## VET-in-school for Indigenous students: success through 'cultural fit'

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Research shows a persistent and troubling drop in retention as Indigenous students move toward the post-compulsory years, and a relative over-representation of Indigenous students in vocationally-oriented school courses. While some have expressed concern at what appears to be a lack of engagement with academic courses, there is no doubt that many young Indigenous people are purposefully pursuing the practical, hands-on learning VET-in-school courses can provide.

Typically, vocational subjects are either delivered in school by teachers who have gained the necessary accreditation to teach those subjects or, when that's not possible, students leave school early and enrol in TAFE. Both of these approaches can be successful but they also present significant challenges to the many Indigenous students who are alienated from school and yet lack the confidence or maturity to venture out into the world of TAFE. This paper reports on recent research into the success of two innovative yet very different approaches to the delivery of VET-in-school, one focused on hospitality and tourism and the other on health care. These programs have been successful because they stretch the boundaries of VET-in-school and ensure a close cultural fit between course content and the realities of local employment opportunities.