

Explicating the Drivers of Success: Schools that Improve Indigenous Students' Learning Outcomes

Many Australians have said it and many Indigenous people have proven it — education is the solution to breaking the cycle of disadvantage that keeps Indigenous people from reaching their full potential. Indigenous politician, Alison Anderson, provides a powerful reminder of how fatal a lack of education can be, 'We are being advised into the grave by people better educated than us. This needs to change'.

This research will contribute towards making that change, inspired by the words of Indigenous leader, Professor Mick Dodson, 'There are plenty of examples of Indigenous success; we just have to recognise it and replicate it.' In this research we wish to explicate the characteristics of effective schools that enable Indigenous students to reach their full academic potential and thrive. The research will identify different pedagogical, pastoral, and organisational approaches that are effective in managing the school experiences of Indigenous students.

We know that educational success is dependent on what the teacher and student do. But it is so much more than this. What happens outside the classroom has great impact on what happens inside the classroom. Therefore, we will be collecting data not only from students and their teachers, but from principals, students, families, and community members to determine what contributes to a world-class education — an education that will break the cycle of disadvantage.

By adopting a positive psychology framework and using a mixed-methods study, we seek ways to quantify the challenges Indigenous and non-Indigenous school leaders face and identify those characteristics (eg skills, psychosocial well-being, and values) that improve learning outcomes for students, where learning extends beyond academic achievement to include other desirable outcomes such as citizenship, a love of learning, and community engagement/contribution.



Project Title: Explicating the Drivers of Success: Schools that Improve Indigenous Students' Learning Outcomes

Start Date: 1 January 2016

End Date: 31 December 2018

Funding Body: Australian Research Council

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