Enhancing Relationships in school communities (ERIS)

Talking Culture

Building on the challenges and successes of culturally diverse schools

Project Report

February 2012

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE — MELBOURNE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

UnitingCare — Broadmeadows Uniting *Care*

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Participating schools

Bethal Primary School   Coolaroo South Primary School

Corpus Christi Primary School   Hume Valley School

Meadow Heights Primary School   St Dominics Primary School

Wandarra Social Club, (an independent Aboriginal aunties and uncles group)

How to reference this publication

Freeman, E., Smith, K., Wertheim, E., Trinder, M., Gurr. M., & Antcliffe, A. (2012). *Enhancing Relationships in School Communities: Talking Culture: Building on the Challenges and Successes of Culturally Diverse* Schools. Research Report. The University of Melbourne and La Trobe University.

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ii. Executive Summary

Introduction and background

A critical issue facing Australian school communities is how to best support schools to build sustainable whole school approaches to respecting cultural diversity, given that schools are in a central position to lay the foundations for children of respect for diverse cultures.

Enhancing Relationships in School Communities (ERIS): Talking Culture was a collaborative project undertaken by The University of Melbourne and La Trobe University to address the need for research exploring the experiences of cultural diversity in Australian schools by investigating:

- How cultural diversity impacts on the experience of students, parents and staff
- The practices currently used by schools to support cultural diversity, with a focus on the practices that students, parents and staff think are most beneficial
- The issues and concerns identified by each of these groups
- What staff and parents (and students) think could be done differently to improve outcomes for the school community.

The project, funded by the Collier Foundation and supported by Uniting Care Sunshine and Broadmeadows (USCB), builds on the ***Enhancing Relationships in School Communities*** research program which has involved working with primary schools to assist them in promoting respect for cultural diversity and developing cooperative methods for approaching differences between people.

The findings of the **ERIS: Talking Culture** project will be used alongside the broader national and international research, to provide guidance for schools wishing to introduce or improve practices to support cultural diversity.

The research was conducted in the Hume Region (northeast area of Melbourne). Participating schools included four Victorian state schools and two Catholic schools involved in the Hume Early Years Partnership. All of these schools include diverse cultural groups, which enabled the study to explore a wide range of experiences of, and expertise in, working with diversity.

Methods

The project used focus groups to seek school staff, parents, and children's perspectives on cultural diversity issues in their schools. In total, 72 parents, 38 staff and 87 students from prep to grade 6 (5 -13 years) across the six schools took part in focus groups. Twelve parent focus groups were conducted with five of these conducted in Vietnamese, Arabic, Turkish or Assyrian-Chaldean (two groups) and seven in English. In addition, to ensure the viewpoints of Indigenous Australians were included, a focus group comprising six Aboriginal parents and support workers from Wandarra Social Club took place. In the student focus groups Diversity Dolls were used as a research tool to generate discussion with the students about cultural and racial diversity. Principals from the six participating schools were also interviewed. Field notes

were taken during the project. Data from focus groups and principals were transcribed and analysed for key themes.

Findings

Parents and staff

As a group parents were generally happy with the responsiveness of schools in meeting their cultural needs and their children's needs. Parents communicated strongly that the participating schools were making active efforts to meet the needs of students and families of varying cultural backgrounds. Parents and staff all readily described specific ways in which efforts were being made to meet the needs of different cultural groups in their schools, such as providing translated materials, arrangements addressing student needs during religious observances, school displays, cultural events, play groups, support groups, membership on committees, the Koorie Education Learning Plan process, and bilingual liaison and education support officers. It was important to parents in each school that the needs of all cultural groups represented in their school, were acknowledged and addressed, not only the needs of the dominant group(s).

Parents also identified specific needs in the areas of teaching languages, religion and cultural understanding, including teaching about Indigenous culture that they thought could be covered more extensively as part of the curriculum. Ensuring that teachers had a good understanding of these areas was noted as important.

Staff requested more formalised and frequent professional development to assist them to be more responsive to the cultural groups in their schools.

While staff described a strong desire to be able to communicate and engage with parents from different cultural backgrounds, there was also strong consensus that this presented many challenges for staff including challenges arising from language barriers. Both staff and parents indicated that personalised approaches to communication are valued and perceived to be more effective. Where available, access to bilingual staff and interpreters (particularly those with a strong relationship with the school), was seen to be of great benefit in building strong home-school relationships.

Some staff and principals perceived that there were different parent expectations in some cultural groups about the role of the family in education that needed to be addressed to encourage greater parent engagement.

Students

The study started with the view that student voices should be central in the research. The conceptual understanding underpinning the project positioned students as competent meaning makers who can provide important insights into their school experiences and have a right to be consulted about matters that affect them. The students' responses demonstrated a strong capacity to reflect on their understandings of cultural diversity.

In general students appear to believe that individuals from different races and cultures 'should' be treated equally well. The concept of 'respect' for people of different cultures and races was

consistently verbalised by the older students and implied by younger students. Students recognised that some people who had coloured skin were not always treated fairly. Consistent with international research students' responses demonstrated that they are not colour-blind or 'innocent' of the racial discourse within the broader social context.

Responses also suggested that some children are experiencing racial vilification at school and may not disclose this to adults. Most students were able to describe behaviours and language involving racism directed at them or others. They were able to talk about moments when students were included and excluded in their school based on race and culture. However, in the majority of instances children labelled such events as 'bullying' rather than racism. Some students' responses highlighted the complexity and challenges they face in standing up against 'bullying' [racism].

Students also had ideas about what could be done to support a sense of belonging for students and their families. Students discussed strategies of mentoring, dealing with and eliminating bullying, academic support and altering the curriculum to incorporate diverse perspectives to support a sense of belonging.

Principals

Each of the principals interviewed aspired to approach cultural diversity as a fundamental part of the implementation of all school policies and practices. They aimed to ensure that their school had a strong and explicit philosophy that embraced the values of respect and harmony for diversity. Principals expressed high expectations for both themselves and their schools and a commitment to proactively searching for ways to improve their school's approach to cultural diversity.

At a practical level this positive orientation was reflected in efforts to welcome students, parents and staff from all backgrounds, recognise the needs of all students, celebrate and respect all cultures, find ways to understand and engage with new families and to seek the personnel and resources to support these efforts.

Supporting staff development in cultural diversity was an area of success identified by principals and they believed that building even greater staff capacity would be beneficial. Principals also commented on the importance of building their own capacity and leadership in the area of cultural diversity through seeking opportunities and networks to extend their own learning.

Principals found that linking with external services had already provided many benefits to their schools and believed that their staff and school community could benefit from expanding local partnerships and supports, by developing additional and closer ties with external services and accessing more support staff and resources.

More concerted effort to provide more opportunities and support for staff to engage with parents was seen to be desirable as a lack of engagement with the school was seen to leave some families isolated, potentially limiting the education of the students. Several principals identified transience in the school population as one the most significant of challenges in enacting their aspirations for positive approaches to cultural diversity.

Principals discussed various ways in which cultural diversity has already been successfully incorporated into the curriculum but several principals indicated a desire to see cultural diversity more explicitly addressed in the curriculum. Principals also wished to find ways to incorporate more languages into the curriculum. Extra-curricular activities, such as Harmony Day or cultural days, were identified as an expanding area of success. Some principals indicated that affirming the cultural identity of their students and reducing racism were challenges that they would like to address.

Conclusions and recommendations

The report uses an adaption of the *Racism No Way School Planning Framework* to frame recommendations for a whole school approach to cultural diversity. Recommendations in each of the following seven components of the framework are provided:

1. **Whole school vision**
2. **Policy and guidelines**
3. **School ethos and environment**
4. **Staff training and development**
5. **Curriculum and pedagogy**
6. **Parent engagement**
7. **Partnerships and services**
8. **Monitoring and reporting**

Whole school vision

A comprehensive approach to cultural diversity requires **a whole-school vision** and approach for a culturally respectful school developed through school leadership with the involvement of staff, students, parents and the community.

Policy and guidelines

Policies and guidelines, consistent with current state and national policies and guidelines, are needed to communicate and implement the whole-school vision for addressing the culturally diverse nature of the school. Policies need to support the school community's understanding of racism and its impact and ensure that action is taken to address instances of racism.

School ethos and environment

To ensure schools are catering for all groups in the school, visible acknowledgements of all cultural groups in the school and broader community is needed in curriculum resource materials, school posters and displays, and through special events recognising diverse cultures.

To acknowledge and celebrate respect for cultural and racial diversity schools may consider forming committees that bring students, staff, families, elders and community members together to actively plan and promote the celebration of diversity. Specific approaches can be developed to acknowledge and celebrate students' respect for cultural and racial diversity.

Staff learning and development

A systematic and planned approach to professional learning in the area of cultural diversity is essential to ensure that staff are well-prepared to engage with students and their families, and to teach all aspects of cultural diversity including cultural awareness, intercultural understanding, Indigenous Australian history and culture, and anti-racist curriculum. This process includes ensuring systematic orientation and mentoring of new staff and enhancing skills of all staff for addressing the pedagogical and social needs of the different cultural groups represented in the school and teaching about cultural diversity and intercultural understanding more broadly.

Curriculum and pedagogy

Schools need a clearly articulated and shared philosophy for teaching about cultural diversity which includes both content related to diversity and content related to anti-racism and social justice using approaches that have evidence of effectiveness. It is essential to seek, consider and include student views on cultural diversity issues in the development of curriculum. When teaching about different cultures or religions, schools can also gain important perspectives through consultation with members and elders of relevant communities.

Parent engagement

Schools need to ensure that they have a proactive and sustained approach towards engagement with parents that employs personalised methods of communicating, through both formal and informal approaches. Where resources permit, increasing the number of teacher aides, cultural liaison officers and staff with bi-lingual language skills will assist greatly in engaging with parents with limited or no English.

Partnerships and services

Identifying and building strong relationships with a diverse range of community services relevant to each school community is essential to support the school's effort and the specific needs of students and families including new arrivals.

Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting of a range of activities and information relevant to cultural diversity are important in order to guide planning, delivery and development of strategies to ensure that student cultural and linguistic needs are addressed; discriminatory practices are countered, a complaints system (including feedback processes on outcomes of complaints) is implemented and academic achievement is enhanced.

Systems level recommendations

Participants in this study made suggestions relevant to education systems in relation to the process of allocating interpreters to schools, funding models related to the needs of Indigenous Australians and addressing the challenges of schools that have a large proportion of newly immigrated students.

1. Overview and Background

1.1 Background of the Project

Australia is a culturally diverse nation and this diversity is reflected in school communities across Australia. Cultural diversity brings with it many benefits including exposure to new ideas, new ways of living and new perspectives on what it means to be an Australian. However, research in Australia and overseas has shown that cultural diversity can create significant challenges in communities including conflict, race- and culture-based discrimination and reduced social cohesion.

Schools are one environment in which both the benefits and challenges of cultural diversity are experienced, and dealt with, on a daily basis. Unfortunately very little is known about the specific challenges that schools face in Australia or the best practices that schools can employ to deal with these challenges. In addition, little is known about the impact of cultural diversity on students, staff and parents, both as individual groups and as school communities.

The current research was an outgrowth of the ***Enhancing Relationships in School Communities*** project, a collaborative project between The University of Melbourne and La Trobe University, which has involved working with primary schools to assist them in promoting respect for cultural diversity and in developing cooperative methods for approaching differences between people (Trinder, Wertheim, Freeman, Sanson, Richardson & Hunt, 2010; Wertheim, Freeman, Trinder, & Sanson, 2006; Wertheim, Freeman, Trinder, & MacNaughton, 2009).

1.2 Aims of the project

This project has sought to address the need for research exploring the experiences of cultural diversity in Australian schools by investigating:

- How cultural diversity impacts on the experience of students, parents and staff
- The practices currently used by schools to support cultural diversity, with a focus on the practices that students, parents and staff think are most beneficial
- The issues and concerns identified by each of these groups
- What staff and parents (and students) think could be done differently to improve outcomes for the school community.

By investigating these areas it is hoped that schools will have a clearer picture of the challenges and benefits associated with cultural diversity. In undertaking this project, the researchers also acknowledge the broader national and international research in this area and draw on this body of knowledge to provide guidance for schools wishing to introduce or improve practices to support cultural diversity.

The scope of the study was limited to certain aspects of the broad term *cultural diversity*. There are many and varied definitions of cultural diversity, most commonly including racial, ethnic, cultural and/or religious diversity. Sometimes under the banner of cultural diversity, people also talk about other areas where discrimination can be high such as disability, sexual orientation

and gender. While these areas were not explicitly investigated in this study, disability issues were raised and are briefly discussed. The primary cultural diversity interest included processes for understanding, and respect for, different cultures; creating inclusive schools; developing processes to address specific needs of different cultural groups; addressing relevant curriculum and issues; and identifying and addressing racial- and ethnicity-based discrimination.

1.3 Overview of methods: Who and how

In 2011, six schools involved in the HEY partnership and the Wandarra Social Club agreed to participate in this project and take part in focus groups to explore parent, staff and student perspectives on cultural diversity issues.

Participating schools included four Victorian state schools and two Catholic schools in the Hume Region (northeast area of Melbourne). Hume has a rich cultural diversity with 140 nationalities and 125 languages other than English spoken in the homes of over 56% of residents. Many residents arrive under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program from countries including Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon. An increasing number of Indigenous families are also moving in to the area. The neighbourhoods in which these six schools are situated have a long history of significant economic disadvantage (Centre for Community Child Health, 2010; Hume Council, 2011) All of these schools include diverse cultural groups, which has enabled this project to explore a wide range of experiences of, and expertise in, working with diversity.

The research process enabled the research team to hear the representative voices of the following from the six participating schools:

- *Parents* – Twelve focus groups involving 72 parents with five of these conducted in Vietnamese, Arabic, Turkish or Assyrian-Chaldean (two groups) and seven in English.
- *Staff* – Six focus groups involving 29 staff.
- *Students* - Seventeen focus groups involving 87 students from prep to grade six.
- *Key informants* – Principals from the six participating schools.

In addition, to ensure the viewpoints of Indigenous Australians were included, a focus group comprising 6 *Aboriginal parents and support workers* from Wandarra Social Club (an independent Aboriginal aunties and uncles group) took place.

1.4 Overview of the report

The following three chapters describe the study findings, followed by discussion and recommendation sections. As the parent and staff focus groups were structured similarly, their methods and findings will be described in one chapter. Subsequently, the methods and findings from the student focus groups will be described. The student groups included use of "Diversity Dolls", a specific child-friendly method to access children's perspectives about individuals of different cultures and race, and relevant attitudes and experiences. The fourth chapter will report on key informant interviews held with the principals from the six participating schools, to explore their perspectives on their school's cultural context and approach to cultural diversity. Finally the report draws together the themes from each of these sources, tying them to current national and international research, and makes recommendations for future research and practice.

2. Investigating parent and staff perspectives

2.1 Aims

This study aimed to explore staff and parent's experiences of cultural diversity in Australian school communities. It was intended that by exploring staff and parent experiences using the same approach both unique and common challenges facing each group would be identified. In addition, by exploring both staff and parent perspectives on solutions it was expected that solutions might be found that benefit the entire school community as well as specific groups.

2.2 Method

Staff and parents were recruited from six primary schools, four government, including one specialist school, and two Catholic, that are part of the HEY partnership in northern Melbourne. To allow parents from different backgrounds to participate, five focus groups, in Arabic, Turkish, Vietnamese or Assyrian-Chaldean, were conducted with parents from different schools coming together. One English speaking focus group was also conducted at each of the schools. Participants in these groups represented a range of diverse cultural groups. One staff focus group was held at each school. In total, 72 parents and 38 staff across the six schools took part. In addition, researchers were able to conduct an additional focus group with six Indigenous parents and workers from the region.

Focus groups in English were conducted by the researchers while the community language parent focus groups were conducted by external facilitators, with researchers in attendance. Focus groups were digitally audio-recorded. In English language groups one of the researchers took summary notes of the discussion. Parent focus groups lasted approximately one hour with staff focus groups running for 30 minutes to one hour depending on staff availability. Focus groups began with a set introduction to the project, describing the background of the project and aims of the focus group. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves before being asked discussed the following topics:

- What is your school doing well to support cultural diversity?
- Does your school face any issues relating to cultural diversity? And if so, what are they?
- What would you suggest your school could do differently to address these issues and in general to support cultural diversity?

Participants were allowed to freely discuss these topics with facilitators providing prompts to explore themes discussed by participants.

In conducting the focus groups with staff and parents we used the generic term of 'cultural diversity' in our discussions. We did not explicitly ask about race-based discrimination, instead exploring whether race-related issues were raised during discussions related to cultural diversity in general.

Data preparation and extracting themes.

Facilitators of community language focus groups transcribed the focus group audiotapes into English and also reviewed the audiotapes to complete a separate document summarising themes and observations noted during the interviews. A second researcher worked with the transcriptions, extracting themes and then synthesised those themes with those noted by the focus group leaders. For English language focus groups, one researcher transcribed audio-recordings of focus group discussions, and then analysed them during focus groups to extract themes. These themes were then examined by other researchers, including those who had attended the focus groups, noting any themes that may have been omitted or that needed clarification.

2.3 Findings

Parents and staff described a wide array of school philosophies and practices that demonstrated respect for cultural diversity and methods for putting their values and aims into practice. The following section on findings is divided into two main parts. The first section covers what participants perceived their schools as doing well. The second includes areas that parents and teachers believed could be improved further, including remaining issues and suggested ways to address them. Of course there was a wide diversity among the participating schools, which differed on size, proportion of different cultural groups represented and specific practices. Our aim is to draw out both the common themes described and also less common suggestions that would add value to the excellent work already being done in schools.

2.3.1 Parents and Staff: What schools are doing well

We begin this report by outlining an amalgamation of best practices identified by participants.

School ethos and environment

Schools embracing respect for different cultures

> ***Parents say:***
>
> In nine focus groups, parents explicitly stated that they felt their school supports, embraces and/or respects different cultures. For example:
>
> "…I observe that the teachers and staff respect everyone, the majority are Muslims, they all respect this; they respect others too and that's what is important…. So I am really happy with this school. My children are also happy."
>
> "I've found that the school embraces multiculturalism, they are always doing different activities for different groups. They embrace that here and don't try to sweep it under the carpet. So it feels like a community."
>
> "The school actively teaches values that they want the kids to have about respect, tolerance and bullying." "Not only that, they demonstrate the values to the kids, so the kids have a role model there for them."

"The school does not impose on our children or put pressure on them to certain beliefs or practices; they let them pray and perform our traditions."

When discussing this topic parents identified a wide range of activities and approaches that were inclusive, catered for different needs and contributed to a welcoming and respectful school climate.

Recognising and addressing cultural and religious needs

Parents and staff say:

Parents and staff identified school practices that both felt support the needs of students and parents. Examples of these practices include:

- *Including posters and signs around the school with different cultural groups and languages displayed*
- *Activities and events in which children could learn about other cultures, including experiencing food from other cultures* As one staff member said: "…We have days such as Bring Food From Your Culture Day, we have our Bring Something In From Your Culture Day, Talk About Your Culture, What Do you Celebrate, What Do You Do and we really promote that cultural awareness of others and individuals."
- *Recognising and accommodating religious and cultural needs*. For example, setting aside rooms for students observing Ramadan during prayer times and meal times. One parent provided the following example, "… my daughter was fasting, and since her body was not that strong, she becomes tired, but the teacher took her in a separate place to rest. Let her sleep for an hour, then asked her to join the class. No one does that way in Turkey."
- *Ensuring that Halal food was available* at school events and at the school canteen.

Parents say:

In addition to the topics mentioned by both groups, parents indicated that the benefit of these activities was that their children have a greater understanding and respect for other cultures and religions, and that they, as parents, were welcomed and included at the school.

Staff say:

Staff also identified additional practices that helped support cultural awareness within their school. Practices included:

- *Having welcome signs around the school* in different languages.
- *Adjusting the school calendar to accommodate cultural and religious events.*
- *Having a staff member of the same religion available to address issues that arose,* such as a child describing concerns about breaking the fast during Ramadan.

- *Many of the activities covered in the later sections.*

Parent engagement

Communication processes

Parents and staff say:

Parents and staff both identified three practices that they felt were beneficial for communication between families and the school. These were:

- Having staff members who spoke the languages present in the school population or were of a similar background.
- Using interpreters for parent-teacher interviews and other meetings with parents.
- Engaging in personal, face to face communication.

These topics are expanded upon in the following sections.

Parents say:

Seven parent focus groups discussed how schools communicate with parents. Parents were generally positive about the practices that schools employed. These included:

- *Staff speaking the language of the students and parents.* Two parent focus groups from different schools identified having staff that spoke the languages of the parents (in this case Turkish and Arabic) as being very helpful.
  - Parents said that this made parents feel more welcome and helped them communicate with the school. For example: "Hearing and seeing someone working at the school that can speak the parent's language helps them relax and get involved."
  - Parents also said that it made a difference to their children if they were upset to be able to talk with a staff member in their first language.
  - Parents also said that staff pronouncing their names and their children's names correctly, made them feel welcome and included.
- *Staff initiating engagement with parents*.
  - Parents indicated that personal, face to face, invitations from staff were the best way to engage.
  - Schools could contact parents in person as parents picked their children up from school or dropped them off, or could contact them on the phone.
  - Personal invitations made parents feel more welcome and encouraged them to become more engaged with the school.
  - Benefits included higher attendance at activities, a greater feeling of community and parents actively seeking ways to contribute to the school.
- *School newsletter being translated into other languages.*
  - Parents appreciated cultural celebrations being discussed in the school newsletter.

- *Talking newsletter.* At one school a 'talking newsletter' was offered in which staff read the newsletter in Turkish and/or Arabic, depending on attendance. Parents liked this and the event also functioned as an opportunity to socialise.
- *The use of interpreters for parent-teacher interviews and appointments with school staff.*
- *The accessibility of teachers for parents who want to talk about their child.*

Staff say:

- Staff from four focus groups mentioned that having staff members who spoke the languages present in the school population was very beneficial for communication. These roles helped staff who do not speak community languages communicate and engage with parents who did not speak English.
    - o Relevant roles included multicultural aides, education support officers, liaison officers and/or teaching staff in their school. For example: "I think having the liaisons/community-officers is such a bonus, such a boost, the parents are more comfortable coming and talking to them… I think that has helped a lot to get the message across, of the aims of the school. and "We have two multicultural aides, Turkish and Arabic-Assyrian. So that is incredibly helpful to new arrivals and to the school."
- Staff from four focus groups indicated that their school used interpreters to provide support for both staff and parents in parent-teacher interviews and other meetings with parents. Teachers indicated that interpreters:
    - o Helped teachers engage with the parents and ensured that parents were enabled to understand their child's educational progress. For example: "We also do parent-teacher interviews quite well, we always make sure that everyone has an interpreter if they want one [as] we have so many different languages and cultures here …so that they can understand what is being said in the interview or ask questions or translate the report for them or just be involved in those things."

Offering activities to encourage engagement

Parents and staff say:

Parents and staff both identified two activities run by the school that encouraged engagement:

- *Running regular activities for parents* such as fundraising activities and social gatherings
- *Running a school playgroup.*

These topics are expanded below.

Parents say:

Six parent focus groups discussed specific activities that assisted parent engagement with the school. For example: "I think the important thing about having activities for

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parents, is that it gets them involved in the school. And the children love seeing that the parents are at school." Activities included the following:

Opportunities to attend school programs and events

- *English language classes for parents.*
- *School playgroups.* Parents from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds were very positive about playgroups.
    - They felt playgroups were a good way to get to know the school, other parents and introduce their child to the school.
    - Having access to playgroups that were run for different cultural groups and conducted in community languages was also valued by many parents.
- Some parents also said that the lower cost of the school playgroup, compared to privately run playgroups, was a significant benefit.
- *Transition programs for students.* These programs were seen as an opportunity for the parents to get to know the school.
- *School assemblies that parents could attend.*
- *Mother's Day and Father's Day activities.*

Opportunities to contribute

"There are definitely opportunities to get involved, they approach you. They tell you what there is to get involved in, of course it's your choice if you want to get involved but it is definitely there." This view was echoed by many parents who mentioned specific opportunities to contribute to their school.

- *Membership of school councils.* Being part of key decision-making bodies was considered important.
- *Opportunity for parents to assist teachers in class.*
- *Reading programs* where parents could go in to the classrooms and help the children with their reading.
- *Parent support groups.*
- *Parents offering skills.* Parents indicated that activities in which parents were given the opportunity to cook helped parents overcome language barriers, as they provided an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and interact with other parents in a more relaxed environment.
- *Fundraising activities.*

Parent Groups

Four (parent) focus groups specifically described *parent groups* as a chance to engage with the school as well as other parents and the school community more broadly. Parent groups helped build relationships between parents and in some cases facilitated friendships between the children of the parents attending. Most parent groups were

aimed at engaging with parents generally, while some were aimed at parents from particular cultural backgrounds specifically.

- Most parent groups involved the *school providing coffee and snacks or the parents bringing in food.*
- Some groups ran different *activities such as arts and crafts sessions.*
- *Days on which the parents would come into the school to cook*.
- Some of these groups were *run in different languages.*
- *Two schools also ran formal parenting programs, sometimes using bilingual staff*. These programs also provided an opportunity for parents from different cultural groups to get to know each other better.

Staff say:

Staff in three focus groups directly discussed ways in which their school communicated and engaged with parents. Practices schools employed included:

- *A talking newsletter* in which staff explained the current newsletter in Arabic and/or Turkish
- *Liaison officers consistently following up with non-English speaking parents.* Examples included, when students had been absent from school or when students had not been engaging in school activities
- *Running regular activities for parents* such as fundraising activities and social gatherings
- *Running a school playgroup*
- *Producing the school newsletter in different languages*
- *Translating notes to parents.*

Staff described these processes as beneficial, reporting that these practices made it easier to engage and communicate with parents. Parents were able to become more involved in the school and were more empowered to contribute actively to their children's education.

Curriculum, teaching and learning

Multicultural days

Parents and staff say:

Seven parent focus groups and three staff focus groups discussed multicultural days when asked about things their school is doing well. These included:

- *Harmony days*
- *Cultural festivals*
- *Cultural lunch days*, in which parents brought in food from their culture
- Many of these events incorporated food, dancing, music and art from different cultures.

Parents liked these events because they valued their children learning about different cultures, it was a chance to get involved in the school and their child's education and it helped build a sense of community. Parents indicated that they would like to see more of these events.

Staff liked these events as ways of teaching about and supporting cultural diversity.

Staff say:

- Staff also discussed 'show and tell' in classes that focused on students' backgrounds and cultures.

Parents say:

- Parents in three focus groups identified the teaching of languages in addition to English at their school as a positive practice.
- Four parent groups (two Catholic schools and two state schools) indicated that their schools were currently offering religious education and that these classes were viewed positively. Parents at schools offering religious classes liked their religion being taught to their children and also appreciated their children learning about other religions.
- Running activities that taught students about other cultures. For example, teaching students dances from other cultures.
- Hiring specialist story tellers to tell traditional stories in other languages.

Staff say:

Three focus groups discussed the coverage of culture in the curriculum. Coverage in the curriculum varied from year long units in which students examined their own cultural background, to a unit on Aboriginal history.

- Some schools talked about a starter program at the beginning of each year that examined similarities and differences between students.
- Staff also reported discussing similarities and differences between cultures and respect for varying cultures during class.

Extra-curricular programs and activities

Afterschool care

Parents say:

Two focus groups identified afterschool care as being very beneficial in providing the opportunity for positive interaction between students from different cultural groups.

- Within afterschool care, parents liked programs that incorporated activities that encouraged children to interact with each other. These activities included sports, but in some cases parents preferred dance or other, less physical, activities.

Partnerships with external services

Parents say:

Parents in one school noted that they liked that the school actively engages with families, including linking families with services.

Parents in one focus group identified the benefit of their school having access to a language centre that provided intensive English language teaching for new arrivals. Upon arrival students completed two terms in the language centre before transferring to normal classes. During this time, students in the language centre spent their class time in the language centre and their recess and lunch periods in the playground with the rest of the school. For example: "They take special care of students from different backgrounds because they know they have difficulty with the language first, and they are new here, so they support them and talk to their parents and try to help them. They have special teachers to help the children learn."

Staff say:

- Staff from two schools discussed their school's efforts to engage families with external services as a positive practice. Staff found these services to be very helpful. External services mentioned were:
  o Anglicare (which offers counselling, mental health, youth services, family relationship services, community care centres, migrant and refugee services, relationship education, disability and carer services). http://www.anglicare.org.au/our-services.
  o Foundation House (which provides services to people from refugee backgrounds who have survived torture or war related trauma, including counselling, advocacy, family support, group work, psycho-education, information sessions and complementary therapies). http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/about/index.htm.
  o General health and family services.

School policy

Children's wellbeing and inclusion in the school

Parents say:

- Three focus groups indicated that they were aware that their school had a policy against racism and/or bullying and felt these were good practices. At one school this included a policy against swearing in other languages.

Staff say:

- Staff in two focus groups discussed the importance of values programs and policies against bullying and racism. Staff from one focus group identified a values program run in the first term of each year as an effective practice, "…And I think also that we have a very good values program here that we run for the first

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4 to 5 weeks of term one and we look at respect and acceptance of other people and that is right across the school so we are all using the same language and embracing different cultures, different people, different ideas within our school and within our classroom."

- A zero-tolerance policy regarding racism was mentioned as important in one focus group.
- Three focus groups discussed their school's process of integrating new arrivals and believed these were effective. Staff from each of these focus groups indicated that having dedicated staff or services that dealt with new arrivals was the key practice that facilitated effective induction for students. For example: "...it [having liaison staff] has also helped us understand a lot of the background of the kids whereas before we wouldn't have known half of the information we know and it is two-way, because we couldn't communicate with them and often there would be misunderstandings and I think we don't have as many of those now." And, "I've got a fairly new arrival in my room… and it is very hard to communicate with her but thanks to having [name of liaison] the student can get [information] first hand."

Staff learning and support

Staff knowledge, understanding and skills related to cultural diversity

Parents say:

The Aboriginal focus group noted that more recent university teacher education programs appear to help staff better understand how to approach working with Aboriginal students and teach about Aboriginal history and culture.

Staff say:

- Staff found external services to be very helpful, including professional development offered by Foundation House.
- Staff from five focus groups discussed the training they had received and the ways in which they had learned to work with cultural diversity.

Informal methods of learning about culture included talking with:

- Students and parents about their culture and background
- Community liaison officers
- Teacher aides and other staff.

More formal methods of learning about culture included:

- Taking part in ongoing professional development throughout the year
- Discussing issues at weekly staff meetings
- Being provided with sheets containing general information about cultural or religious events, for example, Ramadan
- Having a mentoring or coaching system for staff

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- Receiving cultural diversity training at university
- Undertaking a short course on teaching students with English as a second language.

The role of leadership

- Two focus groups specifically mentioned that school leadership was important in promoting positive diversity practices and identified the following as being beneficial:
  - *Leadership awareness of the issues* relating to cultural diversity that their school was facing
  - *Leaders who listen to their staff*
  - *Leaders who respected the cultural and religious traditions of their staff,* such as encouraging time off for religious holidays
  - *Leaders who strategically and proactively support running services and programs in other languages.*

Aboriginal focus group issues

Parents, support workers and staff say:

- The Koorie Education Support Officer (KESO) support process was considered a positive process. For example, one staff member stated, "…We just got a Koori Education Officer that has come on board to support the needs of those students and their families… so we try to make sure that everyone is recognised and everything significant to them is valued."
- The Koorie Education Learning Plan (KELP) process involves an online tool to develop individual education plans and support Koorie students and families to work with their school to improve learning outcomes. Four of five parents viewed this initiative positively (one did not comment), including that:
  - It held schools accountable.
  - It helps with parent engagement.
  - Attendance is included.
  - The online method will mean there is a running record.
  - Parents can access it at home and students can check too.
  - Parents and students take ownership. Students can document self-aspirations.
  - Schools are being proactive.

2.3.2 Parents and Staff: Issues raised and areas for further development

The following issues and recommendations were noted by at least one focus group as important. As schools varied in the sorts of approaches they took to the culturally diverse nature

of their schools, not all issues were relevant to all schools. Each school would need to assess their own context to assess the relevance of each of the reported issues and suggestions.

School ethos and environment

Parents say:

Although parents were happy for their children to learn about other cultures, religions and languages some also expressed some concerns. Some parents with Anglo-European Christian backgrounds in three different focus groups indicated that they felt they were losing some of their traditions and values as their schools accommodated new cultural and religious groups. This included concerns that:

- Christmas and Easter were not being celebrated adequately or at all
- Their children were no longer being taught 'Australian values'
- Their culture was no longer being acknowledged.

Parents also had additional concerns about the ways in which their schools had accommodated new groups. They perceived that:

- Their school had not adequately consulted with parents about planned changes to accommodate the needs of other groups
- They had made changes to accommodate the needs of new groups but the new groups were not willing to reciprocate
- Their own needs were no longer being catered for.

Parents from three focus groups felt that their schools should do more to accommodate the needs of all groups.

Parent engagement

Parents say:

Two of the community language focus groups identified a lack of language skills as an issue. Parents with less proficiency in English language found it harder to communicate and engage with their school if staff there did not speak their language.

Communication between schools and parents

Parents say:

Parents were mixed in their response to receiving information through their children, some parents liked it and others did not.

Translated newsletters. Parents liked translated newsletters but:

- some parents reported that the translations were not always accurate and
- translated newsletters were not beneficial for parents with limited reading skills.

School websites. Issues with communication were identified in two focus groups.

- Parents indicated that websites may not be very useful for parents with limited English or experience with computers and the internet.

Letters from the school. In addition, parents said that some letters that they had received from their school had been poorly translated.

Ways to improve communication between schools and parents was discussed by one focus group. They suggested that more forms be produced in other languages.

Participation rates

Low participation rates for activities aimed at parents. The primary issue that parents discussed in relation to parent engagement was low participation rates for many activities.

- Some parents felt that new parents should make more of an effort to engage with the school.
- Some parents felt their school should be making more of an effort to engage with parents, identify their skills and invite them to use them at school; for example, invite them to teach language classes or to cook at events and activities.
- *Membership on school council.* Some parents identified school council as a specific and important decision-making context in which there was difficulty attracting parents who had recently arrived in Australia or who had limited English language skills.

To improve engagement, including at parent groups and other activities, parents suggested several changes.

- Schools could attempt to engage with parents in a more proactive manner. Face-to-face invitations to events or activities were seen as the best way to do this. Parents also suggested that schools run more activities but did not expand on this.

Staff say:

Staff in all six focus groups discussed wanting to find more effective ways to engage with parents. This aim included finding better ways to:

- Help parents feel confident engaging in the school or with their child's education.
- Communicate with parents who had limited English. For example: you have to take additional steps; you have to get interpreters happening."
- Encourage greater attendance at parent events. For example: ""…I think a challenge is to engage the community.... …the parents, because of their lack of English, they find it hard until we invite and do special days. They are happy to come but you need to put in that extra effort. So I had to make personal phone calls ... I had to get the Arabic ESs to call the Arabic families. And they all came."
- Identify and address cultural or religious differences. For example, staff perceived that there were different attitudes towards school and education in

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different cultures. For example: "One of the major problems we have is that the parents have a different perspective of what education should be for children to perhaps what we have. So they feel that you give the children to the teachers, and the teachers, it's your job to teach. Whereas we feel it is a team, we have our part to play and that the parents have their part to play in the education of their children."

Curriculum, teaching and learning

Language classes

Parents say:

Parents from five focus groups wanted more language classes taught in their school. This included:

- Wanting a greater range of languages taught
  - Parents at one school at which no languages are taught, thought that languages relevant to the student population, Turkish and Arabic, and additional languages if possible, would be very good.
- A general desire for their children to be exposed to more languages.
- Ensuring that language classes were offered in all years.
- Extending language classes to teach about culture.
- More English language classes for new students and support for students with English language needs. For example: "I have a problem, my daughter is not adapting well in the school…the little one does not understand the teachers when they speak English…she comes home not understanding anything."

However, some parents also indicated that they would prefer no languages being taught if only one other language, which was not their own, was being offered. They felt that this could interfere with their children's learning if they were undertaking other language classes outside of school.

Some parents said that they were aware that offering more language classes could be difficult due to resource constraints.

Religious education classes and religious needs

Parents say:

Four parent groups (two Catholic schools and two state schools) indicated that their schools were currently offering religious education and that these classes were viewed positively. However, discussion of this topic at those schools not currently offering religious education varied.

- Some parents from state schools were against religious education classes as they felt it was difficult to cater for all needs given the variation in beliefs within

religions and that these classes could be divisive, or not the domain of the state education system.

- Other parents felt that learning about religions was helpful as it broke down the barriers between children. These parents were generally more in favour of their children learning about different religions rather than being taught a specific religion.

Culture in the curriculum and classroom

Multicultural days

Parents say:

- Parents indicated that they liked multicultural days and special events and would like to see more of them but that the school should not rely on them as their only method of teaching about cultural diversity and that more systematic approaches to cultural diversity, across the full year, were needed.
- The Aboriginal focus group indicated that more attention was needed to NAIDOC week as a special event.

Staff say:

Staff from two focus groups felt that their school might be able to do more to incorporate cultural days or events into their school.

- Suggested practices included:
  o Celebrating religious or cultural events at the school such as Ramadan
  o Running more cultural days and weeks
  o Having different themes for different cultural days/weeks such as art, music, dance or food
  o Greater coverage of Indigenous events.

Other curriculum issues

Parents say:

Although parents were positive about their school's approach towards cultural diversity they identified some specific issues.

Many parents perceived there to be a lack of teaching directly addressing differences relating to culture, religion and disability. One parent stated: "School is just a place where you come to learn to read and write…it's just about education, it's not about anything else. So as far as my school meeting the cultural needs of my daughter, no they don't…School is not helping my child culturally, religiously or personally…And schools need to have a role in it…"

- Some parents felt that their children were currently learning about these differences through contact with other students.

- o Parents also indicated that this was resulting in some problems. For example, some parents said that their children did not understand why other students ate different foods or would not eat specific foods. In one case this resulted in one student no longer eating one type of food to avoid questions from other students.
- Parents reported that students and teachers did not always know *the difference between culture and religion*. One parent reported that it had been suggested to their child that they should bring in a prayer rug as an example of their culture.

Parents identified practices that they recommended schools to introduce. These focused on schools taking a more proactive approach and teaching about differences relating to culture, religion and disability.

These included:

- Teaching about different cultures and religions, for example, "They need to know, it helps them have a better understanding and respect other children with different needs and different beliefs."
- Teaching students about differences between cultures and religion
- Teaching about disability
- Introducing more active learning, including theatre and dance from other cultures.

Staff say:

Staff from two focus groups felt that their school could do more to incorporate culture into the curriculum. This included:

- Moving away from one off events to ongoing coverage throughout school terms
- More programs that helped break down the barriers between different groups of students.

Behavioural and emotional difficulties

- Some staff linked children's behavioural difficulties with cultural diversity. Staff from three focus groups indicated that they had experienced or observed students with behavioural problems. They believed that these difficulties were related to differences in culture and religion, particularly related parenting practices and gender expectations.
- Other issues identified were attributed to trauma in students' backgrounds. Some new arrivals who had recently immigrated to Australia had previously suffered trauma as part of, or prior to, their immigration.
- Staff in one focus group suggested running student groups for students from cultural or religious groups who staff believed were currently not having their needs met. Some staff perceived that some of their female students had very restricted home lives and were not able to fully engage in school and social activities. These staff believed that having culturally sensitive specialised support would help meet these students' social and emotional needs.

2. Investigating parent and staff perspectives

Extra-curricular programs and activities

Afterschool care

In addition, within another focus group, parents indicated a need for afterschool care to be provided at their school.

School policy

Bullying, racism and discipline

Parents say:

School policy against bullying and racism was appreciated. However, in one focus group several parents indicated that there had been incidents of bullying that their school had not dealt with appropriately. These parents had reported incidents of bullying to school staff and felt that the response by staff had been superficial and inadequate.

Within one focus group parents indicated that they were concerned that the schools were not taking a strong enough role in student discipline. They believed that the school should do more to enforce good behaviour and instil strong values; however, they did not suggest ways in which this could be achieved. In contrast, in another non-English speaking focus group parents indicated that they were happy with their school's approach to discipline but did not discuss this topic in detail.

A whole school approach to cultural diversity

Staff say:

One focus group suggested that it would be useful to have an individual coordinator or team that oversaw a whole-school, comprehensive approach to cultural diversity.

Staff learning and support for cultural diversity

Staff say:

Staff training and support was a strong theme within four staff focus groups. Many staff discussed the importance of having an understanding of the different cultures, religions and backgrounds of their students. They identified various issues relating to their own training, resources or knowledge which they felt would be useful to address. They mentioned a need for more information about:

- The culture, religion or background of some minority groups within their school. Staff noted that this information could be difficult to obtain.
- Customs and cultural or religious beliefs of different groups.
- Cultural or religious events (in some schools).
- Differences between some cultural groups within their school, in order to raise awareness of relevant issues.

- Issues facing recent immigrants or refugees. Knowing where staff could obtain additional resources or support to help them deal with issues relating to cultural diversity.

In addition, information specific to particular students was sometimes lacking and considered important to obtain, including for new arrivals.

- For example, on one occasion a student was frequently crying in class and it was only later that the teacher was told this was the result of that student's traumatic experiences as a refugee. For example: "And sometimes we don't know the story (of their student's background)… and sometimes there is never an avenue to find out the things (about their background) that make a difference."
- Another example was a child becoming distressed when she saw buses outside the school and was told the children were going on camp. Staff were unaware that her experience of children being taken to camps had been traumatic and that this regular school event could trigger this child's distress.

Concerns about support processes were also mentioned in some focus groups, including:

- *Insufficient ESL support, teacher aides and liaison officers.* Staff from three focus groups indicated that they would like more support. Some staff had difficulty teaching students who did not speak English. They felt that teacher aides who spoke the student's language were important to help them teach these students.
- *Concerns about interpreters external to the school translating accurately and knowing the school.* At times interpreters did not accurately interpret what teachers or parents said. Because external interpreters often came for occasional sessions at the school, they could be unfamiliar with the particular school's policies and procedures. These interpreters would be unable to represent the school as well as someone from within the school, or an interpreter with a strong relationship with the school might.
- *Concerns about bilingual staff being used as ad hoc interpreters within the school being overworked when it is not part of their formal work load.* While there were advantages of within-school interpreters knowing the school well, those staff could end up with large workloads.
- *Need for more formal induction and mentoring processes for new staff that focused on cultural diversity issues.* Induction and mentoring processes related to the culturally diverse nature of the school were sometimes informal, with new staff members slowly discovering culturally relevant information by seeking staff or others to learn from. Some also felt that they had had to learn by their mistakes which could have been avoided with a more structured process.

Staff suggested:

- There be greater coverage of cultural diversity in university teacher education.
- Increased formal mentoring of recent graduates and any staff new to the school.

- Teaching staff about cultural and religious differences. For example: "I think understanding the different cultural needs and what is involved in the cultures is a big thing that we need to know more about."
- Providing staff with general information packs about events, religions and cultures.
- Inviting experienced staff or community members to the school to speak to staff about the religions and the cultures of the families within their school.
- Ensuring that all staff have access to ESL support if they have students who do not speak English. For example, staff in one school with resources said, "There is no way we would be able to communicate effectively as teachers and with the kids if we didn't have the language centre and the integration aides. If they were external to the school it would be so difficult."
- Providing additional assistance to teachers who had students who had undergone trauma. This included informing the teachers that their student's behaviour may be due to trauma and providing more information about how to deal with students that had been traumatised. For example: "Maybe some professional support, like counsellors, that the kids can speak to and even for us, counsellors, that we could speak to just to get some tips on how to handle these kids when they get into our classroom or when they are showing signs of distress."
- Increased discussion and communication between staff regarding current issues relating to cultural diversity.
- Developing a better system for interpreters including:
  - Consistency regarding which interpreters support each school, so a trusting and effective relationship can be formed between the school and the interpreter.
  - An orientation process for interpreters from outside the school so they become familiar with what the school offers culturally diverse students and parents.
  - If interpreters come from within a school, it should be considered in their workload allocations and considered as part of a funding model.
  - It was pointed out that this was not just an individual school issue but an education system issue since the process is overseen at the system level.
- Employing more cultural liaison officers, teacher aides and other staff who can communicate and engage with parents who do not speak English. For example: "Multicultural aides are paramount to the working of these schools and it shouldn't have to come out of our budget and it should just be available."

Disability-related issues

Improving the way schools deal with disability was a topic in several focus groups.

Parents said:

- A parent with a child with a disability in one (non-specialist) school felt that her school could do more to teach about disability. She felt that students knew very little about disability.

Staff said:

- Staff reported that the training they had received at university had not covered disability adequately. They felt that it is very important that university training covers how issues related to disability can be compounded by cultural differences.
- Staff indicated that discussing disability with parents was more difficult if there was a language barrier or cultural differences. Staff found that parents from diverse cultural backgrounds often had different expectations, understandings and beliefs regarding disability which could sometimes be challenging to address.
  - For example, parent concerns about labeling a child disabled and parent understanding of the physiological origins of disabilities, and what education can and cannot provide (e.g., cure versus developmental support) were important to clarify and address.

Aboriginal focus group issues

Acknowledging traditional owners of the land.

The importance of acknowledging traditional ownership of the land and ways of doing so were discussed and were considered important for demonstrating respect. Suggestions included:

- Displaying the Aboriginal flag and ensuring there is a flag pole to display it on.
- Publicising and acknowledging NAIDOC week (it often is not). However, activities should not be restricted to NAIDOC week.
- Welcome to country and acknowledgement of the traditional owners can be done in a variety of ways. The example of Darebin council was used since it includes an acknowledgement on emails, letterheads, meeting notes, on footers, and in buildings as one enters.
- There can be an Aboriginal section of a school with pictures, boomerangs, totem poles, message sticks. Catholic schools have had touring message sticks circulating around schools to be displayed and discussed.
- Concerts can include Aboriginal dancing and music.
- Welcome to country included at the start of ceremonies and events.
- Native gardens.

Acknowledging Aboriginal culture

- Displaying posters of people from different cultures, including Aboriginal cultures.
- Avoiding stereotyped portrayals, since many Aboriginal people live in cities, not just in the remote areas.

- These acknowledgements were considered particularly important when Aboriginal students are in the school. For example, "Getting the school to understand that we're there and should be recognised as everybody else is, is hard; I don't think we are."

Staffs in schools were considered to have good intentions, but may not always know culturally appropriate ways to demonstrate respect. Ideas proposed included teachers:

- Doing research into the local Aboriginal community
- Contacting the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Koorie Education Unit
- Contacting the liaison officer - Catholic schools often have someone in this role
- Involving parents
- Good celebrations are more likely to attract parents
  - Time it for when parents drop off or pick up their children
  - Give personal invitations.

Curriculum. Participants stated that Aboriginal history should be part of the curriculum:

- Teachers need to be taught how to teach it properly and how to deliver it
- History taught properly helps students understand the historical roots of the problems with health and wellbeing that Indigenous Australians experience today
- Social justice issues need to be included, including traditional ownership of the land.

Support for Aboriginal students when there are only a few in the school

- There were concerns about the level of support for students when only a few Aboriginal students were in the school. This is partly an issue of support and funding. A school needs to have at least 10 students to receive targeted funding. However, when there are only one or two Aboriginal students, those students may feel most isolated and need more support.
- There is a need for more Koorie teachers and integration aides.

Identification as Aboriginal was a major issue discussed

Identification means identification by others and also desiring to be identified as Aboriginal oneself. This issue often arises because a large proportion of Aboriginal students and parents are 'White Aboriginal', so it is not obvious to others that they are Aboriginal.

Identification by oneself

Focus group members felt that a major issue is students not identifying themselves as Aboriginal out of concern about negative reactions and being looking down upon.

- *Proposed solutions included:* if schools taught more about Aboriginal history and culture in a positive way, acknowledged Indigenous peoples more, avoided

stereotypes and represented the range of ways Aboriginal people live and look, then more students would openly identify as Aboriginal.

Identification by others

- *School staff may not be aware that students are Aboriginal*, because the students are White Aboriginal.
- *While this information is collected by schools, due to privacy laws it may not always be disseminated to parents.* So parents cannot find other Aboriginal families in the school to provide support to each other.
- Schools *can identify Aboriginal students through forms parents complete for funding purposes.*
- Sometimes *staff have denied that students or parents who are White Aboriginal are "really Aboriginal"*, which is hurtful.
- To overcome these problems, it is important to *represent in posters and discussions the range of Aboriginals*. Make clear that not all Aboriginals live in the outback, are black, are disadvantaged or when successful are athletes.
- Posters displayed need to demonstrate this.

Disability issues

One focus group participant commented that quite a few Koorie students have disabilities and need aid and attention to their Koorie background.

3. Exploring student perspectives

3.1 Aims

The main aim of the student focus groups was to understand student perspectives related to cultural diversity. A particular focus was on students' responses to individuals of different cultures, understandings and assumptions about how racial and cultural differences are perceived by others, how individuals of different colour or background inter-relate, and assumptions made about people who are Black or White. A further aim was to establish whether students reported having experienced incidents of racial discrimination or prejudice, and their views on current ways of responding and potential ways to respond in the future.

These questions were developed based on a research literature suggesting that children as young as 2 and 3 years are aware that colour and differences are connected with privilege and power, and that racism has a profound influence on a child's sense of identity (Derman-Sparks & the A.B.C Task Force, 1989; Jenkins, Morgan & Taouk, 2009). Despite international research that indicates this to be the case, very little research on this issue has been conducted in Australian schools. Whether students will respond similarly to those internationally, was of interest, to inform Australian schools' approach to cultural diversity.

3.2 Method

Conceptual basis of the method

This research project started with the conceptual understanding that children are competent meaning makers who have valid and important knowledge about their worlds (MacNaughton & Smith, 2008, 2005; MacNaughton, Smith & Davis, 2007). Children not only have the capacity to be active researchers, but they have a right to be consulted in matters that affect them (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008; MacNaughton & Smith, 2008). Therefore students' theories and lived experiences were seen as integral to this research.

Participants

The method used with students was to engage them in focus groups of 2 to 11 students (mean 5.1) in each of three age groups (Prep to Grade 2, Grades 3-4, and Grades 5-6). Eighty-three students between 5 and 13 years of age took part in the research. They self identified as having a broad range of cultural backgrounds; thirty-one different cultural backgrounds were 'named'. The number and age of students in the focus groups varied at each school. Generally, there were three groups at each school: one group with Prep (5 year old children) to Grade two (7 year old children) group, a Grade 3 to 4 group (8-9 year old children) and a Grade 5 to 6 group (10-12 year old children). The combination of grades changed at some schools due to the number of students who chose to participate and other school activities being undertaken on the day. The ages of students related to grade level was different for one particular school as students were placed in grade levels according to their academic capabilities rather than date of birth.

All the children chose their own pseudonym to be use for the purposes of reporting on this project.

Diversity doll method

Students' engagement in a focus group was supported through the use of Diversity Dolls. Diversity Dolls were used as a research tool to generate discussion with the students about cultural and racial diversity. Diversity Dolls (alternatively known as Persona Dolls) have been used extensively in recent years in work with young children in many countries (e.g. United Kingdom, Australia, the United States of America and South Africa). They were originally designed to be used predominately by teachers in the school setting to expose children to social, cultural and/or physical diversity (Brown, 2001). The dolls each have a story or persona that provides them with their own unique identity. The role of the researcher in this project was to start the session by setting the scene through an introduction to the dolls, asking the children questions about the dolls to trigger discussions on cultural and racial diversity and, later in the process, telling a story about a situation where one of the dolls was treated unfairly because of the colour of their skin. According to Brown (2001), using dolls while telling stories makes it easier for children to make connections with their own lives. This then empowers them to think about who they are and about the identities of those around them.

Focus group process

The focus groups were facilitated by two of the researchers. One of the researchers worked with the diversity dolls with the students while the second researcher took field notes and observed the facial and body gestures that occurred for students when they engaged with the questions. During the focus group the students were introduced to a dark-skinned doll and a light-skinned doll to help children articulate how they understood difference in terms of "race". They were introduced to either:

- Sherrie (Indigenous Australian) and Olivia (Anglo Australian); or
- Tom (Anglo Australian) and Aravinda (Indian Australian).

The two dolls used were of the same sex in an attempt to control for gendered issues (knowing that culture, race and gender are intrinsically woven and cannot be separated). During the focus groups in which the students met the dolls, they were asked a series of semi-structured interview questions.

For each individual doll the students were asked:

- Do you know anyone who looks like this doll? Can you tell me about them?
- What do you think might make this doll happy at school?
- What might make this doll feel sad at school?
- Sometimes, this doll thinks school is not fair for them. I wonder why? Do you have any ideas?

Bringing the dolls together the students were asked:

- I wonder if these dolls are friends with each other. What do you think?

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- Which doll do you think would have the most friends at this school?

The students were then told a story about Aravinda or Sherrie:

Aravinda/Sherrie was playing outside in the yard at lunch-time and was told that they have 'yucky' black skin by another child in their classroom. They feel hurt and sad and don't know what to do.

The children were asked the following post-story questions:

- What do you think Aravinda/Sherrie can do about this?
- What could you do about this if this happened at your school?
- What could the teachers do?
- Is there anyone else that might be able to do something to help Aravinda/Sherrie?
- How could we stop that happening again?
- Has this happened to anyone you know?

The last three questions asked were to inquire about students to think about the broader school community:

- Can you tell me about a problem you have had that involved a person from another country? Try to think of someone who looks or speaks differently to you.
- What do you think the people in your school do to include people from different countries in the school community?
- What do you think the people from other countries would like your school to do, so that they feel better about being part of the school community?

Extracting themes

Field notes of nonverbal interactions and transcribed audio-tapes of students' verbal conversations were independently analysed for themes by the two researchers who were present at the interviews. The themes elicited were reviewed by others in the research team. Tabulations of the number of students in different age groups responding in particular ways was then used to help understand the strength of different themes. Students' silences to questions and the degree of consensus among children were also considered in exploring the themes.

Reporting back

During the focus groups the researchers explained to the students that they would report back about the findings of the project. Through conversations with the groups it was decided that the reporting back would be in the form of a newsletter. Three newsletters were developed, one for each of the age groups (see Appendix A).

3.3 Findings

This section highlights that young children do have understandings about respect for cultural diversity and how it plays out in positive and negative ways in their daily lives in and out of school. This section describes the three themes that emerged from the student focus groups.

Prototypical quotes will be used to demonstrate themes in some instances. The three key themes emerging from the student focus groups were:

1. Cultural and racial identity as affecting social responses to individuals.
2. Racism (mis)named.
3. Inclusiveness and belonging.

3.3.1 Cultural and racial identify as affecting social responses to individuals

In general students appear to believe that individuals from different races and cultures 'should' be treated equally well, particularly among the older students of Grades 5-6. This may have been because the older students were better able to articulate their ideas. Students' responses to the Diversity Dolls indicated that they recognised that some people who have dark coloured skin are not always treated fairly. These responses demonstrated that students are not colour-blind or 'innocent' to the racial discourse within the broader social context.

Ideas and understandings expressed by students

The concept of 'respect' for people of different cultures and races was consistently verbalised by the older students from Grades 3-6 and implied by the younger students from Grades Prep-2. When asked what would make Aravinda/Sherrie happy at school the students responded:

"People respecting him (Aravinda)." (Grade 3-4)

"If people respect her (Sherrie), as in, for who she is." (Grade 5-6)

"Learning about her culture (Sherrie)." (Grade 5-6)

The students were asked whether the two dolls (white-skinned Olivia/Tom or brown-skinned Aravinda/Sherrie) would be friends. Of the 50 students who responded, 41 children stated "yes" (20 at Prep-2, 14 at Grade 3-4 and 7 at Grade 5-6). Five students responded "no" (1 at Prep-2, 2 at Grade 3-4 and 2 at Grade 5-6). Six students responded maybe, (1 at Prep-2, 1 at Grade 3-4 and 4 at Grade 5-6). Twenty-seven students did not respond to the question.

During the discussion as to the reasons for their responses, the students in Prep-2 and Grade 5-6 identified that friendships were often typically based on skin colour and facial features. For example, when exploring reasons why the dolls would not be friends, the students responded:

"They would think they're not friends only because they have different skin colour." (Prep-2)

"I don't think Olivia and Sherrie would mix because of their skin colour and they might not like each other." (Grade 5-6)

Interestingly the responses of students in the Grade 3-4 focus groups made no reference to skin colour or features.

In stating why they could be friends students focused on what they could bring to each other rather than on skin colour. They stated:

"Because they talk to each other and they play with each other." (Grade Prep-2)

"Best friends, but not same country." (Grade 3-4)

"I think they will because maybe they like think different so then they can learn about different cultures and different things they never knew before." (Grade 5-6)

Recognising the complexities two Grade 5-6 students reflected:

"Yes. Because they're friendly to each other and they're not bullies. (and) No. They would think they're not friends only because they have different skin". (Grade Prep-2)

"I'm not sure 'cause like yeah…people with different skin colours don't usually play with each other." (Grade 5-6)

"There's a possibility that they might be friends and they might not 'cause if they're both Australian…the history of the country…they might not like each other." (Grade 5-6)

In contrast to the majority of the students stating they believed the dolls could be friends, are the responses made when students were asked which one of the dolls would have the most friends. Of the 68 responses, 48 students (70%) believed that the white-skinned doll would have the most friends, 8 (12%) thought the dark-skinned doll would, while 11 (16%) believed both would have the same amount of friends and 1 (2%) was unsure. Each level's response is shown in the table below.

Table 1. Which doll do you think would have the most friends at school?

	White	Black	Both	Unsure
Prep-2	14	1	6	0
Grade 3-4	16	4	5	0
Grade 5-6	18	3	0	1

In responding as to the reasons behind their views, 23 students (6 at Prep-2, 9 at Grade 3-4, 8 at Grade 5-6) referred explicitly to skin colour and features. They stated:

"Because she (Olivia) has light skin colour and mostly one person will love, two people to three people will love that colour (points to Sherrie) and mostly people love that colour (points to Olivia)." (Prep-2)

"Cause he's white, all the white kids play with him (Tom) and all the black friends play with him (Aravinda)." (Grade 3-4)

"The white one." (Grade 3-4)

"They'll tease her (Sherrie) but not her (Olivia)." (Grade 3-4)

"Because of skin colour." (Grade 5-6)

> "Because more people would judge Sherrie than Olivia because she has different skin…" (Grade 5-6)

Where students believed they would have the same number of friends it was based on a belief that they shared positive personal attributes that would attract friends:

> "I think they'll both have lots and lots of friends because it depends on how nice they are to people…not their looks and things." (Grade 3-4)

42 students identified that they knew a person that looked like Tom/Olivia, while 35 children identified that they knew a person that looked like Aravinda/Sherrie.

Three students denied verbally or shook their head when another student in the focus group identified them as looking like Sherrie or Aravinda:

> "No! No no no no no I'm not black! I don't feel like I'd be Black-no way!
>
> Kylie: "No? Why would you not want to be black?"
>
> "Because! It's… (pause) 'cause I don't want to!" (Prep-2)
>
> One child shook her head and said, "no not me." (Prep-2)
>
> "She (Sherrie) looks like (Janey)." Janey responded "uh?!"(Grade 3-4)

A Grade 5-6 boy agreed with the identification by another group member, stating

> "Yeah, kinda." (Grade 5-6)

22 students (7 at Prep-2, 5 at Grade 3-4, 10 at Grade 5-6) identified white skin as 'normal'. For example:

> "I reckon Olivia [would have more friends] because I see as well that most of the time that some dark skinned people get bullied because of their skin colour. And I reckon that because Olivia is normal, she'll have friends around her." (Grade 5-6)

Four students in Prep to 2 suggested that children could change their skin colour so that the dark-skinned doll would not be hurt or made to feel sad about their skin. Specifically, they could change their skin colour through medical intervention by a doctor giving them tablets to make the skin white or a nurse scrubbing the skin:

> "If he has bark on him take it off and put it on there…and your mum could was[h] it and you could have a bath…take the…" "Mud off?" "The bark will take his yucky things off. If you scrub really hard." (Grade Prep-2)
>
> Kylie: "If you scrub his skin really hard?" "Yeah like this" (pretends to scrub her own skin)." (Grade Prep-2)
>
> "They could take to the doctor and the doctor will give him tablets and the skin would come back." (Grade Prep-2)

Kylie: "Come back to what?"

"His colour (points to Tom." (Grade Prep-2)

35 students identified that they, their friends or someone they knew at the school had been 'bullied' based on racial issues. Six students in Grades 3 to 6 in three separate schools identified that they had been racially bullied. These students declined to discuss the episodes and, when asked whether they would like to talk about it, each student dropped their head, avoided eye contact and said "no".

During the interviews a small number of the older students demonstrated that they could name racism and articulate a politically active anti-racist stance. In response to the question, what might make Aravinda/Sherrie feel sad at school, 3 students stated racism:

"Racism, people saying she doesn't belong at the school." (Grade 3-4)

"Racism." (Grade 5-6)

"People teasing her about her culture." (Grade 5-6)

Conversely when stating what would make Aravinda/Sherrie happy at school one student replied:

"No racist comments." (Grade 5-6)

In other instances, when talking about who would have the most friends, students noted that the white-skinned doll would because:

"Some people might be racist and tease." (Grade 3-4)

"Some people can be quite racist, some people don't like other people." (Grade 5-6)

3. Exploring student perspectives

Key messages and recommendations

1. Children believe that respect for cultural and racial diversity is important:

Recommendations:

- Acknowledge and celebrate students' respect for cultural and racial diversity.
- Education systems may wish to consider cultural diversity activity grants and awards at three levels:
    1. Grants awarded to groups of children to support activities and the development of resources to support respect for cultural diversity.
    2. Grants awarded to teachers to support activities and the development of resources to support respect for cultural diversity.
    3. Respect for cultural diversity school award (along the lines of Sun Smart school programs) to acknowledge activities and the development of resources that support and celebrate respect for cultural diversity.
- Schools may consider forming respect for cultural and racial diversity committees that bring students, teachers, families, elders and community members together to actively plan, promote and reflect on how the school and community supports and celebrates diversity.

2. Children have a great capacity to reflect on their understandings of cultural diversity and how it is similar to, or conflicting with, broader social issues.

Recommendation:

- Students need to have opportunities to critically reflect on issues related to fairness and cultural diversity that can be triggered by critical inquiry questions such as "do you think Tom and Aravinda would be friends?" These questions should be posed in a way that allows students the option to initially engage with these issues of cultural diversity in a non-personal manner if they need to. These conversations can be extended to support students to then reflect on their own experiences if they seek to do so.

3. Children are often not colour-blind or innocent to cultural and "racial" difference.

Recommendations:

- Acknowledge and celebrate students' capacities as competent meaning makers.
- Provide support for staff, students and families to discuss the students' and/or their friends and families' lived experience of cultural and racial diversity and work together to find strategies to challenge unfairness.
- Develop a friendship audit that staff and students can use to make visible how race might play out in who plays with whom, who speaks first, who speaks last, who never speaks and why, who sits next to whom in the classroom, who is chosen to participate in an activity first and who is chosen last. This can support bringing our unconscious behaviours to the conscious, so that people can see when students, families and staff are left out of activities or conversations.

4. Children in their responses show that how they speak and act can reflect an assimilationist (or cultural integration) approach (see Appendix B) to cultural diversity through perceiving white skin as normal and coloured skin as inferior or expecting culturally diverse non-Anglo people to change to 'fit in' with White Anglo-Australian people.

Recommendation:

- Provide support for teachers, children and families to discuss the effects for non-Anglo students, families and teachers when people don't see them as 'normal' Australian or 'fitting in' to the community because of their physical appearance and/or culture.

5. Children can act and speak in ways that silence children who are non-white by ignoring their presence.

Through out the discussions, children with brown or darker skin colour required more encouragement and invitation to participate compared to children with light or white-skin colour, who tended to dominate the discussions. This 'silencing' phenomenon raises questions about how free dark-skinned or 'minority' children feel to share their views and also how they believe their views will be received and whether or not they will be respected. A good example of this was students' responses to the question: "Which doll do you think would have the most friends at school?" The 8 children who replied with the dark-skinned doll (relative to the 48 children who replied with the white-skinned doll) were all dark-skinned themselves and responded after the majority of children had already responded with a different answer. Such answers were typically explained in terms of the white-skinned doll being more 'normal' and 'cool' and therefore more popular. For example:

> "I think maybe Shiree because she's a normal girl and she likes to dance and do performing arts." (Grade 4)

Recommendation:

- Provide support for teachers, children and families to discuss the effects of ignoring non-white people in and out of school to support fairness for all people.

6. Children are experiencing racial vilification at school and may not disclose this to adults.

Recommendations:

- Acknowledge racism occurs in and out of school.
- Provide support for teachers, children and families in naming racism.
- Provide support for teachers, children and families to discuss and develop specific anti-racist policies together.
- Provide support for teachers, children and families to develop resources such as case studies depicting scenarios through video, role play, puppets, diversity dolls or stories. In each case,

scenarios can be provided that illustrate interactions, in and out of school, that are racist; students can then be provided with alternative endings and discuss the effects for each of the people in the scenario.

3.3.2 Racism (mis)named

A significant finding in the focus groups was that most students were able to describe behaviours and language involving racism directed at themselves or others. However there were only 10 instances when students named these behaviours as racism; in all other instances children labelled the events as 'bullying'.

Ideas and understandings expressed by children

In 79 instances during the focus group discussions students talked about bullying and racism in response to one of the dolls being described as having 'yucky' black skin. In 69 of these instances, however, the students named the racism as 'bullying' while on 10 occasions the students (0 students at Prep-2, 2 students at Grade 3-4, 8 students at Grade 5-6) explicitly used the word 'racism'.

35 students were able to describe events or situations involving racism directed towards them or other people that they know.

In all 17 focus groups, students discussed bullying or teasing (racially based) as a reason for the dolls to be unhappy or feel the school was unfair, for example:

> "People say that he looks different that's why they push him around and they don't like him." (Grade 3-4)

> "Um, this is for Sherrie, but maybe because people tease her because they say that Aboriginals are bad and bad things about her." (Grade 5-6)

> [Others say...]

> "You're a different skin colour to us so we don't want to play around you"

> "Your culture is different to ours"

> "I hate the way you look…like their looks"

> "The way they look" and

> "When they don't believe in God." (Grade 5-6)

When asked what Aravinda/Sherrie or they could do about bullying 39 students responded, "tell the teacher" (16 students at Prep-2, 12 students at Grade 3-4, 11 students at Grade 5-6). It is important to note that this statement seemed to occur in a rote manner as if it was the answer that the students were expected to say.

Many students suggested other strategies for addressing the problem through the support of others. They stated:

- 10 students would talk with parents (0 students at Prep-2, 3 students at Grade 4-5, 5 students at Grade 5-6).
- 3 students would tell a friend (0 students at Prep-2, 1 student at Grade 4-5, 2 students at Grade 5-6).
- 3 students would tell a sibling/cousin (1 student at Prep-2, 0 students at Grade 4-5, 2 students at Grade 5-6).
- 2 children said that they would talk to another child from the same culture (0 students Prep-2, 1 student at Grade 4-5, 1 student at Grade 5-6).

51 students were able to articulate what teachers could do as an intervention with the person who 'bullied'.

- 26 students commented on the teacher punishing the child through various methods such as time out and detention (11 students at Prep-2, 9 students at Grade 4-5, 6 students at Grade 5-6).
- 20 students said that the teacher could talk to or reason with the perpetrator (8 students at Prep-2, 2 students at Grade 3-4, 10 students at Grade 5-6).

While 51 students discussed the teachers' actions, none of the students articulated the purpose of these actions. All the actions described were interventions rather than a transformative approach that supports students to reflect on what they have done, question their actions and understandings in relation to racial and cultural stereotypes and discrimination and change their behaviours. It is important to note that this does not mean that the teachers are not taking a transformative approach to cultural diversity, rather it raises questions about how teachers and families might talk explicitly about the programs and methods they use, and why, to challenge racism.

45 students were able to describe what they personally say to stop the 'bullying' (9 students at Prep-2, 18 students at Grade 4-5, 18 students at Grade 5-6). Two specific verbal responses were to tell the person to stop, and ask the student to put themselves in the other person's shoes. In one school one student discussed how the school used a program called *Bounce Back* which taught them to think positively in the event that they become upset after being bullied (Students engage in this program for 1 hour per week as part of KidsMatter Primary, a National Mental Health Promotion initiative). A specific school practice to counter bullying was mentioned by one Prep-2 and one Grade 3-4 focus group and involved confronting the 'bully' in the form of *naming it*. Students explained that *naming it* involves putting your hand out like a stop sign and saying *"stop it – I don't like it when you do [X]. If you do it again I will tell an adult or a teacher"*. The students said they had been taught "naming it" and that they practice it in class. They mentioned that the 'bullying' had slowed down as a result of this policy but still does happen.

Key messages and recommendations

1. Some students have language to name racism:

It is important to identify the distinctions within the concept or term bullying, and the causes and effects of bullying. Specifically, it is important to support children's understandings of racism and their capacity to identify their own and other people's behaviours that are based on racism.

Recommendations:

- Develop a school ethos that names racism.
- Support teachers, children and families to engage with conversations that name racism rather than mask the issue under 'bullying'.

2. Students can see when people are being treated unfairly and are concerned about it:

The students can see when others are being treated unfairly based on racial and cultural diversity. They are not colour-blind.

Recommendations:

- Explore opportunities, such as a student newsletter or bulletin board, where students share stories of unfairness and how they have supported people to change behaviours.
- Celebrate students' inclusive actions.

3.3.3 Inclusiveness and belonging

Students discussed the effects of cultural and racial identity on students' and families' sense of belonging and inclusiveness. The students were able to talk about moments when students were included and excluded in their school based on race and culture; and had practical ideas about what could be done to support a sense of belonging for students and their families.

Ideas and understandings expressed by children

When asked for their thoughts on what people in the school could do to include people from different countries and make them feel good about being part of the school community students, 67 of 83 students provided suggestions. A variety of suggestions were generated, such as:

- Show new students around (10 students at Grade 3-4, 3 students at Grade 5-6).
- Deal with and eliminate bullying. Specifically, students in the Prep-2 focus groups discussed the need to "stop the bullying", while the students in the Grade 3-4 focus groups emphasised the need to protect those being bullied. The Grade 5-6 focus groups discussed making sure people are not bullying and that people are accepting of different cultures.
- Help new students academically.

- Alter the curriculum to incorporate diverse perspectives. "school to be more social of their culture." (Grade 5-6). Some Grade 5-6 students recognised that some students do not have the opportunity to learn about their own culture at school: "Sherrie doesn't get to learn about her culture at school – she only gets to learn about White Australians." (Grade 5-6)

4 students identified that to be 'Australian' is to be 'White'. For example:

"Because most of the [children at] schools are Australian and white skinned." (Grade 5-6)

"Because like, he fits in because like, he was born in Australia, and his skin is white so like, they feel comfortable with him." (Grade 5-6)

Two groups of Grade 5-6 children highlighted the complexity of standing up against 'bullying' [racism] when your friends are the people who are doing the 'bullying' (racism). An example of this can be seen in a conversation with one of the Grade 5-6 groups, when they were asked what they could do to help someone who had been 'bullied':

Maddison: "Yeah, but they would have said 'well it's already happened I can't do anything about it."

Tyler: "Sometimes they just play along because it's their friends saying it."

Kylie: "What does it mean if your friends are saying that? Can you do anything about that?"

Anne: "You can tell your friends to stop because they can't help what they look like."

Tyler: "They're your friends so you can explain it better than the person being bullied."

Kylie: "Do you think your friends would listen to you?" [Two people said yes, two people were silent and one person said no]

Kylie: "You have said yes and no?" "Can you explain or tell me why?"

Tyler: "Yes because they're your friends and they can trust you. No because they might just want to bully the person…"

Maddison: "…to make them feel good about themselves."

Kylie: "Would you talk to them if you thought they might not be your friend? What would you do?"

Tyler: "Regret it…Regret for saying it because you want to stay friends with them."

Key messages and recommendations

1. Students have ideas and expertise in how to be culturally inclusive within the school environment:

Recommendation:

- Invite culturally diverse students to work with teachers to develop materials and experiences to support a culturally inclusive environment.

2. Students are engaging with their own cultural identity and what that means within an 'Australian'/'non-Australian' identity:

Recommendation:

- Support teachers, students and families to continue to explore cultural identity and how people's understandings of identity can support or limit people's sense of belonging within and outside the school.

3. Students highlighted the complexity and power struggles in being social activists for equity:

Recommendations:

- Support teachers, students and families to develop materials that discuss what happens when you see someone being racially vilified and you do not act – how does it feel, what might you do differently next time, what happens when you make a stand against your friends?
- Support students to develop 'safe' phrases, symbols or signs together with their friends to use with each other when any of them are engaging with racist activities or behaviours.

4. School leadership perspectives

4.1 Aims

The final stage of this project investigated the perspectives of school principals. It was expected that exploring the perspectives of school principals would provide insight into the experience of principals as leaders, add insights on the themes identified by parents and teachers, and identify new themes.

4.2 Method

Principals were recruited from the six primary schools, four government and two Catholic, from the Hume region of Melbourne that had participated in the staff, parent and student focus groups discussed in this report. Interviews were held at the office of each principal and conducted by the researchers. All 6 principals took part and interviews ranged from 20 minutes to 50 minutes in length. Each interview began with a brief introduction and then principals were invited to discuss four topics:

- What their schools are doing well to support cultural diversity.
- The challenges relating to cultural diversity that their school faces.
- Practices they would like to implement to improve support of cultural diversity.
- Their philosophy and vision for cultural diversity in their school.

Participants were allowed to discuss these topics freely with minimal prompts from the interviewers.

Extracting themes

Themes from interviews were extracted by one researcher, who attended the interview, through examining notes taken during the interviews, with reference to the audio-recordings of the interviews. Themes elicited were reviewed by the other researcher attending the interview to note any omitted themes, and by other researchers for clarification.

4.3 Findings

Principals discussed a range of practices and themes demonstrating a strong vision for schools that welcomed students of all backgrounds and celebrate diversity. The following section is divided into three parts and sets out the findings of the interviews with principals. The first section covers principals' perspectives on what their schools are doing well. The second section covers issues that principals would like to see addressed. The third section covers principal's philosophies and visions for cultural diversity in their school. Many of the responses from principals were similar to those from the parent and staff focus groups.

4.3.1 Principals: What schools are doing well

School ethos and environment

Principals at all schools identified components of their school's ethos and environment that they felt were effective. Four themes emerged:

- *Welcoming students, parents and staff from all backgrounds*. This included:
  - actively seeking ways to understand and engage with new families
  - providing a supportive environment for staff, and
  - providing the resources, such as bi-lingual staff and external interpreters, that allow parents to feel comfortable at the school.
- *Recognising the needs of students from different cultures and backgrounds*. Schools actively sought to learn about and understand the background of students.
- *Celebrating and respecting all cultures*. This included:
  - frequent discussion of values. For example: "We're always talking about our school values: respect, respect for our own culture as well as everyone else's. I think that the teachers are doing it really well out there…"
  - celebrating cultural and religious events such as Ramadan and Christmas equally
  - engaging with parents to explore how these events might be supported.
- *Approaching cultural diversity as a fundamental part of every policy and practice their school implements*. All principals discussed cultural diversity as a structural characteristic of their school which meant that any action relating to the schools ethos or environment was always taken in the context of the culturally diverse nature of their school. For example: "Our community is culturally diverse and so really, everything we do, fits in (with that)."

Parent engagement

Engagement with parents was discussed by all principals as an area of ongoing work, improvement and success. Principals identified a number of practices that they had found improved parent engagement or had recently been introduced to improve engagement further. Strategies included:

- *Creating spaces for engagement*. Including: running playgroups, inviting parents into the school and classroom, running parent groups, running English language classes for parents
- *Encouraging engagement with parents and families even before students began school*. Including:
  - providing the school as a venue for community events for different cultural groups.
  - creating community or early years hubs.
- *Proactively pursuing engagement*. Including employing face to face invitations, encouraging students to invite their parents and employing staff who shared the

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4. School leadership perspectives

school's commitment to cultural diversity. For example: "Personal invitations from the children works well, if the children invite their parents to come along (to school events), that has been beneficial. A personal invitation, someone walking around the yard and inviting parents; those sorts of things. It is the personal contact."

- *Facilitating communication*. Including providing the school newsletter in other languages, employing bilingual staff, surveying parents to elicit their needs directly, employing interpreters at parent-teacher interviews, providing additional non-print based sources of information for parents where needed such as talking newsletters.
- *Providing supports*. As a school, endeavouring to help recently arrived families engage both with the school and external services. This included helping families make appointments with housing and medical services. Some school leaders employ specialist staff such as psychologists to provide additional support to parents.
- *Encouraging participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities*. For example: "I think we welcome parents into classrooms and I think that's becoming more evident now, parents find it easier to come." Inviting parents to attend concerts, activities and excursions.

Curriculum, teaching and learning

Principals discussed a number of ways in which cultural diversity has been successfully incorporated into the curriculum. These included:

- Language classes – Turkish and Arabic
- A new arrivals program for students
- A language school for new students
- Indigeneous units of work.

Principals also discussed a desire to find ways to incorporate more languages into the curriculum.

Extra-curricular activities

Several principals discussed extra-curricular activities as an area of success. Principals had found Harmony Day and cultural days to be very successful and were events that had grown significantly over the preceding years. One principal discussed the success of an excursion to a museum that had been conducted for both students and parents. The expense of the excursion was covered by the school and parents had travelled to the museum from the school by public transport which helped demonstrate to parents how they could make such trips outside school hours.

Staff learning and support

Supporting and helping staff develop was another area of success identified by principals.

Many schools employed support staff who spoke the major languages represented in the school, and who could interpret and help other teachers learn about the background and values of the families.

Linking with external services and employing specialist staff, like those mentioned above, that could work directly with families helped relieve some of the burden on staff.

Linking with external services that could work directly with families, such as Foundation House, and many of the services in Hume was found to be beneficial for both schools and families.

Principals also found professional development to be effective. Professional development helped build confidence and skills in staff so they could engage more proactively with parents and students. The professional development discussed included:

- induction programs for new teachers
- ongoing training
- attending special events, such as cultural performances.

Aboriginal issues

Principals at two schools discussed Koorie education. At one school a Koorie education officer had been recently employed which was increasing the school's capacity to teach about Indigenous culture and conduct activities and excursions relating to Indigenous culture. At another school, Koorie learning plans had been implemented with 4 students.

4.3.2 Principals: Areas for further development

School ethos and environment

Several principals identified challenges relating to the school's ethos and environment. Principals identified transience in the school population as the most significant of these. High levels of transience were seen to impact on schools in a variety of ways.

- The enrolment and induction process for each new family requires the allocation of significant resources to engage families in a culturally respectful way.
- Newly arrived families to Australia often move in response to housing and employment issues.
- Newly arrived students can require increased support with their learning.
- Principals indicated that they were not adequately funded for these additional costs such as for educational support staff and interpreters.
- Many families return regularly, often for months at a time, to visit family overseas. Some principals also mentioned that they felt that some parents seemed to have different beliefs around the importance of regular attendance at school, particularly in relation to extended overseas holidays and the impact this has on children's learning. This was noted as difficult for the school.
- Having students frequently entering and leaving a class group can be disruptive for other students in the class both socially and educationally. It is also difficult for teachers as they try to accommodate the needs of the newly arrived students and their whole class.

- High transience also impacted on staff as they worked hard with students but did not always get to see the longer term results of their teaching.
  - One principal also identified that when the students sat the NAPLAN test in grades 3 and 5, only about 25% of the class had been at the school since Prep. Given that these results are published on the national MySchool website, it was seen to be unfair that the results are viewed as a measure of the school's teaching when most of the students haven't been at the school long enough to benefit from what the school offers.

Parent engagement

Principals from all schools identified parent engagement as an area that they were continually seeking to improve. For example: "As far as parent involvement, we try to get multicultural representation on the school council. We haven't been very successful with that." Principals identified a number of reasons that they believed parents were not engaging. These included:

- Not having the time due to work, travel time or other commitments
- Having different expectations or understandings of their role in their child's education
- Lacking English language skills
- Lacking the confidence to engage.

Principals indicated that a lack of engagement had left some families isolated and was potentially limiting the education of the students. Principals wanted to address these issues and indicated a strong desire to make families as welcomed and as supported as possible.

Curriculum, teaching and learning

Several principals indicated a desire to see cultural diversity more explicitly addressed in the curriculum and school practice. For example: "I would like to see [the support of cultural diversity], more embedded in practice. At the moment it is a bit ad hoc." This included covering cultural diversity in a more structured manner in class, conducting more cultural events and offering more languages in the curriculum with the aim of addressing cultural diversity in a deeper, and more comprehensive fashion, than was currently being achieved.

Bullying, racism and discipline

Some principals indicated that affirming the cultural identity of their students and reducing racism were challenges that they would like to address. Principals had noticed that some students were refusing to acknowledge their culture and background in an effort to be more 'Australian' and they were concerned about this. In addition, principals had noticed that some students, primarily new arrivals, were less accepting of other cultures or were making more racist remarks than students in previous years.

Staff learning and support

Staff learning and support was an area in which several principals identified issues they would like to address. Foremost principals indicated that they that there was a need for staff

to engage with parents more. Principals felt that increasing staff skills, confidence and providing more opportunities to engage with parents would be beneficial. In addition, principals indicated that they felt their staff and school community could benefit from additional supports, such as closer ties with external services, more support staff and more resources, for example, more resources in the school library on cultures.

4.3.3 Principals: Philosophies and visions for cultural diversity

Each of the principals interviewed indicated that they had strong philosophies and values about students, families, education and cultural diversity. This included:

- A belief that all students, parents and staff should feel welcomed, respected and supported when they enter the school.
- A desire that students and parents come to the school because they want to, not because they need to.
- A conviction that they, as school leaders, should forge strong links in their school between students, parents and staff.
- A strong desire to see families linked to supports within the school and externally to ensure that their cultural, financial and social needs are being met.
- Ensuring that their school had a strong and explicit philosophy. For example, teaching and modelling values of respect and harmony.
- Holding both themselves and their school to a high standard and proactively searching for ways to improve.
- A belief that continued success would come through creating links both within the school community and between the school community and Australian society.
- Endeavouring to make their school a resource for the whole community, not just the families with enrolled students.
- Leadership processes to support cultural diversity.

Part of the philosophy of school leaders also included the importance of building their own capacity and leadership in the area of cultural diversity. This included:

- A strong conviction that they, as school leaders, need to 'walk the talk' and address issues of racism and respect in their everyday life.
- Engaging in building their own understanding and capacity through participation in the Australian intercultural community.
- Participating in education study tours to relevant regions of the world (e.g., Middle East, China) to learn about those cultures and their approaches to education.

Networking. Networking could inform about opportunities and activities related to different cultural groups, and could create communities. Networking included:

- Participating in relevant societies
- Dialogue activities with a range of community groups
- Being active on relevant Boards such as the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

5. Discussion

Staff, principals and parents discussed a wide range of issues relevant to cultural diversity in their schools. Staff discussions included how cultural diversity impacted on their role as staff as well as their perspectives on the impact of cultural diversity on students and parents. Staff and principals felt that they, and their school, were meeting the challenges of cultural diversity but identified areas in which they would like more support. As a group parents were generally happy with how their cultural needs and their children's needs were being handled. Across the six schools parents identified the curriculum, parental engagement and meeting the needs of different cultural groups as key issues.

5.1 Cultural knowledge and understanding

Staff and principals identified professional development as an area which needed greater attention. Staff reported that the amount of training in cultural diversity received to date was limiting their ability to engage with students and parents and principals shared this view. Most staff learned about the backgrounds, cultures and religions of their students through informal processes, for example by talking to students, parents or other staff. While staff identified this as a good way to learn, many staff found that this was not comprehensive and that they were missing important information. Informal processes for learning about different cultures were sometimes initiated in response to difficulties, rather than part of a more planned approach to professional learning.

Staff also reported that current training was often not specific or frequent enough to meet their needs. Staff wanted formalised and frequent briefings that covered general information and which could be supplemented by briefings about the specific cultures present in the school. For example, staff wanted information about the cultural groups in their school to help them understand the backgrounds of their students including the history and politics of the countries families had come. Other examples of information that staff would find helpful included more detailed information about Ramadan including the start and finish date, ways different groups observe Ramadan and other practices associated with Ramadan. Staff were also aware that cultural and religious groups are not homogeneous and suggested that general information or training be supplemented by presentations or talks by local community members knowledgeable about the groups present within their school.

5.2 Engaging and communicating

Staff and principals described a strong desire to be able to communicate and engage with parents from different cultural backgrounds. There was also strong consensus that this presented many challenges for staff. Some of these challenges were related to language barriers. Some staff and principals believed that expectations in the Australian Education system about the role of the family in education sometimes differed from the expectations of some cultural groups and that this could create barriers to fostering parent engagement in the school. Staff from schools with bilingual staff generally reported that they had more success engaging with parents. In schools where no staff spoke the major languages present in the school such as Arabic, Turkish or Chaldean, the lack of language support was

seen to create a significant barrier to engaging with parents and to teach children with limited or no English. Staff were frustrated by this and wanted more bi-lingual staff who could assist them. In contrast, staff in schools with a higher number of bi-lingual staff, and/or on-site access to a language centre or programs for new arrivals, were much happier with the support they were receiving and reported fewer issues. However, the schools that reported the most successful parent-school relationships were those in which the school had a clear plan for engagement and pursued engagement with parents proactively. In addition, most staff reported that parents were most responsive to face-to-face contact.

Parents also discussed a number of issues that paralleled staff concerns about schools engaging with parents. Parents valued being able to communicate with staff that could speak their language and preferred receiving face to face invitations to events or activities. The preference for face to face invitations also extended to parents for whom language was not a barrier. In general, parents were less likely to attend parent groups or school events without an invitation and encouragement from staff or without the knowledge that parents or staff with whom they were familiar would be present. Parents who were already involved school activities (e.g., school council or other) were concerned that other parents did not avail themselves of the plentiful opportunities to get engaged in the school. Generally, parents who were already engaged in the school community (they knew other parents and might attend the odd activity) expressed a wish that new parents, including immigrant refugee families, make the effort to engage with them.

5.3 Parents and the curriculum

Parents' perspectives on the curriculum included the areas of language, religion and cultural understanding.

Language: The majority of parents indicated that they would prefer more, a wider range and more advanced language classes to be offered.

Religion: Parents were generally happy with the treatment of religion in the curriculum but wanted language and culture to receive more attention. Parents at Catholic schools and the government schools offering religious education were happy with the classes offered, although parents in schools where religion was not currently taught had mixed views about introducing the topic of religion into the curriculum, indicating it would need to be done in a consultative manner.

Cultural knowledge and understanding: Many parents reported that they wanted schools to teach about cultural diversity more. Parents felt that schools should educate their children about different cultures more extensively as part of the curriculum. Parents liked the multicultural days that were being run but wanted to see more coverage of culture in the classroom.

Teaching about Indigenous culture: During the staff and parent focus groups the teaching of Indigenous culture was mentioned in only one staff group although a small number of Indigenous students were enrolled in many of the participating schools. The focus group with Indigenous parents and workers from the Hume region, discussed a perceived lack of

teaching about Indigenous culture in local schools. Parents in this group indicated that their children had received very little teaching about Indigenous culture and the teaching they had received had typically been in the form of one-off events, such as dancing or painting, rather than as a part of the school's ongoing curriculum.

5.4 Meeting the needs of all cultural groups

A general theme in the parent focus groups was a strong feeling that the participating schools were making active efforts to meet the needs of students and families of different cultural backgrounds. Parents, staff and principals all readily described specific ways they were addressing the needs of different cultural groups.

One issue that arose in a number of parent focus groups was the perceived focus on the dominant groups in the school. Parents were very positive about their children learning about other cultures and languages but some felt there was only a limited focus on their own culture. In some schools Anglo-Australian parents had noticed a shift away from the teaching of European languages and celebration of Christian events. Other parents from less represented cultural or ethnic groups felt that their culture was not being addressed at all. As a whole these parents felt that their cultural needs were not being catered for by the school and wanted to see the school cater for all the groups, not just the largest.

5.5 A whole-school vision for teaching about cultural diversity

Principals did articulate a strong awareness of, and commitment to, the school's responsibility to proactively address the needs of their culturally diverse communities. The importance of building their personal capacity to lead in the area of cultural diversity was also mentioned. When staff discussed cultural diversity they did so in the context of positive practices and challenges that affected them on a regular basis rather than specific whole-school vision or philosophy for teaching about cultural diversity. Staff often discussed cultural diversity in terms of meeting the needs of the largest or most challenging groups. Few staff discussed what they thought the school should teach students about cultural diversity outside of these immediate needs. As a result, school communities may need to work collaboratively to further develop their existing philosophies or visions for a whole-school approach to cultural diversity.

5.6 Student viewpoints

The student's responses demonstrated a strong capacity to reflect on their understandings of cultural diversity. They indicated, and often could articulate, a belief that that respect for cultural and racial diversity is important. They had ideas about what could be done to support a sense of belonging for students and their families and expertise in how to be culturally inclusive within the school environment.

The findings from these focus groups are consistent with other research which has demonstrated that students are well aware of cultural and "race" differences from an early age. Students discussed the effects of cultural and racial identity on students' and families' sense of belonging and inclusiveness and were able to talk about moments when students were excluded and included in their school based on race and culture. The focus group

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5. Discussion

discussion showed that students are reflecting on and negotiating their own cultural identities.

In their responses, students showed that, alongside their ability to articulate respect for cultural diversity, they can also act and speak in ways that silence other students who are non-white. The students' responses suggested that they were aware of specific instances when students are experiencing racial vilification at school. They were able to describe behaviours and language involving racism directed at them or others. These incidents may not be disclosed to adults. Students' perceptions of consequences when staff were notified indicated an awareness of teachers intervening in a disciplinary fashion or "talking to" a student who had acted inappropriately, but students generally did not describe a restorative approach, repairing relationships.

While some students had language to name racism many students labelled the racist events as 'bullying'. Students can see when people are being treated unfairly and are concerned about it but some perceived risks in standing up for those who are being treated unfairly. The finding that students are concerned about the personal and social risks of intervening, aligns with other research on school race-based bullying and the bystander role (Aboud & Joong, 2008).

Overall, findings from the student focus groups highlighted the complexity for students as they negotiate their own identities and their responses to cultural diversity and racism. Their responses point to the conclusion that for students to become "social activists for equity" they require the support of a whole-school ethos with strong prosocial norms in the area of cultural diversity.

5. Discussion

6. Recommendations

This chapter makes recommendations for future practice based on the research findings, current national and international research, and national and state education policies. The research conducted in the current study provides some insights into valued practices in particular schools that may have relevance not only to other participating schools but also to schools throughout Victoria and nationally, that wish to review their approaches to cultural diversity.

6.1 A broader context

A critical issue facing Australian school communities is how to best support staff to build sustainable whole school approaches to respecting cultural diversity given that schools are in a central position to lay the foundations for children of respect for diverse cultures. Schools can promote the development of an active stance against discrimination to counter the experience of discrimination that has been reported for migrant, refugee and Indigenous children and young people (e.g., Mansouri, Jenkins, Morgan & Taouk, 2009; Mansouri & Jenkins, 2010). At a national level, the importance of intercultural understanding, competency and respect; and freedom from racially-, ethnically- and religion-based discrimination have been highlighted by declarations made by the peak national ministerial council on education (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs; Adelaide Declaration, 1999; Melbourne Declaration, 2008). Guided by these declarations, the new national curriculum, currently being developed, advocates promoting intercultural understandings, enabling students to respect and appreciate their own and others' cultures and to relate in culturally appropriate ways to those from other cultural backgrounds (ACARA, 2011).

At a state level, the policy context that supports intercultural understanding and freedom from racially-, ethnically- and religion-based discrimination includes DEECD Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship strategy (2009); DEECD Wannik Education Strategy for Koorie Students (2008); and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) (2005).

A developing body of research, both nationally and internationally, has been investigating cultural diversity in schools. It encompasses a broad range of areas including creating culturally respectful schools, building intercultural knowledge and understanding (global citizenship), developing ability for intercultural communication and competency, and addressing race- and culture-based discrimination.

The research in Australia and the United States has shown that young children demonstrate consistent, well-defined negative biases towards adults and children from cultural and racial backgrounds different to their own (MacNaughton, 2005). Stereotyping and racist beliefs are consistently found in children as young as 3 years old (Brown, 2001; Derman-Sparks, & A.B.C Task Force, 1989; Lane, 2008; MacNaughton, Davis, & Smith, 2009; 2010). This research shows that it is important to consult with students about their views and ideas as they may have different insights into what it means to live as a child engaging in culturally diverse schools and communities. These views can support staff, families and the

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community to consider how effective or supportive programs, activities, policies and practices are to ensure respect for cultural diversity in the everyday lives of students.

This research, and the body of evidence, does not support the view of many who believe that 'children don't notice colour'. Nor did this research support the view that racism is rare in primary schools as students and principals reported instances of racist comments. Research suggests that teachers are often concerned that talking about cultural and religious differences, including differences in skin colour creates or exacerbates problems. However, when staff develop the confidence and skills to initiate conversations and engage in dialogue about cultural diversity issues, including racism, this can promote greater perspective taking and cultural respect. In one recent study (Wertheim, Davis, Freeman & Trinder, 2010) staff who initiated such conversations, following professional learning in cultural diversity, were often surprised by the maturity and sensitivity with which the students were able to discuss these issues.

6.2 Approaches

When discussing how schools might approach cultural diversity, there is generally agreement in both policy and practice about the need to build respect for cultural diversity. The more contentious element is whether issues of race-based discrimination are acknowledged and included or avoided. The research indicates that there are a variety of approaches to cultural diversity work in schools (see recent review by Greco, Priest and Paradies, 2010) with attitudes, beliefs and knowledge all impacting on the particular viewpoint or approach of schools and the individuals within them.

It has been argued that to have the greatest impact, cultural diversity work of schools needs take a social justice perspective that includes examining social inequalities and discrimination (Sleeter & Grant, 2003). This perspective recognizes that those who are culturally or linguistically different from Australia's dominant Anglo-Christian culture, particularly those from new and emerging communities and refugee backgrounds, are often educationally disadvantaged and experience social inequalities and discrimination. Inclusive schools with a social justice stance on cultural diversity are committed to increasing student engagement, full educational participation and achievement and positive social and mental health benefits. Two particular frameworks derived from that position have been found by schools to be useful for reflecting upon their policy and practice.

The frameworks include the *Five Standpoints on Cultural Diversity* adapted from the work of Sleeter and Grant (2003) and *Justice Alerts* developed by the Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood (CEIEC) at the University of Melbourne (Wertheim et al., 2010; Wertheim et al., 2009). Schools can use the standpoints to open up discussion about their current approach to cultural diversity and to assess whether their current standpoint matches what was intended. The five standpoints framework is currently being developed further by the DEECD Innovative Practices Unit in a pilot project, the "Developing Intercultural Understanding Field Trial".

The Five Standpoints Framework points out fundamental ways in which schools and staff approach their work with cultural diversity, uncovering assumptions about who needs to

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change and how they need to change. The standpoints have been labelled in various ways, but representative terms include *cultural integration* (or *assimilation*)*, celebratory multiculturalism* (or *tourist*), *human relations, progressive multiculturalism,* and *transformative* standpoints. The latter, transformative standpoint focuses on uncovering structural sources of inequality and discrimination, and encourages taking action to address these issues. Appendix B has more information about each.

The second framework, of *justice alerts* (see Appendix C), helps staff consider how to work with individuals and groups across diverse cultures to notice and address possible instances and sources of injustice. *Justice alerts* include noticing when students or parents might feel *unsafe* to express their views, or become *silenced* by being in the minority. Other *justice alerts* include watching for a human tendency to *homogenise* or *stereotype* others by thinking everyone from another culture or group are the same, and to *essentialise* by assuming there are core characteristics that particular groups must share rather than acknowledging the diversity of people within cultural groups. The *justice alerts* provide a new language which allows staff to talk about diversity. They serve as signposts to prompt staff to be watchful for common oversights, assumptions and biases that circulate in school communities (Wertheim et al., 2010; Wertheim et al., 2009).

Together the standpoints and the *justice alerts* can be used in the evaluation of existing school policies and practices. They have been found to be helpful in providing a frame for action at personal, curriculum, classroom and school levels as ways of building a culturally respectful school community.

6.3 A whole school approach to supporting cultural diversity

The following sections set out recommendations to meet the challenges identified in the findings sections and also to ensure that issues identified in the broader research literature are noted. To build on the good work already being undertaken we have framed the recommendations using a model that encompasses a whole school approach to supporting diversity (Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers, 2000). The model provides a framework against which schools can consider the degree to which the different components are currently being addressed by schools, in both a systematic and an informal manner, and directions for future development.

The model is premised on the assumptions that the most effective approach to cultural diversity in schools derives from a whole-school approach. That approach involves a range of components, overseen by school leadership, and informed by state and national education guidelines and local and international research, with the full school community having involvement in development and implementation of the vision.

Figure 1. A model of a whole-school approach to cultural diversity (based partly on Racism No way School Planning Framework http://www.racismnoway.com.au/)

6. Recommendations
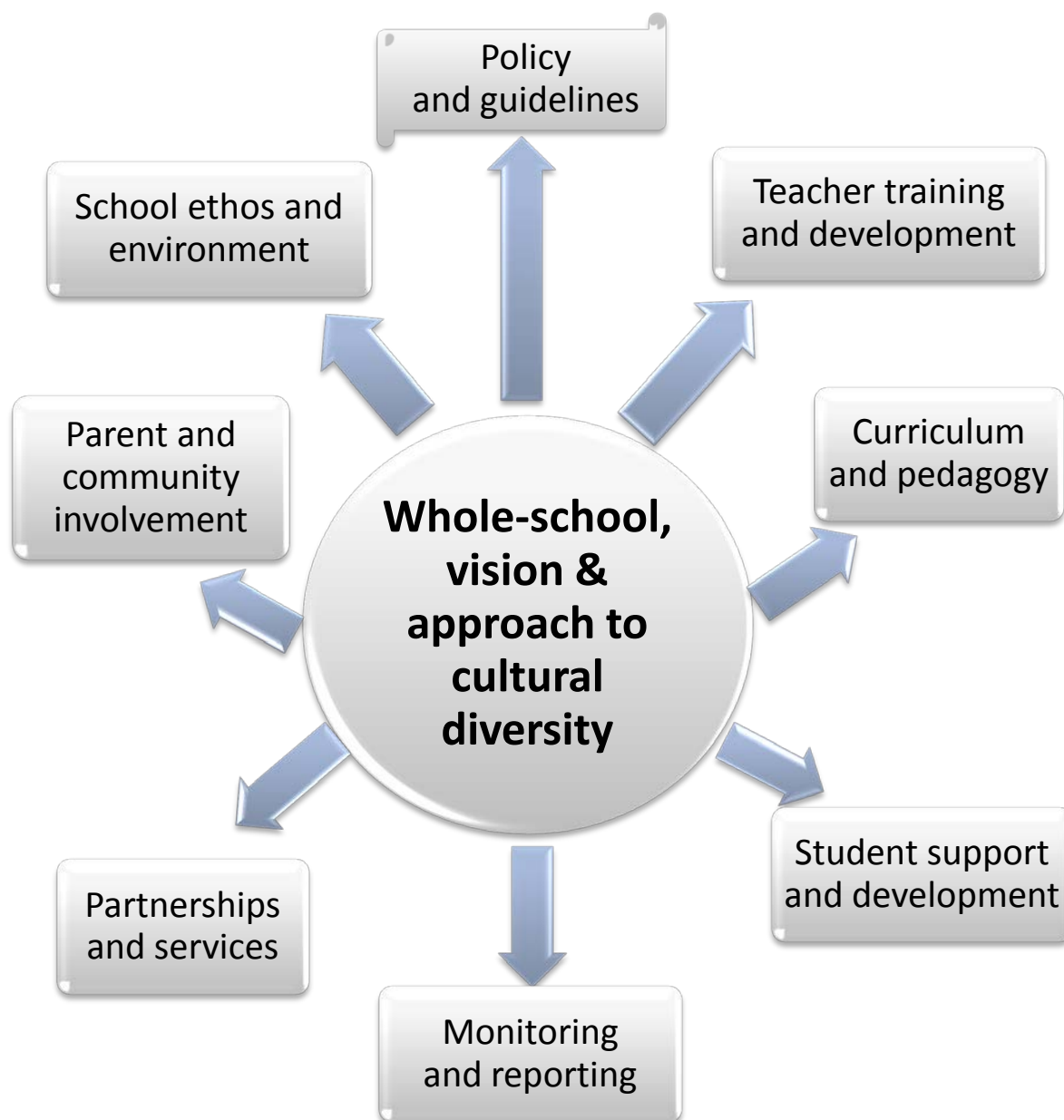
6.3.1 A whole-school vision and approach

A first part of a comprehensive approach to cultural diversity involves developing a whole-school vision and approach.

A vision for a culturally respectful school, and what that might look like, provides an essential foundation for a whole school approach to cultural diversity. Ideally such a vision is created through school leadership with the involvement of staff, students, parents, and the community. The process may be directly led by the school leadership team or delegated to a sub-committee, depending on existing decision-making structures in the school. Processes that ensure the viewpoints of minority group members, as well as members from the majority groups in the school, are recommended. To gain input from diverse groups of parents a whole-school approach may require a variety of strategies and methods which recognise and address possible barriers to involvement. The section below on parent engagement highlights some of the ways schools have invited parents to become part of school processes and activities, which parents have found supportive of their involvement.

The whole school model (Figure 1), Five Standpoints on Cultural Diversity and Justice Alerts (Appendices B and C) provide frameworks and concepts to inform a review of school policy and practice. The Racism No Way School Planning Guidelines, on which the whole school model has been based, is also a useful resource (http://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/school-planning/guide.pdf). Engaging in a whole school audit on cultural diversity can be informative. (Appendix D includes details of a School-Based Audit Tool (Greco, Paradies, & Priest, 2011) which has been developed to assess specific school policies, procedures and practices that support diversity and address race-based discrimination.

6.3.2 Policies and guidelines

- Policies and guidelines are needed to communicate and implement the whole-school vision for addressing the culturally diverse nature of the school, and that of our national and global community and be developed in collaboration with the school community.
- Policies and guidelines will include decisions about school structures and processes that will oversee the whole-school implementation of the school's vision.
- These policies and practices need to be consistent with current state and national policies and guidelines.

Policies and guidelines will also include:

- An examination of school policies and practices to ensure there is no institutional racism occurring.
  - o Managing incidents of bullying or teasing that are race or culture-related.
  - o Provide support for staff, student and families in naming racism.
    - Zero-tolerance for racism as a starting point.
    - Supplemented with specific guidelines for reporting, managing and supporting students, bystanders, and offenders.

- With a stress on promoting and restoring the well being of injured parties, bystanders and offenders and, where appropriate, the relationships of the parties.
- Including feedback to parties.

6.3.3 School ethos and environment

- The whole environment of the school includes ways that show respect for the range of the school, Australian and global community.
  - Visible acknowledgements of the culture of all groups in the school and broader community is needed, such as inclusion of different cultures in curriculum resource materials, school posters and displays, and through special events recognising diverse cultures.
  - Acknowledgement of the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australian society and as traditional owners of the land.
  - Ensuring portrayal of different groups are non-stereotyped and instead demonstrate the breadth of types of people in different cultural groups.
- Acknowledge and celebrate students' respect for cultural and racial diversity.
  - Schools may consider forming respect for cultural and racial diversity committees that bring students, staff, families, elders and community members together to actively plan, promote and reflect on how the school and community supports and celebrates diversity.
  - Awards/cultural diversity grants at multiple levels as detailed in Chapter 3: Key messages and recommendations.
- Schools need to be sure that they are catering for the needs of all groups, not just the largest or most obvious groups.
  - An example would include auditing current approaches towards different cultural events or celebrations to ensure that all groups' needs are considered. Keeping parents informed and inviting parents into the conversation about what and how the school addresses events and celebrations can help achieve a balanced approach that meets the needs of all groups.

6.3.4 Staff training and development

- Part of putting into practice a whole school cultural diversity approach involves *assessing staff training and development needs in the area of cultural diversity.* School staff can potentially benefit from professional development in any of the elements covered in the whole school model.
- A valuable element of professional development involves offering staff the opportunity to work on *understanding their own cultural background and the impact it has* on their attitudes, their approach to teaching and their responses to different cultures.
- The professional learning of staff can include the research on race-based discrimination and "colour blindness" to deepen understandings of cultural diversity and to support evidence-based practice.

- Increasing the frequency and scope of cultural diversity training can provide staff with much needed information to ensure responsiveness to all students and their families. This training is particularly important for new staff. Training could incorporate regular briefings to staff on the cultural groups present in the school and information packets and guided discussions containing general information on cultural events. Professional learning based on principles described can be provided to ensure that staff are well-prepared to engage in teaching all aspects of the curriculum outlined below including both cultural awareness and anti-racist curriculum.

6.3.5 Curriculum and pedagogy

Schools need a clearly articulated and shared philosophy for teaching about cultural diversity.

- Schools should ensure that they are systematically and regularly teaching students at all grade levels about similarities and differences between cultures as well as issues of social justice in their curriculum.
- Schools should seek, consider and include student views on cultural diversity issues in the development of curriculum (see chapter 3).
- In selecting curriculum schools need to identify, where possible, whether the curriculum has evidence of effectiveness (see Greco et al., 2010 for a review of available evidence on curriculum approaches).
- Curriculum content related to cultural diversity includes:
  - o Understanding similarities and differences between cultural groups and religious practices.
  - o Understanding that there are similarities and differences *within* cultural groups (including within Anglo-Australians) to avoid stereotyping and inaccurately portraying certain groups as a homogenous 'other' group.
  - o Specific curriculum related to the history and culture of relevant cultural groups of those in the school, as well as those in our regional and global community.
  - o Curriculum related to the history, culture, and related social and justice issues of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders.
  - o Developing skills in students such as empathy and respect for others, including of varying cultural backgrounds.
  - o Developing understanding of differing communication styles across cultures.
  - o Teaching a range of languages.
- Curriculum content related to anti-racism and social justice.
  - o Assisting students to understand concepts of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination based on race, culture, ethnicity, religion, and language, as well as gender, sexual orientation, health and disability.
  - o Encouraging students to take active steps to combat stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.
  - o Teaching about how to manage racist or culturally targeted bullying.
  - o Teaching and supporting students to speak up when they are bystanders to racist behaviour.

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- o Developing skills to cooperatively manage differences (and disputes) between people.
- o Exploring how we can all contribute towards socially just outcomes in society.
- Pedagogy for cultural diversity work will ideally position students as active co-creators of ideas, materials and resources, for example:
  - o Invite culturally diverse students to work with staff to develop materials and experiences to support a culturally inclusive environment.
  - o Explore opportunities, such as a student newsletter or bulletin board, where students share stories of supporting people to change behaviours.
  - o Provide support for students and families to develop resources such as case studies of racism depicting through video, role play, puppets, diversity dolls or stories as prompts for discussion.
- Pedagogy includes developing teaching practices that enable all students to learn most effectively. Gearing pedagogy to the needs of particular students in the school requires that processes are in place to make certain that staff receive information about the backgrounds of their students if it is likely to impact on their engagement with that student (with consideration of principles of respect, confidentiality and privacy legislation). Examples include:
  - o If the student has had traumatic experiences and has not been coping well at school and the teacher needs to offer that student more support, having access to appropriate information to address the issues.
  - o Understanding previous educational experiences in countries of origin of refugees or immigrants to inform current practice.

6.3.6 Parent engagement

Schools need to ensure that they have a proactive and ongoing approach towards engagement with parents. This project suggested that personalised approaches to communication are valued and perceived to be more effective by both staff and parents.

- The value of building relationships through informal events schools was highlighted.
  - o This can be focussed initially on bringing parents to the school for informal social events that recognise the challenges faced by parents, for example, a coffee club hosted and catered for by the school.
  - o When rapport with and between parents has been established, parents may be more comfortable taking part in other activities.
- Face to face discussions are described by parents and staff as the most effective ways to build relationships and encourage involvement of parents, including those with limited or no English.
  - o Parents say they prefer this and it also helps facilitate their engagement with the school to a greater extent than less personal forms of communication.
  - o Phone contact and invitations can also be used where face to face interactions are not possible.
- Introducing more practices that specifically target parents recently arrived in Australia is recommended. Parents from other countries can face more challenges and

barriers to engagement than Anglo-Australian parents and typically require more support if they are to engage with the school community.

- o Support could include offering more parent groups, in other languages, that are social in nature and relatively informal.
- o Parents also indicated that they enjoy and feel more at ease engaging with, and contributing to, the school through activities that they are already comfortable with, such as cooking (Richardson, 2011).

- Strategically employing bilingual or multilingual staff can reap many benefits.
  - o Where resources permit, increasing the number of teacher aides, cultural liaison officers and staff with bi-lingual language skills will assist greatly in engaging with parents with limited or no English.

- School newsletters and documents translated into other languages are highly valued by parents but processes are needed to ensure these documents have been accurately translated.

- Staff understanding that often their ideas about parent engagement and involvement in the school come from an Anglo perspective and may be different from the expectations of parents from other cultures.

6.3.7 Partnerships and services

- When schools rely on external services such as interpreters, it is highly useful to build relationships with these services or interpreters and use the same ones on a regular basis. Doing so gives schools the opportunity to educate services or interpreters about the school and build trust between students, parents and staff using them.
  - o This process may need to be addressed at a system level in reviewing processes for using interpreters across schools.

- Reviewing current New Arrivals processes and supports systems is important, including:
  - o Identifying external services and programs in a school's area to support students and families.
  - o Ensuring that students and parents with limited or no English language have access to staff with the relevant language skills external programs and services.

- Identifying and linking with a diverse range of community services relevant to the population and needs of each school community is also important for both parents and staff.

- External services mentioned by parents and staff included Foundation House, Anglicare, ESL providers, and general health and family services.

- DEECD provides a list of links to useful services (see Appendix E).

6.3.8 Monitoring and reporting

A further aspect of a whole school approach includes monitoring and reporting of a range of activities and information relevant to cultural diversity. These include:

- *Systematic data gathering about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds and specific needs of students*. Data gathered might include engaging in structured interviews with parents at each transition point to assess specific language, religion-based, or other needs and documenting the information. Consultations with community groups and elders can be appropriate sources of information.
- *Monitoring the incidence of race-, religion-, language- or ethnicity-based discrimination* which recognises that reporting of racism needs to be encouraged by school policy and practice.
- *Monitoring information on student performance*, including for students with particular needs.
- *Using these data to guide planning, delivery and development of strategies.* Planning and delivery can include ways to ensure:
  - o student cultural and linguistic needs are addressed
  - o discriminatory practices are countered
  - o a complaints system (including feedback processes) is implemented, and
  - o academic achievement is enhanced.
- *Progress in achieving cultural diversity goals, reducing incidents of discrimination and supporting student academic achievement is tracked.*

6.3.9 Systems level recommendations

In addition to embracing a whole school to cultural diversity, participants in this study made suggestions relevant at the education systems level. Examples include:

- The process of allocating interpreters to schools would benefit from a review. Consistency over time in the interpreters who assist each school, and helping interpreters orient to specific school contexts, depends on the education system creating processes to allow this to happen.
- Funding models related to the needs of Indigenous Australians may need to be reviewed in light of current policy that a minimum of 10 students is needed for a school to receive funding support.
- A new ministerial policy foreshadows the introduction of compulsory languages education for all government schools from prep to year 10 by 2025 (DEECD, 2011).
- The challenges of schools that have a large proportion of newly immigrated students needs to be understood and addressed. For example:
  - o Providing additional educational support staff and interpreters is costly to schools.
  - o NAPLAN test results published on the national MySchool website provide a misleading picture of progress of students over time if the level of change over time in a school's student population is not acknowledged.

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Appendix A

Grade Prep, 1 and 2 student newsletter

Enhancing Relationships in school communities (ERIS)

Grade Prep, 1 and 2 Student Newsletter

What happened?

Kylie and Amy came to the school to talk with the students about what they knew about cultural diversity. They wanted to know what students thought about what was fair and not fair for people from different countries and backgrounds. They also wanted to know about what was great about being at a school with people from lots of different countries and what might be tricky or hard.

Kylie   Amy

They brought two dolls to the school to talk with the children:

Olivia and Sherrie   or   Aravinda and Tom

Kylie talked about each of the dolls and explained who they were, their family and the things they like to do best. She also told the students a story about what happened to Sherrie and

Aravinda about when someone in the playground at school said that they had yukky black skin. Kylie then asked the children about the dolls' friends and what happened in the playground. Amy wrote down the students' ideas and they taped the students' voices.

What did children say?
You told us that the white skinned doll and the brown skinned doll could play together and that having friends makes them both happy.

They could do this because they:
"Talk to each other and they play with each other".

A question you might like to ask yourself and your friends:
Who do you play with at school and why?

Many of you told us that the white skinned doll would have the most friends because

"(Sometimes) there's not much people with dark skin" and

"She has light skin colour and mostly people love that colour".

A question you might like to ask yourself and your friends:
What can you do when you are playing so that children with all skin colours can play with you so that everyone has friends and are happy?

You told us sometimes children are treated badly because they have different colour skin.

"They were pulling her hair…you have yucky barks on you".

You told us you didn't like when people did that and it is important to be fair to everyone and welcome them to your school.

A question you might like to ask yourself and your friends:
Who can you talk to when you see people being unfair?

Here are some of the ideas you gave us about who you can talk to:

- Teacher
- Parents
- Brother or sister or cousin
- A buddy or big person at school
- A person you trust

What will happen now?
There will be this newsletter

We report (without your names) to your school telling them the things you see, hear and think about as well as all your great ideas for making your school a welcoming place.

Thanks for sharing your ideas and experiences. We hope we can use this information to make all schools fair for students, families and teachers.
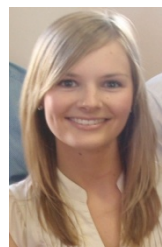
Grade 4 and 5 student newsletter

Grade 4 and 5 Student Newsletter

What happened?

Kylie and Amy came to the school to talk with the students about what they knew about cultural diversity. They wanted to know what students thought about what was fair and not fair for people from different countries and backgrounds. They also wanted to know about what was great about being at a school with people from lots of different countries and what was tricky.

Kylie   Amy

They brought two dolls to the school to talk with the children:

Olivia and Sherrie   or   Aravinda and Tom

Kylie talked about each of the dolls and explained who they were, their family and the things they like to do best. She also told the students about a story that happened to Sherrie and Aravinda about when someone in the playground at school said that they had yucky black skin. Kylie then asked the children about the dolls' friends and what happened in the playground. Amy wrote down the students' ideas down and they taped the students' voices.

What did children say?

You told us that the white skinned doll and the brown skinned doll could play together and that having friends makes them both happy.

They could do this because:

"They're both nice".

"They can help each other with their work at school".

"Best friends but not same country".

A question you might ask yourself and your friends:
Who do you play with at your school and why?

You told us that the white skinned doll would have the most friends because

"He's white, all the white kids play with Tom and all the black kids play with Aravinda".

"Lots of people are like Tom and not much people are like Aravinda so maybe he gets left out a bit more".

A question you might ask yourself and your friends:
What can you do when you are playing so that children with all skin colours can play with you so that everyone has friends and are happy?

You told us sometimes children you know are treated badly because they have different colour skin.

"She's got sort of black skin and somebody came up and teased her".

I've been teased a lot".

"My cousin-she cried and then she said she didn't want to go to this school".

A question you might ask yourself and your friends:
Who can you talk to when you see people being unfair?

Here are some of the ideas you gave us:

- Teacher
- Parents
- Brother or sister or cousin
- A buddy or big person at school
- A person you trust

What will happen now?
There will be this newsletter

We report (without your names) to school telling the things you see, hear and think about as well as all your great ideas for making your school a welcoming place.

Thanks for sharing your ideas and experiences. We hope we can use this information to make all schools fair for students, families and teachers.

Grade 5 and 6 student newsletter

Grade 5 and 6 Student Newsletter

What happened?

Kylie and Amy came to the school to talk with the students about what they knew about cultural diversity. They wanted to know what students thought about what was fair and not fair for people from different countries and backgrounds. They also wanted to know about what was great about being at a school with people from lots of different countries and what was tricky.

Kylie   Amy

They brought two dolls to the school to talk with the children:

Olivia and Sherrie   or   Aravinda and Tom

Kylie talked about each of the dolls and explained who they were, their family and the things they like to do best. She also told the students about a story that happened to Sherrie and Aravinda about when someone in the playground at school said that they had yucky black skin. Kylie then asked the children about the dolls' friends and what happened in the playground. Amy wrote down the students' ideas down and they taped the students' voices.

What did children say?

You told us that the white skinned doll and the brown skinned doll could play together and

that having friends makes them both happy. They could do this because they:

"Maybe like different things so they can learn about different cultures and different things that they never knew before".

"Can have things in common".

You also told us that sometimes it can be hard for them to be friends because:

"People with different skin colours don't usually play with each other".

> *A question you might like to ask yourself and your friends:*
> Who do you play with at school and why?

You told us that the white skinned doll would have the most friends because:

"Some people can be quite racist, some people don't like other people"

"Because more people judge Sherrie than Olivia because she has different skin".

> *A question you might like to ask yourself and your friends:*
> What can you do when you are playing so that children with all skin colours can play with you so that everyone has friends and are happy?

You told us sometimes children are treated badly because they have different colour skin:

"They were saying welcome to Australia and all that!"

"Li-ping, Chinese-tease her and didn't have same skin and make fun of her eyes".

You told us you have the words to tell other kids it is not okay.

"Tell them if they were treated like this how would it feel".

> *A question you might like to ask yourself and your friends:*
> What can you do when you hear someone using racist language?

You told us it can be very tricky to confront other children who are being racist.

"Sometimes (I) just play along 'cause it's (my) friend saying it".

"If I say something "I regret it because you want to stay friends with them."

It can be good to get help in dealing with this. Who can you talk to when you see and hear people being racist?

Here are some of the ideas you gave us:

- Teacher
- Parents
- Friends
- Brother or sister or cousin

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● A buddy or big person at school   ● A person you trust

What will happen now?

There will be this newsletter

We report (without your names) to school telling the things you see, hear and think about as well as all your great ideas for making your school a welcoming place.

Thanks for sharing your ideas and experiences. We hope we can use this information to make all schools fair for students, families and teachers.

Appendix B

Five standpoints for surfacing cultural diversity

Table 1. *Five standpoints for surfacing cultural diversity* (Adapted from a draft prepared for DEECD Intercultural Understanding Field Trial 2011 by ICU Evaluation Team and Sleeter, C. & Grant, C. A. (2003). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender.* N.Y.: John Wiley & Sons, and the Centre for Equity and Innovation and Early Childhood Development, The University of Melbourne.

Standpoints	Description and strengths	Limitations	Who needs to change?
Cultural integration	• Aims to assist students from different cultural backgrounds to integrate into the mainstream culture of the school. • Helping students adapt to mainstream Australian society has advantages in promoting successful adaptation.	• Tends to treat diversity as a problem, rather than a contribution • Portrays individuals from different cultures as 'others' who need to simply learn to fit in to mainstream norms and ways of life. • At an extreme, it can become a pure assimilation standpoint	The different 'others'
Celebratory multiculturalism	• This approach acknowledges and attempts to show respect for different cultures • It mainly engages with different cultures by focusing on material aspects noticeably different from mainstream culture, such as traditional food, clothing, crafts or holidays.	• Mostly surface differences are noted. • The standpoint can reinforce stereotypes, since not all individuals from a particular culture look and act the same. • On its own it can ignore diverse aspects of cultures as they exist in the current world.	Mainstream needs to learn about the different 'others'
Human relations	• Focuses on finding ways for individuals from diverse cultures to get along better. Attempts to change negative attitudes or feelings toward people who are perceived as being different from oneself. • Reduces stereotypes, teaches cooperative ways to manage interpersonal tensions and reduce conflict • Building a sense of one's own and others' identities	• While diversity and a sense of community is valued from this standpoint, a criticism is that it does not critically address social inequalities and discrimination. • There is a risk of 'colour blindness', approaching humans as if they were all the same and assuming all have the same opportunities, which is often not	We all need to learn to get along better

			the case.	
Progressive multiculturalism	• Values cultural diversity for its positive contribution to society, promotes cultural pluralism, equality and respect. • Students acquire attitudes and skills to promote respect for people from diverse cultures while recognising that *all* people have a culture and developing self regard for their own culture.	• Does not always examine social inequalities and discrimination • May advocate 'tolerating' cultural differences as long as they do not disrupt the position of mainstream culture.	All members of the community participate
Transformative	• Seeks to understand and challenge structural inequalities, addressing social injustices and challenging racism, prejudice and other forms of discrimination. • Draws attention to changes that need to happen at an institutional and societal, not just individual, level. • Develops skills to understand inequality and actively work to build a fairer society. • Individuals examine their own position in society and consider the ways in which their experiences have shaped their beliefs and values, and how others may view their culture. • Students learn to think reflexively and critically about their thoughts and actions in relation to other people. Building on this knowledge and awareness, they learn ways of taking action to address inequalities.	• Can be somewhat challenging for members of mainstream or more dominant groups in a particular society, such as those who have more access to resources, decision making, and opportunities.	Members of more dominant or mainstream groups , in particular

Appendix C

CEIEC Justice 'alerts'

Working with children, colleagues and parents: issues, dilemmas and starting points Core Team Day 5

Watch for...	The unjust logic	What you might hear or see
Essentialising Seeing something as a deep, fixed, enduring (essential) part of who a person is because of their ethnicity or culture.	If he/she/they are 'X' then they must do this, think that way, and talk this way – it is essential to who they are. What's unjust? — not seeing all people as individuals with complex ways of being — making assumptions that are often wrong and stereotyping — not seeing how all cultures shift & change	'A tiger must have stripes', 'Koalas only eat gum leaves…" She's a Borg she'll love curried chips, live in a large families, sing loudly – it's the Borg way.
Homogenising Eradicating ethnic and cultural differences by assuming they don't exist.	They all think the same way, eat the same things, dress in "that" way, speak that way. What's unjust? — not seeing all people as individuals with complex ways of being — ignoring differences, debates, challenges, tensions and subtleties within an ethnic or cultural groups — not seeing diversity and complexity in all cultures, only one's own	'All tigers hunt', 'All cats have fur balls….' All Borgs travel in groups - they don't know any better, its their culture. They all do that. They can't help it. They all learn that.
Othering Seeing your self and/or your group as better, more normal than others	If they changed, then we would all be able to get on better… How they talk, eat, dress, think is the problem. What's unjust? — not seeing differences as just that - differences — believing what 'we' do, say, eat, think, believe is normal, what 'others' do, say, eat, think, believe is strange, exotic — not seeing that how we do, say, eat, think, believe might hurt, offend or harm others.	'If tigers didn't hunt on our land we wouldn't shoot them'. If Borgs stopped travelling in groups then we wouldn't feel frightened of them. If they just walked in pairs like we do, there wouldn't be a problem.
Privileging Giving and gaining advantages to a specific group	Its always been that way, why should "we" change. What's unjust? — believing a particular group should have special privileges or advantages because of who they are — not seeing that some ways of doing things disadvantage specific groups of people	'We've lived on this land for two generations, we are not changing what we do just because the tigers are here.' Let's re-organise the classroom to ensure its easier to work in pairs.
Silencing Making it difficult for a group or person to be seen and/or heard. Making it difficult to talk, see and hear race and racism	I know I am right, I know this is normal, I know that is weird. What's unjust? — being certain that 'my' way is the only way — only inviting, hearing and seeing images, ideas, etc from the majority and/or powerful cultural and ethnic group I don't see any racism here. Why talk about it? What's unjust? — shutting down opportunities for children and families to talk about their experiences, feelings and concerns — avoiding and ignoring the ways racism hurts all children in different ways.	'We just need more powerful guns, then the tigers wouldn't be a problem.' Working in pairs is the perfect way to learn and build friendships. 'I know that in my area the tigers get treated well. There is no need to talk about it.' There's no problem with the Borgs here. Everyone is happy being in pairs.

FACULTY OF EDUCATION — Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood C.E.I.E.C — LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

Appendix D

Cultural diversity audit tool

Greco,T., Paradies, Y., & Priest, N. (2011). *School-based audit tool: Assessing current school policies, procedures and practices that support diversity and address race-based discrimination.* Unpublished. School of Population Health, The University of Melbourne.

To obtain a copy of the full audit tool please contact the authors.

Excerpt

Purpose of the school-based audit tool

This audit tool has been developed for use in conducting an assessment of current school policies, procedures and practices that support diversity and address race-based discrimination. This tool is intended to provide a picture of what the school is currently doing to address race-based discrimination and to support diversity, to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in such practices. The process of undertaking an audit is a statement to the school community that the school is committed to addressing race-based discrimination and that it both values and is actively committed to supporting diversity.

The following table provides an outline of each section of the Audit Tool.

Section 1	Assessing current school practice & procedures
Section 1 assesses school practices and procedures relevant to addressing race-based discrimination and to supporting ethnic diversity, providing an indication as to the strengths and areas for improvement in regards to such practice. ___ **Please note:** This section aims to provide an assessment of current school procedures and practices that support diversity and address race-based discrimination, to provide a general overview of practice in these areas. It is recommended that schools at least use this section to assess relevant school practice.	
Section 2	**Assessing school policy**
Section 2 is for use in assessing the comprehensiveness and sufficiency of school policies which aim to prevent and/or address race-based discrimination and support ethnic diversity. E.g. Equal Opportunities, Anti-racism or Multicultural policies. ___ **Please note:** This section is only relevant to schools which have such policies which aim to prevent and/or address race-based discrimination and support ethnic diversity.	
Section 3	**Assessing school practice in terms of monitoring and reporting incidents of race-based discrimination and student academic performance**
Section 3 is for use in assessing current school practice in terms of monitoring and reporting	

incidents of race-based discrimination as well as student academic performance.

Please note: This section enables a more detailed and thorough examination of current school practice in terms of monitoring and reporting incidents of race-based discrimination, than the questions outlined in Section 1 allow. This section is recommended if the school would like a more in-depth indication as to current practice in this area. This section also provides an assessment of school practice in terms of monitoring student academic performance.

Section 4	Supporting the diverse needs of ethnically diverse students and promoting support of diversity among all students

Section 4 provides an assessment of school practices and procedures relevant to supporting the diverse needs of students, including those who are ethnically diverse, and the level of engagement and collaboration with parents and other relevant external agencies.

Please note: This section will help determine the strengths and areas for improvement, in school practice and procedures, regarding student access to opportunities and resources to best support students well-being and educational needs.

Appendix E

Links to additional resources

Links recommended in: *Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship: A Strategy for Victorian Government Schools 2009 – 2013.*

Multicultural Education:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/default.htm

Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC):

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/lmerc/default.htm

Victorian Government Schools Reference: Schools Reference Guide - Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:

English as a Second Language (ESL):
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/default.htm

Languages Other Than English (LOTE):
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/referenceguide/curric/3_12.htm

Civics and Citizenship Education: http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/

Values Education: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/

Studies of Asia and Australia Visit: www.asiaeducation.edu.au

Engaging Young Australians with Asia through the VELS in: http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/pdf/soa_vels_doe.pdf

Connect: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/connect

Other Resources

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues. (2006). *Opening the school gate: Engaging CLD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) families in schools.* Melbourne: Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues.

http://www.cmy.net.au/Assets/181/1/OpeningtheSchoolGate.pdf