



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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EDITORIAL

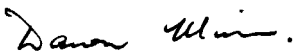
There is little argument that one of the measures of our earth's general health is biological diversity - the widest range of species of all life forms including animals, plants and people! Similarly, the health of any country's population may be gauged by its cultural diversity, by the tolerance and encouragement of many cultures, all contributing to the overall character of a country.

One of the most difficult concerns for education in a multi-cultural society like Australia lies in trying to provide general educational programs that will maintain such cultural diversity through providing for the cultural integrity of minority groups within mainstream educational systems. This must be done not only by tolerating existing diversity but by offering opportunity for developing and fostering cultural maintenance for minority groups.

This sounds fine in "theory". The difficulty arises when the values, world view, cultural knowledge and ways of learning and teaching are not "in line", or may be in direct conflict with those of the dominant culture. If specific minority cultures wish to maintain their cultures, then provision must be made for this to occur effectively, possibly at the expense of teaching the dominant culture. Where a balance between the dominant and minority culture is sought, and the teaching of one conflicts with or causes the decline of the other, special challenges for school communities, curriculum development and implementation, teacher education and educational policy arise.

While general educational policy may set guidelines, control funding and resources, the maintenance of cultural diversity for a specific community will be reliant on the local school and its community. A number of articles in this issue of the *Aboriginal Child at School* ask us to consider how we might individually as teachers meet the challenges raised.

Kind regards,



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Hon. Editor.

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