

Symposium title: Towards an Australian model of Culturally Nourishing Schooling

This symposium examines the notion of a *culturally nourishing* model of Australian schooling. This model of culturally nourishing schooling has been developed in the context of the continued systemic failure of both government policy and teaching practice to bring about substantive improvements in Indigenous student learning outcomes in Australia. Despite the millions of dollars that have been spent on ‘new’ programs, and despite the best intentions of researchers over the previous 15 to 20 years to identify the ingredients for success, there is, on the surface of things, little evidence to support the claims. The *Aboriginal Voices* team presenting here thus considered it was time to re-evaluate the field and its achievements, and to present a fresh approach to addressing the low outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The first paper lays the foundations for an evidence-based approach to the development of an innovative model of Indigenous education. It reports on the most extensive systematic review of literature ever conducted in the field of Indigenous educational research in Australia. The systematic review of literature was born out of a combined desire among experienced researchers across Australia to differentiate fact from fiction, and to identify, through careful analysis, the future goals and directions of Indigenous education. Following the review of over 10,000 papers published in Indigenous education, the *Aboriginal Voices* team have looked to establish a whole-of-community model of culturally nourishing schooling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Drawing on the theoretical work of Smith (2000), Brayboy (2020) and Nakata (2007), this presentation will frame the project within the tradition of critical Indigenous theory, as well as disclosing the pervasiveness of the colonial moment and its cumulative impact on the schooling of Indigenous students.

Paper 2 articulates an Australian culturally nourishing model of schooling with four interlinked elements: (1) rich understandings of Country, (2) Indigenous knowledges and heritage as foundational to identity-work, (3) epistemic mentoring of educators, and (4) transformative teacher professional learning. This model emerged drawing collectively on the empirical and theoretical work of contributors to the *Aboriginal Voices* team. In this paper, the model will be called on to look back at research that helped crystalize the import of this approach. Starting in 2016, the three-year *Culture, Community and Curriculum Project* reveals both the possibilities and complexities for Sydney schools that are yet to effectively or sustainably support Indigenous learners. The *Culture, Community and Curriculum Project*, the first of three case studies presented in this symposium, illuminates the nature of how a model of culturally nourishing pedagogy is implemented. The application of this model is examined in two further case studies presented in papers 3 and 4.

The case study, presented in Paper 3, analyses the impact of professional learning on pre-service and in-service teacher practice. Through the enactment of Country as a pedagogical device, Aboriginal community educators’ knowledge of place, culture, history and politics provides opportunities for teachers to transform their perceptions of teaching and learning in Aboriginal contexts. As a result of the intervention, pre/in-service teachers report increased confidence, knowledge and relationship-building skills to work with Aboriginal communities

to embed Aboriginal content and to develop culturally nourishing pedagogies to better engage Aboriginal students in their learning. The third case study is reported in the final paper.

Paper 4 presents the results of a three year study of the impacts of teaching about the experiences of trauma on students studying to become teachers. The project's overarching objective is to develop an effective trauma-informed pedagogy that can support students who learn about the experiences of the 'Stolen Generations', the Holocaust, wars, and genocide. Following a presentation from a member of the Stolen Generations, students reported strong emotional impacts, indicating heightened arousal and defensive dissociation. Results indicated that effective teaching about the experiences of trauma must be accompanied by management processes that will mitigate the potential detrimental emotional impacts on such learning. We conclude that the reflexive power of narrative can implicate students in their own lives, as well as in the lives of others, thus underscoring transformative teacher professional learning as one of the four key elements of cultural nourishing pedagogies.

Of critical importance in all four papers, is a recognition that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous lives are bound to one another through our combined history and a shared land.