



Keeping Culture: Utilising Koori Elders' Wisdom and Knowledge in Education

This innovative Australian Research Council (ARC) funded investigation is led by Dr Fabri Blacklock, with colleague Professor Janet Mooney of the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, at the Australian Catholic University.

New South Wales Koori Elders' wisdom and knowledge, perspectives, and experiences are the foundation and lifeblood of continuing Koori culture. As such there is a dire need to ensure Koori youth benefit from the wisdom and past experiences of our Koori Elders.

Within an educational context, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students have much to learn from our Elders and this learning can provide all students with an increased understanding of the history, land, and culture of Australia.

Despite the clear value of transmitting such important information, to date no research has investigated how this wisdom and knowledge can be best utilised to enhance Aboriginal education in Australian schools, or how Elders' perspectives can be used to strengthen the identity and educational outcomes of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. The need for such research is urgent because when one of our Elders dies, the knowledge and wisdom they carry with them is lost forever.

To address this gap in the research, this project aims to record and document the oral histories of ten NSW Koori Elders. Importantly this project also aims to build on and expand upon local Koori oral tradition by illustrating the understandings conveyed with newly created visual material such as a DVDs, photographs, maps, historical documents, and artworks.

This will be achieved through a collaborative editing process with each Elder, and the resulting materials will be used as education resources for both school and community Aboriginal education.

By achieving the above-stated aims, this research will contribute to the strengthening of Aboriginal students' identity and their connection to culture, as well as exposing non-Aboriginal students to the rich and unique history of Indigenous Australians.

The study also has the potential to make a significant impact on Aboriginal people's well-being and the successful transmission of their culture through the recording and cataloguing of important insights and cultural information, which can then be readily accessed by future generations of Aboriginal people.



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