions expressed in this podcast are those of the individual speakers only and do not represent the views of their employer or associated organisations. Technical direction by Jason Nicholas.

Catherine Jeffrey is the Head Teacher of Teaching and Learning at Inverell High School. She established Aboriginal Studies in year 9 in 2007, it is now one of the most popular subjects in years 9 to 12. Catherine also works with the NSW Department of Education Curriculum Innovations team and the Australian Human Rights Commission developing teaching resources for Stage 5 and 6 Aboriginal Studies and Stage 3,4,5 and 6 History.