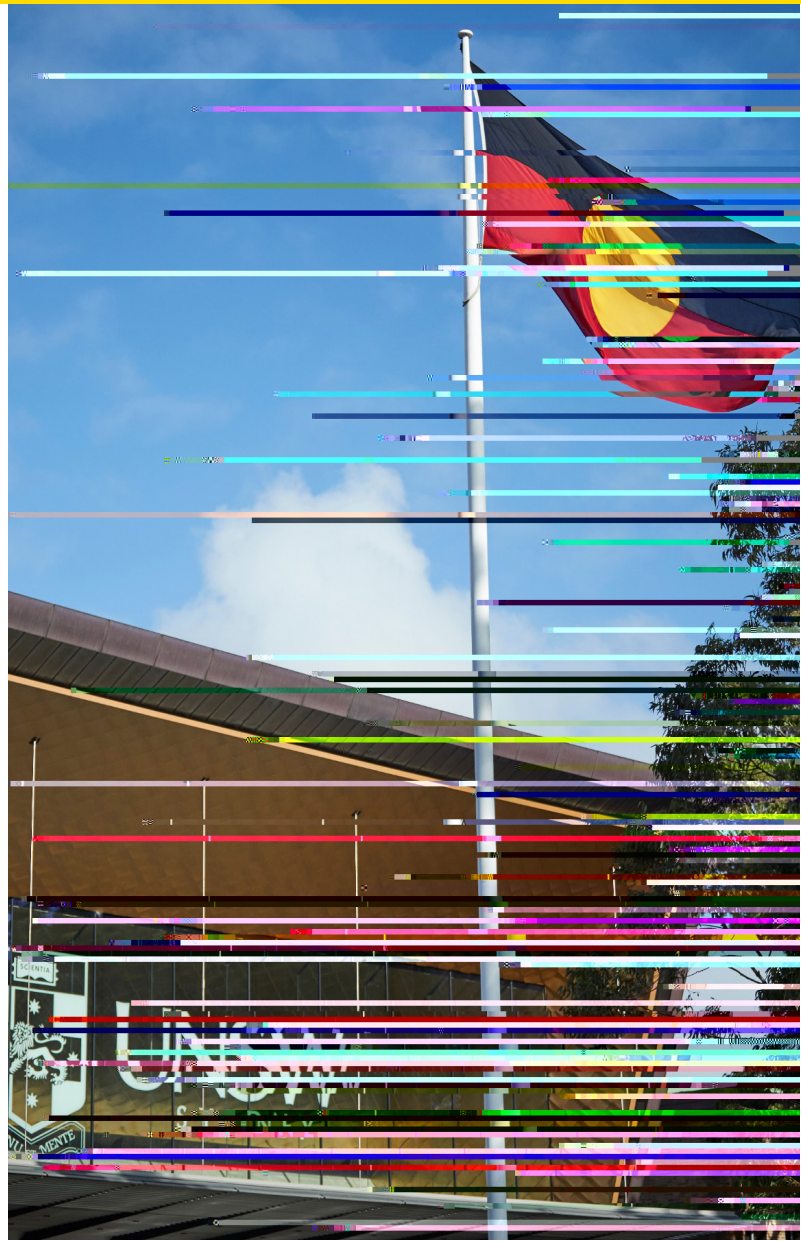


Culturally Nourishing Schooling (CNS) for Indigenous education



Research Brief

The 2019 Mparntwe Education Declaration and the 2020 Closing the Gap Report refresh both signal the importance of (and links between) culture, wellbeing and holistic development for Indigenous education. Yet, many education authorities continue to rely on individual student test results to make judgements about what works and associated funding decisions.

Likewise, key priorities identified by the Education Council and Indigenous groups – such as nurturing emotional, cultural and social wellbeing, and the importance of reciprocity and relationships – are often poorly translated into policy and practice.

These concerns, and the ongoing failure of the Closing the Gap strategy to alleviate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage, prompted Dr Kevin Lowe and Dr Cathie Burgess to lead a team of academics to systematically review a decade of research across 10 topic areas in Indigenous education to find out 'what works' and how do we know.

This review – the Aboriginal Voices project – forms the evidence base of the Culturally Nourishing Schooling (CNS) project.



The Aboriginal Voices project found there is often a disconnect between what teachers think they practice and what they are doing in the classroom or in their relationships with Indigenous students. It determined an array of long-term issues affecting the underachievement of Indigenous students in Australia that need to be simultaneously addressed.



The Culturally Nourishing Schooling (CNS) project is part of a collaborative research study investigating strategies to improve teaching and learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It aims to empower the community, school leaders and teachers to refashion education with an emphasis on establishing meaningful relationships and connections with Country and localised Indigenous knowledges, histories and experiences.

Through simultaneous practice and research, CNS will identify challenges faced by schools and teachers, the key factors needed to ensure sustainable school reform to support positive outcomes for Indigenous students, and successful direct and indirect strategies for facilitating change.

Diagram: Factors and strategies under investigation

This project will deliver a school-based approach to improving schooling for Indigenous students, designed in schools with local Indigenous educators and Elders leading and working with teachers and school leaders.

The overarching project aims are to:

- **A1.** Improve teachers' knowledge and professional practices in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- **A2.** Establish a sustainable base for the long-term collaboration between Indigenous families, communities and schools.
- **A3.** Establish a whole-school model of schooling that supports the needs and aspirations of Indigenous students.

The project is a collaborative undertaking involving local Indigenous communities, school educators and NSW Dept of Education, and researchers to establish a whole-of-school professional model to support the improvement of Indigenous students' experiences of schooling.

The study involves the learning communities connected with eight schools in NSW, working to establish the 'culturally nourishing' schooling model as central to their current strategic planning and operations. The model is a research-informed framework developed and currently piloted by the researchers. It is designed to improve the academic achievements of Indigenous learners while concurrently fostering a strong and healthy cultural identity grounded in the local context.

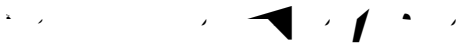
The outcomes of this research will be to:

- Establish a model of professional learning that improves teachers' knowledge and professional practice.
- Use evidence-based strategies to support sustained educative partnerships toward improved outcomes.
- Evaluate a responsive model of culturally nourishing pedagogy and curriculum.
- Develop professional resources for teachers that centre Indigenous knowledges, practices and aspirations in curriculum and pedagogy to support the implementation of the CNS model.

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RQ1: To what extent do the CNS professional learning strategies impact on teacher professional knowledge and pedagogic capacity?

RQ2: What strategies are seen to support the development of productive and sustained educative partnerships



Research Brief



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