



More Aboriginal and
Torres Strait
Islander Teachers
Initiative

Background

3Rs – Respect, Relationships, Reconciliation Project

3Rs Focus Group Research in 2013¹

- There is very significant variation between individuals in the amount of exposure to Indigenous education content during their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) study.
- Participants identified few experiences during their (ITE) study that had significant impact on their values or ability as Indigenous educators.
- Participants expressed anxiety and lack of confidence in teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and teaching Indigenous students.
 - *'I wouldn't say that I would be confident in tackling or talking about Indigenous culture and the right way to say things or immerse them in that culture myself.'* (teacher)
 - *'I think as Australians we should have some sort of basic knowledge. There should have been at least some process of cultural osmosis we should have picked up enough that we should at least be able to give the kids some basics but as a high school level, I'm certainly not prepared.'* (teacher)

Research Findings: Professional Learning in Schools²

- Formal teacher professional development is patchy and not evaluated
- Teachers have fear and resistance about Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4
- Need for a coordinated, multi-level workforce development strategy for teachers

3Rs Project brief from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Learning (AITSL)

Resources criteria:

- Based on research evidence
- Provide knowledge and skills for Professional Teaching Standards 1.4 and 2.4
- Graduate level of Professional Standards for Teachers
- Adaptable to local contexts
- Flexible for different delivery modes
- Have culturally inclusive pedagogies, including anti-racism strategies
- Involve comprehensive stakeholder consultation

¹ <http://rrr.edu.au/beta/guide/research/>

² <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/initial-teacher-education/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-education>

3Rs Timeline

- UniSA Consortium developed a prototype digital unit outline and content designed to address the common elements of ITE units and courses.
- 25 university faculties and schools of education (through the ACDE) signed off to participate in further development and trialing of the 3Rs materials.
- In 2016, UniSA lead the completion of the 3Rs digital resource.
- 3Rs launched by Dr Tom Calma at the ACDE Deans' Forum in Adelaide on June 17, 2016.



3Rs Resource Content

Module 1

Topic 1: Respect, Relationships & Reconciliation

Topic 2: Values, culture and identity

Topic 3: Countering racism

Module 2

Topic 1: High expectations

Topic 2: Supportive classrooms

Topic 3: Inclusive pedagogies

Topic 4: Building positive relationships

Module 3

Topic 1: Indigenous Identities

Topic 2: Country and Place

Topic 3: Significant events

Topic 4: Improving classroom practice

Faculty Guide

About 3Rs

Quotes about the Importance of Teaching Indigenous Studies

'I think it's really important for all of Australia to understand about the make-up of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the First Nation's people. I don't think there is a rich understanding of our histories, our shared histories, our pre-colonial history, the impact of colonialism, so there needs to be a better understanding of – not a blame game in the space – but to understand the impact of the clash of cultures and how that's played out even today. To understand the impact of loss of language, of culture, and connection to country, how that plays out on us feeling like citizens of this country, I think there's got to be a better understanding. I think education has a real place to play in that role... Understanding the great successes and collaborations, and where there's been respectful relationships, there's been some real successes in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributions to the development of the nation.'

MATISITI Project Director and ACDE Board Member, Dr. Peter Buckskin

THE BENEFITS OF THE 3RS RESOURCES SPECIFICALLY

'One of the unexpected outcomes of MATSITI³ was having the opportunity to do the AITSL work on the 3Rs... Now there's been contributions from every state of Australia, and the territories, in relation to the content of the 3Rs, and lecturers in teacher ed[ucation] are picking that up, they're asking to use it. 'Can we use that? Can we add to it?' With that kind of thing happening, then there's authentic kind of stuff happening in teacher education.'

3Rs Curriculum Director, Dr Kaye Price

'I feel that it's a really important to know about the people and the country that you live in... It must enrich people's lives, to realise where they live and what happens where they live.'

3Rs Curriculum Director, Dr Kaye Price

'It's been put together by experts, resources are credible, content is credible. I think the time is right.'

Chair, Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Initial Teacher Education Association and 3Rs contributor, Dr Peter Anderson

'This is actually a really good resource just to build your own knowledge. We're always told in our teaching degrees that learning is never static, you have to keep updating. This is one way you can use for yourself I'm sure... Activities are actually building on skill that you already have and how you can transfer. I think it's a tool that can be used at different levels. You might take one module every 6 months for the next 6 years or you might take one ... It's really up to you, you can tailor your needs or your interests really.'

Chair, Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Initial Teacher Education Association and 3Rs contributor, Dr Peter Anderson

³ [More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative](#)

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR NON-INDIGENOUS TEACHERS TO LEARN TO TEACH INDIGENOUS STUDIES

'How does it sit in terms of potential impact teaching non-Indigenous people, non-Indigenous teachers? I mean what effect does that likely to have compared to relatively the handful of Indigenous teachers in the work force? Well, I think that for me is where a unit like this is particularly exciting because that creates new possibilities being able to expand the pool of people that can actually talk fluently about these issues and think more deeply about these matters.'

(Monash University Senior Lecturer, Dr Nathan Brubaker, on non-Indigenous learners)

VIEWS OF NON-INDIGENOUS TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Studying the Indigenous Studies Unit at Monash University in May 2016

'It was actually wrong. It sounds really scary but ...our knowledge of this topic it was completely wrong That's why these classes have been fantastic, because it's every week, you come here and you go, 'Wow, I just didn't know that.' Then you kind of go, 'Oh my gosh, I can't believe that's how we were taught previously' ... We need to be focusing on now, what's happening now in the Indigenous culture, not just what happened in the past, this history and focusing on the people that contribute to society now.'

(Bianca Brown, Teacher Education student)

'Trying to make sure we're being respectful and learning about something that we felt we should already know about and know a lot more about and we didn't. That made us feel a little sad that we didn't know as much as we should and now we are more confident and we feel more ready to go out there, I guess.'

(Natalie Berrutti, Teacher Education student)

'I think it's going to make us much more culturally competent and make us just much better teachers, because, even from this, knowledge is key. We've learned so much and I feel like before this, I could have done things in my teaching that would have been offensive.'

(Bianca Harris, Teacher Education student)

'We started out not really knowing anything and it was really overwhelming to have all this stuff thrown at us but now it's like we're coming back around to putting it into our teaching practices. So being able to go out and educate children about what we know and we actually know things now.' (

Kellie LeCerf, Teacher Education student)

'Just because you don't have an Aboriginal child in your classroom or Torres Strait Islander child in your classroom doesn't mean that those cultures aren't relevant. You can't just take the cultures that are within your classroom. That's great too but, this is our history, this is our culture, this is part of our community and it needs to be touched on.'

(Ebony Erez, Teacher Education student)

VIEWS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

'The benefits for teaching Indigenous strategies: there's plenty of literature around to say that that supports non-Indigenous kids as much as it does the Indigenous kids. So I think there's plenty of benefit just in terms of straight data on how they'll be. But there's the cross-cultural awareness, it's all the cultural information that they'll take forward and that'll help them understand a few things and then maybe ignorance might stop.'

(Michael Heuston, Teacher Education Student 2015, now teaching)

I think it's important because students thrive on culture and if you're just presenting one type of culture to a bunch of students, they're not going to gain anything from that. There's not a world view that gets put in the classroom.

(Alec Warner, Teacher Education student 2015, now teaching)

'It's paramount to have any understanding of society because in society we don't just have white people, we don't have just that culture, we have a multiple array of cultures. I believe that you need to have an Indigenous person to have a conversation to actually know the issues, to feel the issues, to then have an understanding of what it is that needs to be changed and addressed

(Chantal Rosas, Teacher Education student 2015)