


# Supporting Indigenous student learning in and out of the classroom

A thick, horizontal yellow brushstroke with a textured, painterly appearance, extending across the width of the slide below the title.

Sally Farrington  
Yooroang Garang  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
University of Sydney

# My experience has been gained through..



- my work in Indigenous Student Support
- qualitative research into the experiences of Indigenous students at the Faculty of Health Sciences
- (research group included Associate Professor Susan Page and Dr Kristie Daniel-DiGregorio)

# The Student Experience Study



- mature age students enrolled in block mode  
Indigenous health programs
- Recent school leavers enrolled in semester based  
allied health programs
- Factors that helped or hindered academic success



What did the participants in our research identify as positive influences on their learning ?

# Culture Matters



There is an increasing acknowledgement that, for many Indigenous students, university attendance is a cross cultural experience.

# Strengths related to Culture



- Being with other Indigenous students
- Seeing and using Indigenous culture in the curriculum
- Having Indigenous teachers and administrative staff
- Having an Indigenous space on campus

# Strengths related to teachers



- Awareness of Indigenous history and culture as it affects the learners
- Knowledgeable in the discipline
- Available and responsive to student need
- Well organised

# Strengths related to program design



- flexible and reduced enrolment
- effective academic support
- Effective Orientation



As a teacher..



What do I identify as positive influences on  
Indigenous learning ?

# Learners as people..



- take time to talk about student progress and feelings
- Get to know names quickly and always use them
- Accommodate level of academic skills

# Empowering learners




- Recognise and use the skills and experiences they bring
- Use small group process
- Negotiate aspects of the curriculum
- Staff student forums/ student reps

# Scaffolding the academic culture



“ Successful experience in formal education means learning the academic culture of its institutions”

(McIntyre et al, 1996)

- 
- Orientation program with case studies drawn from real experience
  - Policies and procedures made explicit in student handbook
  - class time spent discussing expectations, subject and assessment requirements

# Scaffolding the development of academic skills

---

- include process skills in teaching
  - | Using a textbook
  - | Note making
  - | Answering Multiple choice questions
  - | Revising and memorising
  - | Essay planning
- Give formal feedback on process skills

# Scaffolding the assessment process



- Use formative assessment to model formal summative assessments
- 'Front end' the assessment tasks – detailed marking criteria and exemplars
- mastery approach to assessments through a draft – redraft strategy.