

## A DEADLY DAY: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AROUND INDIGENOUS ISSUES

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*As part of her Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education course, Therese McLaren was asked to imagine how issues the Social Contexts of Secondary Education class was reading about and discussing impact upon the work of teachers. To that end, students were asked to think deeply about one of the topics addressed in the semester, and to frame a professional development day for colleagues that teaches about the topic, attends to the pedagogy of the session, and creates opportunities for reflection and learning. What follows is Therese McLaren's engagement with the topic of indigenous education.*

### AIM

*How well do teacher education and professional development programs prepare and support teachers in their efforts to deliver quality teaching and learning in rural NSW schools? (McConaghy, 2002, p.5).*

This question, raised by McConaghy (2002) in her paper on 'Situated Pedagogies' is one taken with serious concern in the planning of this professional development day. The aim of this day titled, 'A Deadly Day', is to upset the dominant deficit and disadvantaged discourses that are commonly used by educators to explain the Aboriginal student's experience at school. This will be achieved by addressing the hidden curriculum concerning Aboriginality through a variety of engaging teaching strategies. The planned learning and teaching activities are focused on challenging teachers to reconceptualise their views on Aboriginality in order to improve classroom interactions and learning outcomes. Personal reflection is an integral part of the day, where teachers will be encouraged to think deeply about the issue of Aboriginality and tease out the connections to their teaching. Dismissing ideas of deficit and disadvantaged discourse surrounding Aboriginality will allow teachers to look towards understanding and compassion for their students, rather than blame.

### 'A DEADLY DAY' RATIONALE

#### 1. BREAKFAST TIME! Bush tucker

The idea to begin this professional development day with a staff breakfast came from a conversation I had with a teacher on my practicum experience. She commented that teachers rarely, if ever, get to spend quality time with each other without a work agenda. Therefore, the rationale behind this experience is to provide a space where teachers can just be together. Bush tucker food and billy tea will be provided to add an Indigenous twist to the breakfast, whilst teachers are provided with a work-free space in which to socialise. With full bellies and good spirits a productive atmosphere will be set for the day's proceedings. In McConaghy's (2002) situated pedagogies model she identifies four areas of quality teaching and learning in rural NSW schools: quality professional

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learning communities; quality leadership; quality teaching and learning; and, quality school/community dynamics. A staff breakfast with Indigenous food to begin the day is aiding in promoting and maintaining a quality professional learning community.

## 2. *JUST TO PUT YOU IN THE PICTURE... 'A Deadly Day' introduction*

Where are we going? How are we going to get there? And what do we need to get there? The realities of our world and culture are often very different from those of Indigenous Australians and their communities. The purpose of today is not only to raise cultural awareness, but for you to analyse your perspectives regarding the issue of Aboriginality. Do you truly know how you feel about Indigenous people and their communities? Do you truly understand where your Aboriginal students are coming from? For today's journey you need to leave behind a need for control and predictability. Instead, you need to pack an adventurous spirit, an open mind and a willingness to see the world with different eyes.

## 3. *WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW? Outcomes for the day*

The purpose of this activity is to stimulate thought around the topic and set personal outcomes for the day. It also gives a clear picture of prior knowledge and possible gaps in the participants' knowledge. In order to set these outcomes the teachers will make an 'affinity diagram' in groups. The purpose of such an activity is to stimulate thought and then group similar ideas. Each individual will be given a bundle of 'post-it' notes and asked to write down any questions they have about teaching and interacting with Indigenous students, i.e. what they don't know about Aboriginality and what is it they want to find out? In small groups, after pooling the groups' ideas, the participants will attempt to arrange questions/thoughts into like categories. They then negotiate and identify three burning questions they would like to share with the group.

## 4. *'A DEADLY DAY': Addressing different ways of thinking*

*'Teachers must learn to recognise cultural codes' (hooks, 1994, p.41).*

This part of the day involves an Indigenous guest speaker addressing the issue of cultural differences. They will introduce the teachers to Aboriginal English as opposed to 'standard' English and uncover the implications of different mindsets. What does the word 'deadly' mean to you? What does it mean for Indigenous Australians? In juxtaposition to the negative definition and connotations associated with a 'white' interpretation of the word 'deadly', in Aboriginal English 'deadly' translates as 'really good or impressive' (Eades, nd.). Eades suggests that this word is spreading from Aboriginal English into general Australian usage, especially amongst young people (p.2). An explanation of the different interpretations of 'deadly' provides a springboard for the day's journey to make the 'strange familiar and the familiar strange' and provides a perfect example of a cultural divide between Indigenous Australians and white Australians. A representative from the local Aboriginal community is chosen for this learning activity because who better to teach about a culture than someone from that culture? McConaghy (2002) understands the importance of involving the community into the running of a school, and in her situated pedagogies model she places parents and community members in the inner circle:

Perhaps more than in any other public schooling context, rural schooling requires a perception of communities as integral to schooling and learning, as integral to classroom activities and to the culture, structure and decision-making of the school (McConaghy, 2002, p.10).

Teaching teachers basic Aboriginal English is crucial for clear communication with their Indigenous students and their families. This time can also be used as an opportunity for participants to voice the burning questions they came up with at the beginning of the day and have them answered by the Indigenous guest speaker.

#### 5. COLOUR DOES MATTER...*Setting the scene*

The learning experience chosen to set the tone and mood of the professional development day is a screening of the film *Lousy Little Sixpence*. The film earns its title from the measly wages paid to young Aboriginal servants by their white masters. Funnily enough, many never saw that lousy sixpence. The film examines the experiences of five stolen children: Margaret Tucker, Bill Reid, Geraldine Briggs, Flo Cadwell and Violet Shaw (notice how they all have very English names). The main focus is on the way Aboriginal children were used to create a servant class for white employers. The film also examines the ways in which outspoken Aborigines began to organise and protest about their conditions, especially in the light of the celebration of one hundred and fifty years of settlement in Australia. With the aid of interviews, newsreels and film, the video tells the story of these five people and their communities. The film begins in 1900 then takes the viewer on a journey of changing attitudes, 'to the use of Aboriginal reserve land, the struggles of the Great Depression, the experiences of Aboriginal soldiers in World War II, and the origins of the Aboriginal Rights movement in the 1930s' (Carrodus, nd, p.68).

Firstly, this film was chosen because I took a gamble that unlike *Rabbit Proof Fence* most people wouldn't have seen *Lousy Little Sixpence* before. I thought this film would be an appropriate way to set the scene, and it also helps to avoid the monotony of constant talk. The film deals with the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families and explores the themes of social and emotional dislocation caused to families and communities. As teachers, it is of the utmost importance that we recognise the ugly history of our nation and the lasting repercussions it has inflicted on our Indigenous communities. The film allows an insight, not only into the feelings of the stolen children and their families, but also into the nature of a society who allowed this to happen. The story is told with a marked absence of blame, but a deep commitment to ensuring that this episode in Australia's history is never repeated (Carrodus, nd, p.68). McConaghy (2002) suggests that:

In recognising the importance of historical and geographical location in quality teaching and learning we also recognise that issues of place and positionality are important dimensions of quality teaching in all schools (McConaghy, 2002, p.7).

The 'place' McConaghy (2002) talks about has to do with a sense of identity and belonging. The screening of this film offers one insight into 'place' for Indigenous Australians.

#### 6. IN THEIR SHOES... *A personal reflection*

*'Place is an issue of becoming and identifying' (McConaghy, 2002, p.14).*

The impact of colonialism on the world is a complex process taking many forms. The damage to indigenous cultures, the suffering and loss of life, can never be measured. Hearing the stories of those too long silenced serves to provoke an interrogation of the past and a subsequent shift in ideology. It is of the utmost importance that we, as non-Indigenous Australians, are sensitive towards the scarring effects of invasion and colonisation. As Clayton (2003) so eloquently puts it:

The smouldering resentment of those formerly colonised for having been instilled with a sense of inferiority based on race is part of the price we all have to pay for the ascendancy enjoyed by the West (p.48).

McConaghy (2002) suggests that there are 'some knowledges of the world that are inherently more difficult' to grasp than others, 'due to our various tolerances or intolerances for them' (p.19). She uses 'Australian slavery or colonial ambivalence' as an example of a 'difficult knowledge', one in which creates an 'intolerable conflict' for some, as a knowledge that many cannot bear to know and therefore resist using various defences (McConaghy, 2002). The purpose of this experience is to compel teachers into addressing this 'difficult knowledge'. At the completion of *Lousy Little Sixpence* there is a personal reflection exercise scheduled. 'In their shoes' will allow each individual to consolidate thoughts and feelings brought to the surface through the experience of watching this film. Participants will be encouraged to sit by themselves in silence and write a diary entry 'in role' as an Indigenous student. 'Writing in role' is a powerful process drama technique created by the drama practitioner, Dorothy Heathcote. Much has been written about the use of 'writing in role' as a technique to deepen a drama (Hatton, 2005). It is the aim that writing from an alternate viewpoint will help teachers to develop greater sensitivity and compassion towards their Indigenous students. This experience ends with an important 'take home' message about the Stolen Generation and the history of our country:

Those who suffered most severely under these policies cannot or will not tell their stories, therefore we will never know the true extent of the suffering caused (Carrodus, nd, p.68).

## 7. TEA TIME!

This part of the day continues the Indigenous twist. Instead of finger buns and English tea, morning tea will consist of bush fruits, nuts and billy tea.

## 8. WHOSE EDUCATION? Uncovering white privilege

This oral presentation teaches about the notion of white privilege in order to tease out the ways the school system discriminates against all minority groups, not just Indigenous Australians. McConaghy (2002) states that 'the taken for granted grammars of classroom practice have developed within the material, symbolic and imaginary formations of a nation-state founded upon difference' (p.27). Institutional racism is a product of our society and schools are a reflection of our Western capitalist society. Samoff (1992) suggests that:

The intellectual-financial complexes in education over the past three or four decades have tended to marginalise non-economic concerns such as identity, ethnicity, culture and language in education (McConaghy, 2002, p.15).

School structures, curricula and assessment are specifically geared towards the white, middle-class student. Schooling therefore, empowers this group by making what they already possess that which is necessary for success (Gale and Densmore, 2002). As Gale and Densmore (2002) support, 'public education in western capitalist societies does not equally foster the academic achievement of poor students, of most students of colour, nor of many females' (p.109). The norms of the school are seen as 'right' and 'good' and anything that falls outside of this neat little box is seen as different, and therefore 'wrong' or 'bad'. In turn, this leads to the process of assimilation where students classified as 'at risk' or possessing learning difficulties are taught the proper 'rules'; how to behave and perform like white middle-class students:

Both the strategy of assimilation and the socialising function of schools take the Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, male, middle-class culture as the benchmark, assume we live in a meritocracy, and consider students who do not succeed in school as having special needs, with extra problems, and as forming a subset of the majority of students (Gale & Densmore, 2002, p.117).

Gale and Densmore (2002) suggest that we need to look to the bigger picture in order to 'examine all the structural arrangements that variously position different groups of people as unequal with one another', and to 'understand how culture and the economy work together to produce injustices, both inside and outside of schools' (Gale & Densmore, 2002, p.124).

#### *9. PEEK-A-BOO! Addressing the hidden curriculum*

This activity provides an exploration of the hidden curriculum concerning Aboriginality. Using the 'think, pair, share' teaching strategy teachers will be encouraged to explore the ways in which they may be unintentionally helping to uphold this discrimination. They will be posed with questions such as: How does the drama classroom marginalise minority groups? How can the drama classroom be used as a site to redress issues of Aboriginality? The basic premise underpinning McConaghy's (2002) situated pedagogies model is that 'place' and 'context' matter (p.3). That is, she argues, that:

Quality teaching is situated practice, situated in the sense that teachers must read into their activities the particular aspects of their place or location. Quality teaching and learning thus has important historical, sociological and spatial dimensions' (McConaghy, 2002, p.7).

As teachers explore the hidden curriculum of the drama classroom they will be gaining a better understanding of place.

#### *10. REJECTING THE DEFICIT / DISADVANTAGED: Understanding rather than blame*

In order to reject these dominant discourses surrounding Aboriginality the topic must first be unveiled. At the conclusion of the oral presentation the staff will form groups of

four and brainstorm ways they can avoid blame and promote understanding. Munns (1998) suggests that 'the inescapable reality for many teachers of Aboriginal students is that there is a daily intensity which characterises much of their work' (p.174). Classrooms often centre on discipline and teachers struggle to engage students in productive work. As both Gale and Densmore (2002) and Munns (1998) support, the behaviour and performance of the Aboriginal student is very often explained in terms of a deficit and/or disadvantaged discourse. Explanations such as these attribute blame to the individual. These discourses fuel teachers' views on success and failure and ultimately dictate pedagogy. 'Students' academic performances are typically related to their social descriptors' (Gale & Densmore, 2002, p.109). This view results in a teacher's patronising stance, which in turn results in low expectations for these students, and ultimately a cop-out belief that this is just 'the way things are'. Munns (1998) also suggests that most schools that teach Aboriginal students are those that serve low socio-economic communities. Living in poverty can and does greatly affect a student's behaviour in the classroom and teachers need to be educated to see 'poverty as poverty', and not as a sign of deficiency' (Nicklin, Dent and Hatton 1996, in Munns, 1998, p.91). It is also important that teachers disaggregate 'Aboriginal' from poverty and social disadvantage.

### *11. LUNCHTIME!*

Informal lunch to give staff a chance to discuss and debrief the program so far.

### *12. KOOL THINGS TO DO WITH KOORI KIDS*

McConaghy (2002) believes that the issues of 'relative investments and defences around learning (and teaching) are crucial to understanding teaching-learning dynamics' (p.24). She argues that teachers 'are unable to assume that the old scripts, the colonial scripts about cultural relevance, for example, will secure them in successful relationships with Indigenous communities' (McConaghy, 2002, p.25). In this uncertain post-modern world, we are forced to find new models and ideals about good teaching and who we must be for our students (McConaghy, 2002). McConaghy (2002) suggests, that 'what the other wants from me as a teacher is changing' (p.25). This learning experience offers teachers ideas and strategies for enhancing relationships and interactions with Indigenous students from which they can then build on. The chosen handouts, 'Kool things to do with Koori kids' and 'Strategies for supporting and enhancing Indigenous students' self-concept' (Crawford, 2005) offer practical examples of things to do and avoid with an Aboriginal student. The intention is not for teachers to use them as a bible, but rather as a reference point.

### *13. IN THE CLASSROOM ON MONDAY... Implications for pedagogy*

*'We must acknowledge that our styles of teaching may need to change' (hooks, 1994, p.35).*

In this learning experience, staff break up into 'expert groups' and come up with specific ways this new knowledge impacts on their classrooms and KLAS. They are encouraged to come up with practical strategies for promoting a socially just learning environment and enhancing educational outcomes for all students. Each individual reports back to their original group resulting in a pooled knowledge of pedagogical

implications. The material produced in this activity is collated and distributed to each staff member.

#### 14. ON A FINAL NOTE...

Where to now? This professional development day is by no means the end of an exploration of difference. Instead, it is the beginning. McConaghy (2000) believes there is a need to continue to enhance 'productive partnerships for quality teaching and learning'. As Crawford (2005) supports it is a mistake to presume that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold the same viewpoints and value systems because like any other group of peoples they are extremely diverse. The ideas and strategies taught today will not necessarily work with every Indigenous student. Each student comes to the classroom with a unique set of experiences, values and beliefs and the most important thing is to get to know your students as individuals, not social descriptors.

#### **WHERE TO FROM HERE? The intended outcomes for the day**

*As hooks (1994) suggests, 'we must build community, shared commitment and common good that binds' (p.40).*


A crucial outcome of the day is that those involved embark on a life long learning process. Rather than a mere recognition of difference it is my intention that teachers will develop a deep understanding and valuing of difference, not just Aboriginality. Throughout the day teachers will be challenged to see the world through different eyes with the hope that they will feel a need and a desire to know more about how they can teach with equity. The hope is that the participants will walk away from this professional development day with a 'knowledge hungry' mind and soul. It is expected that teachers will use the information and skills learnt at this professional development day to develop and implement socially just practices for the whole running of the school. The collated pedagogical implications and strategies from the final activity should be distributed at the next staff meeting to be utilised by all teachers in the school. Through a greater understanding of the Indigenous student's experience at school we will be one step closer to achieving McConaghy's (2002) situated pedagogies model, of quality professional learning communities, quality leadership, quality teaching and learning, and quality school/community dynamics. The overriding intended outcome of the day is for teachers to begin to make changes to their practice that better reflect the ideal of a socially just classroom, thereby enhancing educational outcomes for all students.

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## TIMETABLE OF EVENTS FOR 'A DEADLY DAY'

Time	Mins	Learning & Teaching Experience	Organisation
Morning session 8.30- 11.00			
8.15	30	<b>BREAKFAST TIME!</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided bush tucker breakfast for all staff</li> <li>• Seated for a 8.45am start</li> </ul>	Whole group
8.45	10	<b>JUST TO PUT YOU IN THE PICTURE...</b> A 'Deadly Day' introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land.</li> <li>• Oral presentation to introduce the program and address the aims of the day.</li> </ul>	Whole group
9.55	25	<b>WHAT DO I WANT TO KNOW?</b> Setting outcomes for the day Creating an affinity diagram in small groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals write their questions about teaching Indigenous students onto 'post-it' notes.</li> <li>• Groups of four are formed and post-its are grouped into like categories.</li> <li>• Each group then identifies three burning questions they would like to share with the group.</li> </ul>	Individual then groups of 4
10.20	30	<b>'A DEADLY DAY':</b> Addressing different ways of thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Indigenous guest speaker addresses cultural differences and teaches some basic Aboriginal English.</li> <li>• What does the word 'deadly' mean to you? What does it mean for Indigenous Australians?</li> </ul>	Whole group
10.50	60	<b>COLOUR DOES MATTER:</b> Setting the scene Video: <i>Lousy Little Sixpence</i> The film deals with the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families, exploring the themes of social and emotional dislocation. It offers a range of insights, not only into the feelings of the stolen children and their families, but also into the nature of a society who allowed this to happen. 	Whole group
11.00	10	<b>IN THEIR SHOES:</b> Personal reflection Participants sit by themselves in silence and write 'in role' as an Indigenous student. They are asked to explore how this ugly past may influence their interactions with 'white teachers' and their overall experience of school. 'Writing in role' is process drama exercise and was created by the drama practitioner Dorothy Heathcote. It is designed so that participants can place themselves 'in the shoes' of Indigenous Australians for a moment in order to develop a greater sensitivity and compassion towards their students.	Individual
11.00	15	<b>TEA TIME!</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning tea time serving bush fruit, nuts and billy tea</li> </ul>	Whole group
Midday session 11.15- 1.00			
11.15	30	<b>WHOSE EDUCATION?</b> Uncovering white privilege Oral presentation and discussion about institutional racism. In what ways does schooling discriminate against Indigenous Australians?	Whole group
11.45	30	<b>PEEK-A-BOO!</b> Addressing the hidden curriculum Introduction to the hidden curriculum. Think, pair, share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals write about their practice, identifying ways in which teachers may be unintentionally helping to uphold this discrimination?</li> <li>• They share these revelations with a partner</li> <li>• Partners are invited to share their findings with their colleagues to promote substantive discussion</li> </ul>	Individual, pair, whole group

12.15	45	<b>REJECTING THE DEFICIT/DISADVANTAGED:</b> Understanding rather than blame <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral presentation to challenge the dominant discourses surrounding Aboriginality.</li> <li>• Groups of four brainstorm ways to promote understanding and compassion rather than blame.</li> </ul>	Whole group Groups of 4
1.00	30	<b>LUNCHTIME!</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal lunch, chance to debrief and discuss with colleagues.</li> </ul>	Whole group
Afternoon session 1.30-3.30			
1.30	30	<b>KOOL THINGS TO DO WITH KOORI KIDS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral presentation exploring more ways to promote understanding. Staff receive handouts: 'Kool things to do with Koori Kids' and 'Strategies for supporting and enhancing Indigenous students' self-concept (Crawford, 2005).'</li> </ul>	Whole group
2.00	60	<b>IN THE CLASSROOM ON MONDAY...</b> Implications for pedagogy <p>Expert groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff form groups of 4 and are numbered 1-4</li> <li>• They then form new groups correlating with their number</li> <li>• Groups brainstorm specific ways this new information impacts on the drama classroom (i.e. practical strategies for enhancing educational outcomes in their classrooms)</li> <li>• Staff then gather in original groups and each person shares the ideas their expert group came up with</li> <li>• By the end of this activity each individual will have benefited from a pooling of all the ideas</li> </ul>	Expert groups of four
3.00	30	<b>ON A FINAL NOTE...</b> <p>Where to now?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ideas and strategies are collated and someone nominates to type them up and distribute copies</li> <li>• This day is not the end of the exploration, it is the beginning!</li> <li>• A word of caution not to assume homogeneity of Indigenous peoples</li> </ul>	Whole group
3.30			

## KOOL THINGS TO DO WITH KOORI KIDS

### Classroom Management

- Develop rapport with students (get to know their interests and ambitions, get to know them as a person, not just as a student);
- Provide appropriate, relevant and achievable curriculum (Success breeds success);
- Develop as part of the classroom management strategy opportunities for students to cool off and also for you to cool off. Many a bad thing is said in the heat of the moment;
- Make early, positive contact with the students' caregivers and parents;
- Liaise closely with AEA, and parents to develop a picture of their student in your class;
- Provide positive feedback to students one on one. Avoid placing students in a position of shame;
- Never back students into a corner; always leave a way out for the child. If you do not provide this, then be prepared to wear the consequences;
- Don't single out students for discipline in front of the whole class. Do you like being 'chastised' in front of your peers?;
- Provide an opportunity for students' input in the class rules and also consequences for action. Ownership is important. If you own the rules – rules are meant to be broken. If the students own the rules there is more chance of following them. Remember the more rules you make, the more you must be the 'policeperson' to enforce them;
- Don't use questioning as a tool for managing students;
- Be seen to be firm, fair and consistent. When you ask students to do something make sure everyone does it;
- Make students aware of your expectations of behaviour;
- Discuss classroom strategies with deputies and/or Principals (they are experienced teachers who can provide helpful input);
- Access help of AEAs and other Aboriginal education workers. Don't be an island – seek help;
- Teasing is a problem that needs to be dealt with before it escalates;
- Investigate the possibility of running Swearing and Bullying workshops with your students;

Now add your own strategies:

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(Come on, you can think of more than 4!)

## **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

### **Physical Environment**

- Immerse the classroom and students in appropriate vocabulary. (Check of BOS document on KOORI ENGLISH);
- Have students create charts and posters for the room;
- Keep anecdotal records of which arrangements work and under what conditions;
- Vary the location of the teacher's desk;
- All children respond well to a bright, colourful learning environment over which they have some ownership;
- The children's participation should be reflected at all times. They need the opportunity to have their work displayed, with displays changing often;
- The Aboriginal culture needs to be visually represented in the classroom;
- Use a variety of visual stimuli within the classroom;
- Try a variety of seating arrangements – vary group sizes from 2 to 6;
- Vary also the location of desks and other objects in the room (experiment and take note of the interactions);
- The physical environment should reflect the current themes and subject content;
- If you share a classroom, negotiate a section for your class's displays;
- Group work is not just a seating plan; it involves cooperative learning strategies;
- Develop as part of the class MSB (Managing Students Behaviour) policy – opportunities for students to cool off.

### **Learning Environment**

- Develop rapport with students (get to know their interests and ambitions). Be empathetic, ask yourself WHY is a student behaving the way they are?;
- Develop a warm, positive learning environment;
- Make sure students are familiar with the classroom routines;
- Set up and make clear to the students the MSB strategies you are using;
- Make students aware of the positive reinforcements which will be available;
- Listen to any suggestions the students make regarding class structures.

### **Representing Aboriginal Australia in the classroom**

- Read local legends to the class and make up a wall story featuring the legend;
- Feature Aboriginal art on Merit awards, pad covers, newsletters, and notes to parents;
- Use designs for printing and writing lessons and as borders for your worksheets (Make sure to check with you AEA as they may not be appropriate to your area);
- Posters – write to various organisations and ask for a free poster;
- Charts that feature Aboriginal themes;

- Aboriginal authors;
- Use of borders on worksheets;
- Include Aboriginal music/instruments in the school collection;
- Use of traditional local names within the classroom groups;
- Art and craft projects using Aboriginal themes and/or techniques;
- Lifestyles curriculum

**List YOUR strategies:**

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## STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS' SELF-CONCEPT

Do – Do – Do – Do – Do – Do – Do	Don't – Don't – Don't – Don't – Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Speak to a child in a positive manner</li> <li>➤ Show warmth and kindness at all times</li> <li>➤ Be fair and equitable at all times</li> <li>➤ Be consistent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't shout or scream at students</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be sensitive to students' behavioural patterns. For example, some Indigenous students find extended eye contact intimidating</li> <li>➤ Try to understand the body language of Indigenous students</li> <li>➤ Seek advice from appropriate people in the school. If you are unsure of an individual child's behaviour pattern, contact AEA or AECG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't use extended eye contact</li> <li>➤ Don't reject or discourage touching behaviours</li> <li>➤ Don't assume that you know best about children's behaviour just because you are the teacher</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Praise and encourage students frequently and avoid patronising students</li> <li>➤ Encourage involvement in all extra curricula activities the school offers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't stereotype Indigenous students</li> <li>➤ Don't label a child and contribute to or create a reputation that is not deserved</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Understand the student's home background</li> <li>➤ Understand that there may be home circumstances which make doing homework and assignments difficult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't show shock or be shocked at any differences in the home life of Indigenous children</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be aware of health problems a student may have, especially <i>Otitis Media</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't assume a lingering health problem will eventually go away</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be honest with children and build up their trust so they feel they can rely on you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't put students on the spot when they don't know the work</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be open, honest, and be yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't get annoyed, be sarcastic or shout – talk to the student as a person</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Build a positive interpersonal relationship with both students and their extended family. For example, attend community functions, if invited</li> <li>➤ Be involved with, and get to know Indigenous parents</li> <li>➤ Say hello to students and parents and their relatives outside the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't label members of the student's family or extended family</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be aware of the concept of shame. For example, avoid comparing a student with siblings you may have taught before</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't put students in situations which may cause shame – don't use sarcasm</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS' SELF-CONCEPT (CON'T)

Do – Do – Do – Do – Do – Do – Do	Don't – Don't – Don't – Don't – Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be prepared to try alternative teaching/learning strategies to get a concept across – be repetitive in your explanations if you have to</li> <li>➤ Use humour to inform or reiterate important points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't focus on written explanations to provide information and instructions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Try and talk to Indigenous students at their level, in a language they can understand, both in and out of class</li> <li>➤ Accept their home language</li> <li>➤ Set tests, assignments and projects in a language the students can understand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't try and impress people with your level of education. They know that you are an educated person, otherwise you would not be there</li> <li>➤ Don't 'big note' yourself</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do respect Indigenous culture in your community and try to find out things about it by asking questions which are not personal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do not perceive Indigenous students to be primitive, less intelligent, or incompetent in their work because of their Aboriginality</li> <li>➤ Don't try to change Indigenous children into non-Indigenous children</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Get to know your students and their personal relationships within your class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't take for granted that all students can talk, sit or relate to each other</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be aware (some) Indigenous children may resent being singled out for any reason, or being pressured for a response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Don't show up students in front of their peers</li> </ul>
<b>NOW ADD YOUR OWN FINDINGS:</b>	

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

Though we highlight cultural differences, it is most important to remember:

- Do not use these differences to stereotype actions of all Aboriginal people. Different groups have different cultural practices. There are always exceptions to this rule;
- Do not use cultural differences to justify failure, rather use them as a promoter to look at developing new ways to do things.