ResearchOnline@JCU

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY
AUSTRALIA

This file is part of the following work:

**Sam, Tamara M. (2023)** ***"Staying afloat at school": academic buoyancy amongst Indigenous secondary students.*** **Masters (Research) Thesis, James Cook University.**

Access to this file is available from:

https://doi.org/10.25903/5qae%2Dfy45

Copyright © 2023 Tamara M. Sam

The author has certified to JCU that they have made a reasonable effort to gain permission and acknowledge the owners of any third party copyright material included in this document. If you believe that this is not the case, please email researchonline@jcu.edu.au

Indigenous Education and Research Centre

"Staying Afloat at School": Academic Buoyancy Amongst Indigenous Secondary Students

Tamara M. Sam
James Cook University

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy (Indigenous) at James Cook University in 2023

Indigenous Education and Research Centre

## Acknowledgements

This thesis would not be possible had I not had the support of the people that mean the most to me, my beautiful family. To my husband and best friend Assan, the encouragement along the way was the motivation to keep me going. Your support and help, through conversations and your valuable feedback on parts of this thesis, added to the strengths I could draw on to complete this thesis. To my children Moara, Raezahn, Darylle and Mislam, thank you for understanding when I couldn't make an event, or I couldn't give you my full attention as you sat next to me while on my laptop deep in thought. I know you all appreciate seeing the level of commitment it has taken to accomplish such an enormous task and I hope this inspires you all to draw on your strengths to find your success in life. To my parents and siblings, thank you for understanding the sacrifices I needed to make to finish this thesis. Family connection and identity was an important motivating factor for this thesis.

The completion of this thesis could also not have been possible without the support of my mentor, my primary supervisor, Dr. Ailie McDowall. I admire your approach to supporting Indigenous students. Your awareness and acknowledgement of the contested spaces I was navigating throughout the course of this thesis helped me to develop the strategies needed to commit to completion. Your patience, guidance, support and motivation are what helped me overcome so many challenges along the way, ensuring that I stayed afloat to reach final submission.

A huge thank you must also go to Professor Nakata, whose influence, knowledge, and guidance has helped to frame my research to highlight the importance of improving outcomes for Indigenous students.

Thank you also to my secondary supervisors, Dr Dianna Hardy and Associate Professor Felicia Watkin-Lui. Your timely feedback allowed me to reflect on ways to improve my knowledge in academic writing and the best way to use this platform to share my experiences as an Indigenous teacher from a remote setting.

A sincere thankyou also goes out to the Indigenous Education Research Centre (IERC) at James Cook University. The support behind the scenes has made this possible and I am truly grateful for this opportunity.

To my colleagues and friends, thank you all for your words of encouragement and your understanding when I didn't reach out. I hope you find this thesis useful for your own professional development when considering ways to support Indigenous students.

Statement of the Contribution of Others

| **Nature of assistance** | **Contribution** | **Name** |
|---|---|---|
| Intellectual support | Academic support including library services<br><br>Intellectual support and editorial assistance<br><br>Editorial assistance | James Cook University<br>Indigenous Education and Research Centre<br><br>Dr Ailie McDowall<br>Dr Dianna Hardy<br>A/Prof Felecia Watkin-Lui<br>Professor Martin Nakata<br><br>Dr Mary Casolin |
| Financial support | Research and Training Program grant for tuition fees<br><br>JCU Library - SAGE Publishing Asia Pacific Grant for Indigenous HDR Students | Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment<br><br>SAGE Publishing<br>Eddie Koiki Mabo Library |
| Data collection | Assisting the researcher to make contact and talk with thesis interview participants and participation in interviews<br><br>Participation in interviews | Education Queensland<br><br>Students and families from research site |

Abstract

This thesis proposes that Indigenous students are learning to negotiate unfamiliar positions and adapt to new learning approaches to find success within the contested space of formal schooling. Educational policy makers have used approaches such as modifying the curriculum, highlighting connections to culture, increasing expectations of Indigenous students, and creating pathways to further education (Department of Education, 2021) to try to change outcomes for Indigenous students. However, the latest Closing the Gap report states that remote areas experience lower outcomes than major cities, with the gap in attendance widening in secondary school (Australian Government, 2022). This suggests that there is little evidence of the success of these approaches. This study starts from the position that focusing on Indigenous students' capabilities for success may contribute to improving outcomes for remote Indigenous students. Academic resilience and academic buoyancy (Martin & Marsh, 2006) are useful frameworks that could be guided by the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007), to provide a better understanding of how to build this capacity in remote Indigenous settings.

This study investigated how Indigenous secondary students in one remote school define and experience academic buoyancy, through group interviews with 11 students. In this research, students I interviewed were able to navigate the contested spaces of formal schooling. Factors often seen as cultural impediments for Indigenous students, such as the 'shame factor', are understood as agentic attempts by Indigenous students to develop new capacities, such as a strategy to deal with the fear of failure. It is throughout these attempts that students develop strategies to negotiate the classroom without giving up their own cultural positions. As the students become aware of their own capabilities, they strengthen the academic behaviours that contribute to academic buoyancy, which in turn contribute to achievement motivation. Throughout this research, the remote Indigenous students that I interviewed often found themselves being pushed and pulled between different priorities (after Nakata, 2007) such as peer pressure or stereotypes about Indigenous students. It was in reflecting on these moments that the students were able to articulate what they needed to do to grow opportunities for themselves.

From this research, it is important teachers understand that certain behaviours such as truancy, shame, lack of motivation and disengagement could be the result of the conflicting positions and spaces Indigenous students are experiencing at school. As teachers develop relationships with students, they need to understand how Indigenous students see themselves as learners so that they can develop capability in areas where support is needed.

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ........ i
Statement of the Contribution of Others ........ ii
Abstract ........ iii
Table of Contents ........ iv
List of Tables ........ vii
Chapter 1: Introduction ........ 1
  The Contribution of this Thesis ........ 4
  The Context of this Thesis ........ 5
  Research Aims and Research Questions ........ 7
Chapter Two: Literature Review – Resilience ........ 10
  The Science of Resilience ........ 10
  Resilience as a Strengths-based Approach ........ 11
  Resilience for Children ........ 13
  Targeting Indigenous Strengths ........ 14
Chapter Three: Literature Review – Educational Resilience and Academic Buoyancy ........ 17
  Educational Resilience ........ 18
    Academic Resilience ........ 19
    Academic Buoyancy ........ 20
  Educational Resilience for Indigenous students ........ 23
  Gap in the Research ........ 27
Chapter Four: Methodology ........ 30
  Indigenous Research ........ 30
  Interpretivist Design ........ 30
  Indigenous Standpoint Theory ........ 31
  Cultural Interface Theory ........ 32
  The Research Site ........ 34
    Ethics and Process for Disclosure ........ 35
    Recruitment ........ 36
    Data Collection ........ 37
    Dialect in the Transcription ........ 41
    Analysis of Results ........ 41
Chapter Five: Challenges ........ 43
  'Smooth Seas Never Made a Skilled Sailor' – Staying Afloat at School ........ 43
  Challenges Unique to the Indigenous Experience ........ 45
    Historical ........ 45
    Grief and Sorry Business (Loss) ........ 46

Home and Family ... 47
Being Indigenous – Culture/Identity ... 48
Shame ... 49
Shame – Learning ... 50
Shame – Peers ... 51
Shame – Fear of Failure ... 52
Summary ... 54
Chapter Six: Academic Buoyancy Predictors – Performance, Achievement Motivation and Engagement ... 55
Experiencing Academic Buoyancy Through Achievement Motivation and Performance ... 56
Education as Priority ... 56
Aspirations (Educational Intention) ... 57
Achievement Recognition ... 57
Social Learning ... 59
Relationships ... 61
Identity ... 63
Role Models ... 64
Opportunity – Risk Taking ... 65
Summary ... 66
Chapter Seven: Staying Afloat – Predictors of Academic Buoyancy (5C's) ... 69
Commitment (Perseverance, Persistence) ... 69
Composure ... 73
Control ... 75
Coordination ... 76
Confidence ... 77
Self-efficacy ... 77
Self-concept ... 78
Self-esteem ... 78
Summary ... 79
Chapter Eight: Contributing Factors to Academic Buoyancy (Resources and Strategies) ... 81
Resources ... 81
Friends ... 82
Teachers ... 83
Family ... 85
Strategies ... 87
Summary ... 90
Chapter Nine: Discussion and Conclusion ... 92
Research Aims and Questions ... 92
How Is Academic Buoyancy Defined and Experienced by Indigenous Secondary Students? ... 93

What are the Factors that Contribute to Academic Buoyancy for Indigenous Secondary Students? 96
Summary of Research Questions ... 98
Theoretical Implications ... 98
Educational Implications ... 100
Reflections on the Limitations of this Study ... 102
Final Remarks ... 104
References ... 105
Appendix A ... 120
Appendix B ... 121
Appendix C ... 123

List of Tables

**Table 1:** Resilience Theory ........ 12
**Table 2** Activity 1 – Projection Technique ........ 39
**Table 3** Activity 2 – Reflection Letter to an Indigenous Year 7 Student ........ 39
**Table 4** Activity 3 - Research Interview Questions ........ 39

# Chapter 1: Introduction

As adults and educators, we often hear the words 'students are resilient, they adapt to change'. What we as educators, parents or even researchers don't often hear is how students are able to be resilient. In fact, we tend to rely on the adult conversations surrounding resilience and the evidence presented from this point of view. We are rarely given an insight into what children express about this topic or how they feel they experience resilience. The school environment presents many challenges that students are faced with daily. Resilience can play an important role in how students adapt and cope to bounce back from these daily challenges. The introduction to this thesis sets the scene for the idea of building resilient capacity at school for Indigenous students.

I begin this chapter by introducing the concept of resilience, particularly the idea of investigating Indigenous student experiences of resilience. I then discuss the idea of Western and Indigenous definitions of resilience when thinking about Indigenous students in the classroom. Following these definitions, I then introduce a particular construct of resilience, and the definition of academic buoyancy and its relevance to the school setting. Next, I discuss how academic buoyancy is related to student strengths and how this may be a factor to consider for how Indigenous students are doing well. This is followed by a mention of the importance of including Indigenous student experiences of academic buoyancy at school. The next sections of the introduction, outline the contribution of the thesis, followed by the context of the thesis and finally the research aims and questions.

Recent global events have seen an increased interest in resilience research for youth (Gupta & Goyle, 2020). This research has advanced our general definitions of resilience and our understandings of how youth are coping or how they have adapted to change. Resilience has previously been established through research as adaptability and coping, supporting many aspects of an individual's wellbeing (Vohra et al., 2009). How individuals express and experience resilience is determined by how well they manage a set of processes and mechanisms through which internal and external assets (i.e., strengths) are harnessed when adversity is present (Ungar, 2011, p. 1). It is important to consider how school students' internal and external strengths are harnessed and expressed when navigating everyday school challenges. Understanding how resilience is expressed and experienced by students can help build capacity within our schools to foster resilience development. By providing the support structures that promote resilience and resources for students to navigate to for support, schools may contribute to improved outcomes for students.

Understanding Indigenous students' experiences of resilience could contribute to a shared understanding of how Indigenous students learn and find success, and the strategies that are conducive to successfully engaging students in their learning experiences to stay at and complete school. Equally important is how community context and geographical location can impact on or contribute to Indigenous students as

learners, how students are able to achieve success in the school environment and how students maintain levels of wellbeing and are motivated to stick it out at school. According to Nakata et al. (2019), Indigenous students operate at the cultural interface, a space of many shifting and complex intersections between different people with different histories, experiences, languages, agendas, aspirations, and responses (see Chapter Four). Students from remote or traditional locations may have different challenges that they need to navigate. For example, Nakata (2011) argues that the more remote or traditional student backgrounds are, the higher order their language, thinking and analytical skills need to be (p. 2). A shared knowledge in how students from remote locations define and experience resilience could contribute to a context specific approach allowing for strategies to support students within their own diverse environments.

In this thesis there was an interest to investigate how we can draw on both Western and Indigenous definitions to support Indigenous student resilient capacity in schools, how they stay afloat at school. Current research constructs of 'resilience' have been derived from Western experiences of how youth cope, providing very little detail on Indigenous perspectives. For Indigenous people, resilience reflects a holistic nature where individual levels of resilience can be influenced by a multitude of holistic factors including, although not limited to, culture, country, historical events and lived experiences unique to Indigenous peoples.

Academic buoyancy is a concept that has been developed to explain how resilience operates within a school setting. It details how students stay afloat amongst the everyday challenges, including the minor setbacks relative to the everyday operation of school and its associated systems (Martin & Marsh, 2008). Understanding Indigenous students' experiences of academic buoyancy could contribute to our understandings of how to support Indigenous student success in remote contexts. This thesis explores the experiences of 11 Indigenous secondary students, what is working for them and the strengths and resources they draw on to navigate the school system successfully.

Investigating what is working for Indigenous students is often overlooked as the education system has been influenced by past policies and practices that continue to contribute to the assumptions that there is a major problem with Indigenous Education, especially in remote Indigenous communities (Guenther, 2013). Poor results still exist within the Closing the Gap Reports (e.g., Australian Government, 2020), particularly for students from remote Indigenous communities who are one of the most disadvantaged population groups in Australia. Although results for school attendance, reading and numeracy and Year 12 attainment have improved, the geographic analysis reveals lower outcomes for remote areas compared to major cities (Australian Government, 2020). Furthermore, the gap in attendance widens during secondary school. In 2019, the attendance rate for Indigenous primary school students was 85 per cent, and by Year 10, Indigenous students attended school 72 per cent of the time on average (Australian Government, 2020, p. 33). The reasons why Indigenous students are often behind their non-

Indigenous peers are complex and interrelated, resulting from centuries of colonisation, systemic exclusion from the education system and racial discrimination (Beresford, 2004). Understanding what academic resilience and buoyancy means for Indigenous students–how they experience resilience at school—may assist in solving this complex problem.

Academic success, and Indigenous academic success, is sometimes argued as a Western conception of success. Under this argument, measures of completion and enrolments are seen as Eurocentric ways to explain Indigenous student experiences. However, these numbers can also illuminate systematic issues with building Indigenous capacity. For example, out of 12,500 Indigenous school students in one Far North Queensland region, in 2021, 33 went onto university (Nakata, Nakata & Biggs, 2023). Academic success is important to enable future Indigenous self-determination. For these reasons, I chose to focus this thesis on how Indigenous students experience academic buoyancy on their pathways to success, but focusing on their locale as remote Indigenous learners.

To date, not only are perspectives of remote students lacking but education research pertaining to the success of Indigenous students for remote regions of Far Northern Queensland is limited. Instead, existing research literature considers issues such as support services for Indigenous Secondary students travelling from remote communities to boarding schools (Langham et al., 2018), Indigenous boarding school students' psychosocial resilience (McCalman et al., 2016) and the delivery of culturally responsive curriculum through explicit instruction involving the program Mind Matters and its effectiveness in improving the social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) of Indigenous children in a remote community in Far North Queensland (Rabba, 2010).

Definitions of Indigenous student success are often determined by statistical data trends such as completions and enrolments. Many Indigenous families and students have different experiences to non-Indigenous students and the nuance of the learner locale is lost in these numbers. These completion measures can lend themselves to a reductive discourse, don't show what's going on behind the numbers and lack true insight into what success means for Indigenous students. Indigenous students' ideas of success are determined by how students overcome gaps in the prior or assumed knowledge they require to understand and engage with new and unfamiliar academic content (Nakata & Nakata, 2023, p. 15). It is not solely dependent on student-level factors, but also affected by structural-level factors such as teacher attitudes, the curriculum and teaching and learning practices (Uink et al., 2019, p. 12). Indigenous student success is supported by a holistic approach which requires intervention at multiple levels rather than being restricted to outcomes based on academic results, completions, or enrolments (Uink et al., 2019).

The research literature pertaining to the construct academic buoyancy could provide researchers and educators with tools to promote Indigenous student success at school. How to improve outcomes for Indigenous students has long been a question of great interest in a wide range of research endeavours

with debate about the best strategies to support Indigenous learners continuing. However, a recent systematic review suggests that there is no solid evidence on how to improve academic outcomes for Indigenous students (Burgess et al., 2019). Resilience, and the idea of improving outcomes by developing student capacity, may also be useful for Indigenous school students. Through building resilient student capacity, educators may better understand how and what Indigenous students draw on to find success at school.

Understanding context specific experiences could help to address the 'wicked problems' (Conklin, 2006) of remote education in Australia. Indigenous education is often considered complex, with gaps in educational outcomes, lower outcomes for remote areas compared to major cities, and gaps in attendance widening during secondary school (Australian Government, 2020, p. 33). These issues are often seen as intractable and difficult to tackle. . , These results highlight the range of complex and interrelated factors influencing the outcomes for Indigenous students in remote communities. However, despite these complexities, Indigenous students deserve opportunities to find success at school, to be involved in positive experiences that inspire and empower them to contribute to change within themselves and their communities.

**The Contribution of this Thesis**

This thesis seeks to contribute to our understandings of how to support Indigenous student success in remote contexts by looking at multiple resilient factors that enable these students to stay afloat amongst the everyday challenges of school life. Here, staying afloat refers to academic buoyancy, a construct developed by Martin and Marsh (2008) to describe the everyday cumulative factors that students use at school to buffer normal educational stress.

Within the broader field of educational resilience, authors Martin (2013) and Martin and Marsh (2009) make a clear distinction between academic resilience and academic buoyancy. Where academic resilience refers to successfully navigating major (chronic or acute) academic adversity (Martin, 2013), academic buoyancy involves successfully navigating low-level 'everyday' setbacks in the ordinary course of academic life (Martin & Marsh, 2009). Academic buoyancy predicts positive academic intentions and therefore is an important factor to explore to help build understanding around what predictors unique to Indigenous students need exploring to build resilient student capacities at school.

Another driver behind this research is the desire to not only focus on what students lack, but to be proactive in finding out what students bring to their schooling. Historically, outcomes associated with Indigenous education have been dictated by narratives of deficit assumptions based on where the problems lie and how to fix these, drawing attention to ongoing concerns with perspective, position, and power within the broader Australian landscape (Vass, 2012, p. 86). Little recognition has been given to how well some Indigenous students are doing and how they experience successful moments at school.

Whilst there has been a recent move to recognising Indigenous students' strengths (Blignault et al., 2013; Haswell et al., 2013; Heyer et al., 2017; Langham et al., 2018; McCalman et al., 2016; Priest et al., 2012), these rarely focus on academic strengths, and instead focus more often on culture and identity.

This research is interested in academic buoyancy and the strengths Indigenous students draw on at school for several reasons. Firstly, from a research perspective, this concept is less focussed on the failure. Academic buoyancy, rather, provides opportunities for intervention as it highlights fluctuations in student behaviours that can be guided and moulded to strengthen performance, motivation and engagement. Secondly, the general term 'buoyancy' can be defined as the ability of an object to stay afloat or a cheerful and optimistic attitude or disposition. In this case exploring the buoyancy of students in an academic setting moves away from the deficit approach, focusing on strengths students are using to cope at school. Thirdly, there is a strong sense of connection to buoyancy from a cultural position as people from this research site are closely connected to the ocean and staying afloat supports the survival of cultural traditions and ways of being. Finally, the term buoyancy moves away from the idea of resilience as a phenomenon and focuses on what resilient capabilities are important to support, develop and foster at school for Indigenous students.

## The Context of this Thesis

This research took place at a single site in Cape York, Far North Queensland. The research site was an Education Queensland school that services the local community.

The last decade has seen rapid developments throughout Education Queensland in addressing this disadvantage and creating opportunities for Indigenous students. Currently there are two major Departmental initiatives in place to increase understanding of Indigenous students to support student success at school: the *State Schools Improvement Strategy 2021–2025* and the *Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Succeeding Strategy* (Queensland Government, Department of Education, 2022).

The *State Schools Improvement Strategy 2021–2025* consists of an improvement focus centred around students. The Department's ways of working towards improvement is through alignment, precision, and intentional collaboration, particularly working around collaborating and engaging with Indigenous families and communities to improve educational outcomes. This process is more commonly known as the Department's engagement and co-design approach that schools are currently implementing (Queensland Government, Department of Education, 2022). These strategies involve acknowledging community members as a valuable source in informing policy and practice. For Indigenous students this could be evidence that the department is beginning to acknowledge the unique contexts that Indigenous students operate in.

This is also evident in the Department's *Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Succeeding* strategy which is designed around three priorities. The *High Expectations priority* is aimed at lifting expectations of curriculum delivery, making the curriculum more accessible for Indigenous English as an additional language/dialect (EAL/D) student to improve English, attendance, and retention outcomes. Through the *Connection to Culture priority*, the Department aims to build teacher capacity and confidence in embedding cultural perspectives in learning through an approach that involves community and localised curriculum development. The *Meaningful Pathways priority* aims to further increase student retention from Years 10 to 12 by empowering students, building resilience, and providing education pathways and learning opportunities aligned to Indigenous student aspirations (Queensland Government, Department of Education, 2022).

Education Queensland's strategies are part of the first steps towards understanding and acknowledging the multitude of challenges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face in improving educational outcomes. However, current strategies demonstrate a limited focus on Indigenous students as learners. Although the Department is moving towards understanding that each Indigenous community and network varies from the next, these strategies highlight and assume that there are only three problem areas impacting Indigenous student outcomes: language, teacher capacity in embedding cultural perspectives and engagement and motivation. There is little evidence of Indigenous student experience with learning and what impacts or supports their learning journey. For example, of the three priorities in the *Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Succeeding* strategy, the third priority aligns more with the concept of academic buoyancy, indicating that the Department acknowledges the importance of resilience, but it is unclear of how the Department defines resilience for Indigenous students and how this contributes to Indigenous student performance, motivation and engagement. When targeting improving outcomes, attempts to include practices that consider more than just evidence from the classrooms need to be considered. Strategies to improve Indigenous educational outcomes need to be developed to include more holistic approaches, including considering Indigenous students as learners.

I turn now to the local context of the research. In the community where this research took place, the historical context of past events has created multiple areas of conflict, impacting the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples today. This includes conflict from an early religious influence. The Presbyterian church first established the community as one of their Missions (Morrison et al., 2010). The community would later be controlled by the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. Amidst these changes was the beginning of a mining era as the surrounding traditional lands were transformed and engaged in mining production. Today the main town services a small population of non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples, including 12 Traditional Owner groups and multiple smaller surrounding Indigenous communities.

The history of education for the Indigenous population from the closest mission is also highly contested. The first experiences of schooling began under the instruction of the Presbyterian church. Much later a school was established, servicing the local Indigenous community for over two and in some cases three generations. The Queensland Government closed the school in early 2000, and students were then required to travel to the nearest town for school via bus. Today there is a shared feeling amongst the community that this move was unnecessary, never supported by the community and there was no attempt to consult the community to give them an opportunity to voice their concerns about the school closing.

Despite these findings and the multiple contested spaces experienced by the older generations of people in this community, there are Indigenous people who have developed and strengthened resilient traits and maintained positive levels of wellbeing and behaviours to be able to find success in life, in the interface of Indigenous and Western standpoints. More importantly, there are students excelling at school and finding successful moments. This suggests that schools may benefit from analysis on what is working for Indigenous students at school, regardless of the complex lived experiences they often encounter outside of school. The school and teachers are in a strong position to foster and support students to develop the skills, traits and behaviours needed to break through the common cycles of destruction we often see today. Teachers are provided with a rare insight into how Indigenous students react to and engage with the curriculum and how best to deliver it. Responding to student needs is important, including developing and fostering positive relationships and understanding. Building teacher capacity in this area is also important in helping teachers understand the holistic nature of Indigenous students and how their wellbeing can be influenced by a multitude of factors.

## Research Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore how Indigenous secondary students from a remote setting experience academic buoyancy through resilient traits and behaviours, and how Indigenous secondary students understand academic buoyancy in their everyday schooling. This research is not an attempt to measure levels of resilience, but instead will provide examples of how Indigenous young people talk about staying strong at school and being academically buoyant. This thesis is guided by the following questions:

How is academic buoyancy defined and experienced by Indigenous secondary students attending school in a remote setting?

What factors contribute to academic buoyancy for Indigenous secondary students?

To answer these questions, eleven Indigenous secondary students (ages 14-18) participated in small semi-structured group interviews over two weeks in 2021. Students in this age range were selected they had more years of school experience and would be better able to articulate their experiences of academic buoyancy. This particular age group was targeted as the Secondary setting was separate to my everyday working space in the Primary school. I also wanted to capture the experiences of students who were positively engaged with school, hence students that were attending secondary school. Groups were organised into two groups of two participants, one group with three students and one group with four participants. More detail is provided in the methods chapter. My role as the researcher in this remote context involves my interest as an Indigenous teacher and someone who has experienced remote schooling and living, including the transition from community to boarding school. I use my personal knowledge, reflecting on both my school and teaching experiences to support my analysis through an Indigenous standpoint lens. I support this analysis by referring to the Cultural Interface theory as I interpret themes throughout the data that explain resilient student traits and behaviours according to the multiple positions Indigenous students adapt to, to successfully navigate their schooling experiences.

As a primary school teacher, I have taught in the school community where this research took place for 11 years. I hold a position in the community as a respected Indigenous teacher. This both enables trust and connections with the students and families, and also raises ethical implications. I undertook research with the secondary school to ensure that none of my current students were invited to participate. Even though I did not teach the students in the study, it was important to acknowledge that families may recognise that I was a teacher in the P-12 school. This meant careful navigation of the recruitment process. This was handled in large part by the school. Any of my interactions with families took place using official JCU communication channels (such as JCU email) to clarify my role as a researcher rather than teacher as part of this project. I also acknowledged my position as an Indigenous teacher at school but introduced myself to the students as the researcher that was interested in hearing what they had to say about the topic. I also emphasised at all points that there was no obligation to take place in the research, and that it was completely voluntary. Once the research commenced, I used a range of activities to get students talking and to minimise them giving responses that they may think I want to hear. Upon analysis, my supervisor also read my transcripts independently to check my interpretation of the data, and whether my position as a known teacher had affected the students' responses.

This thesis begins with a two-part literature review, providing a narrative of the concept of resilience. Chapter Two discusses the science of resilience, including resilience for children, resilience as a strengths-based approach and the importance of Indigenous strengths. Chapter Three provides an overview of educational resilience and the educational psychology literature pertaining to Indigenous students. Chapter Four explains the methods applied to this thesis and outlines the underpinning theories

and approaches, the Cultural Interface, and Indigenous Standpoint Theory, that were used to analyse the data.

This is followed by the data chapters. In Chapter Five I discuss the challenges experienced at school by the participants. In Chapter Six I provide an insight into how Indigenous secondary students from a remote school define academic buoyancy through their everyday experiences, in particular achievement motivation, and how these factors contribute to their success in 'staying afloat' at school. In Chapter Seven I then move on to outline the predictors of academic buoyancy relating to Indigenous student experience and how this aligns to the 5C model of academic buoyancy (Martin et al., 2010) from an Indigenous perspective. Chapter Eight highlights other predictors of academic buoyancy unique to Indigenous student experience and how this can contribute to the 5C model of academic buoyancy from an Indigenous perspective. I also list some of the resources and strategies that are considered contributing factors to academic buoyancy for Indigenous students within this setting.

The thesis concludes with a discussion on Indigenous student academic buoyancy and the implications for future research proposals and educational practice in supporting Indigenous students in Chapter Nine.

# Chapter Two: Literature Review – Resilience

In this chapter, I will set the scene for this research topic by providing a narrative of the concept of resilience. Following a brief introduction, the first part of this literature review will discuss the science of resilience, including resilience for children, resilience as a strengths-based approach and the importance of Indigenous strengths.

## The Science of Resilience

The focus of this study is educational resilience within an education setting. Therefore, the topics of academic resilience and academic buoyancy are the concepts being investigated. To contextualise these concepts, I will outline the broader literature around resilience and how this concept has been used to explain how people cope and adapt to change, particularly through systems theory. Additionally, as resilience contributes to overall wellbeing, this review will also touch on wellbeing, and the importance of wellbeing to Indigenous peoples.

According to multiple authors (Masten, 2001; Masten & Cicchetti, 2016; Nichols, 2013; Walsh, 2016), research on the concept of 'human resilience' emerged around 1970 with a focus on the impact of trauma and stress on the function and development of individuals. Resilience is usually used to refer to a trait of individuals, characteristics of the individual's environment, as well as a set of processes and mechanisms through which internal and external assets (i.e., strengths) are harnessed when adversity is present (Ungar, 2011, p. 1). Recent global challenges involving multiple systems, such as climate change, natural disaster, war and terror, and pandemics, have sparked a rapid transformation of research involving resilience (Masten, 2018). As a result, there has been an increasing interest in the idea of systems theory involving resilience (Masten, 2015, 2016a).

Systems theory explains resilience as a system at one level that depends on the resilience of connected systems (Masten, 2018). Thus, individual resilience depends on other systems that interact with the individual, particularly on both internal and external systems that directly promote resilience. Some authors (Masten, 2015; Masten & Monn, 2015) suggest that resilience should not be construed as a singular or stable trait, given that it arises from dynamic interactions involving many processes across and between systems. Furthermore, for children, resilience is distributed across levels and interacting systems, including relationships. The resilience of a child at a given point in time will depend on the resources and supports available to the child through many processes, both within the child and between the child and the many systems the child interacts with (Masten, 2018, p. 16).

These interactions can also include, although are not limited to, key concepts such as risk factors and stressors. Where strengths can be explained as developmental assets and resources (that is, internal and

external supports), measurable characteristics in a group of individuals or their situation that predict general or specific positive outcomes, risks are explained as an elevated probability of an undesirable or negative outcome (Wright & Masten, 1998, p. 10). Stressors are events or experiences with the expected potential to trigger stress; stimuli that are believed to cause stress in normative populations, such as exposure to poverty, illness or bullying. Stressors can also present as catastrophic, where they occur outside the normative range, such as parental drug abuse or mental illness (Bell, 2010, p. 207).

The literature pertaining to resilience and its development over time provides a clear difference between resilience and wellbeing. Where wellbeing is described as the overall health of a person, resilience is the ability to maintain this level of wellbeing or the ability of a person to bounce back from adversities to maintain wellbeing. These strengths drawn from personal traits and systems or interactive resources are what promote resilient behaviours needed to build on individual's overall wellbeing, providing strategies to help overcome daily stressors.

**Resilience as a Strengths-based Approach**

The complexities involved in developing screening tools that outline how individuals' strengths foster resilient behaviours are not fully understood, in particular for Indigenous peoples. How Indigenous people construct themselves as being resilient to maintain positive levels of wellbeing has left researchers resorting to alternate approaches and methods to target 'strengths' in promoting general Indigenous wellbeing. By empowering individuals, identifying their strengths and supporting their ability to take greater control, we are strengthening their ability to become resilient, to cope and bounce back from the day-to-day challenges of life and maintain healthy levels of wellbeing (Tsey et al., 2005).

Throughout the literature there are models of resilience that discuss strengths as the protective and promotive factors, the assets that individuals possess and or the resources they navigate to for support (Garmezy, 1991; Masten et al., 2008; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1982). Theories that use variations of the noun resilience, such as resiliency theory, operate more within positive conceptual frameworks, aiming to identify strengths in improving resilience to maintain wellbeing. This approach focuses on the positive factors in youths' lives and the strategies that can be implemented to build on these strengths to improve outcomes (Masten, 2018).

Resiliency theory provides the conceptual scaffolding for studying and understanding why some youth grow up to be healthy adults in spite of exposure to risks (Masten et al., 2008). More importantly, resiliency theory provides a conceptual framework for considering a strength-based approach to understanding child and adolescent development and informing intervention design (Fergus & Zimmeran, 2005; Zimmerman & Brenner, 2010). Within this theory are models of resiliency such as the compensatory, protective and challenge models (see Table 1).

The two most commonly studied concepts in the resiliency theory research literature are the compensatory and the protective models of resiliency. Both models are interested in resilient behaviours and how individuals respond to or buffer stressful events, how they adapt and cope to maintain positive levels of wellbeing. The compensatory model involves promotive factors. These promotive factors are traits, behaviours or support structures that individuals use to buffer or minimise risk exposure in a counteractive way. Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) identified two types of promotive factors: assets and resources. Positive factors that reside within individuals, such as self-efficacy and self-esteem, are defined as assets. Where self-esteem can be defined as a person's self-worth (Du et al., 2017), self-concept incorporates an individual's evaluation of their overall abilities in a particular domain (Prehn et al., 2021), how capable they feel in various situations. Self-concept is often used to refer to a domain specific constructs such as academic self-concept or even mathematical self-concept. Resources refer to factors outside individuals, such as parental support, adult mentors, and youth programs that provide youth with opportunities to learn and practice skills. These positive contextual, social, and individual variables operate in opposition to risk factors, and help youth overcome negative effects of risk exposure (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). For example, a behaviour involving healthy eating can have an opposite effect (buffer) on a developmental outcome rather than any risks.

The protective factor model, on the other hand, explains resilience on the basis of two observable criteria amongst youth: the presence of challenges (risks, stressors, or adversities) and positive adaptation to these challenges (how well youth maintain positive levels of wellbeing) (Masten & Cicchetti, 2016; as cited in Masten, 2018, p.14). This model highlights the traits or personal skills and strategies that individuals draw on as a response to stressful events to maintain positive levels of wellbeing.

**Table1**

*Resilience Theory*

| Resilience Theory (Zimmerman, 2005) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Compensatory Model | Protective Model | Challenge Model |
| • Promotive factors, assets and resources (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005)<br>• Personal traits<br>• Behaviours<br>• Support structures (resources) | • Challenges (risks, stressors, or adversities)<br>• Positive adaptation (how well youth maintain positive leves of wellbeing) (Masten, 2018)<br>• Personal assets (traits/strengths/strategies) | • Acquired immunity (Rutter 1987) |

Two possible pathways through which these protective models function are the risk-protective and the protective-protective pathways. Both pathways highlight the effectiveness of promotive factors in supporting individuals overcome challenges. Within the risk-protective pathway, promotive factors

operate to moderate or reduce the association between risks and negative outcomes. An example within the risk-protective pathway would be mentoring support for adolescent mothers to protect them from the negative effects of stress (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010). The protective-protective pathway operates to enhance the effects of a promotive factor alone for predicting an outcome. For example, levels of self-esteem can increase the negative association between cultural identity and alcohol use for young Native American youth (Zimmerman et al., 1995).

A third model that exists within this framework is the challenge model of resiliency (Rutter, 1987). This model operates as an acquired immunity whereby exposure to modest levels of risk help youth overcome subsequent exposures that make them vulnerable to negative outcomes. It is vital, however, that the initial risk exposure be challenging enough to help youth develop the coping mechanisms to overcome its effects but not so taxing as to overwhelm any effort to cope (Rutter, 1987).

Individual resilience can be fostered by targeting areas of inner and external strengths. Developing individual strengths such as self-efficacy and providing access to or acknowledging resources for individuals to navigate to, are important factors to consider in promoting resilience. Targeting individual strengths will help to develop individual coping strategies to deal with the everyday ups and downs.

**Resilience for Children**

Individual strengths contributing to resilient behaviours differ for individuals, and for children who are experiencing multiple systems and interactions and learning how to navigate these successfully. Adult understandings of how children come to develop resilience have historically been limited due to the assumption that children naturally possess many strengths and are naturally resilient, rather than developing resilience (Perry, 2006). Past research attempts suggest that protective mechanisms operate as part of the normative function of human adaptation systems that foster resilience (Masten, 2011). In other words, children are developing resilient skills and strategies through the experiences within multiple systems and interactions and learning how best to adapt to change in order to cope. For Indigenous children, it is the multiple systems, interactions and influences of the contested spaces of cultural interface that are helping to develop resilient skills and strategies for children.

Throughout the literature, resilience has been explained in terms of children having positive coping mechanisms and a strength of character in the face of great adversity (Priest et al., 2012). Other authors explain resilience for children as the capacity some children have to adapt successfully despite exposure to severe stressors (Howard & Johnson, 1999). Child resilience appears to be a common phenomenon that results in most cases from the operation of basic human adaptation systems (Masten, 2001). Furthermore, resilience explains how both positive and negative experiences affect children, how they choose to deal with these experiences and prepare themselves for the future and ultimately the way children organise their lives so that they are ok and feel safe (Drake et al., 2019, p. 123).

In summary, how children identify with resilience depends on multiple systems and interactions, both positive and negative. Children are not automatically naturally resilient but are continuously building resilient capacities. The ability to be resilient or display resilient behaviours depends on 'how' they manage to deal with these experiences to successfully overcome them. Positive coping mechanisms, including individual strengths, and how children adapt to new experiences is the 'how' to promoting resilient behaviours for children and helping them to stay afloat.

## Targeting Indigenous Strengths

Resilience is used to support and maintain levels of wellbeing. For Indigenous people wellbeing relies on a "whole of life" approach that incorporates the physical, social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of a community and not just the individual (Hickey, 2021, p. 424). Resilience requires an individual to draw on strengths and resources to help adapt to change and overcome challenges to be able to bounce back. For Indigenous people, reaching safe levels of wellbeing requires resilient behaviours that draw on the "whole of life" concept, including an individual's surroundings, to be able to bounce back from the challenges that may present themselves. It is also worth noting that the determinants of wellbeing for Indigenous students often differ to non-Indigenous people and hence Indigenous people face unique challenges as individuals and as part of their community. Targeting strengths for Indigenous peoples is important as it allows for a broad range of assets and resources to be used to maintain positive levels of wellbeing.

Strengths based approaches to improving overall wellbeing move away from deficit approaches as they work towards outcomes based on Indigenous views relevant to the lived experiences of Indigenous people. Targeting individual strengths through strengths-based approaches has more commonly been associated with the health sectors. However, the increased recognition of individual strengths to improving wellbeing has prompted the implementation of varied approaches such as counselling, mentoring, leadership training and community development (Haswell et al., 2013) across multiple domains.

One example of a program that works from a strengths-based approach through case studies, is the Family Wellbeing Program (Tsey et al., 2005). The program was first developed in 1993 by the Aboriginal Employment Development Branch of the South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment (Langham et al., 2018). The Family Wellbeing programs were not only designed to support and empower adults in taking greater control and responsibility for their decisions and lives but have been adapted to be used with Indigenous school children in remote communities (Tsey et al., 2005). The programs have been successful in improving wellbeing amongst Indigenous people by increasing individual capabilities through personal empowerment, such as enhancing individual awareness, resilience and problem-solving abilities (Tsey & Every, 2020).

In a similar way, 'empowerment' is used as a strengths-based approach in several qualitative studies to describe wellbeing programs for Indigenous children. Haswell et al.'s (2013) review of 41 programs revealed evidence of empowerment and strengths-based approaches. Of the national level programs some were delivered through school centres whilst others were community based (Haswell et al., 2013). Some of these include the 3-on-3 basketball program and the Deadly Vibe magazines subscribed to schools. The 3-on-3 basketball program is an approach that encourages youth to draw on sporting strengths to improve health and wellbeing, whilst the magazines contribute to student aspirations by exposing Indigenous youth to other Indigenous youth that are drawing on strengths to navigate their worlds successfully.

Research has also investigated ideas of Indigenous youth strengths targeting wellbeing. For example, according to Priest et al. (2012), four conceptual themes or strengths relevant to Indigenous wellbeing exist for young people: Strong Culture, Strong Child, Strengths and Challenges and Strong Environment. In an exploration of Aboriginal perspectives of child health and wellbeing, the authors interviewed Indigenous and non-Indigenous carers of Indigenous children on their understanding of what wellbeing meant for the child. Although stressors emerged that showed how historical, social, economic, political, and environmental contexts influence the health and wellbeing of a child, caregivers also identified many strengths. These included strength in the cultural, physical, social, emotional and spiritual aspects of the child's life. This research exploration provides an insight into the importance of recognising strengths of Indigenous children and factors that support or influence these protective and promotive factors.

Other research approaches have included methods to identify and build on individual strengths within school contexts, particularly for students transitioning to boarding schools from communities. These studies have mostly focused on resilience as an expression of strengths when adapting to change and suicide prevention. In partnership with Education Queensland's Transition Support Services over a five-year period, the authors McCalman et al. (2016) aimed to combat youth suicide by investigating the impact of an enhanced multicomponent mentoring intervention to increase levels of psychosocial resilience among the 515 remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Cape York and Palm Island. The study suggested that these programs, including the Family Wellbeing Program, positively influenced Indigenous students and the multicomponent mentoring suicide prevention intervention was a useful approach to identifying and developing individual strengths as a response to youth suicide.

In a similar study, Langham et al. (2018) were able to capture elements of the sources and expressions of resilience for Indigenous Australian boarding school students. The authors identified specific aspects of Indigenous students' lives such as students' strong positive feelings about family, community, and culture as a strength (source) upon which the Transition Support Services could support more robust

linkages between boarding schools and families (Langham et al., 2018). In this study resilience is explained as being sourced through 'being' and 'knowing' but expressed through 'doing'. For example, a source of resilience for Indigenous students in this study is knowing that friends care about and support them and are fun to be around. An expression of their resilience would be cooperating with friends. This study highlights the importance in the responses of expressions of resilience and that when expressions of resilience are successfully repeated over time this could contribute to and strengthen sources of resilience.

Evidence of strengths-based approaches in these studies highlight the importance in developing student strengths and providing opportunities for them to experiment with and use these strengths to navigate the school systems. Equally important is allowing for multiple experiences where Indigenous students can reflect on responses to their resilient behaviours and choices and how they can either repeat the actions successfully or adapt to suit new experiences. Evidence within these programs suggest that by drawing on student strengths and empowering students, the protective and promotive factors needed to minimise risk factors common to vulnerable students can be developed. However, there is little evidence of what strengths support Indigenous student academic performance, engagement and achievement motivation at school. Resilience may seek to empower students through promoting individual student strengths that supports overall wellbeing, how can we target strengths that promote the resilient behaviours required to maintain Indigenous student wellbeing and the ability to stay afloat at school.

In this chapter, I have summarised models of resilience and the importance of resilience and wellbeing for Indigenous communities. In the next chapter, I will outline the literature on educational resilience and academic buoyancy.

## Chapter Three: Literature Review – Educational Resilience and Academic Buoyancy

The next part of the literature review provides an overview of educational resilience and the educational psychology literature pertaining to Indigenous students. Following an introduction, a brief overview of educational resilience will begin this chapter. An explanation of academic resilience and academic buoyancy will follow. This will be followed by a discussion investigating educational resilience pertaining to Indigenous students. Finally, I will share the gap in the research and the motivation for my research.

Previous resilience research has established that 'resilience' represents adaptability and coping and supports many aspects of an individual's wellbeing (Vohra et al., 2009). The term has been extended to assist us in understanding multiple areas of human experience, including psychological, emotional, physical and community resilience, to name a few. In education, recent developments have seen definitions of the term move away from associations with extreme adversities to focus more on investigating ways to reveal 'how' or' what helps to promote resilience for children. Resilience contributes to improving wellbeing and academic outcomes at school.

It is widely accepted that historical events and circumstances in Australia have significantly impacted on the health and well-being of First Nations people (Jackson et al., 2013). However, despite experiencing significant disadvantage, Indigenous people have displayed resilient traits to sustain positive outcomes, overcome challenges and adapt to change, and maintain positive levels of wellbeing. Accordingly, despite concerns for Indigenous student outcomes, there are Indigenous students who are navigating the school system, adapting and coping with everyday challenges and finding success. Identifying student strengths and resources and understanding resilience and its associated behaviours within educational contexts is vital to improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

One clear general definition of resilience in education has been stated as the ability of a young person to draw upon the strengths within themselves and around them to flexibly respond to life while remaining true to who they are and creating positive relationships with others (Wicking & Fuller, 2016). In a survey of 91,369 young Australian people asked about resilience, resilience within the school context was raised as an important issue. Wicking and Fuller (2016) suggest that understanding the meaning of resilience for young people will provide opportunities to ensure youth have a safe, healthy and fulfilling life. The survey results also revealed that as students move through their schooling resilience levels decreased, suggesting there is an increase in complexity requirements of senior schooling and hence resilient capabilities need to be developed sooner (p. 16).

This also suggests that monitoring and building resilient capacity for students is important in preparing students to transition and cope successfully through different grade levels at school. However, it is important to understand that the term 'resilience' can be closely associated as a phenomenon and

encompass a range of definitions that often are separate to the academic setting. Hence, concepts such as 'educational resilience' have surfaced alongside the term resilience in an attempt to focus more on resilience within the setting of schooling.

Investigating the science of resilience relating to the school environment through concepts within educational resilience, such as academic buoyancy and academic resilience, could help educators find ways to support resilience development in schools. The terms may also be useful for remote students' schooling as resilient responses to adversity and circumstances can vary and differ to those of mainstream Australia (Holliman & Sheehy, 2022).

It is necessary to clarify exactly what is meant by educational resilience and the terms academic resilience and academic buoyancy involving Indigenous children and how this concept differs from general resilience and wellbeing definitions.

**Educational Resilience**

There are multiple definitions of educational resilience, however as a psychoeducational term, educational resilience refers to students' ability to successfully navigate and overcome academic adversity (Holliman & Sheehy, 2022). According to Wangqiong Ye et al. (2021), definitions of educational resilience are based around two core concepts: adversity and positive adaptation. Waxman et al. (2003) suggest that the construct of educational resilience is not a fixable attribute. Instead, it is something that can be promoted by focusing on the alterable factors that can impact an individual's success in school (p. 1).

Educational resilience is related to other constructs of educational psychology such as achievement motivation (Martin & Marsh, 2006). Researchers such as Martin (2007, 2009) and Martin et al. (2021), describe motivation and engagement in the academic domain to refer to students' inclination, energy, drive, and actions to strive and achieve at school. Motivation and engagement include concepts such as learning orientation, self-regulation, self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Martin & Marsh, 2006). Where self-esteem refers to one's overall perceptions of oneself, self-concept refers to more domain specific constructs (for example academic self-concept, or verbal self-concept) (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2010). Self-concept is a useful construct for predicting and explaining human behaviour, and how behaviour is a result of positive or negative self-evaluations that motivate individuals. It is multidimensional and hierarchical in nature, comprising general academic self-concept and non-academic self-concept components (Shavelson et al., 1976). Self-esteem, on the other hand, allows individuals to cope with the basic challenges of life, in addition to feeling deserving of happiness (Craven & Bodkin-Andrews, 2008).

Attempts have been made to investigate the extent to which academic self-concept and general self-esteem predict academic achievement and educational attainment. In an investigation spanning five years, Marsh and O'Mara (2008) discovered academic self-concept was positively associated with academic achievement. As a result, authors argue that practitioners need to target specific components of self-concept and self-esteem logically related to student performance goals and intended outcomes. Thus, it is important to consider what motivates individuals to succeed at school.

Within educational resilience, student motivation and engagement are closely associated with two key concepts, academic resilience and academic buoyancy. There are slight differences in the definitions of academic resilience and academic buoyancy. Where academic resilience refers to successfully navigating major (chronic or acute) academic adversity (Martin, 2013), academic buoyancy refers to the ability to successfully navigate low level 'everyday' setbacks at school (Martin & Marsh, 2009). This concept may be useful to define resilience within the academic context, noticing that academic buoyancy relates to motivation at school and the temporary fluctuation in academic motivation (Datu & Yeun, 2018). Associations with motivation and engagement, in particular positive motivation and engagement is said to support students' academic buoyancy (Martin et al., 2021).

These constructs are often combined in research attempts to explore and explain resilience and how students cope at school. As academic buoyancy is an emerging concept that stems from a psychoeducational discipline and resilience science, the terms resilience and academic resilience will be explained in detail within this review. Throughout the later part of this thesis, however, the term academic buoyancy will refer to everyday resilience and or resilient behaviours/traits within the education setting.

### *Academic Resilience*

Academic resilience is a broadly used term associated with looking at how students cope when facing difficulties with their learning (Mornane, 2009). It can be explained as a child's ability to maintain appropriate functioning in an academic context, despite the presence of stressful events, environmental conditions or personal vulnerabilities that are known to place children at risk of academic failure (Bell, 2010). Some authors (e.g., Martin & Marsh, 2008) argue that academic resilience is the ability to sustain high levels of achievement motivation and performance despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly in school and ultimately dropping out of school. The concept, along with general resilience research, has proven to be difficult to measure.

As a result, investigations into academic resilience are limited. In fact, in an early exploration of academic resilience, Bell (2010) attempted to prove that the Kumon mathematics tutoring program enhances both academic achievement and resilience when factors that are also known to affect resilience are controlled. The results of the investigation did not support the author's hypotheses. The attempt to

measure levels of resilience proved difficult with the author stating that research into resilience needed to factor in interpretations of resilience, resilience variance across domain and time and clarification around questions including how protective factors operate to generate resilience in different areas (Bell, 2010, p. 333). The authors also concluded that although they were able to provide a summary of student's particular risks and protective factors related to educational resilience, there were some factors that they could not identify or measure.

Part of the issue in identifying and measuring academic resilience has been reducing a complex phenomenon to identifiable, measurable variables (Rudd et al., 2021). In their systematic review, the authors Rudd et al. (2021) focus on educational achievement as the measure of resilience. The studies that focused on measuring students' capacities link academic resilience to motivation, attitudes, and behaviours. Here, the review establishes that students with higher academic resilience also had higher academic self-efficacy, academic engagement, emotion regulation, self-regulation, lower levels of anxiety, social skills and the ability to set goals, to name a few.

In a similar field of research, academic resilience predicted levels of motivation. In their investigation into motivation and academic resilience, Martin and Marsh (2006) surveyed a sample of 402 Australian high school students. The authors identified five key motivational predictors of academic resilience, naming this the '5C' model. Motivational predictors include *confidence* (self-efficacy), *coordination* (planning), *control* (low anxiety), *composure*, and *commitment* (persistence). The results revealed that confidence was a significant predictor of academic resilience and can be developed by restructuring learning to maximise opportunities for success. Coordination was an important way of enhancing persistence, particularly through goal setting. The research evidence also showed how developing student control was important, lowering levels of anxiety particularly by showing students how effort and strategy are key means of improvement and accomplishment, enhanced their sense of control. Composure and drawing on strategies to maintain low levels of anxiety were important to developing academic resilience. The 5C's were later incorporated into academic buoyancy.

### *Academic Buoyancy*

The literature on academic resilience provides a view as to how resilience works for students within the school environment. Academic buoyancy extends on this concept, focussing more on the resilient traits and behaviours that are specific to the everyday ups and downs within the school day (e.g. getting bad grades or struggling with a subject). Academic buoyancy has been developed as a construct reflecting everyday academic resilience within positive psychology (Martin & Marsh, 2008). The authors define it as students' ability to successfully deal with academic setbacks and challenges that are typical of the ordinary course of school life (e.g., poor grades, competing deadlines, exams and so forth). In other words, academic buoyancy can be described as 'everyday resilience' at school (Martin & Marsh, 2008).

Academic buoyancy has focused on theorising how students cope with problems that are regarded as inevitable aspects to the ordinary course of school life, regardless of adverse situations in life like challenging socioeconomic conditions (e.g. poverty) (Datu & Yeun, 2018). Authors Martin and Marsh (2008, 2009) suggest that academic buoyancy predicts multiple factors that enhance positive engagement and outcomes with school such as academic intentions, homework, student self-esteem, class participation and school enjoyment. Previous research has shown that students with higher levels of academic buoyancy have higher levels of academic achievement motivation, self-confidence and self-concept, and improved levels of engagement supported by positive relationship development (Martin, 2013). Achievement motivation and what motivates individuals have been identified as predictors of academic buoyancy and whilst the purpose of this literature review is not to provide a comprehensive survey of all academic resilience and academic buoyancy research, it is worth noting the relationship with motivation and engagement.

In one such research investigation, Martin and Marsh (2008) investigated student academic buoyancy, involving a psychometric scoping of buoyancy in the school setting. The study involved administering the *Buoyancy Scale*, along with the *Motivation and Engagement Scale* (MES) and cognate measures, to 3450 high school students and 637 school personnel from 18 Australian schools. The study focussed on secondary students from years seven to twelve and school personnel with a mean age of approximately 43 years, working in a school for an average of approximately 16 years. The survey results revealed that buoyancy is positively associated with adaptive motivation factors such as participation and persistence and negatively associated with more maladaptive motivation factors such as self-handicapping and disengagement. Furthermore, the 5C's (see discussion on previous page) are significant predictors of academic buoyancy a year later. This was evident in another study by Martin et al. (2010***),*** who discovered that after surveying students twice, students who scored higher in the 5C's at time one were more academically buoyant a year later.

This link to motivation has also been evidenced by Bostwick et al. (2022), who recently investigated academic buoyancy as an antecedent (predictor) for student perceptions of school. Surveys of almost 72 000 secondary students from grades seven to eleven across 292 schools in New South Wales were used to investigate constructs within academic buoyancy. Bostwick et al. (2022) examined the reciprocal relationships between academic buoyancy and students' motivations and engagement, as well as between academic buoyancy and students' perceptions of school support. There was a reciprocal relationship between individual students' academic buoyancy and both their sense of school belonging and teacher support. Students' perceptions of school were linked to academic buoyancy where academically buoyant students tended to have more positive perceptions of the extent to which teachers in their school were interested in students' learning progress, and where there were school behavioural expectations and rules that helped students to learn. The authors suggest that academic buoyant students interpret school situations more positively.

A similar study approach has been investigations into the reciprocal relationships within psychoeducational research relevant to academic buoyancy. Earlier studies into the reciprocal relationships found support for a model in which each (e.g., self-concept, self-esteem) was mutually reinforcing. Martin and his colleagues (Martin et al, 2013) were able to introduce a reciprocal effects model that is widely used today (e.g., Marsh & Martin, 2011). Another study explored the relationship between academic buoyancy and psychological risk (e.g., failure avoidance, emotional instability, neuroticism, etc.) (Martin et al., 2013). The authors discovered that higher academic buoyancy predicted subsequent lower psychological risk, and higher psychological risk predicted lower subsequent academic buoyancy. Thus, in the case of psychological risk and academic buoyancy, it appears a negative reciprocal relationship exists over time.

Martin and Marsh's (2020) recent study explored the relationship between academic buoyancy and academic adversity. The longitudinal study involving 481 high school students in years seven to twelve used structural equation modelling to investigate the extent to which prior academic adversity predicted subsequent academic buoyancy beyond the effects of sociodemographic, prior achievement and auto-regression (Martin & Marsh, 2020). The authors discovered that prior academic buoyancy significantly predicted lower subsequent academic adversity, but prior academic adversity did not significantly predict higher subsequent academic buoyancy. It was also noted that students who experienced academic adversity but who were also high in academic buoyancy were less likely to experience academic adversity one year later. In this study, individuals demonstrate how academic buoyancy can be used as a buffer or a protective effect against adversity.

The literature involving resilience in education highlights how broad this concept is and therefore there is a need for resilience science to be studied within the educational setting, separate to what is affecting students outside of school. The terms academic resilience and academic buoyancy have provided a framework for educators to work from to study how students are displaying resilient behaviours/traits to cope with challenges at school. These concepts also focus on the strengths students are drawing on to help them successfully navigate the school system. More importantly these concepts consider factors of motivation, achievement and engagement, and the role resilience plays within these constructs and why students are willing to actively participate with school. Within recent research literature relating to academic resilience and academic buoyancy, it is evident that multiple factors can contribute to improving resilience for students at school. This research shows an emerging field, drawing on long understood psychological constructs of self-concept and self-esteem involving motivation and engagement. It provides the foundations for researchers to develop on, drawing out themes relevant to academic buoyancy.

**Educational Resilience for Indigenous students**

Themes relevant to academic buoyancy and or related studies involving Indigenous students have emerged within the last decade. Research into aspects of educational resilience and how Indigenous students respond to adversity using academic buoyancy as a buffer is evident. However, whilst current literature about academic resilience and academic buoyancy for Indigenous students provides an overview of educational resilience within educational contexts, there is still very little evidence that considers the perspectives of Indigenous students living in remote settings, experiencing every day 'ups and downs' at school and how they stay afloat. Educators often focus on identifying where the problems lie for Indigenous students, particularly in remote settings, yet little attention is paid to identifying where students are succeeding and why or what students draw on externally and internally to cope at school. Considering factors of Indigenous student motivation, achievement and engagement, and the role resilience plays within their learner locale and why students are willing to actively participate with school is worth investigating.

In an early research study, Pederson and Walker's (2000) study aimed to highlight some of these academically buoyant behaviours for Indigenous students. The authors used scales designed to capture differing facets (in-group preference, general self-esteem, general self-concept) that may affect schooling outcomes. Pederson and Walker's (2000) investigations reveal that only academic self-concept was found to be significantly correlated with teachers' ratings of student ability for the Indigenous students (as well as non-Indigenous students) to succeed. Furthermore, the findings implied that school issues do not greatly affect Aboriginal children's sense of self (p. 194).

Self-concept and resilience at school are areas investigated in Craven and Marsh's (2004) study. The authors investigated the academic motivation of Indigenous students and how these motivational factors strengthen their resilience at school and strengthen their abilities to attain desirable aspirations. The study examined levels of Indigenous student aspirations and the barriers Indigenous students face in achieving these. The authors discovered that Indigenous students were less likely to have aspirations or ideas about the subjects required for a career path compared to non-Indigenous students. The study also noted that more Indigenous students aspire to leave school early in comparison with non-Indigenous students. In this study Indigenous students shared the barriers preventing them from reaching their aspirations included family support, career advice, their own knowledge and their achievement.

However, despite these barriers, Craven and Marsh (2004) described what Indigenous students were doing to set and attain aspirations successfully. Craven and Marsh's (2004) investigation into the academic motivation of Indigenous students noted that successful Indigenous students were able to facilitate the achievement of their aspirations by developing several adaptive psychological tools such as the development of resiliency, high academic self-concept, and a determination to succeed. In-depth interviews with Indigenous students revealed that although barriers to success exist, such as a lack of

family support, students were finding success by negotiating these barriers. Similar to academic buoyancy, behaviours noted here included a mastery orientation to learning, more protective factors helping them to cope with setbacks in school, a good sense of self-awareness, effective communication skills, the ability to describe goal achievement strategies (Craven & Marsh, 2004).

Results from similar investigations suggest that academic self-concept predicted more positive levels of school aspirations to finish year 12, future goals for post-secondary schooling, school enjoyment and academic ability, in addition to lower levels of absenteeism for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (Craven & Marsh, 2005; Purdie, 2005). A series of studies discovered that across 12 different dimensions of self-concept, academic self-concept was the most consistent variable in holding strong relations with the more generalised schooling outcomes of school enjoyment, school aspirations and lowered levels of absenteeism (Bodkin Andrews et al., 2005).

Academic self-concept and the motivational factors that contribute to self-concept have emerged as a predictor to academic buoyancy in the field of motivation psychology (Martin, 2006). Exploring an integrative framework for the education of Indigenous students, Martin's (2006) framework highlights the importance of addressing factors (to name a few) relevant to following in improving achievement outcomes for Indigenous students at school: the 'self' (e.g., the 5C's confidence construct; self-concept, self-efficacy, self-esteem), cognitive and affective factors (those that facilitate motivation and engagement e.g., positive peer influence, quality pedagogy, role modelling, family support), failure dynamics (e.g., fear of failure and shame), socialisation (e.g., support of family) and the role of significant others and their contexts (e.g., peers, effective teachers, good relationships, pastoral pedagogy).

As evidenced in a similar study, self-concept can be dependent on self-esteem as it can influence levels of resilience that can contribute to school outcomes (Craven & Bodkin-Andrews, 2008). In this study, a variety of structural equation modelling techniques were used to investigate the potential impact of Indigenous student self-esteem and perceptions of racial discrimination on educational outcomes. Questionnaires administered to 342 Indigenous secondary students investigated the impact on student performance in spelling and maths. Results revealed disparities in performance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, most evident within the secondary schooling system. There is some preliminary evidence that discrimination does not affect self-esteem. However, discrimination seems to lessen the strength of relation between academic confidence and overall self-esteem by potentially making academic self-confidence less important to one's overall self-perceptions, highlighting failure avoidance behaviours (Craven & Bodkin-Andrews, 2008).

Self-concept has also been investigated to include specific areas where Indigenous students display higher and lower levels of self-concept. For example, investigating the impact of psychological constructs on education outcomes for Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) students, Bodkin-Andrews et al.

(2010), discovered that when compared with non-Indigenous students, Indigenous students held significantly higher levels of general, appearance, physical, and art self-concepts. However, in areas of math, school, verbal, honesty, emotional, and opposite- and same-sex relations, Indigenous students' self-concept was lower compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts. The concepts of self-esteem and self-concept are considered important constructs for Indigenous Australian students (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2010).

Although Martin (2006) discovered a number of factors that facilitate Indigenous students' achievement and engagement including positive peer influence, prior studies have noted the negative influence of peers on developing self-concept at school for Indigenous students. Collins (1993) noted that successful Aboriginal children at school are often heckled by their cousins and may be held back by their under-achieving peers out of a sense of loyalty (as cited in House of Representatives Committee on Aboriginal Education, 1985, p 43). Purdie et al. (2000) also noted that some students appeared to experience another threat to their identities that also came from within their Indigenous peer group. This negative peer influence was related to the reported rejection by some Indigenous students of their peers who were too "white", either in appearance or in the visible signs of how they lived at home (for example relatively affluent, educated parents), or because of the high academic aspirations they held (p. 20). Martin et al. (2013) discovered other constructs of academic buoyancy important to Indigenous students in another study that explored the effect of academic adversity on the motivational processes that allow for adaptive behaviours in schooling. This study involved surveying 350 Indigenous students and 592 non-Indigenous students in years seven to twelve in an Australian high school. The authors discovered that Indigenous students displaying academically buoyant behaviours can more effectively deal with academic adversity and are therefore likely to maintain positive educational plans and intention. Although research relative to Indigenous students and Indigenous students is limited, this particular study investigated academic buoyancy as a predictor of educational intentions (aspirations) for Indigenous students.

Another study by the same group of authors touches on Aboriginal students' academic buoyancy in the context of various motivation, engagement, and achievement factors. Martin et al. (2013) explored various factors that can lead to student disengagement in light of *Socio-economic Status (SES)*. Using the *Motivation and Engagement Scale-High School (MES-HS),* the authors surveyed 985 Indigenous and 985 non-Indigenous students in years seven to twelve across Australian schools. Factors explored were adaptive motivation (self-efficacy, valuing school, mastery orientation, planning, task management, persistence), maladaptive motivation (anxiety, failure avoidance, uncertain control, self-handicapping, disengagement), additional engagement measures (class participation, school enjoyment, positive intentions), academic buoyancy, and academic achievement (literacy and numeracy). The authors discovered that Indigenous students were similar to non-Indigenous students on many positive factors, however Indigenous students scored higher on negative factors affecting motivation,

engagement and achievement (anxiety, failure avoidance, uncertain control, self-handicapping and disengagement).

There is a small handful of studies that use questionnaires to investigate Indigenous students' academic buoyancy, particularly in comparison to non-Indigenous students. Studies conducted by Martin et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2021) explored the motivation, engagement, academically buoyant and achievement factors involving Indigenous students in comparison to non-Indigenous students. Martin et al. (2021) further explored how this predicted academic achievement. Both studies used the *Motivation and Engagement Scale – High School (MES-HS)* to compare non-Indigenous and Indigenous students aged from years seven to twelve across Australian schools. Both studies summarised that there was significantly lower mean levels of motivation and engagement amongst Indigenous students. Martin et al. (2013) discovered that although Indigenous students were similar to non-Indigenous students on most positive motivation and engagement factors (e.g., valuing of school, mastery orientation, planning, task management, persistence, academic buoyancy, goal setting, positive intention), they were higher on negative factors (e.g., anxiety, failure avoidance, uncertain control, self-handicapping and disengagement. Martin et al. (2021) revealed that positive motivation and engagement factors, as mentioned in Martin et al. (2013), predicted academic outcomes to a significantly greater extent than negative motivation and engagement factors.

The most recent study led by Martin explores key factors involved with psychoeducational constructs in overcoming adversity. Here, the study investigates how three factors, educational resilience (academic resilience, academic buoyancy), motivation and engagement, and teacher-student relationships, may support Indigenous students to navigate adversity at school (Martin et al., 2021). The authors highlight the importance in acknowledging the major systemic and structural barriers that Indigenous students experience at school to better develop student academic resilient capacity. The authors also highlight the importance of identifying resilient behaviours and traits that predict positive academic intentions to better build student abilities to be academically buoyant at school. The importance of developing teacher capacity in developing positive relationships with Indigenous students is also highlighted as a key factor the authors suggest could best support Indigenous students in overcoming academic adversity.

A similar study explored the relative salience of academic buoyancy in predicting educational intentions for Aboriginal students (Martin et al., 2013). This study added extra factors, revealing that personal, family and other contextual factors impact and explain motivation and engagement for Indigenous students. The *Academic Buoyancy Scale (ABS)* was used to explore educational intentions of 350 Aboriginal and 592 non-Indigenous students in years seven to twelve from across Australian schools. The results of this study suggest that Aboriginal status and academic buoyancy on education intentions held less positive educational intention and that academic buoyancy was associated with more positive

educational intentions. This study also revealed that as Aboriginal students progress through to senior schooling, Aboriginal status negatively predicts educational intentions, and that academic buoyancy predicts their educational intentions more so than it predicts the intentions of non-Aboriginal students. Here, Martin et al. (2013) highlight the importance in developing academic buoyancy for Indigenous students before they reach senior level schooling.

Indigenous student educational intentions have also been investigated in the context of school subject areas. Recent ongoing research led by the Department of Social Services is investigating the predictive factors positively associated with Indigenous children's Mathematics and Reading self-concept (Prehn et al., 2020). The longitudinal study involves a sample of 1670 Australian Indigenous children aged nine and a half to eleven years over that have been studied since 2008. The results of the study have linked higher academic self-concept to external affirmation (teachers, peer, parents and elders).

Some recent research from outside of educational psychology literature may help us to better understand how students' expressions of resilience can deepen our using of the construct. A study within the tertiary context suggests that academically successful Indigenous Tertiary students are those who enact their resistance internally or externally in response to the oppressive agendas and curricula (Pechenkina, 2017). Touching on the idea of transformational resistance, Pechenkina (2017) explains how Indigenous students are motivated to succeed. Motivating factors are listed as internal resistance where students are motivated by social injustice to become academically successful by behaving within the expectations of the Western Higher education system. External resistance is explained as challenging these injustices by acting out their protests physically like in boycotts or walkouts (Pechenkina, 2017).

Investigations into the motivation and engagement of Indigenous students reveal that multiple factors including self-esteem, self-concept and forms of resistance contribute to building resilience for Indigenous students. Where previous research has measured levels of academic resilience, with limited research on what academic buoyancy means for Indigenous students, understanding these as the contributing factors to building resilience for Indigenous students is important. It is important to work from these ideas, framed within positive psychology, into motivation (self-concept and self-esteem), engagement and resilience (academic buoyancy) and what motivates Indigenous students to be successful at school. However, whilst these studies track Indigenous students' current status, there is little investigation of Indigenous students' behaviours or how they experience challenges – the everyday ups and downs. There is also little exploration of how Indigenous students grow and adapt to negotiate the everyday ups and downs successfully.

**Gap in the Research**

A major gap in the literature is that the research to date offers a limited view of what resilience means for Indigenous students because it has not been defined nor measured based on student experience.

Indigenous students have the same right and need for success in schooling as all other students. The psychoeducational literature may provide some useful insights, given the relationship between academic buoyancy, motivation, and engagement and learning outcomes. The sociological literature, such as Pechenkina's (2017) study, highlights that resilience can be expressed in a range of ways.

This study considers that students have the capacity for academic buoyancy within themselves, but in ways that might be expressed differently to the standard academic literature. The literature on Indigenous strengths suggests that Indigenous people draw on strengths that can be holistic in nature and for Indigenous students is relative to learner locale. Similarly, in the particular locale of the remote Indigenous learner with its particularities, there is also potential for academic buoyancy to be expressed differently. The literature to date has relied heavily on standardised survey instruments, with the Indigenous students in question rarely given the opportunity to describe what it means to be academically buoyant – to stick it out in their schooling. This insight would allow us to think about the role of the system, rather than just the individual traits in supporting Indigenous students in the context of learning.

The literature on Indigenous strengths (see *Targeting Indigenous Strengths*) suggests that Indigenous people often draw on a variety of factors when thinking about what keeps them well, including individual strengths in culture, country, and life specific to Indigenous people. The same may be the case for academic buoyancy. The current academic and educational understandings of resilience as a trait may not consider the realities of Indigenous student experiences, including differences in location, contexts, or historical factors. Furthermore, Indigenous students' experiences of resilience are varied, individual, and may not be captured by standard measurements of resilience. Some factors may be beyond their control, or reflect environmental change (e.g. the change from primary to secondary school). These variations and limited research make it hard to say exactly what resilient behaviour is.

Currently, models of resilience and positive psychology highlight predictors for resilience, particularly through motivation and engagement and working towards improving self-efficacy and self-concept (protective and promotive factors). The educational psychology literature looks at resilience as an individual trait, but education could look at it as resilient behaviours within systems. What are the systems that could involve assets and resources that students use to navigate the school environment?

The project extends on research into programs that have sought to promote resilience for Indigenous students through strengths-based programs and the literature involving resilience science. It investigates how Indigenous secondary students experience and define academic buoyancy relative to their lived experiences within their own community based in a remote location.

The research project investigates how Indigenous secondary students in one remote school define and experience academic buoyancy. This research asks:

- How is academic buoyancy defined and experienced by Indigenous Secondary students attending school in a remote setting?
- What factors contribute to academic buoyancy for Indigenous secondary students – how do they stay afloat at school?

# Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter explains the methods applied to this thesis and outlines the underpinning theories and approaches, the Cultural Interface and Indigenous Standpoint Theory, used in this project. First, I will revisit Indigenous research, highlighting the importance of approaching this research project respectfully. I will then describe the interpretivist design as an approach to the research. Following, I will explain Indigenous Standpoint Theory and how I will interpret the research from my experience as an Indigenous 'knower' and how I will use this approach as an Indigenous researcher to highlight how Indigenous secondary students from a remote setting are experiencing and defining academic buoyancy. I will then explain in detail the Cultural Interface Theory (Nakata, 2002; 2007) and its importance to my research. Next, I will explain the interview design involving Indigenous secondary students from a remote school. I will discuss the methods involved in the production of data for this research project. Finally, I will outline the approach to the analysis of data.

## Indigenous Research

I understand that the history of Indigenous research was once conducted without permission, consultation, or involvement of Aboriginal people (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003, p. 203). Furthermore, I am aware that the research enterprise was once not only a vehicle for investigation that poked, prodded, measured, tested, and compared data toward understanding Indigenous cultures and human natures but past research declared Indigenous peoples as inferior which led to the ongoing and devastating oppression, persecution, and discrimination of Indigenous people in Australia (Rigney, 1999, p. 109-110). Therefore, careful considerations were applied to the ethical processes and approaches involved in interviewing this vulnerable group—Indigenous secondary students. This research ensured that permissions were obtained respectfully, and the intention of the research communicated in various forms (verbal and written).

## Interpretivist Design

In aiding the qualitative research approach and to ensure Indigenous voice was collected and distributed in a way that will benefit Indigenous people, I approached this research topic following an Interpretivist Design, using Indigenous Standpoint Theory.

Interpretivist design has origins in the field of social sciences, in particular psychology, as it aims to understand human behaviour, capturing the actual meanings and interpretations that actors subjectively ascribe to phenomena to describe and explain their behaviour (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 132). In this study, an interpretivist approach was used to understand how Indigenous students define and experience academic buoyancy, through group interviews with the students. An interpretive design provided a lens into a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of academic buoyancy. To support the interpretivist

approach to this study, in-depth group interviews were involved to portray 'real life' descriptions (Creswell, 2004) of how Indigenous students in a remote setting structure their world to stay afloat at school. The ultimate purpose of the interpretivist research approach in this study was not to confirm or disconfirm prior theories, ''but to develop 'bottom-up' interpretive theories that are inextricably 'grounded' in the lived-world'' (Cope, 2005, p. 171) of Indigenous secondary students attending school in a remote setting. In this case, the phenomenon to be explored was how Indigenous secondary students experienced academic buoyancy at school.

**Indigenous Standpoint Theory**

Indigenous standpoint has often been used as a method in qualitative research by marginalised groups where social relations have been dominant, and the voices of these groups are often lacking (Luckett, 2012). It is a distinct form of analysis that draws on personal experiences and uses this to add to a critical analysis of how this concept is already interpreted by others (Nakata, 2007). In research method, personal experiences are shared by a 'knower'. The term 'knower' originates from the term 'knower code' where any knowledge claims that are justified based on the possession of specialised dispositions, attributes, and social location, a 'knower code' is assumed (Luckett, 2012). In this case, I represent the marginalised group and can be considered a 'specialised knower' who has a specialised voice, attributes, and personal insights.

My role as a researcher in this investigation stems from my position as an Indigenous person; a 'knower' as I have had similar experiences in my educational journey. My position as a 'knower' firstly stems from my experience as a student who has experienced remote Indigenous schooling. Secondly, my position as a 'knower' comes from my experience as an Indigenous teacher working in a remote Indigenous context, and how I have been able to draw on my own strengths to overcome challenges throughout my secondary and tertiary education experiences. I believe my understanding of the context of remote schooling and experiences enhances my awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to many of the experiences of secondary Indigenous students in this study.

Thus, Indigenous Standpoint Theory is used as both a discursive construction, and an intellectual device to persuade and elevate what might not have been a focus of attention by others (Nakata, 2007). The investigation into the resilience of Indigenous secondary students from a remote community and what factors promote resilient behaviours at school is highlighted from an Indigenous standpoint to inform and contribute to the interpretations of the current literature.

The combination of this theory and design allowed for my experience as a 'knower' to add to the phenomena of academic resilience for Indigenous secondary students. As Williams (2008) explains, knowledge is determined by some combination or melding of the phenomena to be known and the knower (p. 74). Indigenous Standpoint was relevant in this case as the research focus is on experience

as described from a first-person view, where I sought to apprehend a pattern, as it emerged relating to my own experience as an Indigenous person (Thompson et al., 1989, p. 137).

The intention of the project was to see how students make sense of resilience. Interpretivist design allowed me to reflect on my own understanding of the experiences of students, making it possible to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyse and interpret results that exist within the field of student academic resilience (Cohan & Morrison, 2007). An interpretivist design also allowed me to investigate why students do things to understand what they do and how meanings are attached (Marvasti, 2003). My position as a knower allowed me to effectively connect with, interpret and make available expressions from Indigenous students. Through this approach, I was able to draw on Indigenous student experiences of resilience, communicate these to others and contribute to the literature involving academic buoyancy for Indigenous students.

There were limitations to this approach, however. Given my position and my experience of working closely with Indigenous students there was a risk of certain biases influencing this study. Although every effort was made to ensure objectivity, these biases may have shaped the way I viewed and understood the data collected and the way I interpreted my experiences (Creswell, 2004). I outline my attempts to address any concerns with bias or influence in the research design and the processes involved in data collection in the method below.

**Cultural Interface Theory**

The literature review has provided a broad overview of the notion of resilience for Indigenous students including ideas of working from areas of strengths to promote or foster resilient behaviours. However, the research behind the science of resilience has been strongly influenced by Western ideologies or assumptions. This is evident in the absence of the experiences of Indigenous students or peoples and any contributions made to definitions of resilience from an Indigenous perspective. There is a long history of Western ideas being applied to try to 'understand' Indigenous people from the outside, often in ways that do not serve Indigenous interests. Nakata's (2002; 2007) Cultural Interface theory describes this influential knowledge space as the 'corpus'.

The corpus of knowledge stems from the Cultural Interface Theory (Nakata, 2002). The Cultural Interface Theory describes the intersection of the Western and Indigenous knowledge domains. Nakata (2002) suggests that the Cultural Interface is an alternative way of thinking about Indigenous and Western domains. Within the Cultural Interface, the corpus is defined as 'that body of knowledge, both historical and ongoing, that is produced by others "about us" across a range of intellectual, government, and other historical texts' (Nakata, 2007, p. 7). For this research topic, the corpus, as interpreted within the Cultural Interface framework, can be understood as the collection of written work and knowledge produced about resilience and Indigenous people from the outside. As Nakata (2007) explains, in this

intellectual discourse, translation has already occurred and Indigenous knowledge is re-presented and re-configured as part of the corpus "about" Indigenous people; and is already discursively bounded, ordered and organised by others and their sets of interests (p. 9). Nakata (2007) argues that there is much that can be recruited from Western science to assist Indigenous learners, but that the locale of these learners needs to be better understood.

These perspectives are unfamiliar with the lived experiences of the people concerned, in this case, Indigenous peoples and their experiences of resilience. This becomes a space where conflict exists as the lack of representation of Indigenous peoples' perspectives and their histories within the corpus creates a space of conflict; the 'contested space' (Nakata, 2002). I understand this contested space is a result of multiple pathways of information that exist for definitions of resilience involving Indigenous people. Resilience definitions lie embedded within rich literature texts that extend from multiple domains, each with their own historically significant interpretations based on the experience of the author. Interpretations of resilience have created this contested space where interest groups may choose to accept this knowledge, but Indigenous groups can choose to challenge it.

This is especially important within the school system where the contested space further challenges where students are at and where they position themselves as learners, their *locale*. Also stemming from the Cultural Interface theory, the locale of the learner places students in a space and place where they live and learn; the space and place that conditions their lives, shapes their futures; the space and place where they make decisions – their lifeworld (Nakata, 2002). Indigenous students enter school with their own knowledge systems, influenced by multiple factors: historical, cultural, and spiritual, to name a few. Their locale as a learner is directly affected by the contested space the corpus creates as students are introduced to knowledge systems embedded within Western domains, which Indigenous students need to accept and adjust to when at school. This is especially significant when the history of resilience literature has the power to define resilience for Indigenous students and thus support systems, policy and practices are misinformed, further adding to the poor outcomes for education for our remote Indigenous students.

Thus, the use of interviews was used to support the research design, providing a platform for student voice privileges to occur, further adding to opportunities for students to speak of 'their' experiences within the academic context (Gubrium et al., 2012). Simultaneously, as Mishler (1986) recommends, research interviews can be used as a tool to "empower" respondents to tell their *own* stories, in this case, empowering students to speak of the positive experiences that define their own stories of resilience at school. The use of interviews within this research also provided an opportunity for the subject behind the respondent not only to retain the details of his or her inner life and social world but, in the very process of offering them up to the interviewer, stories the information, assembling it into a coherent account (Linde, 1993, p. 33, as cited in Gubrium et al., 2012).

The use of combined methodologies to investigate resilience amongst Indigenous secondary students was required to successfully challenge the contested space embedded within the literature to work in the space between Western and Indigenous resilience. In doing so, this research attempt approached sensitive topics. Therefore, it was important that the design and theory provided opportunities that are inclusive of Indigenous knowledges and beneficial to improving outcomes for Indigenous students.

## The Research Site

This research took place in one P-12 school in Far North Queensland. In this community, most of the population are employed in the resource sector. At the school, there are 1059 students enrolled with 58% of students identifying as Indigenous (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2023). The school has an *Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage* (ICSEA)[1] of 859. Compared to schools with a similar rating, *National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) results recorded for this school indicate that an average of 35% of students are making above average progress in areas of writing, numeracy and reading (ACARA, 2023). The school services multiple remote Indigenous communities. The school also hosts a residential college with students travelling here from as far as the Torres Strait, a very remote area off the tip of Cape York Peninsula in Far North Queensland. Boarding students attend for the school term and travel home for holidays.

### *My role in the research*

As a primary school teacher, I have taught in the school community where this research took place for 11 years. As a teacher working at the primary campus, I have no direct contact with the secondary students, however I am a known person in the community of the research site. I have previously taught some of the students who are now at the secondary school, and as such, it was a risk that the students and/or their guardians may feel obliged to consent to participate.

My position in the community as a respected Indigenous teacher both enabled trust and connections with the students and families who were my potential participants, and also raises ethical implications. Although there was no immediate dependent relationship between myself and the students who took part in this research, I am aware that there may be the perception of coercion.

---

[1] ICSEA is an indexation of socio-economic advantage, whereby 1000 represents the median.

I took several steps to mitigate the power differences between myself and students, and to ensure that whilst I impact the production of data, my interpretation of the data contained checks and balances to ensure validity. These included:

- Using group rather than individual interviews
- Using school information and engagement processes, and an open invitation, to invite students to participate in the project, rather than approaching students individually or relying on the teaching staff to assist with recruitment
- An information session to explain research participation and what is meant by voluntary, as well as freedom to withdraw. This session will also allow me to articulate and discuss important points from the information sheet.
- Use of a JCU letterhead for the information sheet and consent form, clearly showing that the project is not part of the school, and therefore reducing any perception of compulsion to participate.
- Explicitly stating in the information sheet to participants and guardians that it is their choice to participate or not.
- Informing students that what they discuss in the interviews will have no impact on their grades or their school studies.
- Interviews taking place in a public and glass-walled part of the school. Clear and consistent use of follow-up and clarification questions in the group interviews to ensure that students have the opportunity to expand and clarify responses.
- Cross-referencing of the responses given to the three activities to ensure consistency of participants' answers.
- During the analysis stage, asking a supervisor to look at the data independently to myself, and to compare coding and interpretation of the data.

My interview questions, activities and follow-up prompts were designed to encourage students to answer from their experience and in their own words, rather than what they think I might want to hear. Participants were informed that their responses would be de-identified and that identifiable raw data will not be shared with current or possible future teachers.

### *Ethics and Process for Disclosure*

Extensive planning, thought and considerations were required to be able to carry out this research with two recognised vulnerable groups – Indigenous people and under 18-year-olds. The first steps involved completing both an Aboriginal Ethics Research Application through the James Cook University (JCU) and the Queensland Education Research Inventory (QERI). From these applications, various steps were taken to ensure the correct processes for disclosure were provided.

This application required information on how I was going to address the six core values lived in researching Indigenous peoples: spirit and integrity, cultural continuity, equity, reciprocity, respect and responsibility. The QERI process required detailed information on the research approach itself including a summary and purpose of the research, details of the methods and interview process, how the research aligned with the department's research priorities, the benefits of and how the data would be distributed. Within the QERI application, the principal is referred to as the Gatekeeper. Once consent was given by QERI to proceed with the research, I was able to approach the Gatekeeper of the school about the project.

Through this application process various information and consent forms were created and reviewed by panel members to ensure all participants, including the Gatekeeper of the school, knew what the research involved, their rights as voluntary participants and the actions taken to ensure participant confidentiality in distributing the data that emerged.

This research received ethics through both the JCU Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A) and the Education Queensland QERI (see Appendix B).

### *Recruitment*

The recruitment process considered not only how my standpoint may influence students and their responses but how it may influence my interpretations of the data. I needed to consider other factors such as the history involved in researching Indigenous people, particularly in approaching and recruiting Indigenous students for this research project. The recruitment of school students, therefore, was open to any Indigenous student from the identified site between the ages of 14 to 18 who chose to participate. Participant numbers was capped at a maximum of 25 students. In the end, the total number of participants was 11. This sample size proved to be enough to reach theoretical saturation as participants began to discuss similar themes relating to academic buoyancy and there was no real new data emerging. Some have suggested that qualitative samples that are too large can waste research funds, burden the study population and lead to unused data (Hennink et al., 2017). Furthermore, the size of the group was not too small to avoid not fully capturing phenomena, reducing the validity of findings, and wasting resources that build interventions on those findings (Hennink et al., 2017).

I advertised through the school platform and used the school communication process to ensure families were given every possible opportunity to be informed of my research intent. My research advertisements also involved using the school social media site and posters around community, including a picture of myself. These methods were used to gauge interest, inform families of the project, and invite their children to be participants in the research project. As a teacher in the community where the research was conducted, most secondary students and families knew who I was and the role I have represented at this school over the last 10 years. Most secondary staff were informed of the project at a staff meeting, as

interruptions to the school routine would arise. Staff played a pivotal role in advertising the research to students, answering questions about the research process and helping to organise groups and timetables.

An open recruitment process provided a cross selection of students from the main town, from the neighbouring Indigenous communities and from the residential campus. However careful consideration needed to be given to the overall sample size as disruptions to the school day needed to be minimised. To assist in capping the sample size at 25, and keeping in mind that the investigation sought to identify the strengths of students finding success at school, the selection of participants from the pool of students who self-selected was left to the discretion of the student services teacher, who was able to identify which students were positively engaged at school, according to attendance and engagement (academically, socially).

I then contacted the parents of this short list over email to seek consent. Where clarification was needed, phone calls home occurred to verbally explain information regarding the project and to seek parent permission. Parents were required to formally consent to their child's participation before I discussed the project involvement with participants.

Following permissions, participants were provided with an opportunity to discuss the research process in depth with me before signing their consent to participate. Eleven participants between the ages of 14 and 17 were interviewed in total. Students in this age range were selected as they had more years of school experience and would be better able to articulate their experiences of academic buoyancy than younger students. This also meant that the project remained separate to my everyday work in the Primary school. Two males and nine females were interviewed and students from similar locations (i.e. the main town or the nearby Indigenous community) were placed in groups together. The participants are a mixed range of students, one student resides at the residential college, four students live in the nearby Indigenous community and six students live in the main town. Participants were not given pseudonyms as it was hard to select names that did not conflict with any sorry business protocols (McGrath & Phillips, 2008). Instead, they are presented anonymously in the data. Teachers were given pseudonyms.

### *Data Collection*

To learn more about expressions of academic buoyancy, I needed to construct a data set that was specific to how students are displaying resilience within the school setting. As the participants in my study are both Indigenous and children, as well as discussing potentially sensitive topics, it was important to use an approach that allowed them to feel comfortable and open. As a result, the method of data collection involved in depth, informal, semi-structured (controlled) open-ended group interviews. Throughout the interview process there was an imbalance of male and female participants. Participant age was used as a grouping preference due to timetabling and school organisation. Where there were male and female participants combined participants were asked if they were comfortable to proceed.

The use of informal, open-ended questions and structure was considered age-appropriate and allowed for the use of context-appropriate language that followed the train of thought, rather than techniques used in highly structured interviews (Swain et al., 1998, p. 28). This approach also allowed for questions and follow up (probing) questions to be organised and considered in advance. Following this approach allowed me to ask the same basic questions in each group, increasing comparability of responses and reducing my effect and bias as an interviewer (Cohen et al., 2011). The semi-structured approach also allowed for flexibility and opportunities to probe when needed, to go into more depth or to clear up any misunderstandings that occurred (Cohen et al., 2011). The method of an in-depth approach supported the qualitative narrative where participants were given a voice, recounting their subjective experiences and feelings relative to academic buoyancy (Swain et al., 1998).

The interviews were conducted within small groups of up to four. This approach encouraged interactions between the group rather than simply a response to an adult's question (Greig & Taylor, 1999, p. 132). Additionally, the group approach allowed students to encourage each other and participate using language and actions that they themselves use (Cohen et al., 2011). This was particularly important for Indigenous students who may have needed to hear others talk about a topic to be able to formulate their own ideas and express these comfortably within the group, using their own language (an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander dialect). The group interviews also generated a wider range of responses as discussions were developed (Bogden & Biklen, 1992) and enabled me to reduce the volume of data obtained to focus on particular data of interest.

A semi-structured approach was taken, whilst still giving space for spontaneity, as the interview pressed not only for complete answers but for responses about complex and deep issues (resilience) (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 677). Due to the nature of the research topic, and the sensitivities involved with resilience as a phenomenon, a certain level of control was needed to keep the focus of conversations within the experiences of school life. This ensured discussions about academic resilience could emerge (Stylianou, 2008).

The interviews consisted of three activities: a projection technique, writing a letter to a new Year seven Indigenous student starting school and asking questions directly related to the research. The projection technique involved showing participants a stimulus picture (see Appendix C) and asking students to reflect on feelings of resilience at school (see Table 2), instead of asking direct questions. This activity was undertaken first to warm students up and to build rapport within the group. This was followed by participants writing a letter to a new fictional Year Seven Indigenous student starting school (see Table 3). Finally, Table 4 details the questions directly related to the research. Each table also includes examples of the follow up prompt questions required to help participants understand more of the task at hand.

**Table 2**

*Activity 1 – Projection Technique*

| Stimulus picture questions | Follow up prompt questions |
|---|---|
| How do students relate to resilience in the school setting?<br>What barriers do students identify with at school?<br>How do students respond to and view barriers to resilient behaviours? | How do these pictures represent/show your school journey?<br>Which picture/pictures do you feel are about your school journey?<br>Do you see or feel a sense of strength/stress with these pictures?<br>If so, can you explain to me the feelings involved/associated with the picture/pictures? |

**Table 3**

*Activity 2 – Reflection Letter to an Indigenous Year 7 Student*

| Student letter questions | Follow up prompt questions |
|---|---|
| Indigenous student entering secondary school.<br>What do students say about resilience at school?<br>What do students do to be resilient at school? | What would you say being successful at school looks like for you or another student? How do you know?<br>What qualities do you think a student needs to be successful at school?<br>What advice would you give to someone to be successful at school? |

**Table 4**

*Activity 3 - Research Interview Questions*

| |
|---|
| What does it mean to be resilient at school? |
| What do you do when the going gets tough for you at school or when things don't go your way? |
| What does it look like when you are resilient at school? How do you know? |
| What/Who helps you to be resilient at school? |
| What is it within you that helps you get going? |
| What are you good at? How do you know? |
| How do you know you are successful at school? |
| What helps you find success? |
| What did you tell yourself to stick with it? |
| Why did you stick with it? |

Why didn't you just give up?

How did you feel after you overcome a challenge?

What would you do now if this occurs again?

Data was collected in weeks nine and ten of Term Four, 2021. As the interview involved students, the interviews took place in an environment as close to the natural surrounding as possible (Greig & Taylor, 1999). Therefore, due to discussions involving student academic buoyancy, a classroom setting on school grounds was used as the suited environment for the interviews. While some literature suggests that interviews should be no longer than 15 minutes (Cohen et al., 2011), I chose to allocate a 20–30-minute timeframe to the interviews to include time for yarning, setting the scene and to include transition time. A recent research method used with Indigenous people, yarning is considered a culturally safe way to engage with participants to explore research questions (Kennedy et al., 2022). Interviews were audio taped as this approach has been proven to be unobtrusive (Cohen et al., 2011), and notes were also taken to support this process, particularly when Indigenous people are known to express meaning non-verbally and using body language (Grote et al., 2014). Notes helped me to recall observations of student behaviour that arose during the discussions that could not be recorded. As the interviews involved children/young adults, I needed to be considerate of and plan for multiple factors when interviewing the participants. I needed to consider that even though participants in this study were considered to be young adults, they were still developing cognitively and in areas involving attention and concentration, ability to recall, life experiences, what they consider to be important and their interpretations of status and power (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 116). Cohen et al. (2001) suggest establishing trust with younger participants before interviewing. In this situation I had developed trust with most of the students through my teaching experience at the school, which helped to establish rapport before the process began. This relationship also reminded me of my position as a teacher, who taught some of the participants in the past, and how I may influence a power status dynamic within the interviews (Eder & Fingerson, 2003). As a result, I needed to ensure participants were encouraged to reveal what they really think and feel rather than what they think the researcher/teacher wanted to hear (Cohen et al., 2011). Additionally, I needed to place myself in a position that gets me beyond the institutional, head teacher's or other 'expected' response (Cohen et al., 2011) and focus on what student responses were. I did this by using a common language (Aboriginal English), including body language and humour to communicate with students, helping to break the teacher student barrier and to help students relax enough to speak freely and openly.

It was important that the interviews began with icebreaker conversations or yarning, then moved on to discussions of the whole process of the interview including the actions I may need to perform such as taking notes and recording and seeking final consent to participate. In doing so, I created and maintained a relaxed, comfortable environment, limiting the possibility of influencing student responses to my

investigation questions through my position as an Indigenous teacher. I was careful in my prompts, ensuring I used those prepared before the interview (see Table 3).

Another consideration was the occurrence of participants feeling exposed and vulnerable in front of their friends (Cohen et al., 2011). I ensured the groups were organised so that students were placed together based on similar ages and gender to help ease any of these feelings. Additionally, I needed to consider how to redirect participants that tend to dominate the interview or aren't participating and aim to always keep the interview relevant (Cohen et al., 2011). This included interview strategies such as rephrasing or placing back onto the students' experience to overcome this (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 376). For example, I needed to ask, "If you were going to give some advice to another student on how to be resilient, what would you say?" or "How do you know that someone has demonstrated resilient behaviour?" Finally, as the research aimed to investigate student strengths and challenges, a topic considered sensitive, and the fact that student behaviours can be unpredictable, I needed to be aware of participants becoming too focused on particular features or situations, particularly resilience as a phenomenon and what this can involve outside of the school environment.

### *Dialect in the Transcription*

Students were encouraged to use their own language (Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander dialect) during the interviews. Student quotes are not modified in any way and are written as students spoke. Interpretive meanings are placed in brackets after the dialect to clarify meaning. Additionally, non-verbal communication codes are also included within the transcription. Words such as 'um' and 'ah' have been omitted from the dialect to increase readability.

### *Analysis of Results*

To highlight the themes the interviews were transcribed into conversations, using the software program 'Otter.ai'. Once the transcripts were uploaded into 'Otter ai' and to ensure data validity, I then needed to re-read and edit the transcripts as sometimes the interpretations were different, especially where participants were talking in their own dialect. This was the most useful software package to use as it provided accurate accounts of the various participant voices in and amongst the group interview setting. Although participants were speaking in their own language, the software program allowed me to replay the interviews to interpret, omit unnecessary words (um, ah), clarify and correct transcriptions where needed.

Once data responses had been collected, I conducted a thematic analysis of interview data to highlight underlying themes in the students' discussions of resilience. Thematic analysis itself is a method of "identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" and is well suited to the wide

variety of research questions that is included in my methods (Castleberry & Nolan, 2018). Throughout this process I was looking for themes relating to the locale of the learner at the cultural interface and also any resilient themes such as the protective factors, the assets and resources, participants were drawing on and navigating to at school. Thematic analysis allowed for the cultural and contextual descriptions of student experiences of academic resilience to be drawn out and interpretations to be highlighted and transcribed into various subheadings (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). This form of qualitative data collection also allowed me to apply personal experience, associated with the cultural interface and the locale of the learner, to identify the themes and patterns evident. This approach further provided a critical lens to the analysis when highlighting the predictors of academic buoyancy.

I then used the coding software program *'NVIVO'* to code the transcriptions into themes relevant to how Indigenous students defined and experienced academic buoyancy at school. This data was used to make comparisons with the current literature available. The use of different data sources highlights the relationships between engagement, motivation, protective and promotive factors and academic achievement. The codes were sorted into categories and then these categories were used to develop the themes relative to academic buoyancy for participants in the study.

Three major themes were developed: the challenges participants experienced, the motivating factors in helping participants overcome these challenges and the contributing factors to supporting participant academic buoyancy. These themes were then organised into a series of four chapters, each relating to a different aspect of academic buoyancy. The first of these, Chapter Five details the challenges Indigenous students experience at school in this study. Chapter Six details the school experience and how participants experience academic buoyancy and staying afloat at school. Chapter Seven highlights the predictors of academic buoyancy relative to the 5C model and Chapter Eight reveals the contributing factors, the resources and strategies important in developing Indigenous student academic buoyancy.

# Chapter Five: Challenges

I begin this chapter by sharing student expressions of challenges and resilience as they respond to various stimulus pictures as part of the projection technique. Students shared how they relate to the abstract pictures and how this relates to challenges they feel they experience at school and how they manage to stay afloat. I will then explain the challenges unique to Indigenous students including, historical events, home and family, culture and identity and grief. Following, I will enter a discussion about the 'shame factor' and how this is evident across multiple student experiences including within peer relationships, the fear of failure, culture and identity and historical events. Finally, I will provide a summary of the challenges Indigenous students in this study experienced and what this means for their academic buoyant/resilient traits and behaviours at school.

Although every school experience should be a positive one, it is not often the case, and for many young students, schools can be a difficult environment to navigate. As Indigenous secondary students in remote centres enter formal schooling, they must learn to negotiate academic, home, and social positions. Within these positions they are simultaneously constituted through others' and their own understandings of who they should be as Indigenous students (Nakata, 2007). For Indigenous students, one of the biggest challenges is negotiating the contested space between the two knowledge systems, the cultural interface. It is within this 'locale' that Indigenous students experience multiple interconnected discourses, social practices and knowledge technologies that contribute to how they see themselves as learners at school.

It is also within this position that Indigenous students often feel the contradictions and tensions within having to align to one or the other, especially when they see weaknesses in examples and arguments on both sides of the divide (Nakata, 2007). Navigating the school system presents moments that involve push and pull forces (influences) where students not only have to make decisions but deal with the consequences from two very influential ways of being, Indigenous and Western. For remote Indigenous students in this study the challenges experienced stem from within the contested spaces between two knowledge systems, 'theirs', home, and community and those of 'others', the school system (Nakata, 2011). Although this may appear complicated, experiences within these contested spaces provide opportunities to develop and strengthen the traits and behaviours of academic buoyancy as Indigenous students experiment and find ways to respond to challenges. This academic buoyancy in turn allows students to develop the traits of successful learners. How students manage and overcome these challenges demonstrate their ability to succeed as learners.

## 'Smooth Seas Never Made a Skilled Sailor' – Staying Afloat at School

To start the interviews, I asked students to choose a picture that they connected with (see Appendix C) and to describe how this picture made them feel about school and being resilient, what they felt was challenging or barriers to learning, and how they were able to get through the challenge/s. The use of

stimulus pictures gave students an opportunity to connect with abstract representations of how they felt about the school experience, the challenges involved when keeping their head above water. Of the 11 students interviewed, six participants were actively engaged in this discussion providing their unique contextual experiences of challenges at school.

Referring to imagery of the ocean, Participants 1 and 3 describe the school experience as unexpected and rough, with Participant 1 explaining their choice of picture by saying that school is: *"...like unexpected waves and winds. That's just like unexpected grades hitting you hard. You could get lost out there."* Participant 3 explains their experience at school by saying: *"It's all misty and dark in the sea, and the sea looks kinda rough."* Further to their shared experience, Participants 1 and 3 relate to a picture depicting two paths, one smooth and one rough. Participant 1 describes these paths as: *"...different pathways that I could choose from my schooling, and like how hard they would be."* Participant 3 explains: *"There's a pathway that's split, split in half and has half of smooth stone paths. And one where the stones are facing up, right, well, it seems uneasy."*

Most students agreed that the school experience was not easy to navigate, presenting many challenges along the way. The second question of the interview in Activity one asked for the students' views about school. Two students shared and acknowledged that the school experience was hard and challenging:

> *"It's hard (school)."* (Participant 1)
>
> *"Because I would usually have a rough day."* (Participant 6)

However, even though students expressed that the school experience was 'hard', one participant shared that it was possible to navigate. By becoming a 'skilled sailor', students are continuously building on their resilience, whilst drawing on and developing strengths that help them navigate contested spaces at school. The skills involved in mastering tasks and challenges develop from exposure to challenges and experimenting with strengths and assets to successfully overcome. Participant 3 summarises this experience as: *"So, there'll be challenges ahead in life, and probably mostly in schooling, and outside of school, but they shape you to be who you are after…but what they say less smooth sea never made a skilled sailor."* Participant 1 provided a similar response: *"It's not gonna be easy sailing, it's gonna be struggles."*

The abstract representations that students discussed highlight contextualised experiences of the challenges Indigenous students experience at school. Participant references to the ocean being *'rough'*, *'getting lost'*, *'waves'* and *'wind'* provide a clear view of the connection between challenges and student life experiences within this particular setting. Even though the school experience is 'hard', or 'uneasy', students shared that they perceive they have the capacity to navigate the school system 'smoothly'. By developing new skills and strengths and adapting strengths to build on their resilience, students become

more familiar with choices that will benefit their learning experiences. This is evidence of how students stay afloat amongst the waves and sail a smoother sea.

In this discussion, it was revealed that through these experiences students are continuously learning and developing more resilient traits and behaviours that can be used and even adapted to suit future scenarios. Indigenous students, in this example, see challenges as pathways that each have their own outcomes, both positive and negative. Participant examples here evidence that Indigenous students are aware of the difficulties associated with school and how these become contested spaces. This demonstrates their capabilities to consider how best to approach and respond to the tension/s involved in taking risks. For example, students recognise that there are multiple paths available at school and are considering which ones are going to safely support them. Students refer to the texture of the paths relating to the journey as 'rough pebble path' being a rough experience and 'smooth' being a smoother experience. Students acknowledge that challenges are going to arise. Through this experience students demonstrate their abilities to manage these pathways, choosing the smoother paths where they are familiar with strengths needed to overcome challenges and where there is opportunity to build resilient capability.

**Challenges Unique to the Indigenous Experience**

Adding to the conflict in choosing and managing pathways, Indigenous students are confronted with multiple challenges unique to the Indigenous student experience that can affect their ability to fully engage with school. That is, Indigenous students are not only going to experience challenges at school, but are going to be dealing with the expectations of community, family and culture and their ways of being. This can add to the conflict within themselves as they deal with one way of being and are expected to actively and successfully engage with school.

In this discussion, the interview approach extends on responses to stimulus pictures with participants also responding to interview questions relating to student challenges. Participants express their ideas and understanding of the barriers unique to their experience that they feel influence their learning experiences. Multiple participants shared their experiences with historical implications, grief, expectations from home and family and the 'shame factor' as some of the barriers to staying afloat at school.

***Historical***

Historically Indigenous people have had to endure a 'hard journey'. Like their ancestors, students accept that life as an Indigenous student is one that is complicated, particularly when the effects from past

events are still evident in their lives today. Participant 3 highlights how the challenge of generational trauma is an added weight in trying to stay afloat at school:

> *"Because like, we've been oppressed, repressed and suppressed for so long. There's generational trauma and hurt. And then you [society] just tell us that you just put us in a classroom substitute us [pretend that nothing happened]. We never really, even though you say you've made up for that, sorry it's still there...that hurt...and that's not gonna change."* (Participant 3)

Participant 3 highlights the importance of acknowledging that the effects of historical events are present at the Cultural Interface, further contributing to the contested space and the tensions Indigenous students need to successfully manage in order to stay afloat at school. In this example of how Participant 3 experiences academic buoyancy, the learning position they take is influenced by challenges not only experienced by them but by those that come before them. Acknowledging the past provides students with internal strengths passed down throughout history, that are useful tools that act as the push effect required to motivate them to continue at school.

***Grief and Sorry Business (Loss)***

Tools and or strategies required to deal with and overcome grief is one such strength that has been passed down throughout Indigenous communities. This is evident in the many cultural and traditional approaches to the burial and grieving processes evident today. Through experiencing grief, Indigenous students are continuing this trend in developing or drawing on certain strengths to overcome.

Sorry business is another example of how students are negotiating the cultural interface and developing ways to stay afloat. Having extended families means that students could be dealing with multiple deaths at a time. Two participants shared the experience of 'feeling down' from grief but still coming to school. These are examples of how students are capable of drawing on persistent behaviours and traits and using the school environment as a strength to get through hard times. Participant 1 shares that there are multiple challenges but grievances were significant: *"...but sort of anything really like, grievances, like grieving."* Participant 5 also shares their experience of losing a loved one: *"...because about like last year, I lost my big sister…Yeah. And the one day I had to come school after funeral I felt bit down."*

The idea of grief also emerged from the stimulus pictures. One student was able to express that grief as: "*...having mountains behind you [grief] but looking forward to the city [bright lights], keeping your head up and focusing on calmness and staying strong and afloat at school"* (Participant 6). This example of grief demonstrates students' ability to stay afloat whilst experiencing grief by drawing on strengths

such as looking forward to better days, regulating emotions and focussing on being calm and staying strong.

Whilst outside of the scope of the study, within this community it is expected that students attend funerals and pay their respects regardless of school expectations. Students often attend funerals and will be absent from school. Closure from funerals is important in helping students regulate emotions, building on strengths to help them return to school to continue their learning after funeral expectations are fulfilled. As family and cultural expectations are some of the unique challenges that Indigenous students experience, the school environment can be seen as a strength that students draw on. School is a constant, stable environment where students can position and ground themselves to help manage the external tensions involved here.

***Home and Family***

Challenges such as external tensions can also stem from everyday experiences with home and family. Although family and home expectations can motivate students to achieve, tensions at home can be a barrier to Indigenous students. Two participants shared their conflict with home and family influences. Participants shared how family can be a contributing factor to some of the challenges they are experiencing. Participant 8 shares that coming to school is a distraction from issues within the home:

> *"Sometimes, like, there's times where I don't wanna be at school. And then there's times where like, I do wanna be at school. And the times when I do wanna be at school is like, also like, things that happen at home, say if I get into an argument with my mum, and she stresses me out a lot. I come to school, not like, like to escape from that, just to like clear my head and everything."* (Participant 8)

This is an example of how this participant will choose to come to school regardless of challenges at home. This example demonstrates levels of commitment and perseverance that students display in their efforts to come to school during these trying times. It also highlights how students are negotiating the cultural interface, managing the tension involved with family and drawing on the school environment as a strength to overcome.

Another challenge Indigenous students face lie at the intersection of family and school. Participant 1 shares that trying to match the academic reputation of an older sister and trying to reach a similar level of achievement proved to be challenging: *"I felt a lot of weight on my shoulders, especially from like my sister's achievement."*

The way that Indigenous students interact with school when experiencing stressors involving home life and family expectations are part of how students experience academic buoyancy at school. Participants shared how challenges associated with home and family create tensions that can be hard to manage but connecting with where they feel they are capable and successful in staying afloat is important in helping them overcome these unique challenges. These experiences are more so important as they help students identify with what strengths they can draw on at school to help manage contested spaces that arise between school and community.

***Being Indigenous – Culture/Identity***

Living within community can build on an individual's sense of self and identity through strong connections with culture and family. In addition to the general challenges of school, many of the challenges that students spoke about were specific to their experiences as Indigenous students. One student articulated this explicitly, as they shared how they drew on strengths such as culture and identity to respond to the challenges the contested spaces at school: *"Being Indigenous is not easy…it's always gonna be a hard journey"* (Participant 4).

In this statement, the ability for Participant 4 to accept that life as an Indigenous student is going to be hard demonstrates their strength in developing academic buoyancy at school. This is an example of their position within the contested space; they are aware of the tension. In this example, Participant 4 understands that it is important to use this as a strength when navigating the school system, particularly when tension involving their identity, such as racism, adds to the challenge of being at school. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> *"Racism, it shouldn't be accepted in any way I reckon. Because it is, as an Indigenous kid, we go through daily challenges of that all the time. And not someone just contributing to it. Like each day is just making it harder."* (Participant 4)

As Indigenous students struggle to stay afloat amongst contested spaces influenced by multiple Indigenous and non-Indigenous factors, some students struggle to form, connect and maintain a strong Aboriginal or Torres Strait identity. This can be made more problematic by the attitudes and assumptions of others that can be detrimental to the efforts of Indigenous students performing successfully at school.

One participant expressed that being Indigenous and living with the assumptions of others and the stereotypes associated with being Indigenous is a challenge: *"Being Indigenous at this school…you just wanna show them like, cause they might be thinking, like, they probably won't do as well as me, like, look at their skin colour, like they're not as smart as me."* (Participant 2). Again, despite having to deal

with assumptions associated with skin colour, there is evidence of student strength at play in this example: "*...you just wanna show them"* (Participant 2).

For some Indigenous students, being Indigenous presents challenges of its own. These examples provide a contextual view of how the Cultural Interface is at play here, in particular the corpus. In this case, Indigenous students are experiencing the effects of "that body of knowledge, both historical and ongoing, that is produced by others 'about us' across a range of intellectual, government, and other historical texts" (Nakata, 2007, p. 7). However, despite comments such as: *'...being Indigenous is not easy'*, examples here provide evidence that Indigenous students are able to successfully respond to this challenge, using this experience as the motivation required to be successful at school.

***Shame***

Social and personal factors for Indigenous students at the intersection of school and community can also contribute to the challenges students experience. The 'shame factor' can be a significant challenge for Indigenous students. To understand more about the 'shame factor', it is important that this part of the discussion provides a clear overview of this unique concept. Within this discussion on 'shame', I begin by defining the 'shame factor' and what this concept means for Indigenous people and Indigenous students. I then provide an overview and examples of the different aspects of shame that emerged from the research. Beginning with shame as a barrier to learning, I then discuss shame in the context of peers. Finally, I discuss shame and the association with the fear of failure for Indigenous students.

According to Butcher (2008), the word shame for Indigenous people differs slightly to the more common Westernised conceptualisations. Indigenous shame encompasses not only a feeling of guilt when one has done something wrong, but also a wider feeling of shyness, fear (e.g. of unfamiliar people or places), or embarrassment at standing out from the crowd—even in a positive way, such as when receiving praise. It describes the appropriate feeling of a person in the presence of relatives with whom they are in an avoidance relationship. Indigenous students will often comment 'she getting big shame' or 'I was shame', as well as the term 'shame job' (embarrassing situation) (Butcher, 2008, p. 638).

The 'shame experience' can be attributed to several factors, including being singled out from a group (Butcher, 2008; Sharifan, 2005; Ware, 2013); novelty of experience or not knowing rules and expectations (Butcher, 2008; Harkins, 1990; Sharifan, 2005); being forced to act in a way that does not conform to social and spiritual obligations (Maher, 1999); internalized racism (Kwok, 2012); and response to colonising power dynamics, including engaging with people who speak 'Standard' rather than Australian English (Kwok, 2012; Oliver et al., 2013; Wigglesworth & Billington, 2013).

In this study, shame is an example of how students experience the contested space of the cultural interface whilst navigating challenges at school (Nakata, 2007). It is where Indigenous students often

feel the contradictions and tensions in making decisions. Nakata's (2007) ideas can be applied to Indigenous issues with shame to explain how, within contested spaces students often struggle with their locale as a learner and the effects of the 'push and pull' effect. The 'shame factor' is a hidden thought where students struggle with decisions to act as they are required to suspend accepted thinking in one area (school) without suspending allegiance to Indigenous interests that can result in being tagged essentialist or assimilationist. This can influence student performance and motivation as students either use shame as a motivator or hesitate to perform for fear of the repercussions their decisions and actions may result in, including failure. How this affects Indigenous student engagement and participation can be likened to Nakata's (2007) idea of the push and pull effect. Where the push effect of shame can be seen as the motivator, where students aim to beat the shame factor, it can also act as the pull influence, a barrier to learning. For example, an Indigenous student performing well at school may be teased by other Indigenous students for 'thinking they're good' or better than their Indigenous peers.

**Shame – Learning**

Being teased and feeling shame for trying with their learning at school is common for Indigenous students. In responses to interview questions relating to the barriers to learning, several participants provided explanations of their experiences with shame and learning, sharing examples of their experiences of shame as Indigenous students navigating school. Participant 4 suggests that: *"...being shame, it is within a lot of Indigenous kids."* Participant 8 describes their experience of shame as*: "I was really shame, like I didn't want to talk."*

Participant 3 provides an insight into what shame means to them. In the following example the participant shares the experience of others highlighting their failures and making them feel shame. Comments made by other students after choosing to perform at school can trigger an internal shame response (a pull), creating tension for Participant 3 and their locale in this space: *"They [other students] just point out all the things you do wrong…[other students] make you shame especially if you get like a question wrong or quiz wrong, or low mark or you got a high mark, but they got a higher mark and they throw it in your face."* Overcoming this shame barrier for Indigenous students demands a great deal of effort, confidence and drive that often requires students to draw on multiple strengths to remain motivated to continue at school. In this example, even though Participant 3 is experiencing the pull effect, understanding how the shame factor can pull them down is an important contribution to developing academic buoyant traits and behaviours as they use this as the motivation to overcome shame: *"... and me personally, like I've been shame all my life…and being shame, you'll always have to overcome that barrier...don't be shame, because that's the number one thing that stops every Indigenous child"* (Participant 3).

Shame in the context of learning is an example of the contested spaces where Indigenous students feel they are judged on what they lack (academically) in the space of learning. It is important for teachers in remote contexts to understand how the shame factor can deter or encourage learning behaviours. Helping students build their own capabilities required for success and confidence in the context of learning will help students adapt learning behaviours to overcome the negative reactions that shame can present in the classroom.

### Shame – Peers

More generally, student relationships with peers can play an important part of the school experience for students and can often be a useful resource regardless of negative or positive influences such as shame. As previously mentioned, the 'shame experience' can be attributed to being singled out from a group (Butcher, 2008; Sharifan, 2005; Ware, 2013). In this study most of the participants agreed that they had been affected by peer pressure in some way or another. For Indigenous students, part of being pressured into doing what others are doing is due to the 'shame factor'. Several participants stated that shame is a barrier or a challenge they experience with peers at school.

Several students spoke about peer pressure, two participants share how the 'pull' of peer pressure affects them as they reflect on moments where they felt pressured:

> *"Parties on the weekend. People saying, oh, you don't need to study, we can hang out and go watch the sunset, when I really should have been studying."* (Participant 1)
>
> *"If your friends go out and smoke and that, you be shame to say no. Or feel pressure, pressure from them, to say yes."* (Participant 3)

Another participant shared their experience of the impact of the pull of peer pressure as:

> *"I've also got pulled into peer pressure. Because peer pressure is really strong…and I have a friend that she went through peer pressure…I know peer pressure. Everybody's been through it...and she has been through peer pressure...and then she's in this stage right now where like people talk about it, and she does wrong things and stuff like that."* (Participant 8)

In this example, the use of the word 'pulled' highlights how Participant 8 has experienced the contested space at school and being 'pulled' into peer pressure. Participant 8 speaks from a position as someone who has experienced peer pressure, and someone who has managed to overcome peer pressure to now

be in a position as an active observer. It is through these observations and reflections that this participant is building on resilient traits and behaviours important in strengthening academic buoyancy.

These particular examples show evidence of the shame factor at play and demonstrate where Indigenous students are contemplating suspending accepted thinking in one area without suspending allegiance to Indigenous interests. Part of the shame in these examples is student fear of being tagged essentialist or assimilationist amongst peers. Shame in the context of peers provides evidence of the push effect in these examples, where students identify with the path/s they could have taken and are aware of when they are being pressured. Comments such as these demonstrate that students' awareness is a strength that they are able to connect with to help make the right decisions when placed in certain positions (learner locale) throughout their experiences with peer pressure.

### Shame – Fear of Failure

Without experiencing failure, students are not able to build on the resilient capabilities that are associated with adaptive behaviours. The pull effect of shame can also result in students displaying reluctant behaviours as they choose not to take risks for fear of failing or experiencing these examples of shame (Munns, 1998, p. 179). Part of the shame for fear of failure is Indigenous student self-concept and the idea that they lack the skills to fully participate and succeed at school. Avoiding the task is often a pathway that Indigenous students choose to take to avoid the shame associated with not being able to complete the task well.

Two students share their experiences of shame, providing examples that highlight how elements of shame can lead to a fear of failure and encourage secondary behaviours that can affect student participation and engagement at school. Participant 1 explains how failure to perform and experiencing shame can lead to the 'domino effect'. This example can be likened to the effect of the pull in the contested space where students can become overwhelmed and succumb to the easier path: *"that's when domino effect starts working, you start wagging"* (Participant 1). This example demonstrates Participant 1's awareness of the importance of coming to school regularly. Regular attendance contributes to student self-concept as students learn the skills and strategies (strengths) that build on their capabilities to stay on top of their tasks, ultimately contributing to academically buoyant behaviours.

In another example, Participant 4 reflects on the difficulty of public speaking and being shame. As Participant 4 shares: *"...and public speaking was very hard for me, and it probably is still gonna be hard going into leadership, but I'm willing to overcome that barrier."* The expectations associated with Indigenous students speaking Standard Australian English is an example how Indigenous students may be experiencing shame as a response to the colonising power dynamics, including engaging with people who speak 'Standard' Australian English (Kwok, 2012; Oliver et al., 2013; Wigglesworth & Billington, 2013). Students may feel shame for fear of mispronouncing words or other Indigenous students judging them on speaking Standard Australian English rather than their community language.

However, despite the shame in this example, Participant 4 shares their experience of drawing on the strength of determination and how this is used to challenge the contested space (speaking standard Australian English), helping them to overcome the shame factor associated with this experience. The push effect on the locale of the participant is at play here. The participant recognises that shame is a barrier and is drawing on academically buoyant traits and behaviour to overcome.

Although participants highlight some of the complexities involved in being Indigenous, they also demonstrate their awareness of and their confidence in their ability to tackle these challenges. Students provide examples of the importance of having a strong identity and connection to culture and that this strength can be used to stay afloat throughout the 'hard journey'. Indeed, participants throughout this study provide insight into how they experience academic buoyancy when managing the shame factor. Participants share that they all acknowledge that the shame factor is part of their daily operation at school. It is through this awareness and the experience of shame that students build capacity to draw on strengths and resources, motivating (pushing) them to perform.

In summary, the shame factor is unique to Indigenous students and not something that can be eliminated from the school scene. Not only do Indigenous students navigate obstacles associated with the 'normal' school schedule, they are also confronted with the concept of shame. It is through experiencing shame that students are pulled into multiple realms of contested spaces, including those that go against their own ways of thinking and being. the shame factor is the 'pull' and or the 'push' within the contested space, the added tension that students need to overcome when navigating the school experience. Participants in this study share how they position themselves when faced with the challenge of shame. Rather than allowing the concept of shame to pull them down, students have developed strengths from the motivating push that allows them to navigate the contested space from a culturally, spiritually and personally safe position within their own locale.

Indigenous students in these examples demonstrate how shame is part of how Indigenous students operate. It is something that is *'within a lot of Indigenous kids.'* For Indigenous students in remote communities, connections with and to family, country and identity are held in high regard and sometimes are the positions students will choose over the contested spaces and expectations at school. For example, Indigenous students may prefer to speak in their home language/s, rather than Standard Australian English. Students suspending their ways of being (speaking Standard Australian English), to operate effectively at school can come with a cost, resulting in feelings of betrayal and shame, sometimes from multiple influences. Students in these examples demonstrate an awareness of managing these feelings of tension. It is vital that educators identify, strengthen and develop the resilient traits and behaviours that Indigenous students are drawing on to respond to the shame factor.

Participant responses not only provided an insight into the experience of peer pressure, but how students were 'pulled' into peer pressure and examples of some of the peer pressure behaviours they had engaged

in. Participants describe peer pressure as being 'strong' and noted that everybody is affected by peer pressure in some way or another. Some participants reflected on the peer pressure experience as an experience, that they have survived and are witnessing others experience it now. Participants demonstrate that they not only strongly identify with experiencing peer pressure but are aware of when they are being pressured and can use this as a strength to navigate school down the right path, the path that supports them in staying afloat.

### Summary

Throughout this study, Indigenous students showed their ability to be academically buoyant at school regardless of the contested spaces between the two knowledge systems, the cultural interface. Although students acknowledge that being Indigenous is hard, it is possible for students to position themselves within this locale to operate safely to successfully overcome the challenges that the school experience presents. It is important to acknowledge that in comparison to non-Indigenous students, Indigenous students are presented with challenges unique to them as they are the ones that are experiencing the added tensions resulting from navigating two worlds, Indigenous and Western. All students face common challenges at school, including problems associated with performance, grades and navigating the hard, rough and uneasy paths that school presents. Indigenous students, however, experience multiple interconnected discourses and social practices that can create added tensions (Nakata, 2007), such as the shame factor, family and cultural expectations and problems associated with the experiences of Indigenous people overtime - historical events and racism.

For Indigenous students within their own unique contexts, these multiple experiences provide opportunities for students to identify with their strengths and what works when developing and maintaining academic buoyancy at school. It also allows them to experiment with certain behaviours such as social learning, adapting and developing other strengths to suit new situations. It provides opportunities to build on and strengthen student capability and confidence. Increased confidence will encourage Indigenous students to take more risks with learning opportunities, with the understanding that a failed attempt is a chance to bounce back, drawing on more strengths and build their capabilities to reach their goals.

As Indigenous students navigate the school environment the forces of 'push' and 'pull' are actively influencing their decisions and actions and their positions in learning, their locale. Identifying the strengths and resources that students can draw on to help them position themselves in a way that safely supports them as learners is an important factor to consider when building academic buoyant capacity amongst Indigenous secondary students.

# Chapter Six: Academic Buoyancy Predictors – Performance, Achievement Motivation and Engagement

This chapter provides an insight into how Indigenous secondary students from a remote school define academic buoyancy through their everyday experiences, in particular achievement motivation, and how these factors contribute to their success in 'staying afloat' at school. To highlight the importance of student insights into academic buoyancy, I will first revisit the literature involving academic buoyancy, particularly the predictors associated with this concept. I will then explain the emerging themes on how Indigenous students from the research experience academic buoyancy at school, highlighting the protective factors, contributing to their achievement motivation and performance. I will then provide evidence of the factors that contribute to building student capacity to be academically buoyant. Finally, I will provide a summary of the themes and how students define academic buoyancy and what 'staying afloat' means to Indigenous students at school in a remote setting.

Identifying with strengths and connecting with resources that support learning success not only contributes to student understandings of their own abilities and what they are capable of, it is the driving force (the push) involved in motivating students to continue regardless of the challenges they face. Achievement motivation and performance is a known predictor of academic achievement and educational achievement, a protective factor that supports students' ability to display resilient behaviours to stay afloat (Martin & Marsh, 2006). Previous research has highlighted the relationship between both academic resilience and academic buoyancy and the significant predictors of academic resilience (Martin & Marsh, 2006). In a similar way, multiple predictors of academic buoyancy are influenced by protective factors (assets and resources) and/or stressors (risk factors) (Wright & Masten, 1998, p. 10), including basic capabilities within the components of social and emotional learning (Frey et al., 2019) and social learning (Bandura, 2006).

Despite the presence of challenging events and conditions that place students at risk of doing poorly in school and ultimately dropping out of school, Indigenous students can sustain high levels of achievement motivation and performance (Martin & Marsh, 2008). Indigenous secondary students are motivated to achieve through understanding themselves as capable learners, particularly as they realise they can respond to and negotiate the contested spaces of the cultural interface to become successful learners. For Indigenous students, the 'push', or achievement motivation, is a result of the positions students will return to because of positive experiences. These positions place them in the best locale to learn from as students continue to use these experiences to create a positive image of themselves as capable learners.

In the previous chapter, motivation was also seen as a response to the influencing factors within the contested spaces of the Cultural Interface for Indigenous students. Participants were motivated as they pushed through the shame barrier or when determined to succeed by challenging deficit assumptions,

all important factors that contribute to academically buoyant capacities, necessary to navigate contested spaces at school. For the remote Indigenous students in this study, achievement motivation is also influenced by multiple factors that stem from the values embedded within and unique to their community context. In this study remote Indigenous Students define and provide examples of how they find the positions and respond to experiences that encourage the motivation required to engage positively at school.

## Experiencing Academic Buoyancy Through Achievement Motivation and Performance

Of particular interest in this study were the students' attitudes to their learning and their ability to find success at school, whether it be academically, socially or physically. Regardless of grades or past behaviour records, students involved in this study appeared to be engaged and motivated by some form of inner and/or external strength/s. The level of engagement and motivation students displayed by being present at school daily is evidence that these students are experiencing academic buoyancy and 'staying afloat'. Students provided an insight into what they consider motivates them, an expression of how they experience academic buoyancy and what encourages them to continue to strive for success.

Indigenous students in this study, drew on a range of sources at school as motivation to attend school, be engaged and to perform. As part of their school experience students referred to multiple motivational factors relevant to the context of their learning experience including valuing education, having aspirations for the future, striving for achievement, receiving some sort of recognition for their efforts and learning through relationships and social interactions.

### *Education as Priority*

According to some of the participants, valuing education and ensuring it becomes a priority was an important motivational factor. Several students shared expressions of their experiences of education and why it was important to be at school daily. Participant 8 shared why coming to school is important to them:

> *"Because there are times where I haven't came to school, and then I'm in class and I don't know what's happening, then it makes me feel like aw I don't know what's happening. Then I'm gonna do it propa slack like. So there are things like always come to school, so you stay ahead of your thing, you know what's going on, and you won't, like be like that."*

Statements such as: *"I wanna get an education"* (Participant 9), and: *"...make sure they're [students] getting a good education…and education, yeah, you only get it once"* (Participant 3), indicates that participants have an interest in and understand the importance of an education.

Understanding that education needed to be a priority was important in getting students to school every day. In order to succeed at school, students' levels of self-awareness reminded them of the importance of being present and engaged with their learning. Attending school every day contributes to student capabilities, enhancing their ability to find success. Students wanted to be at school and understood that when they lagged in attendance they fell behind and lacked motivation to participate and perform.

***Aspirations (Educational Intention)***

One student noted that it was important to have a purpose for being at school and receiving an education could contribute to their aspirations. According to Participant 3, choosing the right path to meet aspirations for the future, including further education, was a motivator to stick it out: *"It matters what you want to do in life and how far you want to go…to go down the right pathways in life...hopefully use that to go to uni someday."*

Responding to stimulus provided in Activity one of the interview, Participant 3 detailed that feelings of success could be represented by the light that you could see shining on the other side of a large boulder, the large boulder in this case, being the hardships that present themselves: *"...and on either side is a bit of light. So that's your accomplishment and success in life after school and in the hardships."*

Participant 3 provided evidence that Indigenous students from a remote community draw on aspirations for the motivation to continue with their learning. In these examples, the participant understood the importance of making the right choices to reach these goals. Choosing to attend school every day and to be actively engaged was a positive choice, one that would lead to opportunities for further success, particularly after school.

***Achievement Recognition***

Multiple participants reported that reaching a level of satisfaction through achievement and/or recognition, including being satisfied with their own positive choices and success in life, was one of the motivational factors for students to perform. According to some of the participants, being acknowledged for their efforts, achievements and capabilities added to improved levels of self-satisfaction and motivated them to keep trying at school. Participant 4 shares:

> *"I feel very proud of myself...I just feel excited that I done it…very well (feel). Yeah it makes me very happy to know that*

> *I'm on track to get a certificate as an Indigenous kid...But I went for leadership, and I am now school captain and very proud. And I've overcome that barrier. And public speaking was very hard for me. And it probably is still gonna be hard going into leadership, but I'm willing to overcome that barrier."* (Participant 4)

Participant 8 shares a similar experience in how achievement recognition reinforced the importance of putting in the extra effort as they realised they were capable of achieving an A grade:

> *"I find if you like, work really hard and because like, you know, I've never, I never used to get A's and then when I got my first A in English, I was just like so happy. I went home I was like Mum I got my first A! I'm like crying right now I don't know why I'm so emotional [student crying]...was so happy, like I couldn't stop talking...I called all my families and all my uncles, they're like I hope you do this again, my god - A!"* (Participant 8)

In this example the A achievement evoked emotion suggesting that this student was not only reflecting on the hard work applied to the task but understood what was needed to reach this achievement and the importance of getting a good grade for themselves in developing the idea of their own capabilities. Sharing with family is also an important factor in this example as Participant 8 was also recognised as a capable learner by their family and they could celebrate this as a successful moment.

Participant 1 shared a similar view on achievement and how this tied in with being Indigenous: *"...and I just wanted to make Australia as a whole and Torres Strait, just a better place...and after I had achieved all of this, I felt relieved...and I felt like I was fulfilling my people's dreams."*

In this example, Participant 1 is sharing the motivation to do well at school and the feeling of relief when they had reached this level of personal satisfaction.

These examples suggest both internal and external factors are at play when motivating students. Receiving an A for these students was highly emotive as students not only shared their joy in their successful moments but felt motivated when these efforts were recognised and valued by others and or themselves. Students seemed excited and happy at the achievements made and were willing to celebrate this success. The importance for participants reaching a level of satisfaction in achievement is also evident in comments made by a participant sharing a reflection of their journey. *"Cause one day you're gonna, when you grow up, you're gonna look back and say, you know, wow, like, I did that, I came that far"* (Participant 4).

However, although these examples of celebrations are important and contribute to motivating students, one participant indicated that reaching this point could be challenging, and subtle acknowledgments were also satisfying:

> *"...and finally acknowledged and that's something that's very hard to, to get...no good deed goes unrewarded…and if you know you did the right thing, feels even better when the teacher comes and sees you and gives you that pat on the back, recognition version of rewarding or getting an award."* (Participant 3).

For Participant 3, achievement recognition is important, regardless of how it is delivered. In this example, achievement recognition allowed the student to reflect on what they did 'right' in their performance. This experience is likely to encourage students to return to these successful, positive learning experiences.

Overall Indigenous students described the emotions involved in achieving and reaching successful moments. For participants these moments are reminders of what they are capable of. It is through these moments that students are provided opportunities to understand and recognise the strengths that they were able to draw on to achieve. Whether to satisfy an internal drive for themselves or to gain recognition from external resources such as teachers, family, peers or ancestors, it is evident that all of these factors play an important role as the strengths students draw on to stay afloat at school. It is important for students to reflect on and acknowledge themselves and their efforts and achievements and to have this reinforced by someone they value, including themselves. However, although having these efforts acknowledged in some form was of great value in encouraging and motivating students to continue to perform and a good measure of their success over time, students need to understand that external recognition may not always happen, and that self-satisfaction is also a useful motivational tool.

### *Social Learning*

Indigenous students at school are exposed to multiple learning experiences that can contribute to motivating them to strive to find success. How students learn from others or past experiences can be associated with the idea of 'social learning' and 'social and emotional learning' (SEL). One of the ways that Indigenous students are motivated to initiate actions and deliberately influence the course of events is associated with the idea of 'agency' (Bandura, 2006). Bandura (2006) suggests that to demonstrate 'agency' and or to be 'agent' is for an individual to have the ability to intentionally influence their functioning and life circumstances (p. 164). Bandura's idea of social learning through agency involves four core properties: intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. It is through these agentic properties that Bandura highlights the capacity of individuals to reflect on actions and the

actions of others to plan and adapt behaviours that are suited to new and unfamiliar situations. Hence, students use social learning and agentic behaviours as motivation and as a result are building on academic and socially buoyant traits.

Learning through self-observation and observing the behaviours of others can also occur for multiple SEL capacities. The concept of SEL focusses on a set of social, emotional, behavioural, and character skills that support success in school, the workplace, relationships, and the community (Frey et al., 2019). Learning through SEL involves drawing on or developing certain abilities that belong to certain interrelated competencies that also contribute to the protective factors supporting academic buoyancy. These competencies include but are not limited to self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self-management and responsible decision making (Frey et al., 2019).

In this study, there was evidence of agentic and SEL capacities. Participants indicated that they learn and are motivated through observing both positive and negative social experiences. It is through social learning experiences that students are influenced and motivated to adapt behaviours, drawing on their strengths to suit expectations at school. According to some of the participants, reflecting on behaviour choices, conforming to school expectations and observations were all part of the social learning process. Participant 8, in particular, provided examples of how past experiences have helped them gain the skills they need to be able to adapt their own behaviour when approaching familiar or unfamiliar situations:

> *"Like you think fighting is good. And swearing out loud? Oh, my God. I've been there, done that bro. I used to walk around the schools and everything. And now when I think it it's just like so embarrassing, it like embarrasses like…[starts to cry], like I'm crying right now."* (Participant 8)

Self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and social awareness are important abilities to possess, as it reminds students of their priorities and motivates them to persist with behaviours that are going to be rewarding, through responsible decision making. This is demonstrated in comments from Participant 8 such as: *"Yeah, it's right to be by yourself isn't like, you know, you still have your friends and but like learning time is learning time and your friends will always be there."*

Understanding individual capacities to succeed and having this reinforced by teaching staff for Indigenous students is important in motivating students to continue at school. This behaviour can also be applied to social learning involving peers. Reflecting on past experiences and witnessing peers go through similar experiences also reinforces for students that they are capable of making good choices. For example, Participant 8 shares:

> *"I've gave her advice. And like I've told her like me and my friend, like all my friends we told her like, we've gave her*

> *advice before. But I think it's just like her way of learning. This is just going to be like her way of learning a lesson like, you know, she'll soon realise like, I don't know when [laughs], like, so soon realise what she's doing is like wrong, and she'll turn to us back to turn back to us I know she'll turn back to us when you know, there's no one, there's no one that's going to be there for her anymore. She'll realise that we're actually the only ones that she has been with through thick and thin and..."* (Participant 8)

Social learning for Participant 3 involves them noticing how some peers choose to mimic behaviours of what they see whilst others make assumptions on the actions of others, and this is what motivates them in their decision making and behaviours, whether positive or negative.

> *"It's just that everyone fights because they've seen their parents do it...I observe other people, observe the teachers, what they do with their routine.... How they keep their desk if it's tidy if it's messy, because a lot of that says the personality. Like if you got messy house, you probably all over the place... all kine place chay shame [creole – meaning 'all over the place' and 'shame']."* (Participant 3)

As Bandura (2006) suggests social learning draws on individual agency, providing opportunities for students to grow as individuals, developing their internal and external strengths to adapt to new situation. Behaviour is a result of evaluations of both positive or negative behaviour situations that triggers the development of social learning skills. Through the processes of observation and reflection on self and the behaviours of others, Indigenous students in this study were able to identify with the strengths needed to draw on to help them engage positively with school. Students shared their experiences and demonstrated their SEL abilities such as self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self-management and responsible decision making. Mastering these abilities added to the motivational experiences of Indigenous students at school. The examples of social learning experiences shared by students contribute to how they experience academic buoyancy at school, in particular, how this learning experience motivates them to approach different learning experiences.

***Relationships***

Contributing to the achievement motivation and performance of students is the extensive relationships that students rely on to get through. The interview questions did not ask students to discuss relationships directly, instead leaving the question about what helps students to get through open for students to

interpret. Nonetheless, participant responses provide strong evidence that valuing family, friends and teachers and having their support was vital in helping them to be resilient at school. Multiple participants reported that recognition and support from family, friends/peers and teachers was an important motivational factor for them to continue their schooling. The sense of 'making them proud' and setting goals to get better at something also contributed to motivating students.

Participants 1 and 4 reported the experience of family relationships. Participant 1 shares: *"You need to take into account that, take into account what you believe would make the world a better place. Think about what you could do to make your family slash mob proud."* While Participant 1 discussed the importance of family and making them proud, Participant 4 referred to family as the number one support that contribute to their identity:

> *"Fam [family] is just that number one support. Yeah, they've always been there from day one and it just helps me through my journey as an Indigenous kid…and helps me get far…helps me through hard times…someone there that is giving me the right advice."* (Participant 4)

Relationships through family connections in these examples demonstrate how Indigenous students draw on relationships and a resource to both support and motivate them to continue with school.

For peer relationships, Participants 7 and 8 shared how friends helped them to 'stay afloat' at school by encouraging them or being there for them, especially after experiencing grief. Participant 7 states: *"My friends just kept telling me to keep my head up and look forward."* Participant 8 provides an example of how relationships with peers helps them to stay afloat at school:

> *"So like I'm glad like me and my friends. Like, you know, we don't we don't have to go through that. Because you know, we've got each other and like, so my friends, like, I feel like staying afloat at school, my friends, they helped me with that a lot."* (Participant 8)

Whilst these examples demonstrate positive relationships as a motivational factor, Participant 3 shares the experience of negative peer relationships and how this challenged them and motivated them to excel:

> *"Show them next time like what, what I do, like if a white kid or anyone in general rubs it in my face, if I get it wrong, I'll show them one day…whether it be in sports, or whatever they lack in, like that's not a good trait, like that's my…[motivation] yeah if I like if I know they lack in a certain area that I excel in, I'll challenge them."* (Participant 3)

In addition to peer relationships, three participants indicated that having relationships with their teachers was important, especially when they felt that teachers motivated them by empowering or encouraging them to perform. Participant 7 explains that: *"They [teachers] encouraged me and telling me like where I'm going to go in the future from this subject and what it's gonna do for me, like beneficially and then that just kept me going."* Participant 1 agreed adding: *"I think every teacher that I've had encouraged me to stay on a nice clean-cut pathway."* Part of the motivation in these examples is from the encouragement from teachers and the notion that students are understanding more about their own capabilities as teachers reinforce this. This is evident in statements such as: *"They say, like, I know you can do it, you're just being slack"* (Participant 2). More important, however, is the time taken by teachers to establish relationships and understanding Indigenous students and their individual strengths, capacities, and learner locale.

We know that student ability to be resilient depends on multiple interacting systems, including relationships (Masten, 2018, p. 16). Developing relationships is vital in motivating students to perform. Students offered an insight into how they experience multiple relationships with family, teachers and peers and how these relationships support them in overcoming challenges and staying afloat. For students, understanding their connections to others helps provide a network for them to turn to when the going gets tough. Through these relationships students are not only empowered but are able to build on a sense of self identity, another powerful strength. Students are provided the opportunities to identify and connect with their own capabilities further contributing to building a sense of self-concept/self-efficacy, increasing their motivational capacity and ability to reach success.

***Identity***

Students' sense of identity and how they see themselves as learners, more so, as Indigenous learners, was an important motivational factor for students. Some students discussed their experiences of identifying as Indigenous learners, the complications associated with this identity and how they use this as motivation to show others that they can and are capable of finding success at school. According to Participant 2, the stereotypes associated with Indigenous learners and the assumptions that exist within the school experience, motivates them to do better at school:

> *"So they gotta, like, show them that we actually, we're not just all about wagging and coming to school and like, like, somewhat, some of the other kids might resent us, and you sort of just have to show them... that you're your own person...and you can do you can actually do well."* (Participant 2).

Other students agreed that they felt people made assumptions about their abilities to perform and operate successfully at school. Participant 4 acknowledges that being an Indigenous learner can be challenging

but remembering who you are and your purpose at school is a useful motivational tool in continuing to strive: *"Just remember who you are...remember why you came this far."*

Developing a strong sense of identity is important in aiding achievement motivation. Students' connection to and identity as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders is a driving force and a strength that students draw on for motivation. Knowing where you come from and your purpose at school strengthens learner locale. As part of this position students understand the assumptions that exist around their own capabilities and achievement. Exposure to these experiences contribute to student protective factors, much like acquiring an immunity that has the power to motivate students to challenge assumptions and achieve (Rutter, 1987).

### *Role Models*

Most students reported having a role model that they could look up to. Role models were not only inspirational, but a driving motivational factor in encouraging students to perform. Many participants referred to teachers, family members, other students and even themselves as role models. In the following example, Participant 8 indicated that they look up to both a non-Indigenous teacher and an older Indigenous student for inspiration, motivation and real-life examples of staying afloat at school:

> *"Like she's really independent. So, she sort of like teaches us that you don't need a man to like you know achieve cause if you look at her she has like a future. Like, she has no husband, she has her own car, like you know, she survives for herself and so sort of sets like a goal for me like oh, I want to be like her, I want to be able to afford my own car, look after myself, look after my car, and you know I don't need a man to tell me or help me achieve that and I don't need him to be telling me like what I can and cannot do. I've also seen [friend]...I look to her as a role model too because like she was like down here, like she was here as just a student and now she's like a qualified Diesel fitter. I wanna, like, I wanna be like, I wanna be like her, I wanna be like qualified..."* (Participant 8)

For Participant 8, the ability to be independent, set goals, reach a qualification, and have a strong sense of self-concept are the academic buoyant traits that are being modelled to them. The next example involves two participants sharing how role models within family reflect what it looks like to be academically buoyant. Participants relied on family members not only modelling resilient behaviours but providing real life examples of how to overcome everyday challenges to find success. Participant 1 shares that their dad is their role model of academic buoyancy: "*My dad actually."* Participant 2 shares

that their brothers are their models: *"…with like I guess my brothers...they got into boarding school like with their scholarships and stuff and they're doing good now."*

Whilst the behaviours and actions of family members can motivate students, two participants viewed themselves as a role model, hoping that others aspired to be just like them: *"I guess they'll sort of look up to you one day, and like you're doing good…then they'll think about the choices that they may have made"* (Participant 2). In addition to being a role model, Participant 2 shares how they interact with others to try to motivate them: *"Come, come class [student laughs] come class no need to wag, it not even, we not even doing hard stuff. Like because that's normally they what, why they do because they know they can't do it."* Participant 3 shares how their achievements and success can be shared to inspire the younger generations*: "You can definitely pass that onto, you know, like young kids and tell them your story and how it was hard."*

In these examples role models play an important part in motivating students. Through the presence of role models, students are able to observe the actions and identify with the strengths of others. Role models provide social learning opportunities as students observe the resilient traits and behaviours of others for examples of how they can develop their own strengths and abilities to become academically buoyant but start growing their own ideas of what success looks like. Indigenous role models for Indigenous students in particular are examples of what students could achieve and be. They provide the unique Indigenous experience to what academic buoyancy looks like. Indigenous role models have drawn on strengths and resources to overcome challenges that are unique to their contexts of learning. The presence of role models not only allows students to relate to and identify with the strengths of others but provides real life examples of how other 'stay afloat' and experience academic buoyancy.

***Opportunity – Risk Taking***

The confidence students displayed in their role modelling actions is evidence they have stepped out of their comfort zones and taken risks to develop their own sense of confidence. Opportunity and risk-taking were other themes that emerged when discussing how students experience academic buoyancy. When discussing this type of risk-taking behaviour, students explained that taking risks was something that required personal strength and that taking advantage of opportunities was important in motivating Indigenous students to actively engage with life choices at school. Participants shared their experiences of what it means to take risks, venturing out of their comfort zones, pursuing opportunities to grow and learn and how this contributes to them staying afloat at school. Participant 3 states:

> *"And just that taking up that opportunity is so good. Even if you're not great at it, if you want to try something new try because everything is a learning process…you can go into*

> *something and not know nothing, not know anything about it but at the end of it you will know something."*

Participant 4 provided a similar response, referring to the importance of having the confidence to do so: *"remember that you can go for any big opportunity that you want…you just have to have that confidence and that right mindset to be able to get that far."*

Students not only discussed taking risks and developing confidence in making the right choices but shared their own reflections on risk taking behaviours that others experience. Referring to another student at school, Participant 8 discussed overcoming these experiences and how this behaviour was motivation to seek opportunities that would further develop their confidence:

> "*…she used to wag and smoke and drink…and I was like that, like don't be afraid to try different things. And then I thought like, if it's something like I really like, then this is my only opportunity I get. Like this is the only chance I get, so I'm gonna like go for it."* (Participant 8)

Students were further motivated by experiencing risk taking behaviours, whether positive or negative. Students discussed drawing on strengths that involved a willingness to learn and trying new things, even if it meant failing. Through these experiences student learn what it's like to bounce back and keep going. Seeking new opportunities can provide many rewards, including building a strong sense of self, validating what students are capable of achieving.

**Summary**

It is important to remember that achievement motivation is a predictor of academic achievement and educational achievement, supporting academic buoyancy. Together with the components of SEL and social learning, it also serves as an important protective factor that is important in ensuring students are equipped to deal with everyday school experiences. Students provided examples of how they experience achievement motivation at school. Students lacking motivation are students that are disengaged and possibly falling through the cracks.

Achievement motivation is influenced by both the positive and negative student experience, that requires them to draw on internal and external strengths and make vital decisions, to help them adapt and organise their lives so that they were able to stay afloat at school (Drake et al., 2019, p. 123). The examples students have provided on how they experience academic buoyancy through achievement motivation suggest multiple factors are involved. Student learning experiences at school determine levels of achievement motivation and performance, and hence the ability for students to be academically buoyant.

Identifying the effectiveness of the motivational experiences and what is working is important in fostering academic buoyancy and resilience at school.

For Indigenous students, how they respond to motivation stems from and is grounded within the experiences within their community and school context. This grounding contributes to a strong sense of identity that students use as motivation. Despite the assumptions and stereotypes, Indigenous students aspire just like any other student. These aspirations may not always be clear to others, but having aspirations motivate Indigenous students to stay afloat at school.

The recognition students receive for their efforts at school, make aspirations seem more achievable as it reaffirms student capability, further contributing to self-concept. Students feed off rewards and will continue to adapt behaviours and draw on resilient traits to reach this point of self-satisfaction.

These behaviours are observed by students through social and emotional learning experiences. Students are provided the tools and strategies required to make informed decisions. These learning opportunities further allow students time to reflect on past experiences, connecting with and identifying their own strengths that they have learned to and continue to develop and adapt to suit new experiences, including the everyday ups and downs of school life.

For Indigenous students, social learning includes observing and watching. What others do and how they achieve is important for Indigenous students. Role models play an important part in planting the seeds for motivation. Indigenous role models set the scene of what academic buoyancy looks like, and how other Indigenous people have managed to stay afloat at school and in the broader community.

Role models have taken risks, stepping out of their comfort zones to seek opportunities. In this study, Indigenous students are motivated by risk taking behaviours that lead to new learning opportunities. Whether a risk-taking choice results in a positive or negative outcome, students can always take something away from trying new things. Stepping out of your comfort zone takes courage especially when there is a chance that failure will occur. Students understand that failure is part of the learning process and that you can bounce back from this.

Overall, highlighted within these motivational experiences are feelings of success, that anything is possible, further contributing to the sense that students feel capable of positively engaging with the school experience and can be successful. Developing capable learners leads to improving academic self-concept. Through previous studies (Martin & Marsh, 2006), we have a solid understanding of what self-concept is, however, there has been little opportunity to see what this looks like. Students receiving an A for the first time and celebrating this success, recognising moments where they have realised, that they have mastered the 'school thing' and become a capable student is an example of what academic self-concept looks like. It is through these moments that we need to pinpoint what assets and resources

students have drawn on, to help navigate the school system to overcome daily challenges and develop and foster these moments to build students' sense of ability.

## Chapter Seven: Staying Afloat – Predictors of Academic Buoyancy (5C's)

We have seen how other predictors of academic buoyancy, commonly known as the '5Cs' (Martin et al., 2010) operate within Western conceptualisations involving secondary school students. In this study Indigenous secondary students contribute to the literature by providing evidence of the behaviours and traits developed through interactions within contested spaces at the Cultural Interface. Although unique to Indigenous concepts and contexts, most resilient behaviours align with the '5C' model of motivational predictors of academic buoyancy; commitment (persistence), composure (low anxiety), control (low uncertain control), co-ordination (planning) and confidence (self-efficacy). Evidence of these motivational predictors demonstrate how students come to attain resilient behaviours leading to academic buoyancy (Martin et al., 2010).

Chapter Seven highlights other predictors of academic buoyancy relating to Indigenous student experience and how this can contribute to the 5C model of academic buoyancy (Martin et al., 2010) from an Indigenous perspective.

Understanding the predictors to academic buoyancy is useful to determine how schools can improve positive engagement and performance for students. Amongst the challenges and through the motivational experiences are other predictors that involve personal traits and particular behaviours that students draw on to stay afloat at school. When Indigenous students demonstrate awareness and strengthen ideas of self-concept around who and where they should be as learners, they are referring to their own personal resilient traits and behaviours. Self-concept is one of many predictors of academic buoyancy.

Throughout this study most students share many experiences of how they display resilient behaviours that strengthen student levels of academic buoyancy. Of the 11 participants, one participant did not contribute to this discussion.

### Commitment (Perseverance, Persistence)

Commitment as a predictor of academic buoyancy involves both perseverance and persistence. Miele et al. (2022) suggest that the more students perceive themselves capable of persevering at challenges, will predict how much students will persist with the challenge(s) (p. 607). Therefore, where perseverance can be likened to a personal trait, it is a strength that predicts student persistent behaviours (Miele et al., 2022).

Some participants discussed the importance of drawing on this strength to support their commitment to attending school every day. Martin et al. (2010) discuss attributes of commitment as a level of persistence where students are displaying persistent behaviours. In this study some students refer to their

perseverance as the strength they draw on to display persistent behaviours to become more academically buoyant at school.

Navigating the contested spaces within the school setting requires certain levels of self-perceptions of perseverance leading to persistent behaviours. Several students highlighted the importance of commitment by working hard, and pushing themselves, adding that a level of personal strength and *'drive'* is needed to persevere through challenges to be successful at school.

> *"High School is filled with problems you can have, you can ask me today, the rough days ahead. You just gotta then persevere through... just (have) a drive that no one ever got anywhere in life without putting in work extra hard hours. Putting in extra work to get where you are. Nothing comes free. Everything's with the price. But that price is always affordable. If you put in the work."* (Participant 3)

Building on their experience of academic buoyancy, Participant 2 also shares how a level of commitment requires perseverance and persistent behaviours:

> *"What can get you like the furthest I guess if you try a little bit, it's not gonna like you're gonna make sure you like…make sure you push yourself to like the furthest you can go so you're not like like, you know, like, oh, I could have gave it that little more like."* (Participant 2)

In another example, Participant 8 adds their interpretation of perseverance and commitment. Referring to images relating to resilience as part of Activity one, Participant 8 provides an abstract representation, referring to barriers that reflect their learning contexts:

> *"With this one, maybe like, you know, there are barriers for you say if you want to pass, pass your beach and get into like, ocean there are barriers that will be stopping you, but you just got to like, push through it. And you know, to get what... to achieve what you want."* (Participant 8)

One student acknowledged that as they progressed through year levels, commitment would require more effort. In another abstract interpretation, Participant 3 shares how they needed to adapt to changes to keep up with the increased learning expectations and content as they progressed through year levels: *"Yep…because like the higher like grade level I'm getting the steeper it is. So that's harder work I have to put in…yep."*

In these examples, levels of commitment are supported by students' persistent traits and persevering behaviours. Participants in these examples are aware that commitment is important in supporting success at school.

Several other participants agreed that commitment was important to staying afloat at school. When asked to share advice to other Indigenous students on how they can stay afloat at school, participants shared their views on the importance of committing to school, coming to school daily and applying yourself to learning opportunities. Participants also display an awareness of what is needed to be academically buoyant at school and what actions and behaviours they need to draw on to be active, committed participants at school. Participant 6 shares advice to other Indigenous students that to be academically buoyant at school students need to: *"Just come to school every day"* (Participant 6). Whilst another participant states that: *"I find if you like, work really hard [you can reach success]* (Participant 8).

Advice from another participant on how to succeed at school is:

> *"Just don't take the easy path…yeah, just keep challenge yourself as much as you can…I guess I'm building off what [another participant] said with the easy path and accepting challenges. I guess you need to look at school as a mini version of life. Just school is just an easier version…so you might as well face some of those challenges now to make your life challenges easier."* (Participant 1)

Some students provided examples of commitment through persistent behaviours and what this means through sacrifice, working hard, organising, and prioritising time to ensure their own success regardless of what others thought. Participant 1 states: *"Don't let others tie you down"*. Another participant shares:

> *"It's alright to sacrifice some things even if it means losing friends, like you work for you, not other people not to impress other people. You just impress yourself and your family… and you know, I miss every single time, like any spare time that I used to go for walks with my friends, things like that. But there's, there's good that comes in that as well. Like you go and do work, you get paid and stuff like that. I also gotta like come to school."* (Participant 8)

In this example, Participant 8 touches on how commitment can come at a cost as they realise that commitment means sacrifice and not everyone will agree with their choice. At the same time, however Participant 8 can see the benefits of committing to one way of being over the other. Two participants

discuss the importance of commitment through persistence and the belief that they are capable by pushing through, seeking support, and challenging themselves to complete a task:

> *"But then there was always that teacher, like, I used to have like, put your hand up, I put my hand up and I asked for help. And I even like, stayed behind at school also asked teachers to help me with my cover letter and stuff like that. And they helped me through that. I got my stuff done. And yeah."* (Participant 8)

In this example, Participant 8 demonstrates that they understand the importance of a healthy student-teacher relationship and therefore persisting with conflict resolution will benefit them in the long run. Participant 3 adds: *"Just stick with it stick through, then have that guess mediation with the teacher or just see to find like some common ground yous can work off go yeah just kickstart it from there again, get on the right foot."* (Participant 3).

Some participants understood that further learning opportunities can stem from failed attempts and perseverance provides opportunities to get *'better at it'*: *"Because you probably get better at it…because it takes time sometimes"* (Participant 6). Or as Participant 3 states:

> *"To achieve that, I try to do most of it myself. If I get stuck ask, some other students that are doing the same thing or same topic as me for better help, like not cheating this. Ask them what their idea is. What's their perspective around it. So, I get a kinda different angle that I can work on... will complement my angle... you just gotta then persevere through... yeah to excel, push myself... basically, but yeah, just do what you got to do to get it finished. So, you're going to be more understanding. If you get it wrong. Don't crawl up in your shell and just like, hide from it, try to approach it again approach from a different angle and if you get it right it and like other persons don't get it people get it wrong. Don't blame yourself, because you can easily fall back down on the face again."* (Participant 3)

This example demonstrates both persistence and perseverance. Where Participant 3 is unsure of what the task expectation was, they reached out to peers for an idea to start, adding that the result of being committed is that you understand that a failed attempt is a step towards building resilient capability: *"...get a good mark. Get a passing mark if you want."* (Participant 3). Participant 7, however, shows

how to be persistent in figuring it out for themselves: *"No, I'll just do it myself till I figure it out…never give up"* (Participant 7).

Positions within the cultural interface can often influence levels of commitment for Indigenous students. Expressing a value in and commitment to education, and a willingness to sacrifice and persist at finding success in this setting, is another example of what strengths students draw on whilst navigating the contested spaces at school. It is through these interactions that students realise that they are capable through successful moments that required levels of persistence, pushing through and personal drive. This contributes to their self-perceived ideas of their own perseverance, strengthening and developing persistent behaviours required to overcome challenges at school.

**Composure**

Students discussed elements of composure and staying calm under pressure or throughout stressful situations at school. School experiences gave them the skills to change and adapt behaviours to those better suited to the learning environment. For Indigenous students the challenge of conforming to the school behaviour expectation is another example of the contested space of the cultural interface that students face. Changing positions to suit new and sometimes constricting behaviour and learning expectations, requires students be composed to be academically buoyant at school. It is through these moments that students draw on their own strengths and the resources available to them:

> *"At first you think like all like shut the...like oh, shut up like I'm my own person I can do what I wanna do. Because I used to be like that, like, when teachers used to tell me to do my work, I used to get angry or walk out of class or whatever, but like, now that I think to myself when they used to tell me to do that they just know that you can truly you can do that. Like they just want what's best for you. Because and then they're there for you. They'll help you through whatever you're going through and like what else for schoolwork you find out they'll help you through that. They just only want what's best for you know, they..."* (Participant 8)

Participant 8 shares a reflection on how they realised that composure was important in developing positive relationships and that through composure they were able to see how teachers are there to help. Participant 3 draws on behaviours that encourage composure from others, sharing their experience of composure as:

> *"Be cool, calm and collected through challenges that might pre... that might present themselves to you…yeah, I just go talk to them in like a calm way…coz if you talk to them angry,*

> *you're obviously see a reaction out of anger…talk in a cool way then you get the same response you want…stay cool, calm and collected so you make the best decisions, most efficient way and is the most efficient."* (Participant 3)

Some participants spoke about laying low, not looking for attention at school and concentrating on themselves. Participant 3 shares: *"Just keep my head down. Like, don't be an attention seeker… keep your head down, don't look for attention. If you're wrong, be quiet…if you're right, be quiet"*. Participant 4 agreed: *"Yeah, just always put your head down. You know, worry about yourself, but don't be selfish."* Whilst Participant 1 added: *"Yeah. I probably would have put my head down and not get, got as distracted as I used to get… just basically put your head down and believe in yourself."*

Laying low adds to Indigenous student composure. It is important for them to focus on their learning from composed positions, particularly when they have multiple contested spaces to manage and plan for future learning approaches.

Participant 7 shared that composure involved holding their head up to be strong for others after experiencing a death in the family and how learning became a positive focus: *"…so, I was thinking that I should keep my head up and be strong and be there for everyone… I just went through it I didn't think about anything and just kept strong and participate in my work."*

Other participants discuss the importance of experiencing calm and trying to find ways to cope with the stress of any challenges occurring within the learning context. Participant 4 states:

> *"I was going into an industry where I had no experience. I was very stressed about it. Mum and Dad just told me it's a learning, progress, learn as I go. And just remind me to stay calm, and it'll be alright and yeah I'll successfully go through that pathway."* (Participant 4)

Participant 6 shares that getting to the end of the day is something to look forward to, as it's an opportunity to find a calm space: *"…because I would usually have a rough day but then when it's like last block of the day, I feel calm and relaxed."*

Whilst Participant 8 provides another strategy to support their composure at school:

> *"Sometimes like when I need to control my anger. I really like I'll go to my friends to talk about it and one of them but sometimes also just like, take time to myself. Just think about like what happened blah blah blah and well just listen to music."* (Participant 8)

One student was able to share a reflection of how they adapted their behaviour to have more control of their anger at school and remain composed: *"Maybe just want like us controlling your anger…I pulled my head together in grade seven. Like in the last term, I pulled my head in."* (Participant 9)

Students in this study provided broad examples of how and why it is important to remain composed at school. Composure for Indigenous students involves reflecting on and adapting behaviours to suit the best positions for learning at school as well as drawing on resources for support. It is through these support resources (staff) that students are reminded of their abilities to succeed and the importance of remaining composed to be able to achieve within this learning context. Composure for Indigenous students also involves either laying low and concentrating on themselves or standing strong for others and leading the way through education. Composure is an important strength students draw on to stay afloat at school.

**Control**

The ability to stay composed involves levels of control and perceptions of autonomy. In relation to the 5C's of academic buoyancy. Martin et al. (2013) have associated control with maladaptive motivational factors such as anxiety, failure avoidance, uncertain control, self-handicapping, disengagement. The shame factor emerged as a factor to consider for control in this study. For Indigenous students, experiencing contested spaces throughout their school journey, being in control of their thoughts and actions is important to be academically buoyant. The shame factor places students in positions where they may feel they are being judged from multiple directions. The way that Indigenous students share how they stay in control, at school, is another example of their struggle with the tension involved in sacrificing one way of being over the other, including their own Indigenous ways of being (Nakata, 2007). Student response in this study reflected levels of anxiety (control) when discussing shame. However, contributing to academic buoyancy is the student ability to be strong and in control of their own life choices regardless of what others say or do. The shame factor means:

> *"Don't let other people control your life. If you want to do something, you go for it and you do it. Don't let other people tell you, you can't do it. And it's not worth it. Just do it perfectly..."* (Participant 8)

As Indigenous students navigate contested spaces at school, staying academically buoyant means adapting to new ways of behaving to operate successfully within the school space. The amount of control Indigenous students require is above the usual level of behaviour code switching that most students experience between home or community life and school life. Indigenous students are confronted with decisions that can influence how others, including family and community see them, particularly when the expectations of school behaviours can be very separate to how Indigenous students may behave at home or in community. Drawing on strengths to be in control of their behaviour is an important attribute

that demonstrates student abilities to be academically buoyant at school, especially as this can present as a contested space.

**Coordination**

In staying in control at school, Indigenous students need to find balance, particularly when they are placed within contested spaces of the cultural interface. Coordinating, planning, goal setting and managing time are all ways that students create this balance. Multiple participants share how they demonstrate levels of coordination to be academically buoyant at school. Participant 9 suggests: *"…balance, like if you're willing, if you're, if you wanna start working in year seven or eight, like balance your work life with your schoolwork."*

In their statement, Participant 3 agrees that balance is important:

> *"Yeah just that maintaining a balance of homework and putting in the extra hours or extra research...because if you prepare for it, there's always like chance and preparation is what I mean...is an opportunity. And like, you know, even that opportunity has like that knowing in your guts because everyone has their 15 minutes of fame."* (Participant 3)

Time management was another strategy used to support coordination, as Participant 1 states: *"Oh, definitely time management, I wasn't too good on that"* (Participant 1). Whilst Participant 8 shares that:

> *"You've got to like manage your time and your social life and just … because I like I know how hard it is because like I work and I also have like to keep up with my assessments and stuff like that. But I've managed my time."* (Participant 8)

One participant shared how a teacher helps them set goals and negotiates the learning task to motivate the student to complete. In reference to their teacher, Participant 2 states that:

> *"She like sometimes, like thing if I don't wanna do something, she'll like, what's it called, like, negotiate with me and like, yeah and like give me like the thing that I wanna, if I do this, then she'll do this for me or like she'll help me out with."* (Participant 2)

Participant responses demonstrate how students are aware that balancing school with home life is a skill involving certain control. Planning and goal setting plays an important role in building academically buoyant behaviours. It is through these behaviours that students allow themselves time to bounce back,

time to draw on other strengths to help gain control. Students are not only demonstrating good habits in work and life balance but share how they find balance whilst navigating contested spaces, such as those mentioned in Chapter Five, between school and home or community life.

**Confidence**

We have already seen where constructs within educational psychology determine student resilience at school. Educational psychology constructs such as self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-concept are strengths that play a vital role in developing and maintaining academic buoyancy at school through building confidence in multiple domains. Students experiencing school and managing contested spaces can struggle to build on these strengths as they are faced with many influential factors. We have heard students provide an example of one of these factors as they spoke about the 'shame factor' and how it can affect student ability to stay afloat at school. We have also seen where students receiving an A for the first time (e.g. "*I've never, I never used to get A's and then when I got my first A in English, I was just like so happy")* is the beginning of building the confidence needed to return to these successful moments:

Authors McClelland et al. (1953) believe that to avoid 'shame' Indigenous people's behaviour in educational settings is often driven by the motivation to avoid failure rather than seek success. For Indigenous students this greatly influences self-confidence and self-esteem, as it "dominates how many Aboriginal children think, talk and behave in the classroom" (Harrison, 2011, p.54).

However, it is through experiencing these challenges within the contested spaces, that Indigenous students have developed unique strengths, becoming academically buoyant. Students are given opportunities to develop and strengthen their belief in achieving (self-efficacy), perceptions of their self (self-esteem), and confidence within academically domain specific constructs (self-concept) (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2010). Students within this study provide examples of how they draw on these strengths to tackle challenges at school.

***Self-efficacy***

Self-efficacy is having the confidence in your ability to complete a task successfully, a belief in your ability to achieve (Sullivan, 2009). Indigenous students within this study talked of their success in achieving. Statements such as: *"I just feel excited that I done it."* (Participant 10), *"I just feel really good to know that I have people who are there to help"* (Participant 9), and*: "you're your own person. And you can do you can actually do well."* (Participant 2)

In these examples, participants reveal the emotions felt during these moments. Emotional experiences such as these trigger positive responses in students, building on their confidence to stay actively engaged

at school. These responses contribute to students' belief in achieving and their overall feelings and further contribute to strengthen student self-efficacy.

***Self-concept***

Self-concept is a useful construct for predicting and explaining human behaviour, and how behaviour is a result of positive or negative self-evaluations that motivate individuals. It is multidimensional and hierarchical in nature, comprising general academic self-concept and non-academic self-concept components (Shavelson et al., 1976).

Participants within this study provide examples of self-reflections that helped them to develop their self-concept in various domains at school. Participant 4 shares: *"I feel very proud of myself…I just feel excited that I done it…Very well. Yeah it makes me very happy to know that I'm on track to get a certificate as an Indigenous kid."* Participant 8 shares: *"I never used to get A's and then when I got my first A in English, I was just like so happy."* Participant 8 also shares a reflection on their behaviour in previous years and feeling: *"Yeah like you're just stupid..."*

Achieving a certain grade is an example of an event at school that can contribute to self-concept. Participant 9 reflects on a positive experience that contributed to their self-concept:

> *"And I got an A in maths, and I was like, so proud of myself...I've managed to make my family proud and like set a good example for my siblings…so, like, so like when the teachers when they [siblings] ask teachers like, what did [I] do, I don't want them [teachers] to tell them about like, my past about how like I did bad things, or I was with the wrong crowd..."* (Participant 9)

The reflection Indigenous students make both academically and socially add to developing and building capacity within domains of self-concept. When students are able to self-evaluate, realign and modify behaviours to suit learning concepts they are displaying high levels of self-concept that predict levels of academic buoyancy.

***Self-esteem***

Self-esteem, on the other hand, allows individuals to cope with the basic challenges of life, in addition to feeling deserving of happiness (Craven & Bodkin-Andrews, 2008). We have heard from participants about how the 'shame factor' can be a barrier to overcome when reaching goals leading to academic

buoyancy. Participants share moments where they have felt and experienced moments where they have felt a strong sense of self-esteem.

Participant 3 shares their advice on this concept: *"feel confident in yourself that you did the right thing."* While Participant 10 shares that their overall perception of themselves is like: *"I feel in a better position and like I feel happy and stuff."* Participant 4 provides some advice to other students to: *"don't ever say that you're not smart enough or you're not better than that person, because everyone's their own person….and everyone's more than capable to go anywhere that they want in life."* Participant 6, however suggests that other Indigenous students should: *"Yeah get confident to make friends…act like confident like today's gonna be a good day don't think about yesterday think about what's gonna happen today."*

Strengthening student self-esteem and their overall self-perception is important to consider when working with Indigenous students. Students need to be grounded in and with their overall perceptions of themselves to be strong enough to deal with the conflicting contested spaces presented to them at school, including the influence of the 'shame factor'. Knowing that they are capable is also a driving force that further contributes to students' self-esteem.

**Summary**

Literature pertaining to the predictors of academic buoyancy, in particular the 5C's (Martin et al., 2010), helps identify resilient traits and behaviours Indigenous students demonstrate through their experiences at school. Evidence of these predictors are relevant to participants in this study. As Indigenous students navigate the school system and work through contested spaces within the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007), their experience with academic buoyancy is unique to 'the Indigenous student experience'. Developing and strengthening internal and external strengths and assets for Indigenous students depends on the learning context and how students position themselves, including with others within the locale.

Through this investigation it is possible to see how resilient student traits and behaviours operate in developing student abilities across multiple domains, contributing to achievement motivation and ultimately building academically buoyant students. Indigenous students within this study, without the use of the actual language involving educational psychology, discuss experiences with commitment, composure, control, co-ordination, and confidence.

For Indigenous students, commitment requires high self-perceived ideas of their own abilities to achieve. Students need established levels of perseverance as a trait to support and drive persistent behaviours required to master daily operations within the school setting. Composure requires adapting behaviours to suit new and challenging contexts while having a sense of control involves giving up one way of being, adapting positions to remain cool calm and collected at school. Finding balance and coordination is the ability to plan and set goals that help provide direction and options for students to take when

navigating the school system. Confidence developed through student self-efficacy, self-concept and self-esteem is an important factor needed to negotiate contested spaces as students take on new behaviours and develop new traits, sometimes foreign to their own ways of being to reach levels of academic buoyancy.

Constructs within the field of educational psychology are useful in helping to understand how Indigenous students operate effectively at school. It is through these constructs that Indigenous students are provided opportunities to find positions within the locale that are the most conducive to their learning and success at school while simultaneously keeping them grounded and connected to their own knowledge systems.

# Chapter Eight: Navigating to Resources and Drawing on Strategies

Chapter Seven highlighted the predictors of academic buoyancy relating to Indigenous student experience and how this can contribute to the 5C model of academic buoyancy from an Indigenous perspective. Chapter Eight goes on to list some of the resources and strategies that are considered contributing factors to academic buoyancy for Indigenous students within this setting.

For Indigenous students, navigating the school system and the multiple positions that exist there involves many interactions between multiple systems and relationships including the contested spaces these interactions can present. Indigenous students have proven that amongst these complex positions they can find ways to be academically buoyant. They demonstrate this through their abilities to cope, bounce back and maintain healthy levels of wellbeing at school. Indigenous students navigate to and find positions within the 'school locale' that are conducive to building academic buoyancy. Amongst these are useful resources and strategies, including resources and strategies associated with the motivational predictors of academic buoyancy. These include and are not limited to those mentioned in the 5C model (Martin et al., 2010).

Evidence in this study shows how the remote Indigenous students in this study navigate to these sources, developing and strengthening academically buoyant traits and behaviours to reach satisfactory levels of achievement motivation. Remote Indigenous students in this study reflect on and share experiences of the resources, the 'who' and 'what', and the strategies, the 'how', that have helped develop their capacity to stay afloat at school.

In this chapter I will highlight the 'who' and 'what', the resources that remote Indigenous students reach out to and draw on at school. I will then discuss the 'how', the strategies that remote Indigenous students have developed and mastered through various interactions and experiences at school. Of the 11 students interviewed, most participants contributed to the discussion. Two participants did not contribute.

## Resources

Understanding 'who' and 'what' contributes to students' academic buoyancy is important to consider when attempting to make the school experience a positive one for Indigenous students. During this study participants were asked about what resources they navigate to for support. Participants share their experiences of the interactions amongst friends, teachers and family that have helped keep them afloat at school.

***Friends***

Although school is considered a place for learning, it is evident that most of the participants value being with friends at school and that this is a resource they reach out to when needing support to stay afloat at school. Feelings of wellbeing and happiness are experienced when being with friends. Participant 8 states:

> *"So, like I'm glad like me and my friends. Because you know, we've got each other and like, so my friends, like, I feel like staying afloat at school, my friends, they helped me with that a lot…because like I can be with my friends and my friends make me happy."*

A sense of being happy contributes to overall wellbeing. If Indigenous students are happy within the school environment, they will want to be involved with school, even if it is to be in the company of friends that help them and make them happy. We often do not consider how students form friendships and long-term relationships with peers, often from an early age. Participant 9 discusses a relationship developed over the entire school experience and how they rely on this friend for support in making the best decisions for themselves:

> *"I had this friend I've been friends with for a while now since we're little kids, and he's always been there for me, for ever, he will never stop. And he helped me realise, like, pretty much snapped me back into reality. He helped me realise that I was going down a bad path. And he was actually telling me that he didn't want that for me. And he wanted what's best me. And I didn't have to listen to them. If I didn't want to do it. I don't have to do it."* (Participant 9)

Through this experience Participant 9 is being redirected by a friend to a position that draws on more control and composure to re-engage at school. Having an influential, supportive peer is important in developing academic buoyancy for Indigenous students, particularly in this example where a friend was supporting the participant's choice in one way of being over another.

Participants also share, and agree on, how influential friends help keep them calm and composed whilst dealing with challenges at school. Participant 9 adds: *"Like your friends calming you down, being there for you and just telling you to just calm down it'll be alright."* While Participant 6 shares that: *"My friends [helped me survive school today]."* Participant 7 adds that friends are an important resource: *"My friends just kept telling me to keep my head up and look forward."*

Participants share how they are also learning through the behaviour and actions of their friends. The level of trust is important to also consider through these interactions. Indigenous students trust and find comfort with friends that are a good support that help them survive the school day.

These examples highlight the importance of friendships and the power of social learning as contributing factors to academic buoyancy. Developing relationships with peers requires risk taking behaviours as Indigenous students are left to decide on which behaviours and positions are suited to particular social scenes such as approaching friends and developing relationships. Friends expose Indigenous students to the push and pull factors and are the supports that will also encourage further risk taking, an ability that takes extra courage for Indigenous students as they experience contested spaces. As Indigenous students listen to advice from friends, they are placed in positions that require them to take risks and find what works for them despite what others think of them. In most cases, friends are experiencing the same challenges and therefore they have a shared understanding and can therefore learn off each other ways to best respond to challenges at school. As a result, developing social interactions for Indigenous students require skills that help build on trust and commitment. Friends are the part of the 'who' and 'how' that validate and reward risk taking behaviours, that contribute to Indigenous student motivation.

Friends also help Indigenous students reach states of happiness that lead to improved levels of wellbeing. Maintaining positive levels of wellbeing supports the ability of students to bounce back from everyday ups and downs. Relationships formed through friendships provide opportunities for students to experience another form of commitment and be guided to ways to remain in control and composed to meet expectations in the school learning environment. Friends are extremely important factors to consider when building academic buoyant capacities at school.

***Teachers***

Teachers are also amongst the 'who' and 'what' that contribute to building academic buoyancy amongst Indigenous students at school. Participants reflect on and share experiences of their interactions and relationships with various teachers and how these teachers have helped them build resilience, contributing to their academic buoyancy at school. Multiple participants share how teachers encourage them to persevere, provide explanations of the importance in doing so and show they care. Multiple participants share how teachers have been a valuable resource to draw on at school.

Participant 1 shares that: *"They [teachers] encouraged me and telling me like where I'm gonna go in the future from this subject, and what it's gonna to do for me, like beneficially, and then that just kept me going."*

In reference to their teacher, we have heard where Participant 2 shared that the teacher negotiated with them how to approach a particular task: *"She like sometimes, like thing if I don't wanna do something, she'll like, what's it called, like, negotiate with me…"*

Whilst Participant 8 shares:

> *"Like they [teachers] just want what's best for you. Because and then they're there for you. They'll help you through whatever you're going through and like what else for schoolwork you find out they'll help you through that. They just only want what's best for you know."* (Participant 8)

Through these examples students share how teachers empower them, highlighting their strengths, their capabilities to reach success. It is also evident in this example that there are relationships based on trust as not only do teachers feel comfortable in challenging students to persevere, but students understand the positions that teachers are coming from, they want the best for them. Teacher support in these examples also highlight the importance of achievement recognition in letting students know they are capable of success.

Participants 8 shares how multiple teachers support them in this way:

> *"I love Miss B. She's very hard working you know, she helps a lot of us too. And also I really loved Miss S too, you know, because she's helped me with my English so much because like last year, I like use to like fail all my classes. Yeah. She's really pushed me to like, pass my class and I did pass my class. And I did also with Miss M too… she can be really hard too Miss J but I love her like she's alright she's helped me pass."* (Participant 8)

Participant 9 shares a similar experience:

> *"Yeah, she's [teacher] really pushed me to like, pass my class and I did pass my class. And I did also with Miss M too…she can be really hard too Miss M but I love her like she's alright she's helped me pass…And I had Miss A to help me. She helped me get through all my work studies. And she's actually pushing me to be the best person I can be."* (Participant 9)

Teacher support, in this example, demonstrates how teachers are in a good position to not only connect and develop relationships with students, but in a position that recognises and understands what students

are capable of and how to develop these capabilities. In this example participants share how they were failing; the teacher recognised this and has provided the student with the tools to build capability to be the best they can be. Participants also highlighted the importance of teachers supporting them and building positive relationships with them.

For example, participants recognise that: *"You've got teachers to guide you…you just gotta like just know like there's teachers there, they're gonna help you you're not gonna fail like this always help around but then when you leave school, you're not always gonna have that."* (Participant 9). Participant 9 adds that it is important to: *"Make good relationships with your teachers so you know that you can ask for help whenever…to know that I have people who are there to help."* Most of the participants were able to recall that: *"there was always that teacher…and they helped me through that. I got my stuff done"* (Participant 8). Participant 5 recalls that: *"Miss C."* was able to help them while Participant 2 shared that: *"Miss M does help me."* When asked where they could go to for support at school, Participant 6 states: *"Yeah, probably teachers…they tell us what to do and what additions mean, how to subtract…tell me what to write sometimes."*

Teachers prove to be important resources (who, how) for Indigenous students to draw on. Teachers empower students and support student wellbeing. They model behaviours important for students to follow and apply to their learning experiences within contested spaces at school. Through these processes teachers are providing students with valuable tools and developing positive constructs of self to build on student academic buoyancy. As teachers network and build relationships with students and the school community, they also find knowledgeable positions about the most effective ways to support Indigenous students and develop capability. Teachers have insight into what it takes to manage and succeed in a complex school environment and are in a position to see where students need support with building on academic buoyant traits and behaviours to navigate the school environment successfully.

***Family***

Family is also a valuable resource in supporting students to find success in the school environment. Participants share how family have been a support and a valuable resource to reach out to when needing help to stay afloat at school. Participants referring to family as an important 'who', highlight multiple reasons why in this section.

Participant 3 states that having family is important as it is: *"Someone there that is giving me the right advice…yeah mum and dad for sure when they're free."* Participant 4 expresses the importance of family support and having access to the right advice:

> *"Fam is just that number one support. Yeah, always been there from day one.…and it just helps me through my journey as an*

> *Indigenous kid and helps me get far. Definitely family support…they always remind me that life, life is always gonna be hard."* (Participant 4)

Examples of family support here show how participants connect with family and rely on them being there as a constant in their lives. Through family connections, values are established, providing the foundations needed to cope as an 'Indigenous kid'. These values are embedded within and stem from knowledge systems unique to Indigenous families. In most cases, family are the ones that provide the first knowledge source for Indigenous students, hence why participants will value family and the advice given.

Family connections also involve respecting and looking after family members. Participant 9 states that it is important to:

> *"…keep your friends and family very close like I know my aunty always tells me she's the one, who's always gonna be there for you, she's gonna be there for you through thick and thin that your friends might not be there for you."*

Participant 8 discusses the importance of family relying on them also, in particular through being a family role model to younger siblings, providing advice from their experiences:

> *"And mum, she was like really worried for him too she's like come on [little brother] you stop getting into…if you like, keep getting into fights and stuff like this, you're gonna end up with a bad name for yourself. And like, he's already put a bad name for himself, like I told him too like, come on, bro pull yourself together. It's not even…you're not even good you think you're good, you're not even good."* (Participant 8)

As Indigenous students take risks, they also face the possibility of failing. Keeping family close can be considered an important support in staying afloat as having family as a constant and knowing that they will be there from the beginning and into the future is comforting to know for Indigenous students. Learning from failure contributes to the development of resilient traits and behaviours. Sharing these experiences is important in helping other family members build this resilience to be able to cope and find success at school.

Family form part of the 'who' that help build on and strengthen students' overall confidence to take risks and are the supports that are there to help support times of failure. Connections and interactions with families stem from unique knowledge systems that have rules, and certain responsibilities. Recognising and understanding that Indigenous students have a strong connection to and value family

is an important factor to consider when building academically buoyant traits, particularly when targeting achievement motivation. Equally important is recognising and understanding that advice given by other Indigenous family members comes from positions experienced by individuals who have faced the contested spaces of the cultural interface, including those that exist within the school system. Providing advice through comments such as 'it's gonna be hard' is one way that families help prepare their children for what lies ahead for an 'Indigenous kid' on their journey.

**Strategies**

As Indigenous students navigate to resources, they are provided opportunities to develop, strengthen and identify with strategies that support resilient traits and behaviours required to adapt and cope at school. Participants in this study shared how they see themselves operating at school and how they expect others to see them operating at school. The strategies they use and have developed to build academic buoyancy involves all of the above: peers, teachers and family. Participants in this study reflect on how they have reached successful moments and kept their heads above water.

One participant referred to how teachers can support them by considering Indigenous ways of learning when teaching them:

> *"For teachers just understand our needs, as Indigenous kids, we learn at a different level, learn at a different pace and we're just we're different in many ways. But we are all different and intelligent. While we all are, we all learn in different ways n we're our own person, yet we're not the same as you know, other non-Indigenous people."* (Participant 4)

In this statement, Participant 4 highlights and acknowledges that even though there is a difference, Indigenous students are still intelligent and capable. This expression alone outlines how this participant experiences the contested space of the Cultural Interface at school. This is an example of how an Indigenous student see themselves as an Indigenous learner and how they expect others to see them as learners as they take up multiple learning positions at school.

Relating to the above statement, other participants highlight how teachers have acknowledged them as Indigenous learners and how they have provided strategies to get them through tough times at school. Participant 8 states that: *"this year she's really like the first like couple of terms she's really helped me like stay on board and like keep track of my work and manage my time and stuff like that."* In this statement, Participant 8 refers to how the teacher has provided them with strategies involving coordination. These strategies help students master their coordination at school, helping them to manage time, organise their thoughts and set goals to complete assessment tasks.

We have seen where multiple students highlight how teachers have taught them the skill of perseverance, to keep going. Participant 8 explains that: *"…she's really pushed me to like, pass my class and I did pass my class."* Participant 9 also explains that: *"…and she's actually pushing me to be the best person I can be."* Through this strategy, students can identify with their capabilities, an important motivating factor in achieving and finding success.

Some participants have discovered individual strategies that have supported them in finding success at school. Participant 8 refers to drawing on a strategy that involves approaching teachers for further support and persevering to seek further support at school:

> *"Yeah, she's not just gonna yeah, she's not just gonna like leave you one sided like oh yeah, you don't want to be in class alright, then you can do whatever you want stay out here whatever no because she wants you to push you to the best of your ability…Like, I used to have like, put your hand up, I put my hand up and I asked for help. And I even like, stayed behind at school also asked teachers to help me with my cover letter and stuff like that."* (Participant 8)

In this example, it is evident that students are willing to take steps to further improve themselves at school. Reaching out to teachers for further support, particularly after school hours, is a risk this student was willing to take, particularly when they may have other responsibilities that they need to sacrifice to be able to get on top of their studies.

Feedback from teachers is also important in highlighting student capability. Feedback provides opportunities for students to identify with how they can adapt behaviours, including academic thought, as a strategy to tackle future school tasks. Participant 3 discusses how they draw on critical feedback from teachers as a motivational tool to persevere and get better at tasks: *"Yeah, just take that constructive criticism that the teacher has given you what you could do better next time…on new assessment and just take that into mind."*

Working with feedback from other peers also adds to strategies used to adapt and master school tasks. One participant also spoke about using and considering their peers and family to help them through the school experience. Participant 3 discusses how they rely on and use peers as a strategy to not only tackle academic tasks but for support in overcoming challenges at school:

> *"To achieve that, I try to do most of it myself. If I get stuck ask, some other students that are doing the same thing or same topic as me for better help, like not cheating this. Ask them*

> *what their idea is. What's their perspective around it. So, I get a kinda different angle that I can work on."* (Participant 3)

Approaching peers, particularly if operating within a highly competitive academic environment, involves strategies that evolve from managing interactions within the contested space of the cultural interface. In this example, Participant 3 is approaching non-Indigenous peers to source their ideas on set tasks. For Indigenous students this sometimes involves a lot of courage and is a risk to take, particularly when entering this position sometimes involves taking on other ways of being, different to their own.

In a similar way, Participant 3 refers to emotional support and suggests to:

> *"just talk or just go see your friends I guess, like one that you obviously trust and one you can trust them to hear your problems. So, you can talk about it and figure it out together."*

Talking with peers exposes Indigenous students to the experiences of others and strategies to approach different situations, including social and emotional wellbeing experiences. Sometimes others can help Indigenous students find composure and easier paths to navigate amongst the two worlds they often experience.

Other participants referred to the importance of finding ways to support their social and emotional wellbeing at school. Participant 1 reflects on the fact that: *"I took into account, like my mental state, and my physical state, and then the people around me. And so like, if I had like bad people around me, then I just had to cancel them out."* Whilst Participant 2 adds:

> *"Also just like, make sure do what you can to create, like a positive area and do like what (other student) said before, like you're pushing out people that, like, make it harder for you to learn."*

Developing the skills to choose between others can be difficult for Indigenous students, particularly when it could involve sacrificing one way of being over another. As Participant 2 shares sometimes making this choice can have a negative effect.

> *"Yeah, it's just that mindset that negative mindset that they [other students] have. I have [got into a negative mindset] but mum normally switches me back into it."* (Participant 2)

Yet participants highlight and acknowledge that to stay afloat at school, they need to surround themselves with those that will empower them and not pull them down.

Other strategies shared by participants involve elements of achievement motivation. For example, Participant 1 discusses how having aspirations for the future is a strategy they take to focus on reaching their goal.

> *"What did I do to focus on it? I focussed and I thought about my future. And then I thought holistically like I took into account everything like what I would be doing in the future. What I said to myself is, what would I change to make a better me? And how can I get there?" (*Participant 1)

In this example Participant 1 is searching for ways to 'get there', to reach their aspirations. The strategy involving aspirations is the first step in recognising that they can achieve for Indigenous students. Understanding what one is capable of is a motivating factor in revisiting the experience again and having a go.

In this section, we hear students' expressions of what works for them and how they have come to develop strategies to stay afloat at school. It is important to understand that students come to develop these strategies through experiencing multiple positions throughout the school system. More importantly, however, is how they manage to develop these strategies as they face the contested spaces of the cultural interface. Teacher interactions involving Indigenous students need to take an approach that understand that Indigenous learning positions are products of how students experience these contested spaces. Strategies that support these positions like coordination and perseverance help Indigenous students identify with their strengths, motivating them to continue. Interactions with peers are part of the contested spaces where students are given the opportunities to experiment with what works for them. Recognising where these interactions result in negative consequences is useful in identifying how students can be empowered to bounce back.

**Summary**

Amongst the concern for Indigenous education and student engagement and performance, there are Indigenous students that are doing well. The 'who', 'what' and 'how' in this chapter reveal just how Indigenous students are coping and succeeding at school – how they are being academically buoyant.

Using these resources and strategies, participants have demonstrated their ability to choose paths that present opportunities to find success, promoting positive engagement. Friends, family, and teachers are all part of the who that students interact with. The multiple interactions at school provide the skills and build on individual traits and behaviours required to manage contested spaces. Amongst these responses are the underlying factors, the predictors of academic buoyancy, composure, commitment, control, coordination, confidence and risk taking.

Participants have reflected on their experiences and can see where to position themselves and what position others need to take around them, including teachers. Teachers are one of the most valuable resources for Indigenous students. It is important teachers understand that certain behaviours such as truancy, shame, lack of motivation and disengagement could be the result of the conflicting positions and spaces Indigenous students are experiencing at school. As teachers develop relationships with students, they need to understand how Indigenous students see themselves as learners so that they can develop capability in areas where support is needed.

Family on the other hand have experienced and know what strategies and resources work and are valuable in aiding and equipping students to cope at school. Thus, it is important schools work on and develop positive relationships with families and consider how contested spaces at school can become barriers to learning.

In this chapter Indigenous student voices highlight what works for them at school. This provides an insight into a unique experience and approach to school for remote Indigenous students. It provides us with an idea of how best to support Indigenous students as they adapt to the school environment.

# Chapter Nine: Discussion and Conclusion

Within this thesis, the four analysis chapters showed how Indigenous secondary students attending school in a remote setting spoke about academic buoyancy. In Chapter Five, I highlighted the challenges that exist within multiple contextual factors relevant to these students, including within the contested spaces of the cultural interface. Unlike non-Indigenous students, Indigenous students are presented with added challenges when trying to navigate the school setting successfully. Evidence within this chapter highlights the academic buoyant abilities of Indigenous students as they respond to challenges at school. Chapter Six focused on motivation, providing evidence that Indigenous students can build their individual capabilities through motivational experiences. This chapter demonstrated that a wider range of protective factors are at play for Indigenous students. Chapter Six was important as it helped respond to the gap in the research mentioned earlier. This chapter contextualised the assets and resources Indigenous students draw on to support academic buoyant behaviour as it is expressed differently to the standard academic literature. This may provide educators with relevant information to build these capabilities for Indigenous students. Chapter Seven highlighted how the predictors of academic buoyancy for Indigenous students from this study aligns with the 5C's Framework (Martin et al., 2010). Evidenced within this chapter is how the predictors of Indigenous students are context specific, and how these could be considered within the 5C Framework from an Indigenous perspective from a remote context. Finally, Chapter Eight presented evidence outlining other contributing factors, resources, and strategies that Indigenous students draw on or navigate to help them stay afloat at school. This chapter provided examples of how family, friends and teachers are important in supporting Indigenous students within this learning context. Highlighted in this chapter is evidence of the contributing factors and support systems that are working for Indigenous students towards strengthening academically buoyant traits and behaviours at school.

Chapter Nine presents a discussion on Indigenous student academic buoyancy and the implications for future research proposals and educational practice in supporting Indigenous students. I will begin the discussion by revisiting the aims of the research and restating the research questions. I will then draw on the thesis content to answer the research questions and include a statement on how I have answered these questions. Following the research questions, I will discuss the theoretical and educational implications of the research. This chapter concludes with a reflection on the study.

## Research Aims and Questions

The motivation for this study has been influenced by my experience as an Indigenous teacher working in a remote school and the reflections on my own journey as an Indigenous person who has also experienced remote schooling as an Indigenous student. The original idea for this study stemmed from my interests in understanding how some Indigenous students were doing well at school despite Closing

the Gap reports revealing lower outcomes for remote areas compared to major cities (Australian Government, 2020). I saw a great deal of importance in investigating what these Indigenous students were doing to find success at school and how educators could learn from students who are 'doing well'. Of greater interest was the thought that the data from this project could potentially inform approaches to improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students in remote schooling.

After reviewing the literature, I decided to draw on a psychoeducational construct, associated with educational resilience, known as academic buoyancy. The idea of academic buoyancy and 'staying afloat' appeared to be a good fit for this idea of 'doing well'. The study focused on what predictive/protective factors were relevant for Indigenous students demonstrating academic buoyancy within the remote schooling context.

To gain a better insight into the predictive/protective factors, the method required an approach that would get Indigenous students to talk about 'everyday resilience' and staying afloat at school. Therefore, the research was guided by the following questions answered through group interviews:

How is academic buoyancy defined and experienced by Indigenous secondary students attending school in a remote setting?

What factors contribute to academic buoyancy for Indigenous secondary students?

**How Is Academic Buoyancy Defined and Experienced by Indigenous Secondary Students?**

With respect to the first research question, participants described and experienced academic buoyancy through the development of their own personal learning capabilities at school. For the Indigenous students in this study however, part of this experience involved experiencing and responding to the multiple contested spaces of the cultural interface. Indigenous students demonstrated they were able to draw on unique motivational strengths to successfully navigate the contested spaces of the cultural interface, even amongst the failed attempts and judgement from others (shame factor). These unique strengths are the predictors that demonstrate academically buoyant capabilities. Therefore, to answer the first research question for this study, Indigenous students define their unique experience of academic buoyancy through their experiences of achievement motivation, performance, and engagement as they navigate the multiple contested spaces of the school system.

Where Martin et al. (2021) found lower mean levels of motivation and engagement among Indigenous students using standardised measures, this study provided context specific examples of where Indigenous students were drawing on motivating factors to stay afloat at school. The motivational student experiences unique to the Indigenous students in this study were expressed through; education as priority, aspirations (educational intention), achievement recognition, relationships, identity, risk taking (opportunities), role models, and social learning.

For example, prioritising education meant that students understood the importance of turning up and staying ahead of their learning. The academic buoyant traits highlighted here were a combination of student attitudes towards and valuing learning, knowing that school can be a positive experience and there are opportunities to be successful. This reflects Martin et al. (2013), who argued that valuing education was also an emerging theme from literature involving Aboriginal student educational outcomes.

Turning up at school supports student aspirations (educational intentions). In this study having aspirations gave students a purpose for staying at school and a goal to reach. Authors Martin et al. (2013) state that academic buoyancy plays a salient role in Indigenous students' educational intentions, further suggesting that these intentions decrease as students navigate through to senior year, particularly as there is more emphasis on their Indigenous identity (learner locale). However, this study evidenced student aspirations as students were planning towards their future. This suggests that Indigenous students in this study were experiencing successful transitions through school and into where they see themselves as learners in the future.

Achievement recognition is what supports student aspirations in this study. Martin et al. (2013) state that feedback through achievement recognition develops levels of control in Indigenous students as they are provided opportunities to understand what to do or not to do the next time. This motivational factor provides opportunities for students to understand what strength/s, strategies, and support work in improving outcomes and overcoming their fear of failure.

Relationships were another way that participants experienced and defined academic buoyancy. Students were developing and maintaining positive relationships with peers, families, and teachers. The benefits of experiencing both positive and negative relationships helped to build individual capabilities required to respond to the contested spaces at school in this study. Indigenous students in this study discussed the benefits of establishing positive relationships with teachers. This supports Martin et al. (2020), who posit that good teacher-student relationships may also be a basis for promoting academic buoyancy.

In the current study we see where identity facilitated academic buoyancy as students experienced with the 'push' and 'pull' effect and how to best position themselves as learners. As well as sharing the challenges that they feel shape them as learners, it is interesting to note that Indigenous students in this study also drew on how others saw them as learners, as a strength to perform and find success at school. As mentioned in the literature review, Rutter (1987) discusses a challenge model of resilience whereby individuals' exposure to modest levels of risk help youth overcome challenges. While it has been noted in the literature that Indigenous students can often be burdened by a history of negative stereotypes (Martin et al., 2021), Indigenous students in this study were responding to the stereotypes and assumptions about them as learners and using this as a motivation to build on individual capability.

Experimenting with ways to respond to the assumptions and stereotypes about them as learners involved risk taking behaviours by participants in this study. Students experimented with what works best, especially in and amongst the cultural interface, in supporting their buoyant capabilities. Munns (1998) states that Indigenous students are known to take risks in many other parts of life but were more reluctant to take educational risks. Part of this risk taking is to do with the fear of failure, with students not wanting to be criticized, singled out, or being shamed (Halse & Robinson, 1999). Indigenous students in this study discovered what works for them at school through risk taking behaviours. Here, Indigenous students experienced improved capabilities and were therefore drawing on positive risk-taking behaviours for motivation. These findings support evidence from previous observations where perceived successful Indigenous students were valuing education (e.g. Munns et al., 2008).

This study evidenced the importance of role models in developing and fostering academic buoyancy. Indigenous students were provided opportunities to observe how others are successful and more importantly to see how Indigenous role models respond to and navigate the cultural interface. It is often suggested that education sites provide opportunities for students to have Indigenous role models present (eg. Britton & Craven, 2000c; Rahman 2010). Indigenous students in this study, however, highlighted how not just teachers, but also family members and peers are positive role models in their experiences of academic buoyancy.

Observing role models is a form of social learning and in this study social learning supports student agency as Indigenous students navigate Indigenous and non-Indigenous learning positions. Students demonstrated an ability to learn from others by trialling certain behaviours when adapting to unfamiliar learning positions. Indigenous students in this study need to see how other people manage contested spaces to find learning positions required to be successful at school. This finding broadly supports the work of other studies in this area linking social learning with adapting behaviours (eg. Bandura, 2006).

Students' experiences and definitions of academic buoyancy was also associated with student agency (not giving up) through social learning and experimenting with and negotiating the cultural interface. Student agency here was evidenced through student ability to make meaningful reflections on their own behaviours, and that of others to adapt their own approaches to become actively engaged in their schooling. Agentic behaviours in this study evidence how students were learning and changing behaviours, as they discovered new strengths, and drew on existing internal and external strengths that supported an increase in their learning capabilities amongst contested spaces. This finding is consistent with that of Nakata (2007), who explains that Indigenous students are constantly being asked to manage multiple learning positions, something he refers to as the push-pull between Indigenous and non-Indigenous positions.

In fact, an interesting finding in this study was how Indigenous student experiences of academic buoyancy was enhanced through how they were experimenting with ways to respond to the multiple

contested spaces at school as they experienced the cultural interface. A common experience within the contested space emerging from this study, was the 'shame factor' and how Indigenous students from this remote community respond to shame. Other studies refer to these factors as the negative dimensions of motivation and engagement that Indigenous students score higher on than non-Indigenous students, such as anxiety (Martin et al., 2013). The challenge of the shame factor was also associated with multiple factors, including with the fear of failure as mentioned in previous studies (Munns, 1998). Here Indigenous students provided evidence of their capabilities to respond to the shame factor.

In the current study it was also revealed that shame and the fear of failure, was also associated with not having what it takes to succeed (capability), how others saw them as learners and having to adapt to ways that are unfamiliar and sometimes uncomfortable that may have repercussions from family and or friends. An example in the study included public speaking and leadership roles. For Indigenous students public speaking can be difficult because of the language expectations and the highly contested 'shame factor' and or the idea of being a 'big noter' among peers as mentioned in previous studies (e.g. Munns, 2005). Indigenous student responses in this study demonstrated where they were willing to overcome the 'shame factor', by experimenting with ways to respond to the contestation by drawing on various strengths.

The current study emphasised how Indigenous students experience and define academic buoyancy whilst experiencing the multiple contested spaces, the challenges. Students were motivated by these experiences, supported by academic buoyant behaviours. Experiences and definitions of academic buoyancy in this study show how Indigenous students were developing their learning capabilities, helping them to stay afloat at school.

**What are the Factors that Contribute to Academic Buoyancy for Indigenous Secondary Students?**

The second question in this study sought to determine what factors contribute to or predict academic buoyancy. Also known as the protective factors, the predictors of academic buoyancy are explained as the traits and or behaviours that contributed to student academic buoyancy. The study revealed that Indigenous student predictors of academic buoyancy align with Martin and Marsh's (2006) 5C Framework, that relationships with teachers, peers and family were important in supporting the predictors and that students were drawing on all of these with limited whole school support programs. Hence, to answer the second research question, the factors that contribute to academic buoyancy for Indigenous secondary students are the internal strategies, the 5C's that students draw on and the resources they navigate to are family, teachers and peers.

The predictors to academic buoyancy that emerged in this study are consistent with that of Martin and Marsh's (2006) 5C framework. However, unlike results determined by survey results (Martin & Marsh, 2006), Indigenous students within this study provided real life examples of how they demonstrate these

predictors whilst managing the multiple contested spaces they experience because of navigating the cultural interface. Although predictors from this study align with the 5C framework, the predictors revealed in this study need to be understood in the context of these students and what motivates them.

In a review of the literature, Martin et al. (2013) highlight the importance in encouraging Indigenous students to draw on the 5C's to overcome academic adversity. The authors talk about the importance of coordination, goal setting and reaching personal bests to support Indigenous student success (Martin, 2012). Successful coordination further supports self-efficacy (Martin, 2007). Additionally, the authors highlight where control is developed through timely feedback to students (Hattie, 2009) and administering rewards or acknowledgement recognition in supporting students making better informed learning decisions (Thompson, 1994). Indigenous students in this study shared their unique experiences of this.

Other concepts highlighted as predictors of academic buoyancy were educational intention and within this study the older students were better able to discuss, reflect on elements of the 5C's including their educational intentions (aspirations). This finding is opposite to a previous study whereby Martin et al. (2013) suggest that although Aboriginal students in junior high school share the same level of educational aspirations as their non-Aboriginal counterparts by senior high school, Aboriginal status negatively predicted educational intention. The study also suggests that academic adversity facing Indigenous students in senior school is such that academic buoyancy now predicts their educational intentions more so than it predicts the intentions of non-Aboriginal students (Martin et al., 2013). Findings within this investigation, however, reveal that older Indigenous students were keen to engage in further study or post school pathways and were aware of the commitment and the coordination required to reach this goal.

In terms of the resources Indigenous students navigate to for support, it has been well established in a recent study that student-teacher relationships are important for Indigenous students (e.g., Martin et al., 2022). In this study, I was able to establish one mechanism through which this works: teachers help Indigenous students to recognise their own abilities and that they are capable. Through strong relationships with others, Indigenous students in this study were able to consolidate the internal assets, experiences, through observations to make future decisions.

Nakata (2011) argues that Indigenous students from remote and traditional contexts need more higher order language and thinking. In this study students were relying on feedback through achievement recognition in order to plan how to approach similar tasks or how they could apply this knowledge to new learning contexts.

***Summary of Research Questions***

The research questions designed for this study were valuable in guiding this research approach and the interpretations that followed. In talking to students about everyday resilience, I was able to gather enough information to successfully answer both research questions. With respect to the first research question, I have provided details of how Indigenous students in this study define academic buoyancy. I have shown how they define academic buoyancy as being capable learners that can stay afloat at school. I have also provided an insight into the everyday challenges, including the challenges that involve contested spaces within the cultural interface, that students were able to reflect on to share how they experience and define academic buoyancy. In reference to the second research question, I have provided a contextualised insight into the protective factors and the predictors of academic buoyancy relative to Indigenous students attending a high school in a remote community.

These questions help clarify clear distinctions between Western and Indigenous resilience, as they help to draw out a contextualised view of the resilient capabilities of students at school and how these support Indigenous student academic buoyancy. Indigenous student discussions of their experiences at school zoomed in and therefore highlighted the micro decisions that lead to academic buoyancy. Based on students' discussions within this study, there was more of a contextualised view of academic buoyancy and the different manifestations (e.g. shame). We could see where the students were at conflict with themselves and therefore the agency, amongst other strengths, required to negotiate that conflict needs to be understood as academic buoyancy in this study.

Seeking clarification through these questions has provided an opportunity to define unique Indigenous contextual experiences on academic buoyancy that in turn, can be used to extend on and inform the western concepts of academic buoyancy. For example, the 5C framework stems from ideas that involve western interpretations of what motivates students (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students) to learn in the context of non-Indigenous experiences. This study highlights what motivates Indigenous students at school, but more importantly, how students are motivated whilst negotiating the contested spaces of schooling and what supports them.

## Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications involving the present results are significant in multiple respects. The data presents a view of Indigenous students as successful learners, and the cultural interface theory and Indigenous standpoint theory could be used to guide efforts to improve educational outcomes. The interview approach proved to be a reliable method by providing a rich contextual representation of student experiences and academic buoyancy.

The findings in this study may help us understand how to build Indigenous student capability as it demonstrates that Indigenous students are capable of 'doing well' at school and in fact do possess the mechanisms that allow for success. The data shared some ideas that are seen as important for Indigenous students (relationships, identity, aspirations) and how these are linked to how students' function at school to find success. More importantly, the results reveal unique contextual factors important to Indigenous students, that educators need to consider in their approaches to supporting successful moments in this remote setting.

These findings raise intriguing questions regarding the nature and extent of the contribution of the cultural interface theory and Indigenous standpoint theory in helping to provide a new understanding into what is working for students and how they stay afloat when navigating the school system. Using the cultural interface theory with academic buoyancy allowed for a focus on the locale of the learner, providing an insight and a framework to understand what motivates Indigenous students, what helps them (protective factors) to adapt and what helps them to build capacity. Academic buoyancy helps Indigenous students to identify with strengths and assets to navigate school systems successfully. The contribution of the study demonstrates how the cultural interface approach can deepen academic buoyancy research by working at the locale at the learner. By combining the cultural interface theory and academic buoyancy, we can see what impacts or supports Indigenous learner locale and the mechanisms at play when Indigenous students are responding to the conflict within the contested spaces at school.

As academic buoyancy stems from positive psychology, it may be useful that future research into similar topics involve a psycho-educational intervention approach. In the context of Indigenous education, positive psychology recognises that there are gaps in the lives and the systems supporting Indigenous students but that there are also other dimensions, particularly in which Indigenous students do not under-perform and in many cases succeed (Martin, 2006, p. 38). Academic buoyancy is a concept that looks at how Indigenous students are succeeding, what protective factors, assets, and resources they are drawing on to stay afloat at school.

A group interview methodology approach played a significant role in this research to promote Indigenous youth experiences with academic buoyancy. Hence, another interesting implication of this study is the possibility of using interview-based approaches as an effective method to investigate this concept. Until now, there have been no published interview-based studies investigating academic buoyancy pertaining to Indigenous students. In the context of remote Indigenous students, how students act may not be familiar to teaching staff or researchers who have an expectation of what academic buoyancy looks like. The results presented here are a valuable contribution to the literature as they provide a discussion-based perspective of experiences of Indigenous students within learning contexts providing an idea of what works.

**Educational Implications**

Previous literature (Guenther & Osborne, 2018; Vass, 2013) has critiqued assumptions that Indigenous education is failing and needing fixing. This study provides an opportunity to address gaps that do exist in students' educational outcomes through positive intervention that extends on Indigenous student views of academic buoyancy. Throughout this study participants demonstrated many resilient traits and behaviours, suggesting that it is possible to strengthen academic buoyancy for Indigenous students by implementing strategies into educational policy that further support teacher capabilities in understanding the learner locale of Indigenous students.

The current study presents findings that evidence how these Indigenous students display many resilient traits and behaviours, including student agency and the ability to reflect, adapt and learn. This provides an opportunity for educators to connect with and help develop further, strengthening student agency for lifelong learning. I will look at these educational implications at three levels: implications for students, teachers, and policy.

The results from this study have the potential to develop and structure approaches that are aimed at supporting Indigenous students in the context of their communities and building the capacity of teachers in these contexts. Educators could build individuals' capacities through curriculum and pedagogical approaches. One approach could be to provide opportunities where Indigenous students are encouraged to 'have a go' at tasks, with the knowledge that they will be provided opportunities to reflect on valuable, structured feedback whether successful or not. Martin et al. (2022) discuss the importance of supporting students in understanding how they can correct and master tasks to build capability. This would encourage students to return to these tasks as they felt more comfortable and confident with the outcomes.

Rutter (1987) identified stages in building a capacity to deal with setbacks and adversity that involve reducing an individual's exposure to risk. It is important that Indigenous students are exposed to these risks and made aware of the contested spaces that pull and push on their learner locale to better respond to this conflict at school. Educators should not simply shield students from experiences within the contested spaces but rather, educators need to see this as extra learning within the cultural interface and the importance for Indigenous students to experience and grow from. Morales (2000) has identified that when individuals are provided opportunities to identify major risks, they will draw on protective factors that help deal with the risk and when they see what works they will apply these protective factors again. Hence, educators need to be reminded that through the experiences within the cultural interface, students are provided opportunities to take risks that contribute to their growth and capability building. Where Nakata (2002) argues that Indigenous students can and do engage pragmatically and strategically with the inevitable everyday complexity that accompanies knowledge production at the Cultural Interface, it important that educators have meaningful conversations with students within this space.

Such arguments provide a different approach then the current focus on student mental health and anxiety in school. In relation to the 5C's of academic buoyancy, past research has identified Aboriginal students as significantly higher in anxiety and control (Martin et al., 2013). Rather than focusing on educational anxiety as the point of intervention, educators could provide students with another opportunity to understand what's happening internally and how others have negotiated similar contested spaces. This form of social learning will support and foster student agency, a trait required to reflect on and adapt behaviours.

At the teacher level, the cultural interface theory could be applied to professional development and building teacher capacity in understanding Indigenous students. Another important finding from the study was the importance of positive teacher-student relationships for Indigenous students. Martin and Marsh (2008) discovered contextual factors such as positive teacher-student relationships that may foster greater academic buoyancy. As we have seen in this study, the locale of the Indigenous learner is influenced by a multitude of contextual factors. Therefore, it is important that we build teacher capacity in understanding the cultural interface and what Indigenous learners are experiencing and how they are navigating the school system because of this. Multiple authors (Bishop & Dursksen, 2020; Burgess et al., 2019; Lowe et al., 2021) suggest that teachers seek to understand Indigenous learners as knowledge producers and have a solid understanding of their own axiological and ontological positions to limit personal judgement. Professional development in concepts such as learner locale and personal reflections that highlight influential discourse over time could benefit teachers in understanding the Indigenous learner whilst challenging their own western understandings of.

As teacher-student relationships was a predictor of academic buoyancy for participants in this study, it is important that one of the interventions include a focus on building teacher and student capacity. Interventions to support teacher-student relationships mentioned in previous studies have suggested teacher professional development as a means of assisting at risk students (Martin, 2013) and importantly one of the areas recommended for professional development by other authors (eg. Becker & Luthar, 2002; Martin & Dowson, 2009). As well as supporting the educational implications of this study, strategies conducive to supporting teacher-student relationships need to be included in school pedagogical approaches. An approach that could be adapted is a 'pastoral pedagogy' approach (Martin, 2006), whereby the pedagogy connects to the individual student on three levels: *substantive relationship* (connection between student and the subject matter and what is being taught), *interpersonal relationship* (connection between student and teacher) and the *pedagogical relationship* (connection between the student and the pedagogy). Other authors (Munns et al., 2008: Martin, 2003, 2006; Martin & Dowson, 2009) suggest similar levels of relationship relevant to education outcomes for Indigenous students. Both approaches insist on strengthening relationships in the school for Indigenous students.

Another possible approach to helping teachers understand Indigenous learner locale to be able to effectively establish relationships, therefore, could be the delivery of professional development. Workshops and or the delivery of the cultural interface theory, relative to the context of education and location, could strengthen teacher-student relationships.

At a policy level, one approach currently included in the Queensland Government's *A guide to the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework* looks at 'building student success' through a process of collaborative planning for years one to nine (Department of Education, 2022). This approach allows for students to attempt tasks, with an understanding of what the achievement standard involves, strategies to reach goals and the opportunity to receive immediate feedback. These findings raise intriguing questions regarding the nature and extent of how the cultural interface could influence effective curriculum delivery, that considers learner locale for Indigenous students in remote communities.

This approach could also be considered for other learning experiences such as personal circumstances that are not just academic. For example, circumstances where Indigenous students are negotiating with family. A strategy could involve the use of role models and modelled behaviours that include and share structured reflections that Indigenous students are able to connect to and identify with. Indigenous students need to hear the stories of successful Indigenous people, including how they manage contested spaces, to build on their own ideas about being capable, successful learners. Some authors (eg. Durmush et al., 2021) reflect the importance of the presence of successful Indigenous role models in educational contexts to remind indigenous students of their own capabilities and what they are able to achieve.

**Reflections on the Limitations of this Study**

In reflecting on the outcomes of this study, I understand how important this research is and how this approach is uncommon in the field. Through this method however, I have been able to work in the boundaries of Indigenous student locale and Western standpoints in understanding academic buoyancy. In doing so I have been able to provide an insight into both perspectives.

This study was more interested in what Indigenous students thought was relevant and not what interested others (adults) thought. Therefore, this research approach purposefully kept the interview questions very open. In interviewing students, I did not ask questions about identity, family, or culture. Where these came up, I encouraged conversations that encouraged students to reflect on their understandings of how others see them as learners.

The predictive factors could have been better emphasised in the research interviews. Including questions targeting these predictors and how they contributed to academic buoyancy for these students within this remote context may have enabled a focus on how these predictors directly impact and/or influence the

learner locale of Indigenous students, informing future practice in the education of Indigenous students. This thesis did not set out to explicitly explore the 5C model. However, given its eventual importance in the analysis, this model may be useful in the design phase of future research investigating Indigenous students' academic buoyancy.

Another limitation was that this was a small scale of research conducted as part of a Master of Philosophy investigating a single site. For future research considerations, similar research could benefit from multiple sites that include remote and mainstream representations of Indigenous students. Approaching research through a Doctor of Philosophy would allow for more time and a larger representation of the differences in site contexts and how learner locale for Indigenous students differs.

The group interviews worked well, however, one of the limitations of this study was the short interview sessions. For future research purposes longer interviews and a more structured timetable would need to be considered. Throughout the research process one of the challenges was with seeking consent from parents. The implications of past research attempts with Indigenous students and the need for an ethical process, future research would benefit from including the option of verbal consent.

Following the requirements of the university ethics procedures meant that I could only access written permission from parent/carers to interview students. For local parents/carers with poor literacy skills, there was little response and as a result a particular sub-set of students was interviewed. Students from families with lower literacy or school engagement were not included in the sample, limiting the general visibility of resilience. Another limitation was that the sample focused on students who were positively engaged. Whilst this enabled the strengths-based perspective I sought, it didn't reflect the overall academic experience of Indigenous students. Students who present as not engaged can still have academic capabilities. Future research could include these students.

Another consideration to the limitations and or challenges for this research was the presence of myself as a "local researcher". Although this approach may seem beneficial to the research topic, research data and analysis presented by a local researcher can also be interpreted with an element of bias. Participants knew me as a teacher, parent, coach, and a community member and although this was helpful for establishing research rapport with participants, I understand how this information may be received with mixed reactions. To limit this bias, I used a range of activities, including the projection technique and letter writing to draw out themes in the project. I also acknowledged my position as an Indigenous teacher at school but introduced myself to the students as the researcher that was interested in hearing what they had to say about the topic.

**Final Remarks**

When reflecting on the motivation to begin this research journey, I have found it to be a positive experience. I have been able to make many conclusions about the learner locale of the Indigenous students I have taught and my own learner locale in my multiple positions leading up to and including this Master by research thesis. I have been able to share a positive story on the success of Indigenous students and provided a contextual view of their positions as learners in their remote context.

This research evidenced that successful Indigenous students know themselves, their worlds, their engagement and what they are capable of irrespective of academic achievement. This evidence provides a new confidence in that we can improve Indigenous student outcomes by targeting everyday resilience and reflections on our own schooling.

References

Arksey, H., Knight, P. T., & Knight, P. T. (1999). *Interviewing for social scientists: an introductory resource with examples*. SAGE.

Aronson, J., Fried, C. B., & Good, C. (2002). Reducing the effects of stereotype threat on African American college students by shaping theories of intelligence. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38*(2), 113–125. https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.2001.1491

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Annual (ACARA) Report 2018–19. https://www.acara.edu.au/

Australian Government (2018). Department of Education. https://education.qld.gov.au/

Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a psychology of human agency." *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 1*(2), 164–180. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00011.x

Becker, B. E., & Luthar, S. S. (2002). Social-emotional factors affecting achievement outcomes among disadvantaged Students: Closing the achievement gap. *Educational Psychologist, 37*(4), 197–214. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3704_1

Bell, J. (2010). Educational resilience in primary school children in South Australia: an investigation (Doctoral dissertation).

Beresford, Q. (2004). Indigenous alienation from school and. *International Journal on School Disaffection*, 2(2).

Bishop, M. & Durksen, T.L. (2020). What are the personal attributes a teacher needs to engage Indigenous students effectively in the learning process? Re-viewing the literature. *Educational Research, 62*(2), 181-198, https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2020.1755334

Blignault, I., Haswell, M., & Pulver, L. J. (2016). The value of partnerships: lessons from a multi-site evaluation of a national social and emotional wellbeing program for Indigenous youth. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 40*(S1), S53–S58. https://doi.org/10.1111/1753-6405.12403

Bodkin-Andrews, G., Craven, R. G., Marsh, H. W., & Marin, A. (2005, December). *Construct validation of the self-description questionnaire II (short version) for Indigenous Australian secondary school students.* Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Parramatta..

Bodkin-Andrews, G., O'Rourke, V., & Craven, R. G. (2010). The utility of general self-esteem and domain-specific self-concepts: their influence on Indigenous and non-Indigenous students'

educational outcomes. *The Australian Journal of Education, 54*(3), 277–306. https://doi.org/10.1177/000494411005400305

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklin,, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education* (2nd ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Bostwick, K. C. P., Martin, A. J., Collie, R. J., Burns, E. C., Hare, N., Cox, S., Flesken, A., & McCarthy, I. (2022). Academic buoyancy in high school: A cross-lagged multilevel modelling approach exploring reciprocal effects with perceived school support, motivation, and engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 114*(8), 1931–1949. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000753

Britton, P., & Craven, R. (2000). *Improving the self-concept of Aboriginal students: A holistic approach.* 10th Annual ASA Conference, University of Western Sydney, Bankstown Campus, Milperra.

Burgess, C., Tennent, C., Vass, G., Guenther, J., Lowe, K., & Moodie, N. (2019). A systematic review of pedagogies that support, engage and improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, *46*, 297-318. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-019-00315-5

Butcher. (2008). Linguistic aspects of Australian Aboriginal English. *Clinical Linguistics & Phonetics*, *22*(8), 625–642. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699200802223535

Castleberry, A., & Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it as easy as it sounds? *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning, 10*(6), 807–815. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.03.019

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed.). Routledge.

Collins, G. (1993). Meeting the Needs of Aboriginal Students. The Aboriginal Child at School, 21(2), 3–16. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0310582200005617

Conklin, J. (2006). *Wicked problems & social complexity* (Vol. 11). Cog Nexus Institute.

Cope, J. (2005). Researching entrepreneurship through phenomenological inquiry: Philosophical and methodological issues. *International Small Business Journal, 23*(2), 163–189. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242605050511

Craven, R. G., & Bodkin-Andrews, G. (2008, December). *A model for seeding success for Aboriginal students.* Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Fremantle.

Craven, R. G. & Marsh, H. W. (2004). The challenge for counsellors: understanding and addressing Indigenous secondary students' aspirations, self-concepts and barriers to achieving their

aspirations. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 14*(1), 16–33. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1037291100002648

Craven, R. G., Marsh, H. W., & Debus, R. L. (1991). Effects of internally focused feedback and attributional feedback on enhancement of academic self-concept. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *83*(1), 17-27. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.83.1.17

Craven, R. G., Tucker, A., Munns, G., Hinkley, J., Marsh, H. W., & Simpson, K. (2005). *Indigenous students' aspirations: Dreams, perceptions and realities*. DEST, Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches (Fourth edition, international student edition.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Datu, J. A. D., & Yuen, M. (2018). Predictors and consequences of academic buoyancy: A review of literature with implications for educational psychological research and practice. *Contemporary School Psychology, 22*(3), 207–212. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-018-0185-y

Department of Education (2022). *P-12 Curriculum, assessment and reporting framework.* https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculums/Documents/p-12-curriculum-assessment-reporting-framework.pdf

Department of Education and Training (2021). *Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in School (EATSIPS).* https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/fundingAndSupport/Documents/eatsips_2011.pdf

Department of Education, Science, and Training (DEST) (2002). *The national report to parliament*.

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (2019). *Closing the gap strategy.* https://www.pmc.gov.au/

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (2020). *Closing the gap strategy*. https://www.pmc.gov.au/publications/department-prime-minister-and-cabinet-annual-report-2020-21

Drake, G., Edenborough, M., Falloon, J., Fattore, T., Felton, R., Mason, J., & Mogensen, L. (2019). Is there a place for children as emotional beings in child protection policy and practice? *The International Journal of Emotional Education, 11*(1), 115–134.

Du, H., King, R. B., & Chi, P. (2017). Self-esteem and subjective well-being revisited: The roles of personal, relational, and collective self-esteem. *PloS One*, *12*(8), e0183958–e0183958. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0183958

Durmush, G., Craven, R. G., Brockman, R., Yeung, A. S., Mooney, J., Turner, K., & Guenther, J. (2021). Empowering the voices and agency of Indigenous Australian youth and their wellbeing in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Research, 109*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101798

Eder, D., & Fingerson, L. (2003). Interviewing children and adolescents. In J. Holstein & J.F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns* (pp. 33-53). SAGE Publishing.

Fergus, S., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2005). Adolescent resilience: A framework for understanding healthy development in the face of risk. *Annual Review of Public Health, 26*(1), 399–419. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.26.021304.144357

Frey, N., Fisher, D., & Smith, D. (2019). *All learning is social and emotional: Helping students develop essential skills for the classroom and beyond*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Fuller, A., & Wicking, A. (2016). What can 91,369 young people tell us about resilience? *Australian Journal of Middle Schooling*, *16*(1), 16-20. https://doi.org/10.3316/aeipt.216588

Garmezy, N. (1991). Resilience in children's adaptation to negative life events and stressed environments. *Paediatric annals, 20*(9), 459–460, 463. https://doi.org/10.3928/0090-4481-19910901-05

Grote, E., Oliver, R., & Rochecouste, J. (2014). Code-switching and Indigenous workplace learning: Cross-cultural competence training or cultural assimilation? In K. Dunworth & Zhang, G.Q. (Eds.), *Critical perspectives on language education: Australia and the Asia Pacific* (pp. 101-117). Springer International Publishing.

Gubrium, J. F., Holstein, J. A., Marvasti, A. B., & McKinney, K. D. (Eds.). (2012). *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft*. Sage Publications.

Guenther, J., & Osborne, S. (2020). Red dirt education leaders 'caught in the middle': Priorities for local and nonlocal leaders in remote schools. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, *49*(1), 57-69. https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2018.17

Guenther, J., Bat, M., & Osborne, S. (2013). Red dirt thinking on educational disadvantage. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 42*(2), 100–110. https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2013.18

Gupta, A. K., & Goyal, M. K. (2020). *Integrated risk of pandemic: COVID-19 impacts, resilience and recommendations.* Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7679-9

Halse C., & Robinson M. (1999). Towards an appropriate pedagogy for Aboriginal children. In Craven R. (Ed.), *Teaching Aboriginal studies* (pp. 199– 213). Allen & Unwin.

Harkins, J. (1990). Shame and shyness in the Aboriginal classroom: A case for "practical semantics". *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, *10*(2), 293-306. https://doi.org/10.1080/07268609008599445

Haswell, M., Blignault, I., Fitzpatrick, S., & Jackson Pulver, L. (2013). *The social and emotional wellbeing of Indigenous youth: Reviewing and extending the evidence and examining its implications for policy and practice*. Muru Marri, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, UNSW Medicine.

Hattie, J. (2008). Visible learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement. Routledge.

Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code saturation versus meaning saturation: how many interviews are enough? *Qualitative health research*, *27*(4), 591-608. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344

Heyeres, M., McCalman, J., Bainbridge, R., & Redman-MacLaren, M. (2017). Staff capacity development initiatives that support the well-being of indigenous children in their transitions to boarding schools: A systematic scoping review. *Frontiers in Education*, *2,* 1-10. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2017.00001

Hickey, S. (2021). Talking back to the research: Indigenous wellbeing and resilience narratives from urban Australia. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, *22*(3), 423–445. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2021.1882966

Holliman, A. J., & Sheehy, K. (Eds.). (2022). *Overcoming adversity in education*. Taylor & Francis.

Howard, S., & Johnson, B. (1999). Tracking student resilience. *Children Australia, 24*(3), 14-23. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1035077200009214

Hurd, N., & Zimmerman, M. (2010). Natural mentors, mental health, and risk behaviors: A longitudinal analysis of African American adolescents transitioning into adulthood. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 46*(1-2), 36–48. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-010-9325-x

Jackson, D., Power, T., Sherwood, J., & Geia, L. (2013). Amazingly resilient Indigenous people! Using transformative learning to facilitate positive student engagement with sensitive material. *Contemporary Nurse, 46*(1), 105–112. https://doi.org/10.5172/conu.2013.46.1.105

Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C., & Symon, G. (2006). Evaluating qualitative management research: Towards a contingent criteriology. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 8*(3), 131–156. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2006.00124.x

Kennedy, M., Maddox, R., Booth, K., Maidment, S., Chamberlain, C., & Bessarab, D. (2022). Decolonising qualitative research with respectful, reciprocal, and responsible research practice: a narrative review of the application of Yarning method in qualitative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. International Journal for Equity in Health, 21(1), 1–134. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-022-01738-w

Kinchin, I., McCalman, J., Bainbridge, R., Tsey, K., & Watkin-Lui, F. (2017). Does Indigenous health research have impact? A systematic review of reviews. *International Journal for Equity in Health, 16*(1), 52–52. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-017-0548-4

Koskela, I.-M., & Paloniemi, R. (2023). Learning and agency for sustainability transformations: building on Bandura's theory of human agency. *Environmental Education Research, 29*(1), 164–178. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2022.2102153

Kwok, N. (2012). Shame and the embodiment of boundaries. *Oceania, 82*(1), 28–44. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1834-4461.2012.tb00117.x

Langham, E., McCalman, J., Redman-MacLaren, M., Hunter, E., Wenitong, M., Britton, A., Rutherford, K., Saunders, V., Ungar, M., & Bainbridge, R. (2018). Validation and factor analysis of the child and youth resilience measure for Indigenous Australian boarding school students. *Frontiers in Public Health, 6*, 299–299. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2018.00299

Lowe, K., Harrison, N., Tennent, C., Guenther, J., Vass, G., & Moodie, N. (2019). Factors affecting the development of school and Indigenous community engagement: A systematic review. *Australian Educational Researcher, 46*, 253–271. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-019-00314-6

Luckett, K. (2012). Disciplinarity in question: comparing knowledge and knower codes in sociology. *Research Papers in Education, 27*(1), 19–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671521003592655

Maher, P. (1999). A review of 'traditional' Aboriginal health beliefs. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, *7*(4), 229-236. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1584.1999.00264.x

Marsh, H. W., & Craven, R. G. (2006). Reciprocal effects of self-concept and performance from a multidimensional perspective: Beyond seductive pleasure and unidimensional perspectives. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 1*(2), 133–163. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00010.x

Marsh, H. W., & Martin, A. J. (2011). Academic self-concept and academic achievement: Relations and causal ordering. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 81*(1), 59–77. https://doi.org/10.1348/000709910X503501

Marsh, H. W., & O'Mara, A. (2008). Reciprocal effects between academic self-concept, self-esteem, achievement, and attainment over seven adolescent years: Unidimensional and multidimensional perspectives of self-concept. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin, 34*(4), 542–552. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167207312313

Marsh, H. W., Trautwein, U., Lüdtke, O., Köller, O., & Baumert, J. (2005). Academic self-concept, interest, grades and standardized test scores*: Reciprocal effects models of causal ordering. Child Development, 76*(2), 397–416. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2005.00853.

Martin, A. J. (2003). The role of significant others in enhancing the educational outcomes and aspirations of Indigenous/Aboriginal students. *Journal of Aboriginal Studies, 12*, 23-26.

Martin, A. (2006). A motivational psychology for the education of Indigenous Australian students. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 35*, 30-43. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1326011100004142

Martin, A. J. (2007). Examining a multidimensional model of student motivation and engagement using a construct validation approach. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *77*(2), 413-440. https://doi.org/10.1348/000709906x118036

Martin, A. J. (2009). Motivation and engagement across the academic life span: A developmental construct validity study of elementary school, high school, and university/college students. *Educational and psychological measurement*, *69*(5), 794-824. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164409332214

Martin, A. J. (2012). The role of personal best (PB) goals in the achievement and behavioral engagement of students with ADHD and students without ADHD. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *37*(2), 91-105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2012.01.002

Martin, A. J. (2013). Academic buoyancy and academic resilience: Exploring "everyday" and "classic" resilience in the face of academic adversity. *School Psychology International, 34*(5), 488–500. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034312472759

Martin, A. J., & Dowson, M. (2009). Interpersonal relationships, motivation, engagement, and achievement: Yields for theory, current issues, and educational practice. *Review of Educational Research, 79*(1), 327–365. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325583

Martin, A. J., & Marsh, H. W. (2006). Academic resilience and its psychological and educational correlates: A construct validity approach. *Psychology in the Schools, 43*(3), 267–281. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20149

Martin, A. J., & Marsh, H. W. (2008). Academic buoyancy: Towards an understanding of students' everyday academic resilience. *Journal of School Psychology, 46*(1), 53–83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2007.01.002

Martin, A. J., & Marsh, H. W. (2009). Academic resilience and academic buoyancy: Multidimensional and hierarchical conceptual framing of causes, correlates and cognate constructs. *Oxford Review of Education, 35*(3), 353-370. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980902934639

Martin, A. J., & Marsh, H. W. (2020). Investigating the reciprocal relations between academic buoyancy and academic adversity: Evidence for the protective role of academic buoyancy in reducing academic adversity over time. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 44*(4), 301-312. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025419885027

Martin, A. J., Colmar, S. H., Davey, L. A., & Marsh, H. W. (2010). Longitudinal modelling of academic buoyancy and motivation: Do the 5Cs hold up over time? *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 80*(3), 473-496. https://doi.org/10.1348/000709910x486376

Martin, A. J., Ginns, P., Anderson, M., Gibson, R., & Bishop, M. (2021). Motivation and engagement among Indigenous (Aboriginal Australian) and non-Indigenous students. *Educational Psychology, 41*(4), 424–445. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2021.1879994

Martin, A. J., Ginns, P., Brackett, M. A., Malmberg, L. E., & Hall, J. (2013). Academic buoyancy and psychological risk: Exploring reciprocal relationships. *Learning and Individual Differences, 27*, 128-133. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2013.06.006

Martin, A. J., Ginns, P., Papworth, B., & Nejad, H. (2013). The role of academic buoyancy in Aboriginal/Indigenous students' educational intentions: Sowing the early seeds of success for post-school education and training. In R. Craven & J. Mooney (Eds.) *Seeding success in Indigenous Australian higher education* (pp. 57-79). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Martin, A. J., Malmberg, L. E., & Liem, G. A. D. (2010). Multilevel motivation and engagement: Assessing construct validity across students and schools. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *70*(6), 973-989. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164410378089

Martin, A. J., Tynan, L., Collie, R. J., Bishop, M., & Lowe, K. (2022). Indigenous (Aboriginal, First Nations) students overcoming academic adversity: The roles of educational resilience, motivation and engagement, and teacher–student relationships. In A. Holliman & K. Sheehy, *Overcoming Adversity in Education* (pp. 211-222). Routledge.

Martin, A.J., Ginns, P., Papworth, B., & Nejad, H. (2013). Aboriginal/Indigenous students in high school: Understanding their motivation, engagement, academic buoyancy, and achievement.

In G.A.D. Liem & A. Bernardo (Eds). *Advancing cross-cultural perspectives on educational psychology: A Festschrift for Dennis McInerney*. Information Age Publishing.

Martin, G., Nakata, V., Nakata, M., & Day, A. (2017). Promoting the persistence of Indigenous students through teaching at the Cultural Interface. Studies in Higher Education, 42(7), 1158-1173. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2015.1083001

Martin, K., & Mirraboopa, B. (2003). Ways of knowing, being and doing: A theoretical framework and methods for Indigenous and Indigenist re-search. *Journal of Australian Studies, 27*(76), 203–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/14443050309387838

Marvasti, A. (2003). *Qualitative research in sociology*. SAGE Publications.

Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: resilience processes in development. *The American Psychologist, 56*(3), 227–238. https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066X.56.3.227

Masten, A. S. (2007). Resilience in developing systems: Progress and promise as the fourth wave rises. *Development and psychopathology, 19*(3), 921-930. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579407000442

Masten, A. S. (2011). Resilience in children threatened by extreme adversity: Frameworks for research, practice, and translational synergy. *Development and Psychopathology, 23*(2), 493–506. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579411000198

Masten, A. S. (2015). *Ordinary magic: Resilience in development*. Guilford Publications.

Masten, A. S. (2016). Resilience in developing systems: the promise of integrated approaches. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 13*(3), 297–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2016.1147344

Masten, A. S. (2018). Resilience theory and research on children and families: Past, present, and promise. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 10*(1), 12-31. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12255

Masten, A. S., & Cicchetti, D. (2016). Resilience in development: progress and transformation. In D. Cicchetti (Ed.), *Developmental Psychopathology* (pp. 1–63). John Wiley & Sons, Inc. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119125556.devpsy406

Masten, A. S., & Monn, A. R. (2015). Child and family resilience: A call for integrated science, practice, and professional training. *Family Relations, 64*(1), 5–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12103

Masten, A. S., & Wright, M. O. D. (1998). Cumulative risk and protection models of child maltreatment. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 2*(1), 7-30. https://doi.org/10.1300/J146v02n01_02

Masten, A., Herbers, J., Cutuli, J., & Lafavor, T. (2008). Promoting competence and resilience in the school context. *Professional School Counseling, 12*(2), 76–84. https://doi.org/10.5330/PSC.n.2010-12.76

McCalman, J., Bainbridge, R. G., Redman-MacLaren, M., Russo, S., Rutherford, K., Tsey, K., Ungar, M., Wenitong, M., & Hunter, E. (2017). The development of a survey instrument to assess Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' resilience and risk for self-harm. *Frontiers in Education*, *2*. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2017.00019

McCalman, J., Bainbridge, R., Russo, S., Rutherford, K., Tsey, K., Wenitong, M., Shakeshaft, A., Doran, C., & Jacups, S. (2016). Psycho-social resilience, vulnerability and suicide prevention: impact evaluation of a mentoring approach to modify suicide risk for remote Indigenous Australian students at boarding school. *BMC Public Health, 16*(108), 98–98. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-2762-1

McCalman, J., Tsey, K., & Bainbridge, R. (2013). *How Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health promotion tools can support the capacity enhancement of health promotion officers.* Cairns Institute.

McGrath, P., & Phillips, E. (2008). Australian findings on Aboriginal cultural practices associated with clothing, hair, possessions and use of name of deceased persons. *International Journal of Nursing Practice, 14*(1), 57–66. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-172X.2007.00667.x

Miele, D.B., Browman, A.S. Shen, C., Vasilyeva, M. & Tyumeneva, Y.A. (2022). Domain-general and math-specific self-perceptions of perseverance as predictors of behavioral math persistence. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 90*(3), 593-614. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2020.1799312

Mishler, E. G. (1986). The analysis of interview-narratives. In T. R. Sarbin (Ed.), *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct* (pp. 233–255). Praeger Publishers/Greenwood Publishing Group.

Mornane, A. (2009). The adolescent student's views of factors influencing their learning. *International Journal of Learning*, *16*(5), 221-230. https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9494/CGP/v16i05/46270

Morrison, M., McNaughton, D., & Shiner, J. (2010). Mission-based Indigenous production at the Weipa Presbyterian Mission, Western Cape York Peninsula (1932–66). *International Journal of Historical Archaeology, 14*, 86-111. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-009-0096-8

Morales, E. E. (2000). A Contextual Understanding of the Process of Educational Resilience: High Achieving Dominican American Students and the "Resilience Cycle." Innovative Higher Education, 25(1), 7–. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007580217973

Munns G. (1998). 'They just can't hack that': Aboriginal students, their teachers and responses to schools and classrooms. In G. Partington (Ed.), *Perspectives on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education* (pp. 171-187). Social Science Press.

Munns, G., Martin, A., & Craven, R. (2008). To Free the Spirit? Motivation and Engagement of Indigenous Students. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 37*(1), 98-107. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1326011100016148

Munns, G. (1998). "A lot of 'em get so shamed" : Koori students, risks, shame, and the classroom curriculum. *Set: Research Information for Teachers*, *2*, 1-4. https://doi.org/10.18296/set.0845

Nakata, M. (2002). Indigenous Knowledge and the Cultural Interface: underlying issues at the intersection of knowledge and information systems. *IFLA Journal, 28*(5/6), 281-291. https://www.ifla.org/ifla-journal-old-archive/

Nakata, M. (2007). The cultural interface. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 36S*, 7-13.341–355. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1756751

Nakata, M. (2011). Pathways for Indigenous education in the Australian Curriculum Framework. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 40*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1375/ajie.40.1

Nakata, M. N., & Nakata, V. (2023). *Supporting* Indigenous *students to succeed at university:* A *resource for the higher education sector*. Routledge.

Nakata, M.N., Nakata, S., & Biggs, S. (2023, August 1). More must be done so Indigenous students are ready to succeed at university. The Australian. https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/more-must-be-done-so-indigenous-students-are-ready-to-succeed-at-university/news-story/70518ce52ec3d6af44502e2dd0b5b6b3

Nakata, M., Nakata, V., Day, A., Martin, G., & Peachey, M. (2019). Indigenous undergraduates' use of supplementary tutors: Developing academic capabilities for success in higher education studies. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 48*(2), 119-128. https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2017.39

Nichols, W. C. (2012). Roads to understanding family resilience: 1920s to the twenty-first century. In D.S. Becvar (Ed.), *Handbook of family resilience* (pp. 3-16). Springer.

Oliver, M., & Shapiro, T. (2013). *Black wealth/white wealth: A new perspective on racial inequality.* Routledge.

Otter.ai. (2019, August). Help center: Frequently asked questions. https://otter.ai/help-center .

Pechenkina, E. (2017). 'It becomes almost an act of defiance': Indigenous Australian transformational resistance as a driver of academic achievement, *Race Ethnicity and Education, 20*(4), 463-477, https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2015.1121220

Pederson, A., & Walker, I. (2000). Urban Aboriginal-Australian and Anglo-Australian children: In-group preference, self-concept and teachers' academic evaluations. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, *10*(3), 183-97. https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-1298(200005/06)10:3%3C183::AID-CASP564%3E3.0.CO;2-L

Perry, B. D. (2006). Applying principles of neurodevelopment to clinical work with maltreated and traumatized children: The neurosequential model of therapeutics. In N. Boyd Webb (Ed.) *Working with Traumatized Youth in Child Welfare* (pp. 27-52). Oxford University Press.

Pew Research Center. (2017). *Social media use on the rise in many countries. Spring 2017. Global Attitudes Survey*. https://www.pewglobal.org/2018/06/19/3-social-networkadoption-varies-widely-by-country/pg_2018-06-19_global-tech_3-01/

Prehn, J., Peacock, H., & Guerzoni, M. A. (2021). Academic self-concepts of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children from the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 50*(1), 186–195. https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2019.26

Priest, N., Mackean, T., Davis, E., Briggs, L., & Waters, E. (2012). Aboriginal perspectives of child health and wellbeing in an urban setting: Developing a conceptual framework. *Health Sociology Review, 21*(2), 180–195. https://doi.org/10.5172/hesr.2012.21.2.180

Purdie, N. (2005). Self-concepts of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian students. *New Frontiers for Self Research*, *2*, 195.

Purdie, N., Tripcony, P., Boulton-Lewis, G., Fanshawe, J., & Gunstone, A. (2000). Positive self-identity for Indigenous students and its relationship to school outcomes. Queensland University of Technology.

Rahman, K. (2010). Addressing the foundations for improved Indigenous secondary student outcomes: A South Australian qualitative study. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 39*(1), 65-76. https://doi.org/10.1375/S1326011100000922

Richer, K., Godfrey, J., Partington, G., Harslett, M., & Harrison, B. (1998, December). *Attitudes of Aboriginal students to further education: An overview of a questionnaire survey*. Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Adelaide.

Rutter, M. (1987). Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 57(3)*, 316–331. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.1987.tb03541.x

Sharifian, F. (2005). Cultural conceptualisations in English words: A study of Aboriginal children in Perth. *Language and Education*, *19*(1), 74-88. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500780508668805

Shavelson, R. J., Hubner, J. J., & Stanton, G. C. (1976). Self-concept: Validation of construct interpretations. *Review of Educational Research, 46*(3), 407–441. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543046003407

Stolk, Y., Kaplan, I., & Szwarc, J. (2017). Review of the strengths and difficulties questionnaire translated into languages spoken by children and adolescents of refugee background. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, *26*(4), e1568.

Stylianou, S. (2008). Interview control questions. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *11*(3), 239-256. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401289

Swain, J., Heyman, B., & Gillman, M. (1998). Public research, private concerns: Ethical issues in the use of open-ended interviews with people who have learning difficulties. *Disability & Society, 13*(1), 21-36. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599826894

Thompson, C. J., Locander, W. B. & Pollio, H. R. (1989). 'Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: The philosophy and method of existential phenomenology'. *Journal of Consumer Research 16*(2), 33–146.

Thompson, T. (1994). Self-worth protection: review and implications for the classroom. *Educational Review, 46*(3), 259-274. https://doi.org/10.1080/0013191940460304

Tsey, K., Whiteside, M., Daly, S., Deemal, A., Gibson, T., Cadet-James, Y., Wilson, A., Santhanam, R., & Haswell-Elkins, M. R. (2005). Adapting the "Family Wellbeing" empowerment program to the needs of remote Indigenous school children. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 29*(2), 112–116. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-842X.2005.tb00059.x

Uink, B., Hill, B., Day, A., & Martin, G. (2019). "Wings to fly": A case study of supporting Indigenous student success through a whole-of-university approach. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 48*(2), 206–206. https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2019.11

Ungar, M. (Ed.). (2011). *The social ecology of resilience: A handbook of theory and practice*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Vaismoradi, V., & Snelgrove, S. (2019). Theme in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Forum*: *Qualitative Social Research, 20*(3). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-20.3.3376

Vass, G. (2013). Hear no race, see no race, speak no race: Teacher silence, Indigenous youth, and race talk in the classroom. *Social Alternatives*, *32*(2), 19-24. https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.821921550719675

Vohra, N., & Goel, A. (2009). *Influence of positive characteristics on organizational commitment and job satisfaction of Indian middle managers.* IIMC.

Walsh, F. (2016). Family resilience: A developmental systems framework. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 13*(3), 313-324.

Ware, V. (2013). *Improving the accessibility of health services in urban and regional settings for Indigenous people*. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/improving-the-accessibility-of-health-services-in-urban-and-regional-settings-for-indigenous-people/summary

Waxman, H. C., Gray, J. P., & Padron, Y. N. (2003). *Review of research on educational resilience*. Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7x695885

Werner, E. E., & Smith, R. S. (2001). *Journeys from childhood to midlife: Risk, resilience, and recovery.* Cornell University Press.

Williams, R. (2008). The epistemology of knowledge and the knowledge process cycle: beyond the "objectivist" vs "interpretivist." *Journal of Knowledge Management, 12*(4), 72–85. https://doi.org/10.1108/13673270810884264

Ye, W., Strietholt, R. & Blömeke, S. (2021). Academic resilience: underlying norms and validity of definitions. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 33*, 169–202. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-020-09351-7

Zimmerman, M.A. (2013). Resiliency theory: A strengths-based approach to research and practice for adolescent health. *Health Education & Behavior*, *40*(4), 381-383. https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198113493782

Zimmerman, M. A., & Brenner, A. B. (2010). Resilience in adolescence: Overcoming neighborhood disadvantage. In J. W. Reich, A. J. Zautra, & J. S. Hall (Eds.), *Handbook of adult resilience* (pp. 283–308). The Guilford Press.

Zimmerman, M.A., Ramirez, J., Washienko, K.M., Walter, B., & Dyer, S. (1995). Enculturation hypothesis: Exploring direct and protective effects among Native American youth. In H.I. McCubbin, E.A. Thompson, & A.I. Thompson (Eds.), *Resiliency in Ethnic Minority Families, Volume I: Native and Immigrant American Families* (pp. 199-220). University of Wisconsin.

Zimmerman, M. A., Ramirez-Valles, J., Washienko, K. M., Walter, B., & Dyer, S. (1996). The development of a measure of enculturation for Native American youth. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 24*(2), 295–310. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02510403

Appendix A

This administrative form
has been removed

Appendix B

This administrative form
has been removed

This administrative form has been removed

Appendix C

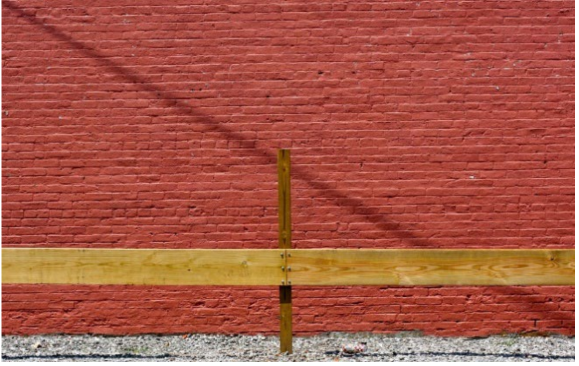
**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**


**6**

**7**

**8**

**9**

**10**