

## **Kids can show prejudice and teachers can show them another path**

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Children are shaped by what they see and hear around them at home and at school. This can include race-related discourse that posits some members of society above others. The 12-14 year old children in two Australian Grade 8 classes were not exempt. Although previously they had very minimal interaction with Aboriginal Australians, all 47 students in these two classes had come to believe derogative stereotypes about Aboriginal people. But things began to change as they engaged in a program of learning designed in consultation with an Aboriginal educator to present a positive discourse to counter the deficit discourse about Aboriginal people prevalent in Australia. In the drivers' seat of their learning, students began to appreciate past and present cultures of Aboriginal people and their resilience and achievements amidst racial oppression. Through a lens of empathy, students not only formed more positive perspectives about Aboriginal people, but realised the need to not judge any group of people. Aspects of the design and outcomes of this study may be applied to other anti-prejudice and pro-social educational initiatives.

### **Introduction**

Most adults would agree children are shaped by what they observe around them. Yet many adults are disinclined to believe children are susceptible to racist discourse that promotes some ethnic groups and demotes others. While some adults believe there is no such racist discourse in their society, others may recognise there is, but children, in their innocence, are somehow immune to it. And many parents — if not most, would vehemently deny the beliefs and behaviours of their own children may have been shaped by any such discourse (Heaton, 2014).

But research has shown that children are not immune to what they hear. Not only the language but also the behaviour of children from a very young age can reflect the racist discourse in their societal surrounds (Donaldson, Lopez & Scribner, 2003; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2002; York, 2003). Even from the early years (0-5 years of age), children have been found to commence developing a basic understanding of race-related differences and power relationships, and deploy these emerging understandings in determining who they include and exclude in the classroom and playground (Connolly & Hoskens, 2006; Tenorio, 2006).

Race-related discourse and its influence on children is largely a by-product of racist ideologies and systems in wider society that are often subtle, unintentional, unwilling and even unconscious (Priest, Paradies, Trennery, Truong, Karlsen & Kelly, 2012). Ideologies about the superiority of white people are prevalent in societies where white people comprise the majority of the population, with such ideologies resulting in enactments of discrimination (Priest, Walton, White, Kowal, Baker & Paradies, 2014). Expressions of

racism toward ethnic minority groups become ingrained and ordinary, even expected, with ethnic majority groups often not being able to see, or choosing not to see, the racism experienced by ethnic minorities. Racial prejudice and discrimination is commonly justified with arguments that the “other” need to assimilate; that “they” ought to be more like “us”.

Research in Australia has found that parents and caregivers are by far the most influential in shaping the race-related attitudes of children and youth, but also of influence (though significantly less so) are teachers, other family members, peers and mentors (Priest et al., 2014). The race-related attitudes and behaviours of teachers often reflect those of the school and wider society (Forrest, Lean & Dunn, 2017). In country New South Wales only two-thirds of teachers support and celebrate cultural diversity and the introduction of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum (Dandy, Durkin, Barber & Houghton, 2015). Accordingly, support for multicultural and anti-racism education among teachers is not universal (Buehler, 2013).

Children also develop their ideas regarding what is racially desirable and undesirable from storybooks, films, nursery rhymes and other media (Christensen, 2017). Christensen (2017, pp. 4-5) referred to the ‘secret education’ children receive as they engage with children’s films and literature that often ‘depicts the domination of one sex, one race, one class, or one country over a weaker counterpart’. In this secret education, white people are regularly presented as the leaders and heroes, whereas non-white people are cast as the tokenistic side-kick, villain or savage. From such influences, children commence understanding that it is white people who talk properly, think more cleverly, look better, and, overall, are better (Tenorio, 2006).

It has also been found that children can learn to hide their prejudices from a very young age — even from as soon as when prejudice is first formed. From what they understand about social expectations and norms, children can hide the prejudices they have adopted and try to appear tolerant. But behind a veneer of tolerance, feelings and beliefs of one’s own ethnic superiority can all too often fester unnoticed, and shape the young person’s thoughts, feelings and behaviours into adulthood (Kivel, 2017; National Association of School Psychologists, 2013). As children develop, shaped by discourse in their societal surrounds, the race-related beliefs, language and behaviours they start to exhibit is often excused or justified by them and adults as being a mere preference for some aspects of culture, values and aesthetics over others (Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 2004).

It is because racist discourse continues to remain at large in many societies, and children are susceptible to it, that schools need to consider what they can do better to show students a more inclusive path.

## **The rationale, inquiry and research methods**

Denying children are shaped by their social surrounds, including race-related discourse, does no one any good. Racism, like other forms of prejudice, stifles a child’s intellectual, social and emotional development (Katz, 2003, pp. 11-12), and prevents them from

looking at others through anything but a skewed frame of reference (Manning, Baruth & Lee, 2017) and from becoming knowledgeable, healthy, socially skilled, responsible and contributing citizens (Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik & Elias, 2003). Most importantly, the effects of racism have a large toll on the recipient, causing the victim of racism anxiety, sickness and social and fiscal exclusion (Larson, Gillies, Howard & Coffin, 2007). Without learning other ways of knowing, children run the real risk of carrying their prejudices with them into the workforce and other spheres of adult life, with ingrained feelings of racial superiority only extending existing racial divides and social injustices (Heaton, 2014).

School-based anti-racism programs of learning are imperative, as the most common setting for Australian children and youth to experience racism is at school (Mansouri, Jenkins, Morgan & Taouk, 2009). Priest and colleagues (2014) elaborated on the important role teachers have of promoting positive intercultural relations and reducing racism by better appreciating students' ethnic-racial socialisation (ethnic-racial socialisation being one's learning about and negotiating racial, ethnic and cultural diversity). Teachers can either counter or perpetuate racist attitudes and behaviours that students bring with them from their societal surrounds into the classroom (Forrest, Lean & Dunn, 2017).

The overarching aim of this current study is to identify whether two classes of 12-14 year old Grade 8 students (47 students in total) at an independent school in a lower socio-economic area of northern Adelaide, South Australia, held prejudiced perspectives toward Aboriginal people. More so, this study explored whether students' engagement in a positive discourse about Aboriginal people that run counter to racist discourse prevalent in Australian society might move them to think and feel more positively about them. Ethics clearance was obtained from the Charles Darwin University Human Ethics Research Committee, before consent was obtained from the school to conduct the study, and all 47 students signed (witnessed by a guardian) an Information Sheet and Consent Form to participate in the study.

To first identify students' perspectives toward Aboriginal people, all 47 students completed a Likert-scale survey. The survey asked them to select 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'unsure', 'agree' or 'strongly agree' in response to words describing Aboriginal people. The sentence starter 'I think Aboriginal people are ...' was followed by a list of 24 positive traits (e.g. 'approachable', 'good parents' and 'responsible'), intermingled with negative traits antonymous to these positive traits and prevalent in stereotypes about Aboriginal people in Australian social discourse (e.g. 'unapproachable', 'bad parents' and 'not clever'). The full list of positive words included: forgiving; approachable; patient; godly; clever; fun-loving; resilient; well-presented; advanced; team-oriented; wise; loving; gentle; responsible; good leaders; beautiful-spirits; humble; talented; peaceful; generous; good parents; interesting; beautiful; and humorous.

Immediately after students individually completed this survey they commenced engaging in a program of learning that comprised 16 lessons and spanned three weeks. A qualitative action research approach was deployed, with students' written reflections, narratives and expositions collected for later analysis. Directly after the final lesson students completed

the same survey again, but this time taking into consideration their perspectives of Aboriginal people following what they had learnt about Aboriginal people in the program. The same survey was repeated six months later to see if any new perspectives they may have developed remained intact or not.

As the teacher and researcher (who is also the author of this paper) is not Aboriginal, the program of learning was co-designed with a local Aboriginal educator and Ngarrindjeri elder from the Coorong region in South Australia, who we will name Stef (for confidentiality, pseudonyms are given to all research participants in this study). A positive discourse was designed in consultation with Stef to counter racist discourse prevalent about Aboriginal people in Australian society. Educational literature was thoroughly reviewed, with work by Connolly and Hoskens (2006) among others providing useful pedagogical insights into engaging middle school students in diverse mediums and modes of learning to achieve anti-racism and pro-social outcomes.

The program of learning (see Table 1) provided opportunities for students to consider positive aspects of Aboriginal family and community life in four units of inquiry: 1. cultures; 2. histories; 3. contemporary experiences; and 4. contemporary achievements. Students engaged in diverse modes and mediums that involved photographs, documentaries, excursions, films, texts, worksheets, news articles, stories, websites and visitors to the classroom, which collectively showcased the positive aspects about Aboriginal people contained in the survey. Toward the end of each lesson students individually reflected on what they enjoyed and if they changed their perspectives, and for homework they progressively added to narratives that they wrote from what they imagined might be the perspective of an Aboriginal person (Lessons 1-9) and also expositions in which they presented their critical learning (Lessons 10-16). The program concluded with Stef meeting the students and sharing with them aspects of her community's cultures and values.

By presenting positive representations of Aboriginal people, the aim was for students to drop their prejudices and to develop more positive perspectives about Aboriginal people. This included attempting to increase students' appreciation for the resilience of Aboriginal people amidst past and present social injustices experienced, which aligns with Sarra's (2009) self-declared ethical agenda of introducing the ongoing impact of invasion on Aboriginal people toward countering prejudice and having students consider what a fairer Australia may look like. As Leach, Iyer and Pedersen (2006) reported, the more members of a privileged group or 'in-group' recognise their own privilege, the more they are likely to feel indignation about it and support greater equality for the 'outgroup'. With an understanding that empathy negates prejudice (Pedersen, Beven, Walker & Griffiths, 2004). Moving students to empathise with Aboriginal people was another key objective.

After delivering the program of learning and collecting students' reflections, narratives and expositions, thematic analysis was used to code and categorise these written responses (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). The inter-relatedness of different components of the students' learning was identified and considered, as were the repeated ideas, common terms, analogies and similarities (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2012). The main themes

that emerged included students' engagement in critical reflection on themselves and their society, increased appreciation for Aboriginal cultures, altered perspectives, and, also, empathy with Aboriginal people.

Table 1: The program of learning

Unit, lesson and topic			Mode/ medium	Positive aspects emphasised	Task*
Unit 1: Cultures	1	Children's activities	Photographs	Fun-loving, team-oriented	1, 3
	2	Community activities	Documentary	Patient, interesting, wise	1, 3
	3	Technologies and language	Excursion	Generous, peaceful, advanced	1, 3
	4	Children's games	Excursion	Fun-loving, team-oriented	1, 3
Unit 2: Histories	5	Genocide	Excursion	Resilient, gentle, good parents	1, 3
	6	Forcible removal of children	Film	Resilient, good parents	1, 3
	7	National Apology	Text	Forgiving, gentle, Humorous	1, 3
Unit 3: Contemporary experiences	8	Aboriginal disadvantage	Worksheet	Resilient, good leaders	1, 3
	9	Resilience amidst racism	Visitor	Approachable, forgiving	1, 3
	10	Exposing racist myths	Worksheet	Advanced, beautiful spirits	2, 3
	11	Negative news reporting	News articles	Good leaders, resilient	2, 3
Unit 4: Contemporary achievements	12	Models	News articles	Humble, well-presented	2, 3
	13	Youth acting talent	Documentary	Talented, well-presented	2, 3
	14	War heroes	Stories	Good leaders, generous	2,3
	15	NAIDOC award winners	Website	Talented, responsible, wise	2,3
	16	Cultures and values	Visitor	Approachable, forgiving, humorous, loving, wise	2,3
* Tasks: 1 = Narrative writing from the imagined perspective of an Aboriginal person; 2 = Exposition writing exploring new critical perspectives; 3 = Lesson reflections.					

## Results

The need to teach against racism was particularly evident when the Grade 8 students were asked to respond to a survey immediately prior to the commencement of the program of learning. Resonating with the findings of Priest and colleagues (2014), students indicated they had developed their understandings about Aboriginal people from what they had heard from family and to a lesser extent from peers and teachers, and also from television and radio. They also indicated they had not engaged in much Aboriginal Studies at school.

Their minimal prior engagement in Aboriginal Studies had been limited to hearing one or two Dreaming stories that detail the beliefs of some Aboriginal groups about the creation of the land, sky and sea, but no cultural context had been given to these Dreaming stories by their teachers. As Craven (2011) explained, a lack of context given to Aboriginal cultures often only further perpetuates students' misunderstandings and stereotypes about Aboriginal people.

All but one of the 47 children in the two classes revealed they held numerous negative perspectives about Aboriginal people. The student who was the exception, Matt, took the approach of selecting 'unsure' in response to the entirety of positive and negative traits, but he had been observed making racist remarks about Aboriginal people that same week and was resistive to the learning throughout the entire program. The other 46 were inclined to select 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' in response to the positive traits, and 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to the negative traits. These responses reflect stereotypes about Aboriginal people prevalent in Australian social discourse. For example, students selecting 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' in response to Aboriginal people being 'responsible' and 'good parents' reflected dominant stereotypes about Aboriginal people being uncaring and absent parents, happily unemployed and alcoholics (Reconciliation Australia, 2017). When, at the end of the program of learning, students were given opportunity to write reflections on what they had learned, numerous labelled their initial feelings toward Aboriginal people as having been 'prejudiced' and even 'racist'.

By the end of the program of learning it was clear there had been a positive shift in students' opinions of Aboriginal people. Apart from Matt, who continued his established practice of selecting 'unsure' for every trait, when the survey was repeated immediately after the last lesson to find out how students now perceived Aboriginal people, all students were more inclined than they had been before the program of learning commenced, to select 'agree' or 'strongly agree' in response to the positive words and 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' in response to the negative words. For instance, whereas the majority of students had initially been more inclined to select 'agree' that Aboriginal people are unapproachable and 'disagree' they are approachable, they were now more inclined to 'disagree' they are unapproachable and 'agree' they are approachable. Six months later, when surveyed again, students' mean levels of agreement to the positive words and disagreement to the negative words were slightly lower than immediately after the program had commenced, but significantly higher than initial levels immediately before the program had commenced (for a fuller account of the shift in students' perspectives, see Heaton, 2014).

It was not only students' perspectives that had changed, but also their feelings toward Aboriginal people. It was evident that students were inclined to respond with empathy with Aboriginal people, which occurred simultaneous to them developing these more positive perspectives.

## Discussion

From early on in the program of learning, as students learnt about some of the cultures of Aboriginal people, they started to see Aboriginal people more positively. It was evident there was correlation between students': appreciation of Aboriginal cultures; the resilience of Aboriginal people in response to social injustices experienced; and Aboriginal people in general. Their appreciation for Aboriginal cultures and Aboriginal people grew side by side as they imagined being an Aboriginal person engaging in aspects of cultures learnt about in class. Students responded with indignation toward the injustices, and they further empathised with Aboriginal people as they identified some similarities they perceived they share with the lifestyles and experiences of Aboriginal people. Students' perspectives of Aboriginal people only became more positive upon an Aboriginal visitor sharing with them her aspects of her cultures and values.

From being introduced to some aspects of Aboriginal cultures and community life, students started to appreciate Aboriginal people and see them more positively. Viewing and analysing photographs, documentaries and texts, as well as attending a class excursion, assisted them to appreciate how Aboriginal people engage in aspects of Aboriginal cultures for the benefit of their community. Their engagement with this wide array of media and modes of learning displayed to them Aboriginal people's contributions to maintaining community functioning and harmony, and in response students identified the joy, fun, peace, responsibility and leadership of Aboriginal people.

In their growing awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures many students imagined being an Aboriginal person. What brought this learning alive for students was them running through trees and hiding behind bushes along the creek line while playing hide and seek at a local nature reserve during the class excursion. They were surprised to learn that hide and seek — a game they know and love, is a traditional game in Aboriginal communities. Their appreciation of Aboriginal cultures as well as their ability to draw links to their own lives was enhanced when they shared a party meal together. They had all been required to bring a drink or a plate of sweet or savoury food, and after enjoying it they learnt how the shared meal is in some ways similar to an Aboriginal communal meal that members of Aboriginal communities contribute to after hunting, gathering and preparing food using an array of traditional and contemporary tools and techniques. Students later reflected on the similarities they perceived they share with Aboriginal people in regards to cultural activities and responsibilities, and noted that Aboriginal children and youth are not all that different to themselves. Some wished they themselves are Aboriginal, living in Aboriginal community.

Students' engagement in imagining life as an Aboriginal person and identifying similarities as well as differences they have with Aboriginal people was further evident in their narrative writing — which was the very purpose of the creative writing task. Some aspects of Aboriginal cultures and community life tended to interest and capture the imagination of female students as compared to male students. Many of the girls reflected they were most interested in learning about the closeness and collaboration of Aboriginal people and communities, and were captivated by the intricate basket weaving skills Aboriginal

mothers, aunts and grandmothers taught to girls in the communities. Many of the boys, on the other hand, were impressed by Aboriginal technologies and techniques for hunting animals and building small temporary shelters called wiltjas. Students drew upon this learning as they wrote their narratives from what they thought might be the perspective of an Aboriginal person. Reg imagined being an Aboriginal boy, and wrote from what he thought might be the boy's perspective:

We would have so much fun playing hide and seek, the bone game and many others. We ran down the steep sand hills, we were taught by mothers how to make tracks in the sand, and we told each other stories while sitting under a wiltja.

Appreciation for Aboriginal people was heightened as students learnt about some past and present social injustices they have experienced. After enjoying the games and the shared communal meal, while still at the local nature reserve, students sat in a circle on grass, logs and blankets as they were told about what Aboriginal people see as the invasion of their land and communities following the arrival of the First Fleet from Britain in 1788. Students demonstrated what Craven (2011) described as learners being shocked about the history of race relations in Australia when engaging in Aboriginal Studies. Previously, students had not heard about the genocidal activities of the new arrivals in numerous Aboriginal communities that were now introduced to them. Like many of his classmates, Charles reflected on his astonishment of the genocidal activities and other injustices against Aboriginal people:

I was shocked that some people would try to exterminate the Aboriginal people.

Back in the classroom, students were also saddened to hear about the Australian government's policy and practice of forcibly removing Aboriginal children of a lighter skin complexion from their families and communities and placing them in white missions and families — often never to return. Previously students had known about some aspects of these policies and practices, but viewing the film *Rabbit-proof fence* (e.g. Crewe, 2015) made it so much more real to them. Many students indicated in their reflections that viewing the film escalated their awareness of the tremendous impact on Aboriginal children taken away and on their families and communities who were left without them. Students tried to imagine what this might be like for the three Aboriginal girls in the film, Mollie, Daisy and Gracie, but, like Tiff, most appreciated that the experience as well as the strength of character shown by these girls was something they could not relate to:

If I were taken away from my parents I wouldn't have been as tough and resilient as Molly, Daisy and Gracie.

Learning about historical as well as contemporary social injustices that Aboriginal people have navigated led students to respond with moral indignation to the injustices. It appeared that what most upset them in learning about racism experienced by Aboriginal people today was the disadvantage in education, employment, health and housing they face as compared to non-Aboriginal people in Australia. There are varying views in regards to the value of students feeling indignation in response to learning about social injustices. Manning, Baruth and Lee (2017) reported that learners responding with



indignation is valuable, as more positive opinions about ethnic minorities are developed as a result of learners feeling upset at the racial oppression they endure. Wilner and Dubouloz (2011) agreed that at times learners responding with indignation can be beneficial, but at other times it can be counter-productive, as responses of anger, even if towards injustice, can lead learners to experience withdrawal, contradiction and dysfunction, and also sometimes extremist views. Such possible responses from students also made Cranton (2016) question the place of students feeling and expressing indignation at injustice in the classroom.

It is the author's view that moral indignation is an invaluable anti-racism and general anti-prejudice and pro-social learning outcome. An absence of feeling indignant toward an injustice experienced by someone else is equivalent to an absence of empathy with them. Indignation at racism and other forms of prejudice and discrimination is an expression of solidarity and empathy with victims of prejudice and discrimination, and accordingly an essential ingredient in anti-racism and other anti-prejudice and pro-social education. What most assisted students to develop deeper empathy with Aboriginal people was their narrative writing, as they tried to put themselves in or imagine the situations they learnt many Aboriginal people have been in. Narrative writing enabled students to empathise with Aboriginal people as they continued to identify some similarities they perceived to exist between their own personal experiences and those of Aboriginal people. Students knew they have not experienced the injustices the Aboriginal people they were learning about have experienced, and they could not claim to relate to them. Regardless, they tried to identify some similarities, and this was valuable in them better appreciating these experiences of Aboriginal people. Graham compared the initial moment of Aboriginal children being taken from their family to his experience of being lost at a shopping mall, and Cindy in her narrative writing drew upon her experience of once crying herself to sleep in her narrative by having the main character in her story do the same upon being removed

The creativity and imagination that narrative writing provided students was central to them rethinking prejudices they had held and developing more positive perspectives and ways of knowing. Gail reflected on what she perceived was the value of the narrative writing process:

The lessons that switched my perspectives greatly was the writing of my narrative. It helped me step into someone else's shoes and then channel all my new positive emotions through my writing. I was able to express my creativity, while feeling the pain, hurt and love at the same time.

From writing their narratives, divisions between "us" non-Aboriginal Australians and "them" Aboriginal Australians became increasingly blurred in students' minds, with some students, including Verma, identifying this in their written reflections:

But, as I found out in the lessons following, that they are very much the same as we are. During the lessons I slowly started to warm up to them, feeling a change of sympathy and a special acceptance and affection.

Meeting and interacting with an Aboriginal person who visited the class to talk about her cultures and values helped students to further increase their positive perspectives about Aboriginal people in general. The visitor was Stef, the local Ngarrindjeri elder and cultural educator who assisted in the initial development of the program of learning. Many of the students found meeting Stef to be a most meaningful moment in their learning about the cultures and experiences of Aboriginal people. Her visit was in the final lesson of the program, and by then they had started developing new, positive understandings about Aboriginal people. What Stef shared with students not only consolidated but added to what they had learnt up to that point in time. After Stef left, a large proportion of students reflected on how impressed they were by her and Aboriginal people in general, and their resilience amidst experiences of racism. This included Cindy.

When Stef came to our school and talked to us about Aboriginal culture, I was really amazed by what Aboriginals have gone through in their lifetimes. The things such as the stolen generation, massacres and disadvantages experienced, have made me change my perspective of Aboriginal Australians.

Of the 47 students in the two classes, one student, Helen, identified as being Aboriginal. Like her classmates, she too had held negative opinions about Aboriginal people, agreeing with many of the negative descriptions and disagreeing with many of the positive descriptions in the initial survey. Also like her classmates, she had indicated she has previously had minimal interaction with Aboriginal people, as she lives with her mother who is not Aboriginal and she hardly knows her father who is Aboriginal, and she has next to no contact with Aboriginal cultures and community. And also like her peers, she had developed her understandings about Aboriginal people from conversations with friend and family, listening to radio and viewing television programs. She had believed the deficit discourse about Aboriginal people prevalent in Australian society, resulting in her not being proud to be Aboriginal. But the lesson in which she met Stef was special to her. When the lesson was over, after the other students had left, Helen was introduced to Stef, and Stef kindly gave Helen a red, black and yellow bracelet — the colours of the Aboriginal flag. Like Stef, Helen's father identified as Ngarrindjeri, and Stef told Helen that because her father is Ngarrindjeri so too Helen is Ngarrindjeri, it is an honour to be so, and to be proud to be Aboriginal. Helen later reflected that meeting and interacting with Stef, as well as some earlier lessons, were significant in her taking steps to embrace her Aboriginality:

I loved the poems that she [Stef] read and how she explained them and how she gave me a ring and a bracelet. Watching the DVD documentary that she brought helped me understand a bit more about my Aboriginal background and their way of life. I felt a lot of connection with her and the tribe during these certain lessons.

## Conclusion

Children can indeed show racism, but carefully crafted and facilitated learning experiences can show young students an alternative way of seeing people who are culturally and ethnically different to them. In this study the shift in the 12-14 year old Grade 8 students'

thinking involved them not only forming new positive perspectives about Aboriginal people, but developing new ways of knowing. From appreciating the cultures of Aboriginal people, to being shocked at past and present racial oppression experienced by them, and celebrating their resilience and achievements amidst these experiences, students empathised with them. Students' shock and indignation toward past and present injustices experienced by Aboriginal people was crystallised as they overlaid these injustices with aspects of Aboriginal cultures they loved and connected to aspects of their own lifestyles and lives. Students progressively recognised the need to watch their thoughts, feelings and words about Aboriginal people, and to not judge them. More so, they learned the need to not judge any group of people they see as being different to themselves.

There are practical aspects to the design of the program of learning presented in this paper and the outcomes it achieved that can be applied to other anti-prejudice and pro-social classroom initiatives. There is need for further research to delve deeper, beyond the scope of mainstream pedagogical approaches, into alternative teacher-facilitated learning that may sensitively yet effectively offer young students space to re-evaluate their attitudes toward people of a different ethnicity to themselves. There is also benefit in identifying how to maintain successful anti-prejudice and pro-social outcomes that are achieved in the classroom as children and youth continue being influenced by alternative voices at home and other places where prejudice are prevalent. By facilitating learning experiences in which students consider the experiences of people they perceive to be different to themselves, and empathising with them, teachers provide opportunities for students to see there is no "them" and "us" – there is only an "us".

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**Please cite as:** Heaton, A. (2018). Kids can show prejudice and teachers can show them another path. *Issues in Educational Research*, 28(4), 940-952.

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