



Linking Research to the Practice of Education is a publication of the School of Education (SoE), UNE, for all educators: early childhood, primary and secondary. It introduces research, conducted by SoE staff, applicable to educational settings.

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## Editorial

In our first edition for 2024, we start with an article which explores some of the research-based resources created for Ezidi children and families by Dr Somayeh Ba Akhlagh and Dr Majida Mehana. In the second article, Dr Casey Mainsbridge explores the benefits of school sports carnivals and how to support students who are fixated on participating only if they will win. The third article is written by Dr Cat Volpe who guides us through the skills required to teach geography and how prepared teachers are to use these. The fourth article lays out tried and tested ways to decolonise the curriculum by Darin Gorry, a Meriam man from the Torres Strait Islands. In the fifth article, Associate Professor Helen Harper and secondary teacher David Partridge explore plurilingualism and how to support students who speak multiple languages. The sixth article explores the supports Indigenous students have at UNE. Lastly, we examine some new, free research-based resources available for those supporting children whose parent has a moral injury.

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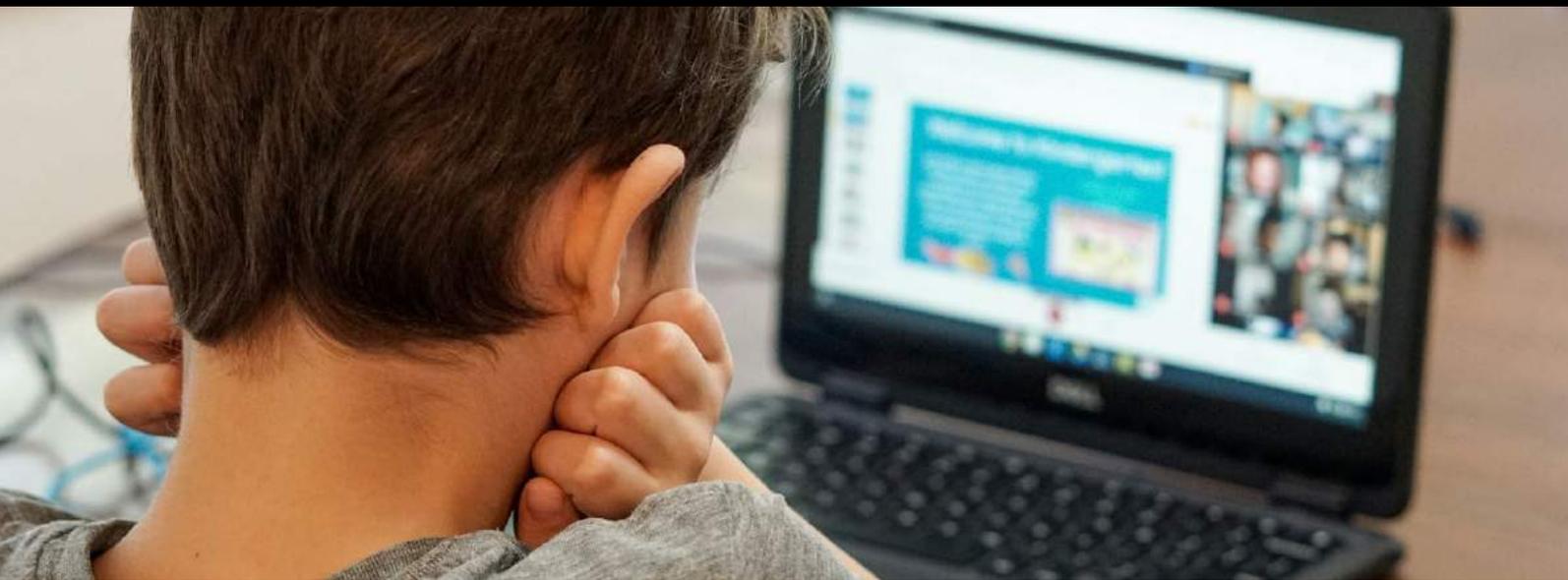
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## Challenges and opportunities in designing culturally appropriate resources to support refugee families

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### Background

Our funded<sup>1</sup> research project aimed to support the learning and development of Ezidi children and families and their transition to school in a regional city in Australia. The research investigated Ezidi parents' involvement in a Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY). This is an international program that is administered in Australia by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence and is funded by the federal government. HIPPY local professional providers support families through home visits, facilitating a program to promote children's literacy, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development ([HIPPY Australia, 2023](#)). The activities offered in the package include children's storybooks.

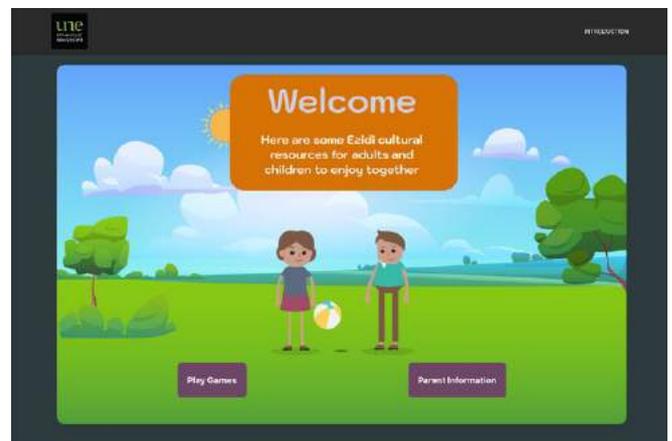


Figure 1. Welcome page of the online resources

The Ezidi community are an ethnic minority group that was brutally persecuted by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). More than 4000 Ezidi refugees re-settled in Australia, most of them in regional areas of NSW and Queensland ([Settlement Service International, 2019](#)). Kurmanji is their spoken language and for the Ezidi's who went to school in their home country, their written language is Arabic ([ABC South Queensland, 2023](#)).

<sup>1</sup>Michelle Bannister-Tyrell (MBT) Memorial Research Scholarship



Figure 2. Online activity choices

## Findings

The findings from our interviews and observations indicated that the HIPPY program supported Ezidi children's transition to school. They were learning early literacy and numeracy skills through their parents. These parent observations indicated that they did not prioritise play as a form of learning. There were some challenges for parents such as limited English language and knowledge about the program which resulted in the parents not being fully involved in the program.

Following these findings, the researchers with the help of the Ezidi community designed culturally appropriate resources to support parents' involvement in children's learning and transitioning to school. We invited Ezidi community translators to help us collect resources from members of the community. We requested the community members to share stories, songs, recipes and traditional games for children under 5 years old.

## Challenges

Some challenges included collecting the resources which were not age appropriate. For example, one parent shared her personal story of being captured by ISIS, when we were seeking children's stories. The other challenge was not having a common song, food recipe or traditional games among the Ezidi community, for instance, one cultural food recipe has a variety of cooking methods and different ingredients. Designing the resource required a lot of thinking and negotiation with the community. Investigating a traditional game for the children using their feet was a popular choice among the community; however, each ethnicity has its own song. To overcome these challenges, we only

kept the age-appropriate resources and used those that had the most agreement amongst the group. 'Despite many challenges, we persisted in creating resources for the families to support parents' interaction with their children and most importantly improve the feeling of belonging with the Armidale community.

The [free resources](#) were created by the help of UNE Education Futures Media Team. Resources included a story, a traditional game, a song, two recipes, and two numeracy and literacy activities including numbers and days of the week. The recorded voice on the resource is in Kurmanji and the written language is in English. We chose these languages because most of the parents did not attend school in their home country and they are currently learning English in Australia.

## Opportunities

Although difficulties delayed the study, the opportunities that arose from the resources are still being felt. We launched the resources at the 2023 HIPPY graduation ceremony. The first feedback that we received was children hearing their mother tongue from the activities on the screen; they looked at the parents and smiled. Families appreciated the resource, as the members of the community gave a speech to thank the researchers. We also received written reports from the families who attended the study. All families gave positive feedback such as the usefulness of the resources. Parents stated that their children enjoyed the story. We are keen to pursue other opportunities to support other refugee and migrant families.



## “Why would I participate if I am not going to win?”: School carnivals as a life metaphor

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In November 2023, I coordinated an informal educational discussion with several pre-service teachers enrolled in a Health and Physical Education (HPE) unit. The discussion included topics such as school student participation in practical HPE lessons, teaching styles of HPE teachers, HPE as a sport-dominated subject, and school carnivals including swimming, cross country, and athletics. The pre-service teachers (PSTs) involved in this discussion represented a broad range of ages and backgrounds, but most of them were either employed in a school environment, had previously undertaken a school practicum, or had school-aged children of their own. The topic of school carnivals raised numerous perspectives amongst the PSTs, but of interest was a statement made highlighting a school student’s comment regarding school carnivals, specifically,

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“Why would I participate if I am not going to win?”

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This comment surprised and concerned me, but I was informed by the PST that such sentiments are not uncommon in both primary and secondary school environments.

The collective surprise amongst the PSTs generated from this comment led to recollections of school carnivals, memories of school houses, cheering, celebration, participation, and fun, with these outcomes

often extending beyond the carnivals and into school culture. House points were awarded for participation, but more importantly students gained a sense of belonging and self-worth by wearing house colours, singing house chants, and experiencing a sense of pride by representing their house in events. Interestingly, winning was not mentioned in these recollections but rather individual and team efforts, trying one’s best, and healthy competition. [Sutherland \(2021\)](#) identified multiple benefits from being involved with a school house, such as camaraderie and bonding between students, encouragement of friendly competitiveness to promote challenge and achievement, responsibility through teamwork, and a sense of identity.

Following this educational discussion, I found myself feeling perturbed and dejected that some school students would equate the opportunity and experience of school carnivals with winning, and winning only. Questions such as “when did school carnivals become just about winning?” and “why would students not participate based on their ideation of winning?” came to mind. Additionally, I was curious about school cultures surrounding expectations of student participation in numerous school activities and events, including carnivals. Participation in school activities and events is important for improving the school socio-ecological environment, peer and student-teacher relationships, and student wellbeing. This upholds expectations and provides support for participation that can encourage these outcomes ([John-Akinola & Nic-Gabhainn, 2014](#)). Although school cultures and teacher expectations can influence student perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours ([Tus, 2020](#)), the direction of the school student

comment suggests elements of self-handicapping that contribute to a perceived weakness or inability (Martin, 2010). Fear of failure is a tendency to consider threat in situations in which failure is a possibility (Taylor, Eklund, & Arthur, 2021). Accordingly, perceptions of a fear of failure can lead to students avoiding particular actions or behaviours, such as not participating in a school carnival, and subsequent adverse effects on individual wellbeing and motivation (Conroy & Elliot, 2004). Fear of failure is learned between the ages of five and nine years of age through socialisation processes. It can continue to impact individual self-efficacy into adult life (Taylor, Eklund, & Arthur, 2021). Self-handicapping is a process where an individual creates or chooses obstacles to a behaviour or performance setting to protect their self-esteem in a threatening situation (Ramer, 2022). By making the comment “if I am not going to win”, the student infers that winning is an obstacle and therefore they will not participate.

The direction of the school student’s comment constitutes a pessimistic viewpoint where if “winning” is not achieved then the pursuit is not worth the effort. Personally, I find such a perspective worrying, self-defeatist, and apathetic. Moreover, it inspires me to re-visit representations of success for every individual school student, that winning has multiple forms, and that failure is essential for learning (Dewey, 1933). For instance, Bonnie Blair (2021) quoted

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“Winning doesn’t always mean being first. Winning means you’re doing better than you’ve ever done before”.

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Improper learning conditions and an absence of self-management skills necessary for independent achievement are the foundation of negative attitudes and feelings of failure (Segal, Chipman, & Glaser, 1985). To address these, outcomes and rewards within a school environment must be provided that allow failure to occur. Teachers can also foster skills and attitudes for personal acceptance of these outcomes and rewards caused by a student’s own efforts.

Teachers have the opportunity to provide education for students around individual differences, and that each of us has diverse strengths and limitations. Gardner’s *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1989) suggests that some may have strength in creative arts, in languages, or intra-personally, and for some their strength may be through movement and sport. Naturally, students will gravitate towards where their individual strengths are, but teachers have the capacity to create environments where all students can participate and learn regardless of their ability. Irrespective of learning in music, drama, science, or sport, there will be students who are less able and more able. This does not mean they should not participate or try, but rather be supported to establish an understanding of where their learning is situated, and how this can be improved.

If some students choose not to participate in activities because they believe they are not going to “win”, then how they might approach other challenges could inhibit their growth, learning, self-belief, and realisation of their own capabilities. Teachers are in a prime position to influence student decisions and behaviours regarding challenges they may encounter, with school carnivals offering excellent opportunities for students to develop a range of lifelong skills; arguably learning how to manage “not winning” might be the most vital.





## ‘It doesn’t prepare you for the actual curriculum taught in schools’: Graduate teachers’ readiness

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‘What do I know now that I didn’t know before?’ – for those of us who are teachers, how many times have we posed this question to our students? We ask our students this question to check on their knowledge and understanding; and interestingly, this is a question I asked myself all throughout my teaching career. Perhaps, an even better question would have been ‘What do I know now that I needed to know before?’ There were many times in my later years as a secondary English and History/Geography teacher where I found myself thinking,

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‘I really wish I had known this in my first years as a teacher!’

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In those early years, I felt I lacked the training and confidence to teach, and as I stepped into the tertiary sector as a lecturer in social science education, many questions formed in my mind:

- On a national scale, are we fully preparing our teachers to teach?
- What do pre-service teachers need to learn across different teaching areas and are Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses providing this training?
- Are some universities ‘doing it better’ than others?
- Do graduate teachers *feel* ready to teach?

### My research

These questions drove me to conduct research with graduate primary and secondary geography teachers focusing on their feelings of readiness to teach. To investigate some of these questions, I distributed a survey to Australian teachers asking them about their perceived readiness to teach geographical skills and tools. Primary and secondary geography teachers will know that there are a wide variety of geographical inquiry skills and tools that need to be incorporated into our teaching.

The questions I asked the participants were about the training they received in their ITE courses that prepared them to make use of these skills and tools. The results were alarming, yet not at all surprising considering my own feelings and experiences. Most respondents stated they needed more training on how to incorporate skills and tools into their lessons. Here are a range of responses from five different educators.

Foundational skills were not taught in my course. It was assumed we knew these things ourselves already.

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It does not prepare you for the actual curriculum taught in schools.

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*“I felt unsure of what skill level is actually required for the grade I teach”.*

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*“I would have felt less intimidated by the curriculum content [with more training]”.*

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*“More training on how to explicitly teach and model use of [geographical] skills/tools”.*

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The responses in the survey highlight that we have work to do to ensure our pre-service teachers have ample opportunities to learn subject-specific skills. An evaluation of the data highlights that pre-service teachers are *being made aware* of the skills but are not necessarily being taught the pedagogical approaches for teaching those skills. Teaching *an awareness of skills* is not enough. We are not setting our pre-service teachers (and their students) up for success if we do not explicitly teach the skills and tools they need.

An even deeper issue for secondary teachers is that of out-of-field teaching, which is defined as ‘teachers who are assigned to teach subjects and year levels when they are not suitably qualified to do so’ (Du Plessis, Gillies & Carroll, 2014, p. 90). If teachers are not fully trained, how different is this lack of subject training from out-of-field teaching? We know that out-of-field teaching ‘[disrupts] the integrity of a subject, ...results in heightened levels of student disengagement, lower than expected achievement of student learning outcomes, and an increasing lack of confidence amongst teachers about their ability to teach effectively’ (Caldis, 2017, p. 13); and since out-of-field teaching is increasingly occurring in secondary schools, it may be suggested that these aforementioned impacts are exacerbated by a potential lack of training. We not only have out-of-field teachers, but we have teachers who are not feeling prepared to teach their subjects.

To conclude, I restate the question asked at the start of this article: *what do I know now that I didn’t know before?* At this point, I think I can provide an initial response to the question: those of us training pre-service teachers must have a closer look at the training we are providing them, so these teachers feel (and are) ready to teach when they enter the classroom. For those who are already out in the field, advocating the need for professional development in these areas may prove to be a step in the right direction.





## Practical steps to decolonising curriculum

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Indigenous children and students thrive in schools when we take authentic steps to decolonise curriculum. This is not a simple process, but neither is it impossible. In this article, I outline the steps experts recommend to decolonise curriculum, arguing why each step is necessary.

### 1. Go deep

Importantly, make sure the decolonisation process has sufficient depth. It is best practice to avoid soft, superficial, or stereotypical changes ([Abu Moghli & Kadiwal, 2021](#)). The use of Aboriginal flags and artwork, canteen foods, and representing diversity in newsletter and promotional materials are examples of this decolonisation process ([Ahmed-Landeryou, 2023](#)).

Although it could be argued that any reform is better than none, change for change sake does nothing to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students and their respective communities. Nor does it give them a voice in determining their educational future. Educational settings need to include multiple voices in their curriculum, pedagogies and assessments. Writing, speaking, and acknowledgment of multiple voices beyond the standard Australian or state curriculum are needed. If changes are occurring at this level, then the smaller changes, such as those listed

above, will be part of that process; however, they must not be the whole process.

### 2. Develop meaningful relationships

Vital to success is building meaningful relationships with local Indigenous peoples to ensure that your education setting gains and maintains their trust. Education settings must be prepared to take the necessary time to connect, respect, listen quietly, ask permission and to tread softly. It is necessary for education settings to decolonise their processes and conduct their approach in an Indigenous Australian manner ([Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003](#)). Trust has been eroded over 236 years of government policies, which have largely disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Therefore, educational settings need to invest time to rebuild this trust and demonstrate that they can share power with (and not power over) the local Indigenous populations.

Knowledge creation for the curriculum needs to come from the local Indigenous groups and be co-constructed, rather than writing content about them. Significant harm can arise when this process is subverted, and Indigenous knowledge holders are excluded from the process. This may involve unlearning ways of knowing, doing and being, and then relearning them with the new worldview and values of Indigenous Australians. This is not to suggest traditional Western understanding of knowing, doing and being is less than Indigenous understanding, but rather the development of a new shared understanding can bridge both cultures.

### 3. Be reflexive

The ability to use reflexivity throughout the process and beyond is vitally important to success. Reflexivity can be described as reflecting on your feelings, responses and motives and how this impacts what you think and do. This should include: engagement with students’ history, the community and educators; drawing on Indigenous knowledge holders work; and addressing white fragility and discomfort (Race, Ayling, et al., 2022, p. 4). ‘White fragility’ refers to the backlash that can occur as the decolonisation process moves curriculum, including content and pedagogy, away from the Western knowledges and ways of doing to the new inclusive ways of understanding.

The most effective approach to respond to these issues which arise from this discomfort is to deal with them directly. A more productive process that is supportive of change involves guiding difficult conversations regarding race and power. We should not ignore or avoid the feelings that arise as peoples’ assumptions and expectations are questioned. We need to facilitate a safe place for people to express these feelings of discomfort (perhaps for the first time in their lives) and critically examine why they are having these feelings, and the validity of the ‘truths’ that may be behind them. This can lead to a reevaluation of assumptions and stereotypes.

### 4. Use Indigenous pedagogical methods

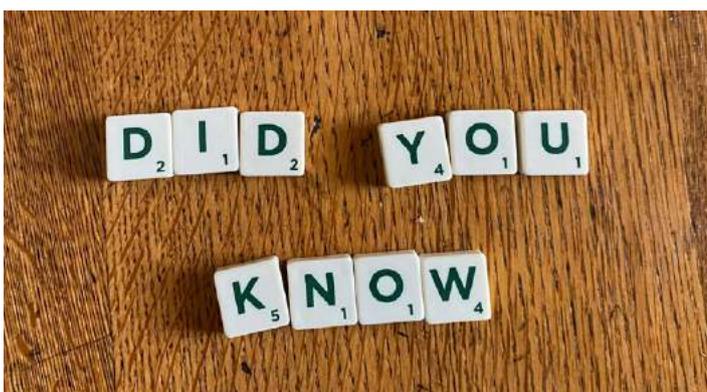
Use pedagogical methods, such as storytelling and authentic learning tasks, based on student interests and with connections to their cultural and social environments whenever possible. Also, use the traditional educational methodology of observation, model, imitation and practice, rather than early self-directed learning. This can strengthen learning outcomes for Indigenous students. Indigenous knowledges need to occur naturally throughout the whole of the curriculum content, rather than being an afterthought. This will reinforce their equal value and



worth to staff, children and students, and the local Indigenous communities. In this space, questions and critical thinking in regard to what is being learnt should be actively encouraged, not avoided. This can be very relevant to areas such as Australian history where the truth in which multiple perspectives and the experiences of everyone need to be honestly presented; however, to follow the policy of the state and federal education departments, make sure that comments and questions are framed in a respectful manner.

### 5. Include strong Indigenous role models

The final suggestion is that strong Indigenous role models and significant people of colour be included in teaching materials. This needs to move beyond sports people to include those like Charles Perkins, David Unaipon, and Mandawuy Yunupingu who have made significant contributions to Australian society. This allows Indigenous children and students to see strength in their own cultural identity and imagine possible positive futures where they can remain true to themselves and their own cultural identities. It promotes hope of a better tomorrow where they will be valued and respected members of our society on their own terms.



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## Helping English language learners through planned translinguaging

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Most Australian teachers work with students who are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). In the past, it was, and is still to a certain extent, common practice to discourage or even forbid the use of students' first language(s) in the classroom. It was believed that if students resorted to a language other than English, this would be detrimental to their English learning. However, current research suggests that students may learn better, and with more ease, if they have opportunities to use their first languages while they are learning English.

### Plurilingualism and translinguaging

**Plurilingualism** is a useful concept for helping us think about how to optimise the use of students' first languages in classrooms. Plurilinguals use more than one language to communicate. Most of us are already familiar with the terms bilingual and multilingual, which are usually used to refer to speakers with equal language competence in two or more languages. Plurilingualism, on the other hand, acknowledges that language learners have various levels of linguistic and cultural knowledge in their different languages, and particularly that they have emergent competence in the language(s) they are learning. The notion of plurilingualism fosters a holistic perspective of language learning and counters the widespread belief that English language learners have a language deficit.

**Translinguaging** refers to a linguistic trait typical of plurilinguals. In translinguaging, people **use and mix various elements of their linguistic repertoire** in order to comprehend, speak or write. Translinguaging is an

important concept for teachers, because it can be used as a **planned or spontaneous teaching strategy**.

When translinguaging is planned, teachers intentionally create opportunities for students' first languages to be used for learning. For example, they might ask students to discuss content with other students in their first languages, or they might ask a bilingual School Learning Support Officer (SLSO) to lead a micro-teaching session. Spontaneous translinguaging, also known as "translinguaging shifts", is used at point of need to promote communication and understanding and is not necessarily part of the lesson design.



Figure 1: Plurilingual student with a bilingual Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO)

## Our research

The potential of translanguaging as a teaching strategy is of special interest to us, a head teacher leading EAL/D education and an academic in the NSW rural city of Armidale. Since 2018, [Armidale has welcomed](#) hundreds of [Ezidi](#) (also known as Yazidi or Yezidi) refugees, mostly from northern Iraq, and there are now more than 250 Ezidi students enrolled in our schools. Many students arrived with little or no English and a history of interrupted schooling. Still, they bring rich linguistic knowledge to their learning, including their knowledge of spoken Ezidi or Kurmanji language, often spoken and written Arabic, and their growing knowledge of English. Thus, we can describe our students as plurilingual.

We conducted a small [study](#), using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, to gauge the experiences of five EAL/D specialist teachers in Armidale. In particular we wanted to find out how teaching practices drew on Ezidi students' plurilingualism to support learning, how students' first language was used in teaching and learning, and the conditions under which it was used. Here we offer some suggestions for translanguaging, based on the teachers' reported practices in our study.



Figure 2: Bilingual SLSOs can provide support with language, curricula and culture

*All images were taken and used with the written permission of the students and teachers.*

## Planning for translanguaging

When teachers plan for opportunities for English learners to use their first languages, those students will have richer linguistic tools for accessing the curriculum. In practice, this might involve:

- Designing worksheets where students can translate key vocabulary, or work in their first languages
- Providing access to resources such as bilingual dictionaries
- Providing access to audio-visual material (such as YouTube videos) based on the lesson's content in language the students are more familiar with. (In our research, for example, teachers found Arabic language videos explaining the water cycle)
- Partner and group activities where students can use their shared first languages to carry out tasks
- Inviting students with stronger English skills to interpret aspects of content, and explain to their peers in their shared languages.

Where schools are fortunate enough to employ bilingual School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs), there are further possibilities for enriching students' access to the curriculum. When bilingual SLSOs collaborate in lesson planning, they can provide advice about potential language challenges, as well as offering cultural advice. In the classroom, bilingual SLSOs can use their language skills to:

- Check student understanding and provide feedback to the teacher
- Lead small group work to consolidate learning in the students' first languages
- Lead microteaching sessions to help students comprehend content, especially when the teacher perceives that students have not understood the English explanations.

Finally, our study highlighted the importance of seeking advice from specialist EAL/D staff. Our research suggested that teachers can feel ill-equipped to work with the Ezidi students in their classes. EAL/D specialist staff can work alongside teachers in planning and teaching, and they can provide specialist advice on differentiation and assessment. In our context of Armidale, the influx of English learners to the school system has provided many challenges, but we have seen that the most effective solutions arise when classroom teachers, language specialists, and Ezidi staff work together to build on the students' existing plurilingualism.



## Ooralá Indigenous Student Support Service celebrates achievement

By [Estelle Boshoff](#)

Indigenous tertiary students at the University of New England are supported in a culturally sensitive way through the [Ooralá Aboriginal Centre](#). It provides on-campus and online tutoring, cultural events, entry pathways, courses and orientation programs.

Ooralá means a ‘meeting place’, and the centre staff have provided support for over a quarter of a century. Achievement, excellence and impact were celebrated at the annual Ooralá Awards held at the Armidale City Bowling Club 2023.

The Awards acknowledge the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the UNE staff that support them. This year marked a significant milestone for the Awards with the organising team received 65 nominations, up from 25 in 2022.

Student excellence are recognised in four categories: Achievement, Academic Excellence, Impact to Community, and Sporting Achievement. These categories are open to all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander undergraduate, postgraduate, and higher degree research students. The winners exemplify outstanding contributions across various domains, showcasing the diverse talents and accomplishments within the Indigenous student community.

A highlight of the 2023 Ooralá Awards was the recognition of Guido Posthausen with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award for his unwavering commitment to Aboriginal education at tertiary level. Guido first joined UNE in 1999 and has been a steady force, blending tradition with innovation to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, throughout his career. The Lifetime Achievement Award is a well-deserved recognition of Guido’s enduring legacy and the immense impact he has had on many students and colleagues.

In addition to student awards, the Ooralá Awards recognise the pivotal role of UNE staff in fostering Indigenous success. Staff Awards are presented in three categories: Recognition, Tertiary Impact, and Impact to Community. These categories are open to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous professional and academic staff who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their academic journey.

*Image: Kate Carter Lecturer and Unit Coordinator TRACKS; Uncle Colin Ahoy, Ooralá Elder-in-Residence, Guido Posthausen, Academic Coordinator; Sam Fowler acting Director Ooralá; and UNE Vice-Chancellor Professor Chris Moran.*

**Celebrating 70 years**  
From 1954-2024

## Free research-based resources to support children whose parents have a moral injury

Since 2021, the [Child and Family Resilience Programs](#) (CFRP) has offered **free**, online, research-based, evaluated resources for children who experience:

- parents working away or on shift and on-call work (such as first responder, remote worker and defence families),
- frequent relocations, and
- secondary trauma due to parent’s work-related [physical injuries](#) and [mental health conditions](#).

There are three types of resources:

1. Research-based [children’s storybooks](#) (eBooks, [printed books\\*](#) and [interactives](#)) with accompanying educational activities
2. Multimedia online modules for [educators](#), [parents](#) and [support workers](#), and
3. [Personalised programs](#).

All resources have been co-designed and co-created using narratives and input from those with lived experience. Other authors include educators, support workers, researchers and many [Australian and international stakeholder partners](#).

New resources:

In 2023, we added modules about [transitioning from service life](#), [child and family trauma](#) and a self-referral pathway for those [worried about a child’s wellbeing](#).

In 2024 thanks to in-kind funding from the [Manna Institute](#), we are adding to the resources by providing new storybooks and accompanying modules written with a large number of Australian and international partners. This includes:

- i. the impacts of parent’s [moral injuries](#) on their children and family life (fully available by July)
- ii. [relocation](#) (fully available by December).

### Moral injury

[Moral injuries](#) are experienced by some parents in their workplace when they have an extreme experience that violates their deeply held values or beliefs. Some examples include a worker who experiences or witnesses something that they believe to be morally wrong (e.g. war involving civilians, bullying, corruption, abuse, ignored complaints or claims). Moral injuries can also occur when someone blames themselves for not taking an action that might have avoided a disaster (such as failing to check a particular room during a house fire; take a call seriously; or report an incident). With the increases in climate disasters, first responders and defence are increasingly affected by moral injury.

Additionally, there are many in our community who have a moral injury that is not work-related, such as those who suffered childhood abuse from an adult, and being ignored, disbelieved or blamed if they have tried to report the abuse to family members and/or authorities.

These illustrations, by [Tanya Cooper](#), are from the first pages of our new storybook to support children (5-8 years) whose parents have a moral injury that is impacting their parent’s behaviour and family life. It is for one-to-one use with those children with a moral injury, not for general group or classroom reading.



Figure 1: First storybook page of 'My Dad's Moral Injury Cloud: Lara's Story'



Figure 2: The storybook aims to improve children's understanding of moral injury

The book will be being piloted by our UK partners (Kings Centre for Military Health – Kings College) with their families who have a parental moral injury. We will adapt the story after their evaluation, and release it by the middle of 2024. It will have an [accompanying module](#) to increase educator, parent and support worker knowledge, competence and confidence in assisting children impacted by a parent with moral injury. We are also seeking funding to co-create a cartoon storybook for 9-12-year-old children in these families.

You can view the [storybook and module](#) and provide feedback to help us improve these resources.

Preliminary feedback has included the following comments:

*“It made me cry... all efforts to address the perplexity of mental injury for children are worthy of support....speaking as a child who lived through it myself... having any level of understanding at all... would have had a positive effect on my childhood”. (Adult child of a veteran)*

*“Profoundly simple...but so are we humans...This wee book provides the clearest explanation yet of the origins and initial steps toward explaining and solving a highly complex problem that (as veterans) my husband and I have been grappling with for the past 62 years”. (Veteran)*

*“A long-awaited book that will help young children make sense of the veteran’s dark and difficult days”. (Veteran)*



Figure 3: The storybook is written by the CFRP team, and many researchers, those with lived experience, and practitioners

*“I cried with joy at wishing such resources did not need to exist, and deeply grateful that such love and compassion can be put into an easily accessible resource that can be used to help create and explore the complexities of what was done to us and how we may respond in unskillful ways that isolate or worry our loved ones. I wish this book was available when I had my first moral injury.” (First Responder)*

*“In my professional experience, storybooks have always been an effective way in teaching children/youth about and normalising experiences when it comes to their feelings and emotions. I am confident that if I shared this story with a client in session who has a parent with a moral injury they would respond well to it”. (Clinician)*

\*Royalty free [printed books](#) are available from an on-demand printer. Additionally, printed books are available for loan for UNE students ([current and previous](#)) and staff through [the Library](#).

## Are your students or staff interested in studying early childhood?

[Explore the UNE Course Handbook](#)

Studying early childhood education has many benefits, including:

- making a difference in the most important years of a child’s life,
- the ability to build on children’s interests and strengths,
- being able to place children at the centre of their education,
- being part of a growing and important field,
- being in demand (there is a shortage of degree-qualified early childhood teachers in Australia),
- working closely with families to support children’s learning, and access to a variety of work options

*There are two different early childhood education courses offered at UNE.*



### **Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Primary)**

This is a unique teacher education course that offers two career options for graduates. The course allows employment flexibility across schools and early childhood services to suit graduates’ opportunities and circumstances.

It is an initial-teacher education qualification that encompasses working with children from birth to age 12 in both early childhood and primary school settings. This course is available:

- full time or part time,
- on-campus or online,
- to start in Trimester 1 and 2 each year.

### **Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education and Care)**

This new degree provides students with flexibility by allowing students to select the subjects they want to study; in the order they want to study them. Most placements can be complete in a student’s own workplace allowing for new knowledge to be put into practice.

The degree is designed to meet the Australian Government’s requirements to qualify graduates as four-year trained Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs) for children aged birth to 5 years. Students are offered 2 years credit into the degree, if they have a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care or equivalent, plus a year of work experience post-Diploma study in an early childhood setting. This course is available:

- full time or part time,
- online
- to start in Trimester 1, 2 and 3 each year.



## Are you interested in further study?

You can find out about our UNE Education courses via the [Handbook](#).

The University of New England offers a wide variety of programs to assist teachers to upgrade their skills. Within many courses you can specialise in the area in which you are interested. For more information, visit some of the links, to the right:

[School of Education Postgraduate Study](#),  
[Graduate Certificate in Education Studies](#),  
[Master of Education](#), [Master of Education \(Research\)](#),  
[PhD](#)

### Are you wanting to become a teacher?

The career opportunities for education graduates are increasing every year, especially in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.

By studying at UNE, you will be well equipped to perform in these often-demanding contexts, plus you'll be more likely to obtain a permanent teaching position if you work in an area of teacher shortage. The NSW Government even offers a variety of targeted scholarships to help you study and gain employment: [www.teach.nsw.edu.au/getpaidtostudy](http://www.teach.nsw.edu.au/getpaidtostudy)

UNE has developed undergraduate courses in Early Childhood and Primary and K-12 Teaching to expand employment prospects by qualifying you to teach across two sectors.

### What Teaching Courses are Available?

UNE offers a number of undergraduate Education courses including:

- Bachelor of Education
  - Early Childhood Education and Care
  - Early Childhood and Primary
  - K-6 Teaching
  - K-12 Teaching
  - Secondary Arts
  - Secondary STEM
  - In-service Teaching (for teachers who might be thinking of retraining)
- Bachelor of Special and Inclusive Education (Primary)
- Master of Teaching (Primary)
- Master of Teaching (Secondary)

### Worried About the “Three Band Five” Requirements?

Many of our Initial Teacher Education courses are structured to include one year of “discipline studies” (i.e. subject/s that you will go on to teach in schools) in the first year of study. Successful completion of this first year also gives all students, irrespective of their educational backgrounds, the opportunity to demonstrate they meet the Government’s academic standards for studying teaching.

Try our online ‘Teaching Solution Finder’ at [www.becomeateacher.com.au](http://www.becomeateacher.com.au), which makes it easy to understand the entry requirements of our Early Childhood Education and Initial Teacher Education degrees, and design a study pathway based on your personal circumstances.

### Want to stay informed about our School activities?

Join our UNE School of Education community on Facebook to keep up with our news and happenings in research, teaching and learning [Facebook/UNEEducation](https://www.facebook.com/UNEEducation)



## Acknowledgement of Country

The University of New England respects and acknowledges that its people, courses and facilities are built on land, and surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, of the world's oldest living culture. In doing so, UNE values and respects Indigenous knowledge systems as a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia. We recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of the Aboriginal community and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future.

Artwork: Warwick Keen "Always was, always will be" 2008. Gifted by the artist to UNE in 2008