

SECCA App in Practice: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students

What should teachers consider when teaching relationships and sexuality education to culturally and linguistically diverse students?

The term 'culturally and linguistically diverse' (CALD) is commonly used to describe people who have a cultural heritage different from that of the dominant Anglo-Australian culture. CALD students can range from children of migrant workers to refugees or asylum seekers. They may be the English-speaking members of their family. Like Aboriginal students, CALD students should not be viewed as a homogenous group, but may share some similar learning experiences.

1. Do not mistake lack of vocabulary for lack of understanding

CALD students may bring a wealth of knowledge to your classroom and be unable to readily communicate this due to language restrictions. Using the foundation games on the SECCA App to assess students' understanding of concepts is a way to bypass language barriers. Do not make assumptions about student capability based on their ability to verbally communicate.

2. Some children may have experienced trauma

Children who have left dangerous situations as refugees or asylum seekers may have experienced trauma, and may find some RSE content highly distressing. Students may have undiagnosed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or have experienced abuse. If your school has a counsellor, ensure that they are aware of students who respond strongly to any RSE content.

3. Be aware of cultural sensitivities and develop your own cultural competencies

In a diverse classroom, there are a number of sensitivities and issues to consider. Become comfortable with your own lack of knowledge of all cultural groups and actively educate yourself about the cultural backgrounds of students in your class. Anticipate possible responses to controversial topics. Encourage students to express their views but ensure the classroom remains a safe environment which is free from homophobic, racist or sexist comments. An awareness of curriculum requirements will help frame your responses.