

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Reassessing multicultural education

**Dr Megan Watkins and Associate Professor Greg Noble from the Centre for Cultural Research are collaborating with the Multicultural Programs Unit of the NSW Department of Education and Training to explore approaches to multicultural education in NSW government schools.**

'It has become clear that multicultural education is in something of a crisis in Australia, and across the world' explains Dr Watkins. 'Some of the assumptions made about cultural diversity that formed the basis of multicultural education programs in the 1970s may no longer be appropriate'. Associate Professor Noble continues, 'Diversity has become more diverse, shaped by intergenerational change, intermarriage and the different ways ethnic groups have accepted or rejected other cultural practices and beliefs. Students may claim three or four different cultural and linguistic heritages, and this makes it difficult to know what these students need, and how to provide it. This is a huge challenge for educators. Our project, which draws on findings from an Australian Research Council Linkage project, will explore notions of culturally inclusive curriculum appropriate for the 21st century, and how these link to broader understandings of multiculturalism and the role of education in promoting social justice'.

Working closely with the Multicultural Programs staff and NSW school educators, the researchers will employ a mixed methodology of document analysis, surveys in eleven NSW Schools, and focus group interviews with teachers, parents and students in a sample of schools. A professional learning component of the research will also be developed to involve teachers in planning, implementing and evaluating action research projects within each school.



This project will provide students, parents, and educators with successful strategies for improving multicultural education in NSW schools, and provide valuable information to assist the NSW Department of Education to develop future multicultural education policy initiatives.

**Project Title:** Reassessing Multicultural Education Pilot Project

**Funding has been set at:** \$58,000

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