Responding to Indigenous Students and their Community’s Voiced Experiences Regarding Effective Teaching Practices

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

& of Indigenous people present
Colonization History:

• 1788 Terra Nullius
• Included in Flora and Fauna Act
• 1869 Aboriginal Protection Act
• 1901 White Australia Policy
• 1940s – 1960s Assimilation Policies
• 1962 Voting rights
• 2008 Government Apology to Stolen Generation
• Future – Recognition in our Constitution
WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE PROJECT?

**Mandate for Catholic Education:**

- **to improve equitable outcomes** for its Indigenous students
- Catholic Education recognises that engaging teachers in **inclusive curriculum practices is a central focus** in its commitment to provide equitable learning outcomes
- To find out the **teaching practices that best support** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their learning
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

- Australia’s focus on teacher quality and teaching quality
- Contributors to this discussion: Noel Pearson (CYI El & DI), Chris Sarra (Stronger Smarter), Siegfried Engelmann (DI), John Fleming (El)....
JOHN HATTIE & VISIBLE LEARNING

- Central character, Professor John Hattie (Visible Learning)

- Attributes of effective teaching:
  - Understand the essential learning of their subject – know their subject well (CK) and how to communicate it well (PCK)
  - Respond to student interests – can connect it to students’
  - Feedback, monitoring and progress of each student
  - Create positive classroom learning environments
  - Clear learning goals and self-regulation

![Barometers of Influence]

- Below $d = 0.0$ – Decrease achievement
- $d = 0.0 - 0.15$ – Typical effects of teachers on students that can be accomplished in a year of teaching
- $d = 0.15 - 0.4$ – Zone of desired effects
- $d > 0.4$ – Anagoric effects
CONCERN ACROSS THE TASMAN

- Concern that Hattie’s work is now generalised across all contexts (decontextualised ‘invisible’) (Snook et al, 2013)
- Nationalistic agendas override Indigenous peoples aspirations for education, especially in the important space of teacher-student interaction (McKinley, 2010). The “Closing of the Gap” objectives (2009); New National curriculum with Embedding Indigenous Perspectives as a cross curriculum priority in every subject area; Personalised Learning Plans for ALL Indigenous students.

“There is astoundingly little known about what Aboriginal students see as the qualities of effective teachers and the impact this has on educational outcomes.” (Craven, 2011).
OUR RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT WORK

- **Phase One** (2014): Conversations with students, parents and teachers to identify the teacher actions that influence student engagement & learning

- **Phase Two** (2015): Develop Effective Teaching Profiles used to inform changes in practices

- **Phase Three** (2015-16): Work with teachers of Grade 4, 5 & 6 over the next three years (2014-2016)

- **Phase Four** (2015-2016): Determine influence of these practices on student engagement and learning –

We want to find out what teacher behaviours as voiced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their communities have the most effect on learning
CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS

- 28 parents across 4 schools (Townsville and Mount Isa)
- Open-ended conversations
- On average, 45 minutes long, and often with an Indigenous teacher or education worker

1. **What are some things that you would like your child’s teachers to know that would help them in their learning?**

2. **What can teachers do to help your child or children in their learning?**
GENERAL THEMES

- Understanding **Our History** with Education
  - Understanding the **“Code-switching”** Required of Our Children
- Understanding Our Perceived **Inability to Change Schooling** as It Exists Today
- Wanting Teachers and Schools to Hold an **Alternative Point of View** of Indigenous Students and the Communities They Represent
  - Wanting Schooling and Teaching to Affirm **Cultural Identity**
- Ensure **Learning Priorities** are Broader than Achievement
Questions asked:

1. **Next year, you will get a new teacher [for a subject]. What do you want that teacher and classroom to do to help you to learn?**

2. **Tell me about classrooms and teachers where you feel good about yourself and learning**
GENERAL THEMES

• A classroom climate of ‘warm expectations’
• Building cultural bridges as a foundation for respect and learning
  ➢ Making provision for development of literacy (and numeracy) fluency
  ➢ There is a tendency towards explicit instruction, emphasizing a gradual release of responsibility
• Student diversity is accommodated to promote individual engagement and success
• A variety of practices support student learning
  ➢ Being attentive to student health and well being
  ➢ Developing a classroom environment that supports learning through mainly proactive measures, especially relational
• A classroom environment that affirms and welcomes and includes community resources, both physical and human
just
NEXT STEPS (FROM THE QUALITATIVE TO THE QUANTITATIVE)
(HELEN)

- Phase One (2014): Conversations with students, parents and teachers to identify the teacher actions that influence student engagement & learning
- Phase Two (2014): Develop *Effective Teaching Profiles* used to inform changes in practices (Quantitative)
- Phase Three (2015-16): Work with teachers of Grade 4, 5 & 6 over the next three years (2015-2016)
- Phase Four (2015-2016): Determine influence of these practices on student engagement and learning –

- We want to find out what teacher behaviours as voiced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their communities have the most effect on learning
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  • Shalom Christian College in Townsville

• Australian Research Council