



MEDIA INFORMER

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Girls Delight in Exchanging Cultural Treats

Roseville College Year 6 students are using social media to share life experiences with students at Hanscom Middle School in Massachusetts, USA, and both groups are enjoying the fruits of cultural exchange by sending each other boxes of treats.

Year 6 teacher Mrs Henrietta Miller says the highly successful initiative began on a whim as a “fun, authentic and interesting experience” for her students. “Many participants are blogging, and even Skyping, outside school hours,” she explains, emphasising that Edmodo, a moderated online learning environment, allows young people to interact with others of the same age in a safe, secure and interactive context.

“When we engage in dynamic activities like this, especially by our own initiative and in our own time, we benefit from ‘incidental learning’. That is, we develop and refine a range of transferable skills like researching, comprehension, writing and technological literacy without even realising it,” she says.

Earlier this month, a surprise box from Hanscom arrived at Roseville College. It contained hand-picked magazines, souvenirs, toys, food items and gifts to add texture and context to topics that students had discussed online.

When asked about differences between our two cultures, as revealed through this experience, Emily Dawson mentions that “weird OREO cookies in ‘Spring’ and ‘Birthday’ flavours” arrived in the box, and Angelique Manconi noticed a baseball. “It took us a while to explain what ‘netball’ is!” she laughs.

In reply, the Roseville College students are finalising their own Australian-themed box of treats. Gemma King, who is the daughter of an American living in Sydney and has teenage cousins in the US, believes lollies such as Fantails and Minties will be well received, and Natalie Lackerdis thinks that a boomerang, a pair of “Australia Flag inspired sunglasses” and Australian wildlife books add to the box’s cultural element. Plenty of clip-on koalas, wash-off Aussie “tattoos” and mini Australian flags are also carefully included by Mrs Miller.

Creative and engaging activities, especially ones that transfer beyond the classroom walls and combine people with technology, are vital to the Junior School experience at Roseville College.

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Photograph: (L-R) Year 6 students Angelique Manconi, Emily Dawson, Natalie Lackerdis and Gemma King with a selection of items received from Hanscom Middle School, Massachusetts USA, and the brimming “Australia” box they are posting in return.



**Kaje Pickering
Media Relations**

P. 02 9884 1126

F. 02 9411 3945

M. 0414 473 640

kpickering@roseville.nsw.edu.au

27 Bancroft Avenue

Locked Bag 34

Roseville NSW 2069

www.rosevillecollege.com