

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Success in Indigenous Education

Indigenous Scholar Ms Lynette Riley-Mundine, along with Professor Rhonda Craven and Associate Professor Geoff Munns from the Centre for Educational Research, is exploring optimum conditions for academic and life success for Aboriginal school students through a three year ARC Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development Grant.

'Aboriginal students remain the most educationally disadvantaged Australians and interventions have often failed to penetrate the classroom door, making educators unable to help Aboriginal students achieve commensurate educational outcomes as their non-Indigenous peers.' says Ms Riley-Mundine. 'This research seeks to make clear what the conditions for success are for primary Aboriginal students to achieve effective academic achievement, school engagement, wellbeing, and participation. We will be focussing on outcomes at the individual, classroom, school, home and community levels, with a view to building the capacity of Aboriginal education, schooling and communities so that Aboriginal students can fulfil their potential in life and academic pursuits.'

The research team will survey the top ten percent of Aboriginal students in remote, urban and rural areas, and conduct focus groups with successful students, parents, Aboriginal staff, teaching staff, school executives and regional school representatives. This will gauge their perceptions about what constitutes quality teaching, and what benefits might be gained from programs such as different teaching methods, changes in environments, executive leadership and support, and community engagement. Results from these



studies will then be used to design, implement, and assess an intervention program that aims to improve motivation, positive self-concept, mental health, coping mechanisms, and educational engagement for Aboriginal primary school students.

This project will contribute to strengthening Australia's social and economic wellbeing by adding new knowledge of Aboriginal education issues and effective strategies to improve the life potential of Indigenous students throughout Australia.

Project Title: Conditions for Success to Enhance Aboriginal Education

Funding has been set at: \$105,000

Contact Details: lyn@koori.usyd.edu.au,
r.craven@uws.edu.au,
<http://www.uws.edu.au/research/researchcentres/cer>
February 2008