Batchelor Institute

FINDING COMMON GROUND:

NARRATIVES, PROVOCATIONS AND REFLECTIONS FROM THE 40 YEAR CELEBRATION OF BATCHELOR INSTITUTE

Editors: Henk Huijser, Robyn Ober, Sandy O'Sullivan, Eva McRae-Williams, Ruth Elvin

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Acknowledgements

Putting together an edited collection that draws on the common ground on which we meet as Batchelor Institute, is both exciting and involves a lot of people. This collection features 30 direct participants, so our first thanks go to the authors for their wonderful and stimulating ideas, and their determination to persist through the reviewing and editing process. However, the large amount of reviewers have ensured the quality of the chapters in this book, so many thanks to them.

We want to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land we work on. Much of this book was produced on Kungarakan and Warai country (at Batchelor), as well as Larrakia country (Darwin), and Arrernte country (Alice Springs), with many of the participants working across other communities. We acknowledge all of them as central to the production of a text that is, after all, about common ground.

Batchelor Institute has been very supportive throughout the production of this book. From the organisation of the 40-year celebrations through to the submission of

the manuscript, we have had the support of many of our staff across a range of areas. Special thanks to Noressa Bulsey, Stephanie Barber, Elsie Carter, Sue Campbell, Louisa Castle, Victoria Dawson, Sarah Martin, Leeanne Mahaffey, Kevin Arthur, Peter Hillier, Mike Crowe, Jurg Bronnimann, Adrian Mitchell, Kirsty Kelly, Brooke Ottley, Bob Somerville, Peter Stephenson, Maree Klesch, and the many other volunteers and contributors.

We hope you find this book stimulates and engages discussion around the robust topics it covers.

Regards,
Henk Huijser, Robyn Ober, Sandy O'Sullivan, Eva McRae-Williams, & Ruth Elvin (The Editors)

*All chapters submitted to the editors of this book meet the Australian Government Research Council's definition of research. Papers identified by * on the contents page indicate chapters refereed by two independent peers. Papers without an * identifier indicate non-refereed papers.

**There are different preferences for the use of the collective terms Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous, and for the specific spelling and framing of individual language and country names. Individual authors have chosen to use specific collective terms, some framing that use in a way that supports the individual variation. The editorial team has chosen to support this variation in nomenclature as it reflects the difficulty in applying collective terms to varied communities and peoples.

Foreword

Batchelor Institute, in its many iterations over the last forty years, remains an iconic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander provider on the Australian educational landscape.

From its humble beginnings in 1964 as an annex of Kormilda College, Batchelor Institute has risen to become Australia's only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dual sector tertiary education and research provider. As such it holds a unique place in the university and vocational education and training space. More so, it holds a special place in the hearts and minds of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have either studied or been connected to Batchelor.

The Australian educational scene would not be complete without a tertiary institution that is founded upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander beliefs and cultural understandings and is able to interpret a western education system in a manner such that both are ultimately so intertwined that neither loses creditability. Rather the strengths of both result in a unique learning environment that is not only culturally safe but results in real outcomes: this is what we at Batchelor define as 'both-ways'.

The stories, personal commentary and scholarly writings contained in this book provide a context for Batchelor's future by defining and describing our past and articulating the dreams for the future. They also provide a challenge to the Institute as it moves into a future where tertiary education can be accessed wherever you are able to connect your laptop to the internet. Consequently, ensuring that language and culture are kept 'front and center' will be of paramount importance.

Batchelor Institute has provided training and education that has resulted in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people gaining the skills, knowledge and understandings that have improved and enriched their lives and livelihoods. The work Batchelor has undertaken over its forty years existence is nation building and changed the lives of people.

The next forty years will, in my view, see Batchelor Institute become firmly bedded into the Australian university scene as its next university. The Institute is already a 'Table A' higher education provider, our research capability continues to be enhanced and our further education provision grounded in capacity building training. Batchelor now is well positioned, well-funded and capable of providing educational provision from foundation skills through to a Doctor of Philosophy. Batchelor is already providing a planned learning pathway from training through to higher degrees. Batchelor has the expertise and the experience that will not only enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander opportunity but also that of other Australians working with our communities.

Batchelor Institute is proudly Territorian, established in 1964 to provide training and upskilling to the Territory's Aboriginal para-professional workforce. While Batchelor will remain grounded in the Territory and continue to provide quality training and learning to Territorians, its future is to reach out across Australia and internationally. Batchelor's aim is to become Australia's preferred dual sector Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary provider.

The logo of Batchelor Institute represents a place of learning (central motive) where knowledge is gathered (coolamon) and culture and language protected (shield). It symbolises not only the foundations of this wonderful Institute but also its unique place in the educational landscape of Australia.

I commend this book to you as it represents a comprehensive 'glimpse' into the history of Batchelor Institute.

Robert Somerville AM, Chief Executive Officer Batchelor Institute

Contributors

Jacqueline Amagula is a Warnindilyakwa woman from Groote Eylandt in the Northern Territory. She graduated from Batchelor College and has been a qualified Indigenous teacher since the 1980s. Education is her passion. She was the past Chairperson of The Ngakwurralangwa College Advisory Board. Ngakwurralangwa means 'Our Way': we own it and we lead it, we have our say. She is also a member of the Anindilyakwa Education and Training Board, NT Indigenous Education Council and the Indigenous Early Childhood Parent Reference Group as a representative of her regions, Anindilyakwa and Wuybuy.

Dr Melodie Bat began her career in Aboriginal education as a remote-based teacher, and has moved between teaching, research and management, with the common thread her ability and desire to create systems and connections. Melodie's Masters degree in education was one of the first early literacy research projects in remote NT Aboriginal communities; and her Doctoral research into teacher education at Batchelor Institute provided a timely contribution to the national conversation on quality in Indigenous tertiary education. Melodie's current VET-based role at Batchelor is Director of Humanities, managing programs in Health, Education and Early Childhood Education & Care.

Catherine Bow is a linguist with research experience in both descriptive and applied linguistics. She has described the sound system of an African language, investigated language development in children with impaired hearing, explored endangered language documentation, and researched the language and communication needs of international medical graduates. She has worked as a trainer and coach for language learners, and currently works as project manager for the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages at Charles Darwin University.

Noressa Bulsey is from the Torres Strait, but has been in the NT for more than 40 years. She has worked and studied at Batchelor Institute off and on since 1978. Noressa's current role is Indigenous Learning and Development Coordinator, and she has been involved in cross-cultural awareness workshops and both-ways seminars. She is also a mother and grandmother to six grandchildren.

Margaret Carew has worked in the Northern Territory as a community linguist for 20 years. She undertook language research with the Gun-nartpa language group in north-central Arnhem Land in the 1990s and continues to work with a Gun-nartpa language team on language documentation and publishing projects. She has also worked on projects with language teams at Ti Tree, Utopia, Wilora, Artarre, Willowra, Yuendumu, Yuelamu and Tennant Creek. She has extensive experience in Indigenous adult education in both Higher Education and VET programs in the area of linguistics and Indigenous language documentation, and has collaborated with linguists on various other projects.

Professor Michael Christie worked as a teacher linguist in Yolŋu communities in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia, between 1972 and 1993 before moving to Darwin to set up the Yolŋu Studies program at Charles Darwin University in 1994. He is currently Professor in the Northern Institute, heading up the Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge and Governance research group, working on collaborative research and consultancies in a range of areas including health communication, 'both-ways' education, resource management, digital technologies, and contemporary governance.

Lenore Dembski is Kungarakan and her Mother's country covers Berry Springs, Darwin River, Litchfield National Park, Batchelor and Adelaide River in partnership with Warai people. Lenore has undertaken research and made presentations on topics including: Indigenous policy development; service delivery; community development; health; housing; education; employment; training; textiles and fashion; science and Indigenous people; governance; leadership; and land management and rehabilitation. Lenore's interest in flora and fauna relates back to studying biology and travelling extensively with

her family. As a Traditional Owner she is actively involved in Caring for Country. Lenore is the owner operator of Paperbark Woman.

Dr Brian Devlin is an Associate Professor of bilingual education and applied linguistics at Charles Darwin University, Darwin. He was Visiting Professor and first holder of the Dr R Marika Chair in Australian and Indigenous Studies at Cologne University in Germany (October 2009-February 2010). He is currently helping to build a digital archive of the texts produced in the Literature Production Centres (LPCs) during the bilingual era of education in the Northern Territory. His various previous roles have included Chair of the NT Education Advisory Council, Dean of Education, UNESCO consultant, Principal, Teacher-Linguist, and Visiting Foreign Expert (Tsinghua University, Beijing).

Dr Ruth Elvin is a research, policy and communications management specialist based in Central Australia since 2006, working primarily with applied Indigenous research programs and with a particular focus on the sustainability of remote communities. She has worked at a senior level with a number of organisations, including the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, the Centre for Appropriate Technology, and Batchelor Institute as Interim Head of Research and Research Training in 2014-15. Ruth holds postgraduate qualifications in both law and political science from Australian and US universities.

Dr Lyn Fasoli is Adjunct Professor at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. Her research focuses on Indigenous education, Aboriginal perspectives on early childhood education and care, remote Aboriginal community children's service training and development and leadership practices. Before teaching adults she worked in a number of early childhood teaching positions in the early years of school, child care, advisory roles and a mobile service. She is an American-Australian who has lived in Australia since 1972 and in Darwin since 1978. She is the mother of one son and four grandsons.

Dr Kathryn Gilbey is a descendant of the Alyawarre people and has been a lecturer at Batchelor Institute for fourteen years. Her role teaching and co-ordinating the common units she describes as the best job in the world. Kathryn finished her PhD in 2014 and is proud to be Batchelor Institute's first doctoral graduate. In early 2015 Kathryn joined the College for Indigenous Studies, Education and Research at the University of Southern Queensland as a lecturer, but she has continuous involvement with Batchelor Institute.

Dr Henk Huijser has been a Senior Lecturer Flexible Learning and Innovation at Batchelor Institute since 2012, and more recently also Higher Degrees by Research Coordinator, until August 2015. Henk has a PhD in Screen and Media from the University of Waikato. His research interests include online learning, learning and teaching in higher education, Indigenous education, and cultural and media studies, and he has published widely in all these areas. In August 2015, Henk joined Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University in Suzhou, China, but he continues to be involved with Batchelor Institute in an Adjunct capacity.

Claire Kilgariff took up the position as Head of VET Division – Human Services, Arts and Foundation Skills at Batchelor Institute in January 2014, but began with the Institute in 2009 in the role as Head of Faculty Education Arts and Social Sciences. She has particularly focused on building strong collaborative relationships with industry, stakeholders and communities. Previously she has worked in senior policy and executive roles within the NT Department of Education and Training. In addition, Claire has been a community artist, professional musician and performance artist, secondary music teacher and artist director of Arafura Chamber Ensemble.

Maree Klesch has worked in Indigenous education for the past 30 years with people from urban, rural and remote communities in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. She is Project Manager for the Noongar, Wadeye and Mowanjum language project teams to support language maintenance, revival and education. She is also the Publisher of Batchelor Institute's publishing arm, Batchelor Press. As Chief Investigator of ARC linkage project Living Archives of Aboriginal Languages (in partnership with CDU) Maree focuses on making the Centre for Australian Languages

and Linguistics (CALL) archives at Batchelor Institute accessible while providing advocacy for Australian languages in education.

Ganesh Koramannil lectures in the School of Indigenous Knowledges and Public Policy (SIKPP) at Charles Darwin University. He has also taught at Batchelor Institute and at Macquarie University. His research interests include EAL/D Indigenous students in higher education, higher education, languages and cultural studies. Ganesh has an MA (English Language and Literature), MEd (TESOL) and Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning (PGDTL). He has taught ESL, TESOL, Linguistics, Literacy, Education and English Literature in Australia and India. His background as an ESL student and educator, Cambridge Examiner, and his teaching practices in Higher Education, extensively influence his research interests.

Professor Steven Larkin is a Kungarakany man from Darwin. He is Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership and Director of the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE). Professor Larkin holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from Queensland University of Technology. He has chaired the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council (ATSIHEAC) (2009-2012), and the Northern Territory Board of Studies (2010-2012); and he continues to serve on several professional organisations, including National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC), National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network (NIRAKN), The Healing Foundation, and Beyond Blue, among others.

Dr Jillian Marsh is an Adnyamathanha woman from northern South Australia and her research career involves community-driven research as well as cross-institutional research collaborations. She has worked as a Research Fellow with Batchelor Institute, Flinders University Rural Clinical School, and the Department of Rural Health at University of South Australia. Jillian is passionate about strengthening Indigenous research capacity in Australia, at both community level and the highest academic level. Currently Jillian is enrolled in the Master of Archaeology

program at Flinders University and hopes to use this as a stepping stone into research consultancy in Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management.

Dr Helen CD McCarthy is a Scholarly Teaching Fellow in the School of Education, Faculty of the Humanities, at Curtin University. She has worked in regional and remote communities in Arnhem Land and in Western Australia for more than thirty years, working with primary, secondary and tertiary Aboriginal students. Her interest is in the application of two-way bi-dialectal approaches in the development of holistic emergent curriculum frameworks that venerate Indigenous epistemological traditions. Her critical auto/ethnographic PhD study investigated the struggle for culturally-sensitive educational pathways for adolescent Aboriginal girls, using their love of basketball to stimulate a negotiated emergent curriculum.

Dr Eva McRae-Williams is a Research Leader and Lecturer at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. Eva resides in Darwin and has been an employee of Batchelor Institute for over 8 years. She has held a range of positions, including research, teaching and project management responsibilities. She is currently the Principal Research Leader for one of 12 research projects operating under the nationally funded Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP). She also teaches into the Graduate Certificate for Indigenous Sustainable Partnerships, through the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE).

Robyn Ober is a Mamu/Djirribal woman from the rainforest region of North Queensland. She is employed as a Research Fellow with Batchelor Institute and is currently undertaking her PhD studies focusing on 'Aboriginal English as an academic discourse'. Robyn has an educational background, teaching in early childhood, primary and tertiary educational contexts. She has a strong interest in both-ways education, educational leadership and Indigenous Australian languages, in particular Aboriginal English. Robyn has undertaken several research projects focusing on these topics and has published papers in educational and linguistic journals, both nationally and internationally.

Millie Olcay is a Community Engagement Leader in the Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor – Indigenous Leadership at Charles Darwin University. Millie has more than 17 years experience in early childhood and primary education, children's rights, disability and inclusion. She has spent the last 4 years working in vocational education and training and higher education research across a number of remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. At Batchelor Institute, she was Senior Lecturer (Community Services, Children's Services) and Project Manager on 'Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce' project, winner of the NT Training Initiative Award in 2013.

Dr Sandy O'Sullivan is a Wiradjuri woman and a Senior Indigenous Researcher at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in the Northern Territory, Australia. She is a current Australian Research Council Senior Indigenous Researcher, an enduring Australian Office for Learning and Teaching Fellow, and holds a PhD in Fine Art and Performance. Her current international research study focuses on the representation and engagement of Indigenous peoples in major museum spaces. Sandy is a practicing artist, and is committed to supporting positive outcomes for both museums and other keeping places in the representation of First Peoples.

Brooke Ottley was born and raised in Darwin, Northern Territory, and she is a young Gungarri, Wuthathi and Torres Strait Islander woman with seven years' experience in graphic design. In 2007 she was awarded the Highest Achieving Indigenous Stage 2 student, ranking in the top 6.6% of 13,000 graduating senior high school students. She is currently studying an Advanced Diploma in Graphic Design and is due to graduate in November 2015. Brooke is also passionate about information technology, photography and cultural exchange, having hosted over 300 travelers from 31 countries—both couch surfers and paying Airbnb guests—in her home.

Dr Ailsa Purdon has worked in bilingual, language and literacy education for over 30 years including in the Warlpiri bilingual program in Central Australia, with Aboriginal teachers at Batchelor Institute, and in Africa and South East Asia. She currently works with the Catholic Education Office and OLSH Thamurrurr College at Wadeye. She represents the Catholic Education Office on the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages project. As literacy educator, Ailsa is particularly interested in ways in which individuals and communities with oral literatures and traditions based in aural and visual performance are using digital technologies and multi-media to transmit key narratives.

Sue Reaburn first came to the Northern Territory as a remote school teacher in 1977. Since that time she has held a range of roles as a teacher, lecturer and administrator including involvement in Homeland Centre Education, Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE), Mentoring Aboriginal Teachers and Executive Teachers. Sue has written and co-authored a number of published and unpublished papers and supported the development published works which celebrate the capacity of Aboriginal educators. Since retirement, Sue passionately continues to undertake casual work which contributes to strengthening Aboriginal adults as educators and the pivotal role they play in their children's education.

Dr Bronwyn Rossingh's experience working for Aboriginal organisations and communities in WA and the NT extends over 25 years. Bronwyn is currently a Community Engagement Leader for Charles Darwin University working with Yirrkala and Galiwinku communities and has been Principal Researcher on numerous research and other projects. These projects include: understanding culture legitimate accountability; Indigenous youth leadership through skin group culture; empowerment of Indigenous women through financial literacy; community engagement research methodologies; building strong governance and business foundations for not-for-profit organisations; enabling opportunities for Indigenous art and culture funding; and inspiring young Indigenous and non-Indigenous school students to consider university.

Evelyn Schaber is an Arrernte woman from Alice Springs and has been involved with education and the empowerment of Indigenous people since the seventies. She has worked in the area of Community Services and the Common Units of the Degrees. She has also worked

closely with the Catholic Education office of Western Australia in Broome to upskill Assistant Teachers in the Kimberley Region. In 2013, Evelyn was a finalist for VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year in the NT Training Awards. She is currently Senior Lecturer, Education Support at Batchelor Institute.

Kristina Sehlin MacNeil is a PhD Candidate at the Centre for Sami Research at Umeå University in Sweden. Kristina's PhD project compares conflicts between Indigenous communities and mining companies in Sweden and Australia. The study focuses on discriminatory structures and power relations that make long-term solutions and successful conflict management difficult. In 2014-2015 Kristina has been a visiting scholar in the David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research at the University of South Australia. Kristina's research project is part of Umeå University's Industrial Doctoral School and is co-owned and mentored by the National Association of the Swedish Sami People.

Robert Somerville AM (Member of the Order of Australia) is a Martu man from Jigalong in Western Australia and has a large extended family throughout the Gascoyne-Murchison region of WA. Robert was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of Batchelor Institute in February 2015. Prior to joining BIITE Robert was in the Western Australian Education system as a senior executive leading their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander provision. Robert is a qualified pilot and held the rank of Wing Commander, commanding 7 Wing, Australian Air Force cadets at RAAF Base Pearce in Western Australia from 2012 until his current appointment.

Leon White, OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) has been working in a number of roles and places around the Northern Territory since 1970. He has previously work for Batchelor College and BIITE whilst based in Batchelor (1980 to 1986) and at Yirrkala (1986 to 1993 and 2008 to 2010). Leon is currently working as Principal of Yirrkala Homelands School. He was first involved with Batchelor programs offered through the Aboriginal Teacher Education Centre (ATEC) in 1975/6 at Yirrkala and has maintained an active working relationship with Batchelor Institute since then.

Dr Michele Willsher taught for 4 years in a remote NT Indigenous community, after graduating from the University of Sydney in 1982. After teaching and studying Chinese language in north-west China, Michele returned to Australia, working for 8 years as a Senior Lecturer in teacher education at Batchelor Institute. She then worked overseas again (2001-2008), mainly in Laos, on large-scale teacher education projects. In 2009, Michele undertook ethnographic fieldwork in village schools in Laos, culminating in a PhD from RMIT University. Since 2013, she has been employed in various roles at Batchelor Institute again, and is currently an Academic Advisor.

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Finding the common ground: looking at the next 40 years of Batchelor Institute

Robyn Ober, Sandy O'Sullivan, Eva McRae-Williams, Henk Huijser, & Noressa Bulsey

Introduction

Looking back over the last forty years of Batchelor Institute, the title for the conference that inspired this book is about as apt as one can get. Finding common ground has been a key theme over the last 40 years, finding expression in Batchelor Institute's continuing both-ways approach and philosophy. Importantly, the emphasis on finding common ground, both as part of past discourse and captured in the following chapters, suggests a continuing process, rather than a final destination that has been, or will be, reached. This relative fluidity of 'finding common ground' should not be seen as a weakness; on the contrary, it should be seen as a strength that occurs in a productive space of continuous reflection and engagement with diversity and difference. This space at Batchelor Institute is where the 'burden of representation' should be absent, and where people are valued, based on their particular strengths, without the need to explain or defend their Aboriginality. This space should be one of respect and it should be owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in the sense of having agency over how things operate and function

at Batchelor Institute. In fact, this sense of ownership was a central theme during the 40 year celebrations and conference in 2014. When reflecting on the past 40 years, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and visitors stressed that Batchelor Institute (or Batchelor College, as many still call it) was 'our place'. While this may imply a space of cultural safety, and while that is definitely a key aspect of it, it is important to stress again that it is also a space in constant flux as well as a constantly contested space. What the past 40 years have shown, and what is reflected in some of the chapters in this book, is that the space that Batchelor Institute provides, a productive common ground, can never be taken for granted but needs to be continuously claimed, fought for, reinforced, and reasserted.

As the history of Batchelor Institute is widely discussed in the chapters that follow, illustrated with passionate narratives and analyses, it becomes clear that finding the common ground has been a continuous struggle, and continues to be so. Of course this struggle is not limited to Batchelor Institute, but is part of the wider Australian context. In other words, while Batchelor Institute can lead the way in terms of tertiary education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it does not exist in a vacuum, and is to an important extent dependent on external forces. These forces do not only relate to where education and research funding come from, but also to what others in the tertiary education sector are doing to open up new opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students. However, what becomes clear as well from these narratives and discussions is that when the stars align, the end result can be enormously powerful and potentially life changing, as indeed it has been for many Batchelor Institute students and staff. As history is thus widely told and reflected on in the pages that follow, we focus in this chapter on the future, and where the next 40 years may, or should, take Batchelor Institute. The key ingredient, as it has been during the last 40 years, is

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agency and a sense of ownership. This is worth fighting for, as without it, there can be no common ground.

Both-ways into the future

The metaphor used to capture 'finding common ground' at the 40th year celebrations shows pairs of feet in a circular shape making connection to each other and the red dirt on which they are standing.

This visual metaphor is significant in that it displays the various shades of colours, shapes, forms and positioning of the bare feet on red dirt. In relation to both-ways it makes a strong statement that our learning starts with us - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people grounded in their own knowledge/s, ways of doing, ways of making meaning and ways of thinking and expressing themselves. Grass roots people who possess deep, intrinsic and complex knowledge of their own worlds and who are encouraged to draw on their knowledge systems within the both-ways teaching and learning space at Batchelor Institute.

However over the past 40 years this space has moved back and forth, expanded and detracted, from a limited, narrow, uneasy, uncomfortable way of thinking about both-ways, to a radical, emancipatory, unlimited force where students and staff felt empowered to bring about change. In terms of the future of both-ways at Batchelor Institute, the space is changing, with multi-ways, many voices, new ideas, technologies and theories, but still connecting us to who we are as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The new fresh feet joining the circle force the expansion of the circle, ensuring there is movement, there is development, there is growth. The red dirt in the middle of the circle represents 'common ground', sharing, respect, reciprocity, responsibility but also roughness of the ground, capturing the tensions, struggles, conflicts, as we work together to move forward in the various discipline areas of academia and vocational education. As an

Indigenous tertiary institution, the circle is expected to incorporate the feet of people in areas of governance, administration, student services and operations. As new discipline areas are introduced, so too our thinking about curriculum development, delivery and assessment should be guided by a both-ways approach to teaching and learning. Both-ways should never be a limited, restricted circle, but there should always be room for growth, open-mindedness, and a search for new ways of doing things in the area of teaching and learning and beyond. However with growth, there are also growing pains, indicating resistance against new ideas, concepts and ways of doing things.

As Batchelor Institute develops and grows its business, so too the common ground extends and expands new ways of operating in a both-ways learning and research environment. The common ground is continually changing to accommodate students' ways of being, doing and making meaning in a tertiary educational context. It is a continuous learning journey that is unique to Batchelor Institute because it emerges from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have strong connections to country, language, and culture. These connections are acknowledged and celebrated as the fundamental base to draw on and move forward into the professional academic domain. Just like the visual metaphor 'bare feet on red dirt', a both-ways learning journey is ongoing, never ending, without restrictions, but continually guided by the expanding circle of feet on common ground. Research is a crucial element in this process.

Growing the research space

The role of research and the relationships forged between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers for the benefit of our communities and communities of practice remain at the centre of the Batchelor Institute ethos. The concept of 'common ground' is not used unproblematically in our approach to research. In forging robust research networks and opportunities for further

research in our Indigenous-centred space, dissonance can provide an important mechanism for how we grow in collaboration.

In 2015, and following on from the 40 years Batchelor Institute conference, the research area at the Institute has formed a new approach that focuses on collaboration and networked research. With the emergence of the Centre for Indigenous Research Collaboration (CIRC), the act of bringing together wide-ranging perspectives, views and ideas to forge meaningful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, is front and centre. The notion of the personality-driven research approach is minimized to rather focus on what really matters in conducting research that supports engagement, including the complex variety and unique requirements of our communities. The Centre for Aboriginal Languages and Linguistics (CALL), a well-respected institution that takes language-development and support direction from communities, is an exemplar of this approach and CIRC will use their model of engagement and reciprocity to form a robust approach. CALL continues, with the support of community linguists and researchers, to be at the forefront of language maintenance and revitalization across the country, which is the focus of Part II of this book.

Being part of a 40-year history of engagement means that the Institute has seen a great deal of change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and in particular the research that is carried out by, and for, Indigenous peoples. Batchelor Institute has also led some of this change. 40 years ago there were few Indigenous researchers working within higher education institutions. Today, the Institute has more than a dozen PhD and Masters candidates completing the highest level of education in the research area, led by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers with national and international profiles. These candidates are a part of the newly developed Batchelor Institute Graduate School, an environment that is uniquely formed to provide support, encouragement and a space for innovation in research.

In 2014 - the year Batchelor Institute turned 40 - two Aboriginal research candidates enrolled in the higher degrees programs were awarded the Institute's inaugural PhDs. The first was Dr Kathryn Gilbey, whose focus was education, and in particular the importance of understanding and reviewing the history of programs that support success in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education students (see also Chapter 3 in this book). The second was Dr David Hardy who focused on identity, sexuality and 'coming out' within the structures of a creative writing submission and exegesis. This included writing a novel, a play, and a broader body of work, as well as a theoretical research framing.

These candidates, our research staff and academics, our centres and our support staff all work towards empowering Indigenous communities and communities of practice. The focus as we move towards our next forty years of research is on ensuring that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are front and centre in all levels of research practice and that the work we do is edifying, supportive and provides genuine agency. To accomplish this, the next part of the research journey of Batchelor Institute will take us into the international space, with programs that will bring Indigenous researchers here from overseas, and will send our own researchers into these spaces to create meaningful discussions across communities where we share some of the same ideas and ideals.

The digital future

Of course working in an international space is increasingly enabled by digital technology, digital media, and the internet. Corn (2013) has called this digital future 'the Indigital revolution', as it has created huge opportunities on the one hand, and it has been taken up in a big way in Indigenous contexts in recent years, especially in the social media space. Of course this then has an impact on educational and research spaces such as Batchelor Institute, and it raises questions about the extent to which Batchelor Institute responds to the opportunities

the digital future provides. With specific reference to the context of the Northern territory, Heron (cited in Nadarajah, 2012, p. 6) points out for example that, "for the first time we have the opportunity to do away with the 'remote'. Indigenous communities no longer have to be isolated – they can be connected. Limitations of time and space no longer need to apply". In other words, while teachers may still 'fly in and fly out' of 'remote' communities across the NT, there are now increasing opportunities to maintain and develop relationships on an ongoing basis over time. Interestingly, if teachers learn how to leverage existing social media use, it would in many ways be highly learner-centred, because Indigenous people in general, and particularly young Indigenous people, appear to have taken to social media use, and technology in general, in a big way (Hall & Maugham, 2015).

The digital future provides opportunities for Batchelor Institute to connect people across Australia and internationally in constantly evolving learning and research communities, and to thereby break through some longstanding preconceptions and boundaries that have informed Indigenous learning and research spaces in the past. In particular, digital technologies in general, and social media in particular, have huge potential to overcome the 'tyranny of distance', and with specific reference to Indigenous contexts in Australia, the 'tyranny of remoteness'. Even though remote communities are increasingly becoming 'connected', "currently online learning is not available for most remote living Indigenous people in the Northern Territory (NT)" (Vodic, Senior, Dwyer, & Szybiak, 2012, p. 34). This means that for many Indigenous people in remote communities, learning still follows a well-trodden path of (mostly) non-Indigenous trainers and teachers flying in and out to 'deliver' self-contained learning modules largely in isolation, without necessarily being linked together, nor necessarily being linked to a local context. In other words, despite all good intentions, this is essentially a 'tick-box' kind of

approach where the emphasis is on the teacher being able to sign off on the delivery being achieved, or the learning being 'delivered on time'.

Batchelor Institute is a dual-sector learning and research institution, and of course there are huge differences between VET courses, higher education programs, and postgraduate studies and research training. Moreover, there is huge diversity amongst Batchelor students in terms of cultural backgrounds and locations. However, what the digital future promises is the potential to develop linkages and pathways and thereby cross some of these boundaries. In many ways, this process is well underway in the learning and research spaces, and digital technology is of course also increasingly an integral part of employment.

Is a focus on employment too narrow? The VET – Higher Education nexus

Through policies to recruit, retain and advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the Institute to the main business of providing learning experiences and qualifications of market value to its students, the Institute has remained committed to supporting pathways into and through employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Yet it is the nature and form of 'supportive pathways' and the assumptions and values that might be attached to various real and imagined destinations that must continue to be discussed and explored as the Institute moves forward.

The Institute does not exist in a vacuum and is situated in a larger context where the purpose and value of 'education' is heavily influenced by economic directions and labour-market policies and priorities. Getting individuals ready for economic participation through either developing competency in work-related skills, or broadening the skills of those already in the work-force, is the underlying aim of most educational and training programs, including those developed and delivered by the Institute. Engineering and supporting pathways into and

through employment for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people is seen as the key response to addressing not only financial inequities but also improving indicators of individual and community wellbeing (McRae-Williams & Guenther, 2012). The responsibility for engineering and supporting pathways into employment is firmly positioned within the Vocational Education and Training sector, as well as to a large extent, the higher education sector.

Following linear and causal pathways through formal education into work, achieving (economic) independence and accumulating wealth have become the most virtuous and legitimate aspirations and representations of success in this dominant cultural frame (McRae-Williams, 2014). At the same time increasingly the role of education systems in enacting such pathways are understood through the standardisation of approaches to testing, professional standards and curriculum (Guenther, Bat, & Osborne, 2013). Pathway engineering in such a frame, can hardly avoid privileging a certain kind of individual and conferring legitimacy to only a limited number of journeys with predefined destinations (McRae-Williams & Guenther, 2014).

Robinson (2011) has highlighted the risks of such education reforms, based as they are on linear assumptions of market supply and demand. He argues that such reforms approach pathways through education and employment and into the future as mechanistic and a process of creating standardised products. It is a process, he argues, which dangerously inhibits creativity through ignoring diversity among learners and subsequently constraining economic innovation and potential. For Batchelor Institute to continue to provide a space that privileges and respects Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledges, perspectives and identities with the ultimately goal of empowerment, it cannot simply focus on and direct its activities to the production of 'standardised' or 'normalised' workers for labour-market engagement. Rather an exciting future for the Institute will involve an openness and active engagement with established, but also creative and innovative, pathways to economic participation that amplify Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' strengths. By developing and nurturing common ground where new economic potentialities can germinate and evolve, the Institute will not simply contribute to increasing employment outcomes but may work to disrupt regimes of power that continue to inhibit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander empowerment and the associated respect for difference and diversity.

Conclusion

Looking into the future of Batchelor Institute from various angles, as we have done in this chapter, it becomes clear that the role of the Institute continues to evolve, and so it should be. As many of the chapters in this book show, Batchelor Institute has always been a contested space, and again, this is how it should be, as contested spaces can be very productive spaces. The key element that makes it a productive space is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control over the agenda of the Institute, for this is the element that makes it 'our place'. The biggest threat to the Institute would be a lack of control over the agenda, and indeed this threat has surfaced at various times during the past 40 years, and it requires continuous vigilance to keep it at bay. None of this is to suggest that the Institute should have a narrow or inward-looking focus; quite the opposite, it benefits from a very inclusive approach to education and research, and the future directions as outlined in this chapter, are testament to that, as the Institute look internationally and in cyberspace to broaden its scope. However, Batchelor Institute is unique because its agenda is controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and this defines its unique position to grow and strengthen into the future and to serve the communities it knows best.

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PART I – INDIGENOUS EDUCATION: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Finding the common ground with Indigenous and western knowledge systems and seeking the common good for all present and future Australians - Where is the common ground if we are going to find it?

Leon White

Introduction

In acknowledging past contributions that have helped shaped thinking that should be considered in conversations of the theme 'Finding the Common Ground with Indigenous and Western Knowledge Systems' it is important to recall the contribution of Wali Wunungmurra in his paper entitled *Dhawurrpunaramirri: Finding the Common Ground* (1989). Wunungmurra wrote about his aspirations for an appropriate education:

> What we need now is education, which can teach a high level of skills but without the destruction to culture. In an exchange of knowledge both sides learn from each other instead of knowledge coming only from the Balanda side. But Yolŋu [cultures based in North East Arnhem Land] and Balanda [white people] knowledge will only come together if there is respect for our knowledge and where

Aboriginal people are taking the initiative, where we shape and develop the educational programs and then implement them.

> In other words Yolŋu[1] must own the ... program. Without this we will feel crushed and lose our self-respect and self-identity - we will be living on other people's programs like it was in the past ...

> ... negotiation between Yolŋu and Balanda cultures to find the *common ground* that makes up the two way curriculum (1989, pp. 12-13, emphasis added).

Wali uses the term 'two way' where others use the term 'both ways'. Robyn Ober (n.d.), on the Batchelor Institute website provides details of the current use of the term at the Institute (see also Ober & Bat, 2007). In this chapter, I will pursue the notion of 'both ways' as a reflection of Batchelor Institute's 40 year celebration theme as well as an area of significant concern for planning and theorizing future moves. Wali foresaw the need to develop an approach that recognised the 'common ground'.

The story of the emergence of a discourse about 'both ways' education illustrates sets of productive relationships that nurtured and facilitated this discourse,

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1   It is important at this point to recognise that the 'both ways' concept at Batchelor Institute has a very strong Yolŋu influence and sense of ownership. While many at Batchelor Institute have embraced the concept as central to the Institute, it is still a contested concept and not everyone necessarily recognises it as a valid for the Batchelor context, including some of the Kungarakan custodians who work at Batchelor today.

originally in a few places, and then spread it elsewhere. From my perspective the story of the use of a series of metaphors and analogies that enabled community based dialogue about the ideas behind the term "both ways" started far away from Batchelor. One of the earlier places where the term was used was Yirrkala, where the term was embedded in both the struggle over education decision-making and in the research of teacher education students in both the DBATE[2] and RATE[3] programs.

However the idea of 'both ways' was only one of several complementary ideas that were of crucial importance to the development of the curriculum and pedagogy of then

Batchelor College's[4] Teacher Education program and of the schools at Yirrkala. Place is a crucial component of describing the context for the contribution from Yolŋu Dilak[5] at Yirrkala.

Discussion about 'both ways' in isolation only examines a small part of our historical developments and achievements at Batchelor Institute with regard to Indigenous education, appropriate curriculum and pedagogy.

In discussing ideas about 'common ground' a starting point would be to share some of the ideas and events that led to the development of the ideas about 'both ways'. It is possible to link these developments to the teacher education programs that Yolŋu educators have participated in and a range of productive outcomes can

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2 In 1986 then Batchelor College entered into a partnership with Deakin University (Melbourne) to deliver the Deakin's Bachelor of Arts (Education), the main teaching qualification at the time, through a community based program called the Deakin Batchelor Aboriginal Teacher Education Program – DBATE (Den Hollander, 2013).

3 In 1973 bilingual education was initiated by the Commonwealth government, which at that time, still administered the Northern Territory. The bilingual program provided the first real opportunity for Indigenous people to determine the type and style of education they wanted for their children. In 1976, a community based teacher education program commenced in Yirrkala. This later became known as the Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE) program based at Batchelor College (About 'both ways' education, n.d.).

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4 Batchelor Institute began in the late 1960s as a small annexe of Kormilda College, providing programs for Aboriginal teacher aides and assistants in community schools. In 1974 Batchelor Institute moved to the Batchelor township. In 1982 the Institute commenced as a dual sector tertiary provider and since the 1980s has continuously built a focus on learning that is supportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. A second campus was established in 1990 in Alice Springs. Between 1988 and 1999 the Institute was known as Batchelor College. In 1999 the current Batchelor Institute was established with an emphasis on Indigenous Australian ownership and governance of the Batchelor Institute Council. Since the Australian government higher education reforms of 2003 Batchelor Institute has been recognised and funded as a 'National Institute' (History, n.d.).

5 The Dilak Authority (comprising 13 Yolŋu clan nations) has long operated as the system of governance in North East Arnhem Land, but is not recognised outside the Yolŋu traditional world (North-East Arnhem Land, n.d.).

be seen to have resulted from these educators having undertaken teacher education studies in their own communities.

Community based teacher education tends to involve linkages between a number of agencies and stakeholders at both the community level and externally. Batchelor Institute has a unique position historically through its work in addressing the training and tertiary education needs of Aboriginal people in remote Northern Territory communities. An extremely important aspect of the development of any Aboriginal Teacher Education program relates to the way that such a program assists Aboriginal communities to grapple with the problems associated with the inclusion and active respect for their culture in their communities' schools, which is explained in detail in the *Return to Country Report* (Blanchard, 1987). This is important as in many aspects Aboriginal community schools remain fundamentally Western institutions and mono-cultural. As such they remain active participants in the cultural invasion and imperialism that has marked Australia's occupation and colonisation and continues to do so (see Kemmis, 1988; Marika-Munungiritj, 1991; Fogarty & Schwab, 2012).

At Batchelor in the early 80's staff were working collaboratively to develop an integrated approach to working with students that was informed largely by the writings of Paulo Freire (1970; 1973; 1998). Freire's writings informed attempts to understand our work in a political context with our power as non-Indigenous educators to potentially continue the process of colonization that education is part and parcel of. Thus, our[6] work included exploring new ways to construct teaching/learning events around intensive workshops both at Batchelor and in off-campus settings. Experiments with ways to develop reflective practice in the multi-lingual contexts in which we worked grew out of our exploration of

Freire's writings. Exploring ways to develop a "problem posing" approach (as opposed to a solely problem based approach) to our work laid the foundation for some very significant developments. Staff at Batchelor developed a proposal for 'Self Evaluation', which attracted funding, and facilitated the commencement of a very fruitful partnership with Deakin University (Kemmis & Henry, 1985)

John Henry was the first member of the Deakin team to visit the Northern Territory (NT) as part of this project. At Batchelor, John introduced the notion of Participatory Action Research (PAR) to staff, which is an approach to research in communities and aims for participation of community members in addressing "questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers" (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p.1). PAR was the start of a very energetic engagement that took up the challenge of adapting the formal research process to suit the context and circumstances at Batchelor Institute and many other places in the NT. Explicit links were made to the evolving ideas already in place at the Institute with input from community representatives, educators, and other interested parties. Of particular importance here is that the PAR process provoked questions related to Indigenous aspirations and hope for the education of their children and their own community members as teachers of those future generations. The following vignettes illustrate some of these aspirations:

• At Willowra[7] John was told by a community elder
  – "Warlpiri people (Yapa) want their children to be educated 'both ways. This means that the children learn Whiteman's (Kardiya) knowledge while maintaining and developing their Aboriginality."

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6   When I refer to 'we' or 'our' throughout this chapter, I refer to everyone involved in the Teacher Education Program at Batchelor College/Batchelor Institute.

7   Statement by SJM at Willowra on 24/08/84 from John Henry's field notes.

• At Yirrkala[8] – "We are interested in bringing more Yolŋu Way into the program at Yirrkala Community School. … as we talk to more community people about the Yolŋu Knowledge that is appropriate and suitable for school work. We will be able to move forward on this issue of making our community school a 'both ways' place when we have the structure of communication linking the classrooms in our school with interested community people."

• At Yuendumu[9] – discussions occurred with Jeanie Egan about 'both ways' schooling and Yapa involvement in leadership in the school.

As indicated earlier intensive workshops had previously been used as a strategy at Batchelor College and valuable ideas from this experience were incorporated into our evolving practice in the Batchelor teacher education program. Some of these ideas included:

• Negotiation of tasks – inclusive practice of learner's perspective and knowledges

• Working in teams and small groups – Yaka Gana/ Always Together

• Problem posing – How will this contribute to our community's development?

• Considering the possibility of things going wrong i.e. consequences of teaching – caution and prudent action

• Starting points – Where are we? Where are we going? Where *should* we be going?

• Teacher research-based development – We are all learners: school teachers, Batchelor lecturers, Batchelor students

• Context – crucial importance of place in providing content and process

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8 Letter from Mandawuy Yunupingu to Chairperson of Yirrkala Dhanbul Community Council Association dated 10/10/84

9 From John Henry's field notes 13/10/85.

Conversations around ideas such as these informed our reflective practice and this provided an important basis for the development of the following key principles:

1. Teacher preparation should assist community development.

2. Teacher development should assist the development of Aboriginal perspectives on contemporary issues.

3. Teacher preparation within cultural contexts should retain the graduates' social standing within their communities.

4. Teacher preparation involves development of knowledge of 'both ways' (that is, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ways of life).

5. Teacher education should reflect community expectations and aspirations (Batchelor College, 1985, pp. 3–5).

This may be the first 'sanctioned' use of the term 'both ways' within the College. This highlights a concern that a focus solely on 'both ways' is too limited if other important elements of the collective five principles are disregarded or ignored, at a time when they should possibly receive even more emphasis. The outcome of community development, contemporary perspectives and social standing may be in danger of falling by the wayside in the implementation of current programs, both in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education. However, they might provide good starting points for a review of practice across the Institute as a way of locating and revisiting the foundations of Batchelor Institutes teaching and learning philosophy and practice.

Given that Batchelor Institute is now offering a swag of courses with ideological traditions that are generally even more teacher-centred and culturally dogmatic than the ones we sought to change in the 1980s, it seems timely to again explore more inclusive and appropriate practices. The ideas mentioned above all grew out of collaborative action research amongst Batchelor staff and students.

There are two further important exemplars that strongly relate to the 'common ground' theme: Dr Yunupingu's (1987) research whilst a Deakin University (DBATE) student and Dr Marika-Mununggiritj's (1991) research whilst studying at the University of Melbourne. Neither of these institutions were then, or are now, committed to 'both ways' learning and teaching programs but they were able to provide the space for these Indigenous students to negotiate a customized program of study that met both the expectations of the university and the individuals involved. Neither of these educators had participated in Batchelor courses that were informed by any mention of 'both ways' at the time of their research and early writings. This points to the importance of richer themes than the ones offered by a simplistic interpretation of 'both ways'. Rather, it suggests the importance of a problem-posing negotiated approach mentioned above.

Furthermore, we were also exploring ideas that informed collective endeavour through exploration of the ways that Guku (wild honey bees) (a highly significant high knowledge metaphor in Yolŋu culture) might guide our work. This was a response to the issues that emerged through individuals taking, or at least claiming, ownership over certain places, other people, ideas and programs. In the East Arnhem region at the time we were inundated with the use of possessive pronouns by non-Indigenous people that claimed space, and that claimed ownership of people through what might appear to be simple statements at first sight, such as *my* classroom, *my* assistant teacher, *my* program and *my* school.

Bees, it was pointed out, cannot make these specific claims and don't! Moreover, it was pointed out that bees' whole orientation is concern for future generations, which is why they work so assiduously to provide the best start for that generation's struggle. Thus, the bees have to get the balance right of the nectar that they gather from the two estates – the Yirritja and the Dhuwa[10]. Two is the operative term here! While they need to get the balance right, there is more.

Not only does the land sustain a range of trees and flowers that the bees would range over, it also nurtures the Ngathu, Dingu or cycad palm that provided us with another important metaphorical concept. The analogy provides a link between the making of bread from the cycad and the construction of knowledge and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Unless made with the deepest care, this bread can kill and harm. Knowledge, it was suggested, can be equally dangerous if it is taken up in the wrong way and without care in following the right process and caution about its nature. For example, it can potentially lead to assimilation, self-centredness, and selfishness. This Dingu process was written up by RATE students in 1988 and used to develop an analogy with a curriculum development process to in fact critique a Batchelor proposal.

The important connection for us now in revisiting the Guku and the Dingu conversations is the emphasis on collective action. The Guku – the bees example of seeking to make the best honey ever made – signifies a search for excellence that would always be an unrealized quest. That the quality of the honey according to this story could always be improved was important to us, and informed the adoption of a reflective participatory research-based approach to our learning. In the 1980s, this introduced us to the use of terminology and culturally-based metaphors that describe ideas and approaches, for example the introduction of the lipalipa or canoe. When

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10 Everything in the Yolŋu world view is made up of two moieties. One is Yirritja and the other one is Dhuwa. Dhuwa and Yirritja make up the Yolŋu world view. They are two halves of our holistic world view. Yirritja and Dhuwa fit together perfectly. Everything in Yirritja and Dhuwa is connected. Yirritja and Dhuwa people intermarry and everything in the land is either Yirritja or Dhuwa (Yolŋu Sea Country: Dhuwa and Yirritja, n.d.)

the lipalipa is moving through the water it makes waves that point ahead of the canoe – indicating the direction to be traveled, i.e. to the intended navigation point. This was important because it is actually a place that you are always traveling to - because in heading there - it (there) becomes 'here' on arrival and so the next 'there' is always ahead of you on your journey.

The quest moves on. Where to next on our journey? Again, this emphasized collective effort and reflection on the journey travelled. The central question was always: are we heading in the right direction?

Nalwarri Ngurruwutthun's father[11] recorded some epic stories of his canoe trips that illustrated these discussions. We saw our work as educators like the lipalipa paddlers of older times. This got us talking about new paddlers needing to be trained and the need for the older paddlers to help train and instruct the new paddlers in the skills needed in the process of this learning journey.

In part it also required us to explore the role of metaphor in social reproduction as presented by Tilley (1999), who argues that the interrelationships between culture, individuals and groups are dependent on understanding the metaphors used within the cultural group. In his words, "learning metaphor becomes part and parcel of the process of the acquisition of cultural knowledges and the authority residing in their acquisition" (Tilley, 1999, p. 9).

In exploring the notion of 'common ground' as a metaphor, the question we need to address is whether this is the best metaphor to meet our needs. In other words, how do, or will, the various parts of Batchelor Institute find the 'common ground'?

The discussions we had in past times explored the important philosophical ideas that underpinned Yolŋu epistemology and ontology. A range of "temporary"

thematic headings emerged for clusters of central ideas – some of which are captured in the *Aboriginal pedagogy: Aboriginal teachers speak out report* (Nayan et. al, 1991).

The ABC discussion program Q & A (2014) was a feature of the 2014 Garma Festival and included a number of Batchelor graduates. Many years earlier, the first of these festivals were using the word Garma on advice of a senior Rirratjingu leader to guide us around some of the arguments that occurred through the use of other words. The image he gave us was of a place where young and old come together, men and women, Yirritja and Dhuwa. The activities at such places were accessible to diverse groups. They were open to all and not classified as only open to one group or only belonging to one group. The Rirratjingu leader was cleverly indicating a way to access knowledge that would not belong exclusively to one group: the place for the ceremony would be a neutral place, characterised by the following:

- there was a clear purpose for the activity that would influence its agreed location
- people of all ages could safely come together; both genders, both moieties would be able to participate
- the location of the activity would indicate who would have organisational responsibilities and what knowledge would be shared at the activity (coming together-ness)

Is this the type of common ground we envisaged?

In returning to the learning journey, the questions arose because the curriculum task posed a problem. The solution was the appropriate response to the problem posed in trying to find a name for our learning journey.

Discussions about the bees also assisted us in thinking about research tasks – like the bees - individuals travelling out to the wider community to seek answers to questions of importance to community issues and then bringing the information gained back to the collective – to the hive. Like the knowledgeable women who make the cycad bread for others to check so too would we have times to

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11 Nalwarri Ngurruwutthun was one of the Indigenous teacher trainees who developed and articulated the 'both ways' approach, along with for example Dr M. Yunupiŋu (About 'both ways' education, n.d.).

present our ideas and findings to check them out with each other, other students, and elders in the community. We would question upfront whose interests should be served by our study. The stories that we were studying, examining and attempting to use to guide our work had an emphasis on working for our collective good – for our collective community interests. This work built on the work (research) of others and ourselves in many cases.

In the story so far I have chosen examples of ways that the teacher education program at Batchelor has nurtured the development of very important ideas. Initially this might have been through bringing in outside facilitators to establish conversations about community aspirations, research approaches and professional development for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators based in schools and at the College. However, as time went on we saw these initial ideas becoming generative and foundational for further research and discussion by Batchelor students, staff or others. We also saw the ways in which Batchelor students used the opportunities that research-based assessment processes allowed them to undertake ground breaking studies that would better inform the practice of both schools and Batchelor itself. This is the most important aspect as the learning went both ways: out of schools and communities and into Batchelor, and into schools and communities and out of Batchelor. However, an educational Institution that only sees 'empty vessels' to be filled instead of rich possibilities of collaborative learning will not deliver, and it is important to keep this fundamental recognition always in focus. Our work, like that of the bees, was generative and drew on revisiting past writings/research in the quest for appropriate knowledge and guidance.

At the graduation ceremony at Batchelor for the first cohort of DBATE students in 1987, my waku[12], Mr Dhurrkay (Lanhupuy, 1988), then MLA[13] for Arnhem, said:

> The decolonisation of schools in Aboriginal schools is the challenge for Aborigines now.

> The challenge for Tertiary and TAFE Institutions ... is to develop courses that begin with the knowledge and skills that the students bring with them from their communities and then develop the students' study programs through continual reference to their society, their culture and their communities' needs.

He warned that:

> Exposure to Tertiary study for Aborigines could mean that one's Aboriginality is weakened and devalued.

He nominated a solution that fits neatly with the themes of this book:

> Tertiary education programs ... must themselves be experiments in bi-cultural education.

> This will be achieved through programs that are based on bi-culturalism, through ongoing consultation by staff and students with Aboriginal communities and educational organisations, by giving students a more active role in their own learning, and by a policy of rapidly increasing the proportion of Aboriginal lecturers on academic staff.

In 2006, Kathy McMahon, a long term Northern Territory educator and Batchelor Institute staff member, reminded us of Stephen Kemmis' advice:

> 'Both ways' education is essentially problematic. It is not the description of a solution to the curriculum problem (the problem of what to teach students about Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ways of life).

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12 Yolŋu Matha term for 'son' (Yolŋu Matha Dictionary, n.d.)

13 Member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly (MLA)

It does not describe or prescribe the content and processes of a curriculum suitable for Aboriginal students. On the contrary, the term 'both ways education' is a name for the problem itself. Both ways education is something to be defined and redefined through history and across different locations and circumstances by Aboriginal people themselves (Kemmis, 1988, p. 22).

Kemmis and Henry (1985) in their report on the assisted evaluation at Batchelor ask a range of important questions that are pertinent to our discussions here: "Was the College adopting an unexamined credentialist view that might be antithetical to good Aboriginal Teacher Education?" (p. 25) and is "there an assimilationist version of 'both ways' schooling?" (p. 55)

There is an important connection between these two ideas. It is relatively easy to slip into the practice of using the demands of credentials to impose a 'one way' approach. The concern is that too much of the focus of our dialogue about 'both ways' is on addressing the *what* of 'both ways' without due regard to 'what we might do' on the *how*, and the *why*, and on how we might appropriately demonstrate arrival at our destination in a way that is not a 'concealed' assimilationist, ethno-centric and an unduly academically orientated one.

This is not to suggest that the idea of 'both ways' should not be used, but rather that we need much more in our search for an empowering approach to developing a useful 'common ground'.

In their 1993 presentation to the World Indigenous Peoples Conference in Wollongong, Brabham, Ferguson, Henry & Saunders (1993) warned:

> When we use the term both ways schooling we must be careful that we are not coopted into supporting a form of schooling that reproduces the old assimilationist form into the future. ... Our people are talking about schools that keep our cultures and identities strong in our children while equipping them with the skills from the contemporary world

necessary for self-determination of our nations. ... But we are not calling this form of education, and the schools that will deliver it, both ways. We see that this form of education is one-way, the Koorie way (pp. 8-9).

With that in mind, I return to Wali's ideas about appropriate education programs. While he talks specifically about secondary education there is a key idea here that relates to our quest:

> At this level it is up to teachers and students to learn with each other about the way in which both sides can come together. The role of the teacher is to provide the framework for the comparison of cultures which students then complete. But teachers would also be students of culture, the relationship between teacher and student would be different ... This partnership between teachers and students is of great importance because without it there can be no exchange of knowledge and we cannot learn from each other (Wunungmurra, 1989, p. 14).

Mr Dhurrkay put the challenge more bluntly: "The challenge for Tertiary institutions .... is not to repeat the assimilationist practices of primary and secondary schools" (Lanhupuy, 1988, p. 2). The issues are the same. Tertiary institutions in Australia derive their meaning from the traditions and culture of Europe.

With these challenges in mind and the developments that have occurred at Batchelor as increasingly a VET[14] provider/RTO[15] we could include my waku's concerns about tertiary institutions to apply to training providers as well.

Implications: the road ahead

In moving forward in working towards both the common ground and the common good, thought needs to be given to some salient points from our history so far:

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14 Vocational Education and Training

15 Registered Training Organisation

First, we all need to have ways to support personal academic growth in issues related to levels of academic skills in English as an Additional Language. We seem to have lost our connection with previous work undertaken by Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope (1993) here at Batchelor who shaped a language framework to guide everyone's work. There is a need to question how it relates to the Australian Core Skills Framework[16].

Second, Indigenous knowledge and local development aspirations must be a central component of teachers' practice and their pedagogic design (Fogarty & Schwab, 2012). This, and knowledge of the students' literacy levels, along with an awareness of their capacity to produce their own creative literacies recognises that "Indigenous people in the very remote regions of Australia have made the transition from an oral culture to a literate culture only relatively recently … without the prior and parallel development of many socially or culturally meaningful textual practices" (Kral, 2009, p. 41). Many students have benefitted from the significant work undertaken not only by RMIT and Deakin University, but from the challenges and insights gained by working with University of Melbourne staff members Marilyn Woolley, Keith Pigdon and Dennis Claringbold (Claringbold et al., 1984; Pigdon & Woolley, 1990). Their work provides the necessary scaffolding and creative flair to engage, and offers many examples that would serve contemporary course design well.

Third, we also need approaches that allow, in Allan Luke's (1993) terms, an understanding of how forms of

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16 The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) is a tool which assists both specialist and non-specialist English language, literacy and numeracy practitioners describe an individual's performance in the five core skills of learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy. It is also the key quality measure for the Australian Government's Skills for Education and Employment Programme (Australian Government Department of Industry and Science, n.d.).

language have shaped the organisation and values of social life, and how texts influence one's identity and authority. This recognition allows us to provide, as the Batchelor RATE students have repeatedly demonstrated, a context to develop powerful forms of literate practice relevant to their in-school and out-of-school lives (Luke, 2003; Beavis, 2004, 2007; Culican, Milburn, & Oakley 2006; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Gee 2010). In other words, informed, holistic, and relationally responsive practices that are mindful of people, land, culture, language roles and responsibilities, spirit and the relationships between them. We need well-informed educators/trainers at the coal face forming the common ground!

Fourth, an anticipated response to implementing some aspects of the suggested approaches will come at a cost. However, the anticipated outcomes will more than provide a return on investment.

Fifth, we should not stop searching for better models that better fit local contexts, rather than accepting a one-size-fits-all approach. This should include engagement with, and potential adoption of, international examples of good practice.

Sixth, any partnership project requires a consideration of place-based pedagogy, and consciousness of relationships between places (Gruenewald, 2008; Kalantzis and Cope, 2008). It needs to embrace a pedagogy of responsibility (Martusewicz & Edmundson, 2005), for the positioning and presentation of knowledge, and the engagement with questions of diversity, democracy and sustainability, and aim for a decolonizing partnership process of recovery, knowing, analysis, and struggle (Tuck, 2007). We need to have health and well-being as part and parcel of every focus on the common ground as we work in a context fraught with the suffering of unnecessary death and sickness.

Seventh, consider the lesson of the Wilson Review (2014) where no Indigenous writing was researched or proper Indigenous consultation process undertaken, despite a long list of people who were apparently 'consulted'

(Wilson 2014, pp. 283-300). Isn't this an example of concealed assimilation? As Clark (2014) notes in response to the review:

> What has never been attempted in the NT is the transparent and accountable implementation of long-term needs-based core funding in remote Indigenous schools. This was an opportunity to put this urgent priority squarely on the table – an opportunity lost (Clark 2014, n.p).

While the review identifies an "almost total systemic failure to support over two generations of people living in remote Indigenous communities to a level of basic literacy required for even an unskilled job" (Clark, 2014, n.p), it fails to recognise that remote Indigenous education has never been funded to a level required to reach the projected outcomes. This leads Clark (2014) to the following important question: "Do we need to wait another 14 years – nearly a generation more of systemic and racist policy failure for the next review to pick this up?" (n.p). The likely poisonous outcome of this review will resonate for Batchelor Institute for decades. Remember the Cycad Bread metaphor!

Eighth, we need to highlight and recognise the important role of the workplace, and workers in the workplace, as the site of ongoing training and professional development, and the crucial role of all co-workers in the development of Batchelor students in that workplace. This is about learning and teaching in context, the importance of which should not be underestimated.

Ninth, we need to recognise that investing in the learning and professional development of staff is crucial as long as it is tied to long-term sustainability, in the form of a long-term commitment to students and communities, rather than a short-term 'project' approach.

Tenth, we need to rethink the undervaluing of the study of linguistics in all courses. We face another decade with more Indigenous languages being put at risk and potentially lost. We need to provide a necessary skill base to future intergeneration knowledge transfer. Sadly,

Batchelor used to be much stronger in this regard, with the Aboriginal Languages Fortnight[17] and regular access to internationally renowned linguists, which provided a much richer, mainly community-based, environment than that available today. It is crucial and urgent to revisit this, as time is running out fast for many languages, including local languages (National Indigenous Languages Survey Report, 2005).

In recognising that the ten points above suggest a clear need for improvement, it is also important to recognise valuable achievements. Batchelor Institute can be proud of the outcomes of the professional development for its staff and students as there have been some very important outcomes from this in a range of ways. Firstly, our past, present and continuing contribution by former staff and students in important (some might argue crucial) roles inside Batchelor Institute itself, Department of Education schools and system, Catholic Education and Charles Darwin University (CDU). Secondly, the significant curriculum contribution that Batchelor, and in particular former RATE students and their former lecturers, have made to the development of the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework - particularly EsseNTial Learnings, Mathematics, and the Indigenous Languages and Culture strands.

As Kathy McMahon[18] explains:

> We (the NT) were the first (and still the only) in Australia to do such work. That work spilled over

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17 Every year students from the Batchelor College Teacher Education Program used to devote two special weeks to working on literature and literacy in their own languages. During this time, known as Aboriginal Languages Fortnight (ALF), most students developed a research project with their own community elders, and through the research process they learned more of the depths of their own culture, and developed ways of communicating some of these ideas to other people through writing (Christie, 1994).

18 Personal communication n.d.

into other learning areas but we were making the space for Indigenous knowledge systems and languages first and foremost. And every single Batchelor graduate I worked with understood the task immediately. Problem posing - how do we get what is important to us in here? From Yuendumu, Papunya, Areyonga, Ltyentye Apurte, Yipirinya, Titjikala, Willowra, Lajamanu, Wadeye, Bathurst, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Galiwin'ku, Milingimbi and Yirrkala...Batchelor graduates all.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we need to look to the future but in doing so it is relevant that we know the foundation of the history for that future, so we can fearlessly confront the ignorant colonising and normalising forces that are present today as we plan and prepare for the future we face.

As a result of Batchelor staff initiatives, such as regular articles in journals, we can now celebrate a wide and influential body of Indigenous publications and Indigenous voices within the academic literature. Batchelor Press has contributed to their development and distribution with good inclusive design and a stress on the visual to tell the story and engage the reader. We need to continue these. We need to build on *Strong Teachers* (Murphy et al., 2013), a recent collaborative 'both ways' project, which involved gathering stories and reflections of ex-Batchelor lecturers and former students. If strong, relevant and transformative community-based education and training is to be achieved, we need to take collective control, learn from the past, and begin to explore some of the recommendations and suggestions in this chapter. This is not a blueprint or template, but rather a set of recommendations to provoke questions. The quest moves on: are we heading in the right direction?

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Rhetoric, recognition and rights: the common units 1999-2011

Kathryn Gilbey & Evelyn Schaber

I will tell you something about stories.

They aren't just entertainment.

Don't be fooled.

They are all we have, you see,

All we have to fight off

illness and death.

You don't have anything

if you don't have the stories.

Their evil is so mighty

But it can't stand up to our stories.

So they try to destroy the stories,

Let the stories be confused or forgotten.

They would like that,

they would be happy

because we would be defenceless then.

(Silko, 1977, p. 2)

The power of stories to transform, inform and remove the polite veil of ignorance is what this paper will ultimately be about. This will be done through the telling of a series of stories and moments at Batchelor Institute, the teaching of the Common Units. The stories about stories will show Indigenous pedagogies in practice, both-ways enacted, and the power of stories to undermine the subtle positioning of Aboriginal students by non-Aboriginal lecturers. This paper will be an exploration around the teaching and learning process that was the Common Units at Batchelor Institute 1999 – 2011. The units themselves were transformative and experiential, you came out changed after having experienced them. This is our aim with this paper also, we invite you on a journey to come and explore from our perspectives the tensions and celebrations that were the Common Units.

The context

In 1999 Batchelor College had emerged as a fully fledged self accrediting independent tertiary institution with the passing in the NT parliament of the Batchelor Institute Act 1999. The College had morphed into the Institute. The then Director, John Ingram, on the day of independence stood down as Director and Veronica Arbon, the new Director, emerged as the first Aboriginal and the first female Director of the newly formed Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. The Council was given accreditation powers that meant that Batchelor Institute was one of the very few self-accrediting Indigenous controlled and run educational organisations in the world.

This time, and the importance of these changes, cannot be underestimated. The metamorphosis from a small annexe in 1974 to an independent tertiary institution was enormous; the world was Batchelor Institute's oyster. The Institute had emerged as a real force within Indigenous Education, and it was within this heady context that the Common Units were conceived and implemented. These Units were part of the plan of the new Director to ensure the vision statement of strengthening identity whilst achieving educational success. This was part of a larger strategy that envisaged Batchelor Institute as the leading Indigenous educational facility in the country. And it had achieved that status in legislation.

The Common Units

The two Units, Public Communication and Telling Histories were core Common Units to all the undergraduate Higher Education courses within the Institute from 1999 to 2011. This meant that the classes were large, heterogeneous, dynamic and exciting and, for the students, often the first time that they had come together as a large student group rather than in small groups in discrete discipline areas.

Overview

The Common Units were written in 1999 by Dr. Rob McCormack and a team of Indigenous academics at the Institute including, but not limited to, John Reid, Tom Ober, George Pascoe, Dana Ober, Ochre Doyle, Veronica Arbon, Aunty Mai Katona, Evelyn Schaber and many other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics present at the Institute at the time. Over the years they continued to contribute to these Units. It must be said that these Units were initially conceived in response to student demands to have a say, to have a voice, to be recognised in a fundamental way within their own educational experience, as part of a broader plan of inclusive Indigenous education. Veronica Arbon, in her book *Arlathirnda Ngurkarnda Ityirnda,* explains why they were developed and explains some of the initial resistance to the Units.

> There was no coherent story of the disruptive and oppressive aspects of Australia's colonial history or the important aspects of our knowledge to be carried into tomorrow (Arbon, 2008, p 122).

She goes on to say:

> Opposition arose as staff argued that the curriculum did not have the space, that Indigenous knowledge was addressed in other ways and that such an approach was not necessary. The most powerful arguments swirled around a belief that the inclusion of the Common Units would undermine and downgrade the professional intent of the awards. Despite these arguments, the Academic Committee of the Institute endorsed these Units in 2000 (Arbon 2008 p. 122).

However, the negative arguments would prove to be ongoing and unrelenting, constantly undermining Indigenous knowledge and practices as expressed through these Units. Perhaps it was a sign of the changing priorities of the Institute or a fundamental disbelief in the way that the Units were put together, but it seemed for most of the eleven years that they ran they were contentious and despised, lauded and celebrated.

So the quandary around these Units was that whilst they were embraced and celebrated by the students and Aboriginal staff at the Institute they were also vilified and despised by many non-Indigenous lecturing and executive staff. The contributors to these successes were not acknowledged by our critics in terms of recognition of our inclusive Aboriginal knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum activities. There was no acknowledgement of the academic rigour required for the long term academic application of the text patterns of the students' work in Public Communication across writing genres, the oracy development applicable across many other units, or the analysis of history applicable to all disciplines and theories. It was not that we were academically less capable, but rather that we were equal and so much more.

When they began as transitional units into higher education they were designed to not privilege students with an English-as-first-language background. The student body had changed quite radically from a majority of students from remote communities to a vast majority being from an urban background. The newly developed degree programs also attracted a lot of interstate students. Students were old and young from all over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia. We were varied and different, but the same, and our commonality was what became celebrated. This was one of the key defining successes of the Common Units, designed to be transition units into higher education. Students from all over got to meet, share and work together. The students' diversity was the Units' strength as we learnt from each other's strengths and weaknesses, but we did it together. The sense of accomplishment at the end of these Units was enormous and was shared by all students. The nature of the Units was that while one student may have one set of obstacles to overcome, another had a complete other set and together and collectively we could achieve our shared common goals.

So while an older student, may struggle with the computer it was very common to see a younger student typing their speech up for them whilst they told them their stories. These stories often then came back in the form of telling histories and the cycle became complete, synergised by the collective work. This often happened with individual speeches for students who had less English language vocabulary as these students often had the strongest cultural traditions and stories, which then in turn strengthened the whole group.

One of the key reasons that the Units were so successful in terms of student results was that students were assessed by how well they worked together not by how much they knew in comparison to each other. Academia is typically very cut-throat and competitive but we as Lecturers explained early on that the focus in these Units was cooperative and collaborative learning.

The aims of these Units were to:

1. Encourage students to tell their truths and realities, through speeches, banners, performance, shared public values, public protests, action as communication and through sharing and acknowledging our shared Indigenous histories and commonalities, as well as celebrating the uniqueness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians;

2. Provide a safe environment that privileges Indigenous ways of being and knowing;

3. Explore, through critical analysis, the construction of history and the development of western education systems;

4. Offer experiential learning journeys that are student focused and driven; and

5. Provide an environment where amazing and moving workshops are possible and students tell their stories and histories and as a result everyone in the room is in one way or another, changed.

(Batchelor Institute Common Units Study Guide 2009, p. 4)

Together these five points then work to engage students in a way that no other units can, nor do. They create excitement about learning itself, rather than narrowly defined learning outcomes. To have specific units that do this explicitly makes Batchelor Institute unique, and had a big impact on factors such as retention and progression.

Public Communication

Public Communication was based on the classical western educational philosophy of rhetoric. As a team we taught text patterns and building blocks for effective Public Communication. We encouraged students to use the text patterns of rhetoric to tell their stories. These text patterns then formed the structure for an individual speech to an audience. We provided the foundational blocks through rhetorical text patterns and structure of the speech and the students provided the content. There was no prescription on content so students were asked to find what they were passionate about; this was the first time for some students that their knowledges were being privileged and that their voices were being heard. This meant that we had interesting, well-structured speeches on topics as varied and diverse as the student body itself.

It is hard to describe the electricity of those moments when the speeches were being read. This became the transformative part because when one sits and listens to a room full of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders speaking their truths in a five minute speech, utilising really effective text patterns designed to get to your heart, it was amazing. Every topic you can imagine came up, from the stolen generation to brown rice, from otitis media to sexual abuse and overcoming it. This became a roller coaster of a journey that we all shared. One woman spoke about being removed from her family and put in a home; she spoke about it in the third person and then at the end she said, "I know because I am that little girl". I had hung my head because I was crying because she had moved me that much, and I looked up and around because there was a quiet in the room. She had transported me to another place but I was embarrassed

by the tears rolling down my cheeks; then I saw Tom and he was crying, and John was crying too. The whole room was silent and I didn't know what to do. John got up and made a joke to break the silence. By the end of the day everyone was utterly exhausted and excited in equal measure, and everyone was changed.

The Unit also used multi-literacy forms of communication. Students were expected to create a banner and compile a group speech that expressed a collective public value. They were then expected to take to the streets and as a group express a public value or concern as a student body in a public demonstration. In addition, Public Communication introduced students to the classical Greek philosophers, Aristotle and Plato, the ancestors of western education. The Unit outlined the two very different western educational traditions that arose from the thinking of these two men. These were the disciplined factual type of schooling of Plato that has at its basis a single truth and the leadership rhetorical style of Aristotle that saw Doxa and opinion as more important.

Loud classroom discussions about Socrates' choice of hemlock over banishment were broken down into the importance of country and the pain of dispossession. If these were the ancestors of western education and the choices that surrounded them then we accorded them the respect that they deserved. By knowing the conflict between Aristotle and his teacher Plato, by knowing that they differed in their approach, we could break down and understand the current western model and, in so doing, removed the omniscient power of western education to that of simply a winning model. This insight opened the door to alternatives.

Aristotle, Plato and power

By looking at the history of western education we see the influence on its structure of political ideologies over this same history. In this way we used the coloniser's educative tools for integration and assimilation to our own benefit, for our self-determination. We moved

from being mere subjects of power and became agents of power. We managed to move our position on the power continuum from being passive recipients of the consequences derived from others' positions of power through their benevolent goodwill to becoming speakers of our truths. Just being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person in this country is political, our very survival is political, so when we get up and speak our truths it becomes a revolutionary moment that changes all of us.

The transition from being individuals beholden to the power of non-Indigenous others to individuals holding power and with space to speak was a transformative educational moment. The holding of space and agency is important on many levels. Not only is it about sharing something that has never been shared outside of the family, or something that you are passionate about, it is also a personal achievement. So the act of speaking one's truths has dual meaning. It is important for the public sphere, adding to the knowledge of the room, the town, the country, but it is also important on a personal level. The public/private sphere is transformed into a collective space imbued with all the strength and power of stories never before told, or needing to be re-told with the hopes and expectations and community mindedness of the whole classroom. In this moment, the subjugation of the past is removed, the feelings of inadequacy gone, as we, in that moment, feel empowered. Speaking the truth of our lives, telling a story of a grandfather banned from the islands and the effects on him, three generations of one family in care because of the stolen generations, a story of survival from a massacre in NSW, stories of triumph against adversity, stories of survival, recollections of idyllic childhoods on the river, at the beach or in the desert, manifestos on hunting and bush food, and native title claims, for each student this was a moment of embodying the power of an ancient culture and sharing that with an audience.

Knowledge is power and in the Public Communication classroom, as we discussed knowledge production, as we discussed the wisdom of our Elders, as we learnt

about differing styles of education, we did so from our own uniquely varied but First Nations people's position. We felt ourselves growing more powerful through the knowledge of the Other (western education). By removing the invisibility of the current western education system we could discuss from our own First Nations' perspective the value of our own education system as well as the pros and cons of the various western systems.

This synthesis of knowledge came from two sources: one a non-Indigenous academic's detailed knowledge of Greek educators and modern philosophers, the other the First Nations students' detailed knowledge of their own educational practices (some call this their home education) and their own educational journeys, often characterised by a disconnect between what they knew and had been taught by family and community, and what they had been taught in schools. By applying this knowledge to our real world, a whole new level of understanding about the role and purpose of knowledge sharing through generations was revealed.

Public Communication aimed to show the two types of schooling arising from ancient Greece and considered how these types are applied in an Australian context. In concert with this aim, the Unit aimed to highlight our own Indigenous knowledge systems and teaching and learning strategies. Dr Rob McCormack described the approach within Public Communication as:

> ...one, a positive affirmation and deepening commitment to Indigenous ways of knowing and being, the other, a critically respectful study of non-Indigenous ways of being and knowing (McCormack, 2003, p. 6).

One core component of Public Communication, and one of the underlying strengths of the Unit, was that the students' own knowledge was not only acknowledged but was crucial to the unfolding of the content and success of the Unit. The Unit provided the building blocks and contexts for strong powerful speeches to be constructed, speeches in which the students provided all the content.

There was no wrong content; it was an opportunity for students to speak powerfully about whatever they wanted to express. Throughout the history of the Units students have relished this moment and readily took the chance to speak their truths.

Ruth Van Dyck in her paper 'Redefined Rhetorics: Academic Discourse and Aboriginal Students' says:

> To Aboriginal peoples, essay writing has symbolized the loss of languages, cultures, and people groups. However, the paradigms of classic Aristotelian rhetoric, as taught in introductory composition courses at university, are being reshaped, especially by theories such as new rhetorical genre theory that emphasize the socio-political contexts of knowledge. This shift creates greater opportunity for traditional, Aboriginal discourse conventions to be welcomed as frameworks for new knowledge (Van Dyck, 2005, p. 36).

It is this new knowledge, built on old and modern stories, that was created and celebrated within every workshop.

Telling Histories

Histories are contested terrain in educational practice. Many sites of public education and schooling serve to provide information on history and represent dominant histories which subjugate Indigenous peoples (Barnes, 2005, p. 150).

Telling Histories focused less on rhetoric and was based more within a critical pedagogies theoretical framework that viewed history as a concept, a discipline and a tool of the oppressor.

Australian history by its nature, name and definition is not inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' stories or lived realities. Australian history is based around settlement and not invasion. It does not represent through public holidays, war memorials, curricula and the collective psyche the ongoing struggle continuum that constitutes Aboriginal peoples' realities since invasion. There have been constant and ongoing sites of

resistance, freedom fighters, warriors, wars, activism and resistance to colonisation. This is rarely represented in the history books taught in schools and universities. When on the odd occasion it is, it has been hotly contested by some non-Indigenous historians and politicians (e.g. Windshuttle, 2002)

Telling Histories began with a look at what History is. Was Herodotus (the father of History) biased when he wrote 'The Histories' to show the glory of Greece against the Barbarians in the Greco Persian wars? If this is the foundation upon which the modern 'History' discipline is based, then the question of bias emerged in class discussions and questions were raised about who benefits from any agreed upon versions of 'History', and what Australian history tells us about who wrote it.

We spent a lot of time looking at Aboriginal resistance history largely through Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus's book *The struggle for Aboriginal rights* (1999). We began with the first written acts of resistance in the late 1830s on Flinders Island in Bass Strait. We would then move through time to the ongoing struggle for land rights, citizenship and recognition up to today. This detailed examination of resistance history was often confronting and eye-opening for students. Students local to the areas included in the written historical accounts knew the histories through their own peoples' oral traditions. But as a whole, as a cross-sectional snapshot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' resistance, very few knew of the complete, recurring and undying struggle continuum. We started to see how much of our history had been left out of the dominant versions of history. We did this as a large group where we all participated in the process of reading about sites of resistance and sharing that back as a group.

It was also important that we had the space to tell our stories and histories in an Aboriginal only place as in this way the journey of telling and retelling history could happen without fear; we raged, we cried, we celebrated, we laughed and we shared.

The History Wars and who controlled the representation and arguments around Australian history was analysed. The differing versions of the Mistake Creek massacre of Peggy Patrick and Keith Windshuttle formed a robust discussion. Also we celebrated our warriors of resistance in the struggle by looking at Gary Foley's Koori History website.

What we did alongside this process was to provide the building blocks to communicate our own versions of history, a re-telling from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective. It helped us define what was important to us. Then we prepared ten to twenty minute performances in groups of five to ten. The groups chose a moment in history or a story and then conducted an intense character analysis from their physical and emotional depths for their historical roles in the performances. The groups then scripted and performed a story, a show; it may have been one moment, it may have been many. These performances were created for a large and varied audience of community members, staff and students and, when appropriate, we would invite years 5-7 from the local Batchelor Area School.

These performances were an act of breaking down some of the barriers that typically exclude First Nations people from succeeding within Western higher education frameworks. They were both an act, and therefore a site, of empowerment for the participants and a gift to the audience to witness a different perspective, to participate and be drawn into a journey that may be one they didn't know, a journey which could open a door to conversations, to meaningful exchanges.

Dion (2009) speaks of these moments in terms of "compelling invitations":

> ...within Aboriginal traditions the power of the story resides partly in the telling, our approach is to (re) tell the stories in such a way that listeners hear a "compelling invitation" that claims their attention and initiates unsettling questions that require working through...the hope for accomplishing an

alternative way of knowing lies partly in our ability to share with our readers what the stories mean to us (Dion, 2009, p. 1).

Sharing our histories and stories in a way that was accessible and that could be heard was one of the aims of Telling Histories. If the moments in history that we find important, moments that shape who we are, are the very moments that white Australia wants to forget, then telling histories from an Indigenous perspective provided forums from which more authentic discussions could begin. Again Dion supports this point from her Canadian perspective:

> If justice for Aboriginal people lies in remembering, but forgetting serves the needs of the Canadian nation, where are the possibilities for accomplishing justice found? (Dion 2009 p. 1)

Scripts were written and re-written, props and costumes made, the story rehearsed and re-rehearsed, all the formal requirements of creating a performance were done on a large scale, often with four or five groups of eight to ten people, with at least three or four re-workings and rehearsals. This was a crazy, exciting time and we did it all within two weeks. The classroom would be left open with students rehearsing into the night, with at least two direction rehearsals with lecturers.

The day before we would rehearse the bump in and out of all props, cement the order, practice all that at least two or three times, rearrange the classroom so it became a makeshift theatre, cordon off our entrances and exits, and get all our sound effects and cues on the laptop and any power point or images to be projected. We practised and then did a complete run through of all the shows. All the time we were aware of the energy growing, the excitement building, people panicking. The electricity in the air was palpable and then just when you felt ready to explode, it all came together with the room packed out and the performances perfect. The resulting sense of shared achievement was hard to describe, the crowd going crazy and everyone elated.

We called these workshops transformative and experiential. We all, student, lecturer and audience members, came out different at the other end, partly because of the powerful experience of listening to a room full of stories. The workshops were transformative also because of the personal journey that each student went on and the collegial support that everyone in the classroom shared.

These were the best-scaffolded units I have ever taught. Dr. McCormack, in initially writing them, had incorporated the rhetorical text patterns we were teaching into their delivery. Literally while we were speaking into the microphone we were role modelling the text patterns in use.

Speaking our truths and the possessive investment in ignorance

This analysis of the Common Units is all about the celebration of speaking and enacting the power of our ancestors through the students telling their stories, talking their histories into existence.

Butler (2010) speaks of this transition from subjugation to agency:

> It seemed that if you were subjugated, there were also forms of agency that were available to you, and you were not just a victim, or you were not only oppressed, but oppression could become the condition of your agency"
> (Butler, 2010).

It was this act of speaking up and out to an audience that was one of the key strengths of and the greatest threats to the Common Units. The presentations were all informative, entertaining and strong, and they all held Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' views, worldviews, stories, and realities. This often had a profound effect on the audience but also, I believe, was the underlying aggravant behind the mistrust and dislike of these units. Every speech and every performance challenged

ignorance. That was the very point of doing them, to communicate our histories to an audience. This is not problematic unless it happens in an environment were there is a possessive investment in ignorance. The possessive investment means that anything that tells a counter-truth to dominant Australian narratives must be questioned, that the investment in ignorance must be possessively guarded.

The Common Units, with their open storytelling style, not only confronted that ignorance but actively dismantled it. When the audience is sitting through a performance based around massacres on cattle stations in the Northern Territory, there is a profound impact on, if not eradication of ignorance. Or when audience members watch a 'smash the Act' performance with a black Joh Bjelke Peterson and screaming protestors at the Commonwealth games, screaming students being dragged out of the classroom/stage by other students wearing police costumes, when students stage that right and all disbelief is suspended, the audience is emotionally engaged, the action happening right there. We can add to this the enactments of the histories of Pemulwuy, Jandamarra and the Freedom Rides, a life story of Sir Douglas Nicholls or William Cooper, a Broome half caste girls' home and so many stories of the stolen generations, of mothers losing their children or being in detention centres called homes. We learnt so much from these stories.

All of these stories, communicated powerfully through performance, song and dance, changed those that heard them, taught those who engaged with them, and confronted those who didn't want to hear them. The Common Units, Public Communication and Telling Histories, had eleven years of pushing the boundaries of ignorance possession. Whilst the Units may well have been dismissed as being trivial, not academic, not serving a real academic function, the stories and speeches told within the Units were less easily dismissed. Many staff just didn't attend the presentations, tried to boycott them so to speak. In fact we knew in advance

who from the staff were going to come or not. However, even though they tried through avoidance to maintain their investment in ignorance, this also did not fully protect them, as the students in their classes would talk of the performances, as would other staff over lunch the next day. The word got around what the content of the performances or speeches were. These truths told at these times were inescapable. Momentarily within the Institute the central story being told was one of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement, history, strength and survival. The classrooms and the offices had been hijacked and, whether it was one speech or story in particular that grabbed the audience's attention, the focus was briefly not on curriculum content or discipline specific knowledges that maintain the accustomed binary power relationships within the Institute, but all about First Nations peoples' strength, knowledge, stories and capacity. Conversations about the amazing props, or the Islander dancing or the realistic spears, spoke to a greater truth and it was all about the students' capacities and competence.

This ran contrary to other narratives that surround First Nations people. The gaze had shifted. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strength and competency were being displayed and this sat at odds with the hegemonic narrative. As such, it was mistrusted, denigrated and needing to be contained. The form of containment, and ultimately the Units' demise, was enacted through the strategic use of Western standards. The possessive investment in ignorance was displayed every time my colleagues and I had to justify and defend the Units at all the forums described in the narrative chapter, with my senior lecturer telling me these Units were universally despised.

These Units were the flagship of Batchelor Institute for so many people and the bane and thorn in the 'hegemonic side' for so many more. The arguments that surrounded them were bigger than content, outcomes, and standards.

The animosity was larger than those lecturers seeking to protect their own disciplines by seeking to regain the 'loss' of 20 credit points in their degree taken up by these Units.

These Units and their outcomes ran contrary to white privilege and its pathologising narratives (Moreton-Robinson, 2009). The celebratory analysis and presentation that happened within these Units stood as a direct challenge to white privileging and notions of Aboriginal mimicry through assimilation. These Units demonstrated and celebrated First Nation competency, not only in the high pass rates of students but in the very outcomes and challenges that the Units achieved. They ran counter to the ideology of whiteness. The Common Units questioned the validity of the stereotypes that the dominant narratives had been constructed against. They were too successful.

So the Common Units, through their expressed intent, impacted upon the levels of ignorance that significant 'others' employed at the Institute had an investment in. The Units also undermined the hegemonic power imported into the Institute by saying, 'you may think this but you quite simply cannot deny the power of these stories and the work put in to the display of them'. Two weeks is all we had to change the world around us a little bit, but that's OK, that's all we needed, we were that good!

The narrative that exists around Aboriginal people (students and staff) is born of deep seated prejudice and a supposed knowing that Aboriginal society is at its core dysfunctional. These prejudices were played out around the Common Units for eleven years, that they were not academic enough, that the students were inherently lazy, that the lecturers were radicals with an agenda outside education. These narratives, though deeply felt, needed to be re-thought when faced with the strength of stories, when faced with a different version of truth around history and most importantly when faced with the sheer hard work that was needed to actualise the stories. Each speech and performance worked as a counter

narrative, slowly chipping away at the drunk, desperate, needy narrative and replacing it with strength, survival and resistance. The possessive investment in ignorance which sees a deliberate not knowing just couldn't exist in the same space as powerful stories. The Common Units stopped being offered as Batchelor's undergraduate program amalgamated with Charles Darwin University through the Australian Centre of Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE) in 2012.

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Looking for a new common ground: a reflection on Batchelor Institute's teacher education training programs for remote Aboriginal education professionals in the Northern Territory

Sue Reaburn, Melodie Bat, & Claire Kilgariff

Introduction

Batchelor's history in Aboriginal teacher education reflects and is reflected by a small institution's ability to navigate through forty years of politics and practice surrounding both Indigenous affairs and teacher education. This chapter considers the long engagement of Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) in meeting the needs of Aboriginal students enrolled in its teacher education program and makes a call for a renewal of purpose in teacher education.

For the purposes of this chapter, the term 'teacher education' is used to include education and training programs for all Aboriginal Educators: the university Higher Education (HE) programs which prepare fully qualified 'teachers' as well as the Vocational, Education and Training (VET) programs which 'train' in-classroom paraprofessional. The chapter presents a brief chronological overview of BIITE's various programs and considers them in terms of what a 'quality' program looks like, importantly noting that where common ground was found among the issues, tensions, contradictions and paradoxes, lived some of the best quality teacher education programs for remote Aboriginal Australians.

What is a quality teacher education program?

Bat's research findings into BIITE's teacher education program proposed the following:

A quality Indigenous teacher education program has equity of inputs as well as outputs

a) An equity of inputs is evident when:

i. Self-determination is a key purpose of the course

ii. Indigenous knowledges and cultures are embedded throughout the course

iii. Delivery of the course strengthens identity through relationship-based learning.

b) An equity of outputs is evident when:

i. Graduates attain professional standards

ii. Graduation rates are commensurate with all other students

iii. Social capital is created through community capacity building. (Bat, 2010, pp. 338-339)

Essentially, these findings were distilled by examining 'quality' from two key perspectives. Firstly from the Aboriginal learners and their communities, for whom the *how* (which incorporates the *who* and the *where*) and the *why* were the most important.

Such a program has self-determination at the foundation, embeds Indigenous knowledges in content and delivery and makes use of relationship-based learning in its delivery (Bat, 2011, p. 9).

And secondly from the perspective of the profession and the employers, where the *what* of the programs were key, this being essentially the attainment of a set of universally acceptable regulated standards (Bat, 2011).

This tension between *what, how* and *why* is evident throughout the five decades of BIITE's teacher education programs (and twenty years of its predecessors), in all their various forms.

Decade 1: the 1960s: the beginnings of formal programs

In these earliest days of teacher education, Aboriginal Educators, (also known as Assistant Teachers, Teacher Aides and Teacher Assistants (all of whom were Aboriginal and drawn from the local community) were seen as a link between teacher and parent: the "... bulwark for the child during his transition from the vernacular to English". Equally important was the development of the individual, for each Teaching Assistant is regarded as "potential youth and community leader" (Kormilda College, 1969).

Most early 'training' was on the job and early records and anecdotal evidence indicate that more formal 'training' commenced after the first two Aboriginal Educators were employed in NT government schools in 1953 as Assistant Teachers. In the early 1960s, short courses were held in a variety of locations in Darwin including the Welfare Branch Training Centre (later renamed Kormilda College) and Carpentaria House. Held over Christmas school holiday breaks, student numbers and gender varied as did participant skills and experience. The seminal Watts and Gallacher Report recommended that the course be extended (1964, p. 104) and by 1968 a one-year specialised course had begun in Darwin. The Assistant Teachers and their families lived on site at the newly opened Kormilda College in Berrimah and the staff of two taught "the rudiments of teaching and academic study" (Northern Territory Administration, 1967, p. 25).

As expected of the national policy of Assimilation at the time, the course itself provided no evidence of relational learning or the embedding of Aboriginal knowledges. Review of the destinations of these students reveals that of the 23 students from 17 Northern Territory communities studying the 1968 year-long program, four later became Principals of their community schools, evidence that the outputs of the program were significant for that era.

The not negotiable *how* was one year away from home with family uprooted, one year back working as an educator and then onto the second year, a pattern which was to continue for some years to come. From the small amount of documentation available it appears that the *what* of these programs—the curriculum content and the training outcome—was dominant and the focus was on bringing people into the profession as it then existed, rather than the journey to get there.

Decade 2: the 1970s: New beginnings: bilingual education and RATE

In 1970, a second year of study was added to the offering at Kormilda. Successful completion of the first and second year courses enabled Assistant Teachers to some career progression as they became TA1 (Teacher Aide 1) and TA2 (Teacher Aide 2).There were seven second year students, many being experienced educators; some had managed their own class for years (Benjamin, 2014). As with other 'vocations', the pattern of the first two years being vocational training continued through the early 1970s.

From mid December 1972, the newly formed Whitlam government commenced a new era in policy, that of Self-Determination, a shift from the paternalistic Assimilation policy to one where decision making by Aboriginal peoples would be supported. Responsibility for all education in the NT was allocated to the new Commonwealth Department of Health and Education and bilingual programs were announced for commencement in February 1973 (Edmonds, 2014). The role of the Assistant Teachers required reimagining as

in addition to their existing duties, in identified bilingual schools, they were now expected to be teachers of language (McGrath, 1974, p. 9).

Concurrently, decisions about what to do with the town of Batchelor after the closure of the Rum Jungle Uranium Mine saw, among other things, the beginnings of Aboriginal teacher education located there in early 1974. Similar efforts were occurring in Western Australia with the beginnings of their Aboriginal Teacher Education Program and the program in Batchelor became known as the Aboriginal Teacher Education Centre (ATEC). In 1974, a third year of training for the Aboriginal Educators was negotiated to be taught at and by Darwin Community College (DCC) (Charles Darwin University's forerunner). Students and their families were expected to again uproot from community and relocate to Darwin for a period of twelve months. The effect was a large dropout rate. As a result of the devastation caused by Cyclone Tracey in December 1974, although still taught by DCC staff, DCCs third year teacher education course was moved to Batchelor.

This dropout rate led to the trial of community-based teacher education program at Yirrkala in 1976 (White, 2005) and began what is heralded as BIITE's, indeed the NT's, most successful Aboriginal teacher education program, the Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATE). The success of the early RATE programs inspired the establishment of other onsite programs and by the late 1970s programs had commenced in eight other communities. In its initial stages, RATE was a first year, tertiary enabling type program, and the campus-based residential program continued (Uibo, 1993). Another impact of the off-campus nature of the RATE programs was the need to strengthen curriculum and the development of a range of resources to assist the lecturers based in communities with quality assurance and delivery of a course with common content and methodology.

The programs themselves were developed in an era when tertiary institutions self-regulated and there is

a sense (Kluken 2013; Pitman, 2013), that the *what* was becoming to be driven now by the *how and why*, giving space for Aboriginal languages and knowledges to be to be included as curriculum. By 1978 there were fourteen trained Aboriginal teachers in the NT. Much of this development was informed by the experience of educators working in New Guinea and relocating back to Australia post its independence in 1975 (Pitman, 2013).

Decade 3: the 1980s: teacher education as bicultural education

RATE fulfilled three primary functions:

1. the first years of pre-service Teacher Education for Aboriginal educators who for a range of social, cultural and political reasons needed to remain in and of their community

2. in-service training where professional development with a pedagogical focus was aligned to accredited training requirements

3. a forum to create curriculum as pedagogical exchange (Reaburn, 2012, p. 2).

As the RATE course content was designed around real and immediate classroom and community issues, students thought and spoke in their own language. In addition tutors were part of the school staff enabling the relationships between the students, the school and teacher education staff to be very strong creating optimal conditions for and immediate and easy transfer between theory and practice. In this environment students succeeded and RATE programs proliferated.

> RATE Stage 1 Lecturers usually worked with four part-time programs at one time – running a community based workshop in each community each term and bringing all four programs into a central place (Batchelor, Alice Springs or a large community) for a combined workshop once a term. Between these workshops the Tutor was responsible for ensuring the students completed post-workshop tasks (research, academic and teaching) and

prepared tasks for the next workshop. Lecturers met at Batchelor College once a term for planning and curriculum development. All workshops were recorded in book form and kept at Batchelor College as resources for other Lecturers (Priestley, 2013).

Although BIITE became a College of Technical and Further Education in 1979, it was still under the control of the Northern Territory Department of Education. In 1980, proposals were made to deliver a teacher education course leading to an Associate Diploma of Teaching after three years of training and a Diploma of Teaching after four years. Despite being approved by the Council for Advanced Awards and the Northern Territory Teaching Service Commissioner, the Diploma was rejected by the Minister for Education on the basis that there would be only one Teacher Education provider (DCC) and that Aboriginal people who wanted a teaching qualification had to be 'equal and the same' (Stanton, 1992). Tentative moves for Batchelor to diversify its offerings were met with the same resistance. In 1983, Bachelor's Principal, with experience supporting self-determination in Papua New Guinea, facilitated the establishment of first Council of Batchelor College (advisory to the Secretary of the Department of Education) and a Board of Studies to advise the Council on academic matters. Apart from two students, the Council had only one Aboriginal member (the Chair of the NT Indigenous Advisory Committee Feppi) and initially there was no appetite to increase the proportion of Aboriginal members (Ingram, 2014).

To assist navigate a course of action, assistance was sought from Deakin University to evaluate the teacher education program in preparation for its reaccreditation in 1985. It was an 'assisted self-evaluation' which engaged the staff in thinking about what a quality teacher education program would look like.

1983 saw Batchelor's move to offer a fourth year of training to diploma level rejected and three-year Aboriginal Schools Teaching Certificate was replaced with a three-year Associate Diploma of Teaching (Aboriginal

Schools). The qualification was restricted, meaning successful graduates could teach Aboriginal children only and there was no opportunity for promotion.

By 1985, there were around 80 students in the campus-based residential program, with three or four graduates a year, and 75 students in eleven RATE programs. Given the lack of prior student access to secondary schooling and that the Assistant Teachers who were students of the RATE programs worked full time, it continued to be the equivalent of pre-tertiary enabling program (Baumgart et al., 1995; Ingram, 2004; White, 2005). The attrition rate reduced from over 50 percent to 35 percent. Concurrently the teacher education program itself continued to be developed. Later RATE expanded to include what was then called Stage 2, the equivalent of a first year course. In addition, the campus-based program shifted to a mixed-mode approach, where students lived on community and travelled to a BIITE campus or centrally located communities for workshops. This shift in program delivery was an important educational (as well as social and cultural) development.

The immediate applicability in their community schools of what the students were studying was central to the training provided (as it was in the other areas of training and education that we took on). All students were required to do at least 10 hours per week in the classroom in addition to the off-the-job training provided for an hour or two a day in the community through co-operation with school staff. But more than this, "both ways" education requires that the student be able to draw on both western orientated academic knowledge and the knowledge and educational practices of their community and cultural heritage (Ingram, 2014).

However despite its success (compared to the high failure rate at DCC) the homesickness being experienced by the Batchelor campus-based students (Ober, 2001) meant a growing attrition rate (Uibo, 1993). In 1986 RATE included a program for Assistant Teachers working in very remote

Homeland Centres in North East Arnhem Land and by 1987 enrolments in the teacher education program had reached 150.

The same Deakin University staff who had done the earlier evaluation conducted an evaluation of the RATE program in 1985 and 1986 (Kemmis, 1988). The combination of DCC refusing to hand over delivery of Stage 4 (it was then the third and last year of teacher education qualification), and mounting pressure coming from Batchelor's Associate Diploma graduates growing frustration at their inability to complete their 'equal but same' study at DCC, (renamed at this stage Darwin Institute of Technology (DIT), now CDU) meant that students could not break through the promotional ceiling imposed by their restricted qualification. What resulted was a partnership between Batchelor and Deakin University to deliver Deakin's primary teacher education degree. The course became known as the Deakin-Batchelor Aboriginal Teacher Education (DBATE) program.

In securing this alternative partnership, the desire was to have a program that was "… respectful of Aboriginal peoples' right to self-determination" (McTaggart, 1987, p. 10). It was designed on the principles and practices established through the RATE program and strengthened by the assisted self-evaluation which engaged Batchelor staff and students (Kemmis, 1988) in reflecting on the *what* and *how* a 'both ways' course methodology and content could be like. From 1986 –1988 the partnership between Batchelor and Deakin University enabled 25 Associate Diploma of Teaching (Aboriginal Schools) graduates to complete their final year of teacher training. They were awarded a Batchelor of Arts (Education) by Deakin University.

Despite receiving strong criticism from quarters in the Northern Territory (Henry, 2014; Ingram, 2014) the course could, using an approach which reflected and respected the linguistic and cultural knowledge bought to the course by the students, legitimately claim to be at the same standard of the mainstream teacher education courses. It did much to ameliorate the constant challenges regarding the quality of the BIITS teacher education program offering. Importantly it also modelled to other teacher education institutions the *what* and *how* of a highly successful approach to teacher education for Aboriginal educators.

Nine graduates of DBATE went on to become principals of the schools in their communities and the influence these educators had on Aboriginal education in their communities as role models and locating the place of Aboriginal pedagogy as an integral part of the curriculum left a remarkable legacy. Other graduates met with resistance back in their community schools as their aspirations to leadership positions met with resistance and they left education. Many went on to be successful in other careers.

> They were our role models for our communities someone that we can look up to. They played a very important role in political times but they went through this, they have survived. This because they had hope and vision, bridge builders, they devoted their lives as much as possible. They are passionate teachers all in the name of EDUCATION (Yunupingu, 2014).

By 1988, Batchelor had achieved its own nationally registered course, the Diploma of Teaching, an unrestricted award built on the principles and practices of both RATE and DBATE with short intensive workshops on campus where students developed action research projects to be done within the community (Roche & White, 1990a).

Internal regulation of courses led to much internal contestation around what constituted a quality teacher education program and who decided, with Batchelor' s teacher education staff falling on one side or the other of debate between academic requirements, or 'standards'—

the *what*; and the need for self-determination —the *why* (Stewart, 1989). The debate was at times fierce and personal. They had a consistent theme:

> Both ways ... is almost (some would say undoubtedly) a contradiction in terms to have an apparent 'Aboriginalised' course of instruction in a centralised western-style institution. It is this apparent contradiction that is the central dilemma faced by all those black and white, who are part of Batchelor Institute, be they staff, student, or administrator. And yet is this dilemma that is the dynamic of the College that continually throws up the questions that have to be faced and answered, that challenge all preconceptions about teaching styles, content, and philosophy (Morgan, 1988, cited in Ingram, 2004, p. 136).

This was the decade where Batchelor Institute worked to embed Aboriginal ways of teaching and learning in its programs, actively working to shape the *what* of programs. The problem-posing approach used in the RATE and DBATE curriculum allowed the program to draw on student Aboriginal knowledges and on the western academic traditions and address real issues that were current and relevant in the experiences of the students. From this, students were able to develop their own educational philosophy and praxis (Ingram, 2014). It was also an approach which gave more flexibility for community-based education and an approach to Aboriginal teacher education strongly supported by Aboriginal educators who understood and articulated clearly what they wanted and why. For example, one Homeland Centre Assistant Teacher /RATE participant noted:

> Through RATE, we Yolŋu see our chance of getting loose and getting rid of the harness and the bridle that the Balanda has long used to steer us in the direction that they wanted us to go and that is the way of Balanda. Through this type of training we have a chance of getting educational skills so

that we can work in our communities and put our qualifications and what we've learnt into use in our Homeland communities. We Yolŋu would like to gather enough understanding and knowledge about Balanda law and system so as to understand and live with both laws and worlds .... . This will also make communications better between Yolŋu and Balanda (Ngurruwutthun, cited in Roche & White, 1990b).

In response to the national push for 1000 Aboriginal teachers in Australian schools by 1990 The Northern Territory committed to having 100 Indigenous teachers in classrooms (Northern Territory Government, 1987).

Decade 4: the 1990s: the beginning of the change: funding cuts bring changes

Despite challenges, the 1990s saw a period of strong support through the NT Department of Education and close collaboration between lecturers and departmental staff. From 1990 - 1992 the Northern Territory Department provided Batchelor with Commonwealth funding, and housing for 20 classroom teachers to act as tutors to Assistant Teachers who were also teacher education students in identified communities (Northern Territory Government, 1992, p. 8). Teacher education courses led to the awards of Diploma of Teaching and the Associate Diploma of Teaching and the accreditation of a Diploma (and Associate Diploma) of Education (Early Childhood). Batchelor, in partnership with Catholic Education in WA extended its teacher training reach across to three communities in WA.

The year 1990 had almost 40 students graduate from the Associate Diploma of Teaching.

> Central to this challenge is the provision of courses which attempt to engage students in the task of developing appropriate responses to issues of cultural survival, maintenance, renewal and

transformation. At the same time the courses seek to facilitate access, equity and social justice within the context of the Australian and international social, political and economic order (Batchelor College, 1993, p. 11).

Curriculum development was informed by this, taking a negotiated approach that embedded action research problem posing problem solving approaches to achieve a program that was:

• student centred

• build on experiences of the learners

• balance content and process

• real life problems and issues used (Batchelor College, 1991b, p. 18).

In 1993, 250 new applications for enrolment in Batchelor's teacher education courses could not be accepted due to funding constraints (Batchelor College, 1992, p.11).

In 1995, a one year Graduate Certificate and a two year Graduate Diploma of Educational Administration were developed. They were "... designed primarily to meet the needs of Batchelor graduates seeking to advance their careers through attaining senior teaching positions ..." (Batchelor College, 1995, p. 29).

The programs of the 1990s had with them perhaps the most promise of all the eras. The *what* contained strategies to ensure that Aboriginal knowledges were embedded within them and the *how* was negotiated in collaboration with communities. Many students were able to study on country. Not surprisingly such approaches gave space and Aboriginal voices were strong in relation to teacher education.

> RATE community-based study helps us explore and strengthen our knowledge and understanding of our Djalkiri (foundation), our community, our languages and learning and education in our community: by sharing and discussing our educational research with Mala leader students.... tutors and lecturers; by developing our confidence as Yolŋu teachers

and our knowledge and skills as Yolŋu teachers; by practicing ideas from local people about children and learning/teaching in the classroom ... Batchelor College has to make sure that the Teacher Education Program works to support us in achieving these goals. It must make sure that the interests that this reaccreditation process serve are our Yolŋu interests and not Balanda interests (Batchelor College, 1991a, p. i).

To me Batchelor College is a tertiary institution where Yolŋu people meet and learn together for the development of our own communities, promoting self-management and self-determination (Garnggulkpuy, 1991).

This high level of collaboration between agencies, communities and Batchelor, combined with an appropriate curriculum approach and the implementation of community-based learning make this decade with the strongest evidence of quality.

Pressure from a number of quarters meant that programs become centralised in the late 1990s, changing their very nature and impacting on their relevance. The federal government was adding pressure to reduce the travel budget and the schools were increasingly reluctant to make teachers available to work with Batchelor students. It was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit sufficient quality staff who were willing to be based in communities and it was easier to recruit and base staff in regional centres where their families could attend school, find work and have them travel out to communities. Further funding cuts in the TAFE sector in the late 1990s brought about the end of the community-based tutors fundamental to the success of the RATE programs (Ingram, 2014).

As the programs became more rigorously framed by the newly developing Higher Education rules, changes in funding to support the geographical and sociocultural tyrannies of distance, and Teacher professional standards became more explicit, so remote enrolments and completions declined and the progression rates faltered.

Decade 5: the 2000s: the rise of VET

One of the impacts of a more regulated higher education system has been the development of graduate attributes within each higher education organisation. At BIITE, these graduate attributes encompass both-ways as an approach to lifelong learning, a strong sense of identity, and a sense of community responsibility (Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, 2007). These attributes, and their previous iterations, have guided the curriculum development at BIITE, including the degree program that was reaccredited in 2001 for implementation in 2002.

The degree programs were each separated into two courses: a three-year Bachelor of Teaching, which was the professional requirement in the Northern Territory at the time of accreditation, and a fourth-year standalone Bachelor of Education to meet the anticipated professional shift to the requirement of a four-year

qualification for teaching. The Bachelor of Teaching was a three-year degree with exit points at first year (Diploma) and second year (Advanced Diploma) providing Assistant Teachers with pay progression points. It was intended that "students should be competent classroom practitioners by the end of year 3" (Batchelor Institute Education Course Development Committee, 2001, p. 1).

These exit points were complemented by the development in 2002 of a new VET course – the Certificate III in Indigenous Education Work designed specifically for Assistant Teachers and developed and accredited by Batchelor and the Northern Territory Government. Up until this point, the Teacher Education journey had been framed as a continuous journey from Assistant Teacher to Teacher. The split between VET and Higher Education saw the rise of an era of external regulation and standards. The following table presents an overview of the programs from 1985 to 2002, illustrating this shift.

Table 2.2 **The Primary degree programs 1985–2002**
(sourced from Batchelor Institute documentation)

AQF Levels [2]	AT career structure level[3]	Stage of course [4]	Year value of qualific-ation[5]	1985[6]	1991	1997	2002
1							2000 C1-SWE[7]
2							2000 C2-SWE C2-CSCS
3	1						2000 C3-IEW C3-CSCS
4	2	Stage 1	0	Statement of Attainment Stage 1 (Primary)	Statement of Attainment Stage 1 (Primary)	Course in General Education	2000 Preparation for Pre-Tertiary Studies (Education) Certificate IV in Indigenous Education Work
5	3	Stage 2	1	Statement of Attainment Stage 2 (Primary)	Statement of Attainment Stage 2 (Primary)	Statement of Attainment Stage 1 (Primary)	Diploma of Teaching (Primary) (Year 1 exit point)
6	4	Stage 3	2	Associate Diploma of Teaching (Aboriginal Schools)	Associate Diploma of Teaching (Aboriginal Schools)	Diploma of Teaching (Primary)	Advanced Diploma of Teaching (Primary) (Year 2 exit point)
7		Stage 4	3		Diploma of Teaching (Primary)	Advanced Diploma of Teaching (Primary)	Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) (Year 3 exit point)
8			4			1996 Graduate Diploma in Educational Administration	Bachelor of Education (Primary) (Year 4 exit point) — Graduate Diploma in Management and Administration

(Source: Batchelor Institute records 1985–2002)

(Bat, 2010, p. 117)

In her research into the framework for considering the quality of Higher Education programs of this, Bat (2010) noted that the role of learning on country was pivotal in the formation of a learning identity, particularly for students living in remote NT. Many shifted to VET which supported on-the-job and on-country learning and there is a marked decrease in HE enrolments (Bat, 2010) a trend which continues to the present day. In VET, the Indigenous Education Work (IEW) programs continued to expand with programs being run as a combination of workshop and on-the-job learning. The partnership between BIITE, schools and education jurisdictions saw a rise in enrolments and a shared expectation that all Aboriginal paraprofessional and classroom support staff would engage in these programs.

From 2008-2010, a partnership between Batchelor and the NT Department of Education, gave rise to a higher education collaboration designed to upgrade the existing teaching qualification of twenty-two remote Aboriginal teachers to a full four years of qualification. Following a successful approach from the past, the Indigenous Teacher Upgrade Programme (ITUP) was run as an in-service program with most of the teachers continuing their full time jobs as teachers and studying part time. The program was highly successful, with fourteen completing the upgrade. Two are now co-principals in their respective community schools.

> BIITE gives us opportunity to learn and enrich our learning, to educate us and build our understanding in education and what lies underneath the history of colonisation, so that we may teach our children to raise their voice, to stand tall and proud and have the knowledge to debate the system that, exits today (Whitehead, 2011).

Clearly, the shift away from community-based teacher education programs in the HE programs was having an impact. Graduate attributes were now the norm, as were professional standards for teachers; accreditation of teaching degrees became regulated by the teacher registration authority and the '*what*' of the higher education programs was tightly controlled.

In the later years of the decade this high level of regulation shifted to the VET space. Up until 2008, Batchelor held the VET course accreditation for the Assistant Teachers, and worked to the ever increasing regulation of the VET system. However with control over the content, Batchelor was still able to respond effectively to the needs of the remote school paraprofessionals. In 2008, the first Education Support course was released in the National Training Package for Community Services and Batchelor was forced into delivering a program that was developed for the national Indigenous Education Worker. This nationalisation, combined with the expansion of regulation in the VET jurisdiction a new tension developed in the VET space, with the '*what*' now taking precedence.

Decade 6: the 2010s: Back to the future?

This decade continues to present complex challenges for the delivery of a quality teacher education for Aboriginal educators. The increased regulation of the teaching education, the teaching profession and VET means all programs exist in a tightly regulated environment with little time, space or encouragement for innovation. The consequence was that Batchelor found itself unable to continue with HE programs on its own. In 2011, BIITE entered a collaborative partnership with Charles Darwin University to establish the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE) based in Darwin. Batchelor continues to deliver HE programs through the ACIKE partnership but no longer has any accreditation authority for the degree programs themselves. The BIITE ACIKE teacher education program is a campus-based workshop model with students engaging in a blended learning approach with online learning supplemented by workshops.

The establishment by the NT Department of Education in 2011 of employer Professional Standards for Assistant Teachers has brought its own challenges and combined with their and Batchelor's ongoing 'stop start trickle of funds' (Ingram, 2004), collaborative approaches to professional development/accredited training are under constant pressure. The result is that despite knowing '*what*' is required for quality education programs to be delivered (Ingram, 1987) Batchelor's capacity to deliver appropriate (community-based) and relevant (both-ways) HE and Education Support VET courses is severely compromised. In an increasingly regulated, fiscally tight environment, the co-operation, mutual support between agencies and co-ordination of efforts required to properly serve remote Aboriginal educators, the common ground, has all but disappeared. The net effect is a decrease in VET and HE enrolments from remote communities. Everyone loses.

Looking back looking forward

Teacher education at Batchelor Institute has been a rich, contested journey of development and delivery that began with the early training courses for Aboriginal school paraprofessionals in the 1960s in Darwin. The *why* and the *how* of the teacher education program over time has responded to the twists and turns in politics, policies and programs of (and between) Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments; difficult relationships between Batchelor with the other public provider of teacher education based in the Northern Territory (Charles Darwin University and its forerunners); variable relationships with the Northern Territory Department of Education and all the associated vagaries of allocation and distribution of resources; conflicts within and between individuals based on their philosophical differences in perspective; and the changes and developments to the higher education and vocational education sectors.

It is a journey of persistence and resistance. It has been a hard fought struggle for Batchelor to keep its unique identity and guard the space for Aboriginal languages

and cultures to be counted. With strength of voice deep rooted in relationships with Aboriginal people across remote Australian communities, BIITE has been able to stand and fight for programs that are responsive and relevant to the needs of Aboriginal educators.

However, it is the view of the authors that, in its efforts to meet external demands and requirements and be able to keep the teacher education programs going, BIITE has moved away from the very strengths that drew Aboriginal people to enrol in its courses. There is a need to reengage with the interface of the two radically different social and cultural systems in geographically diverse and often difficult remote environments, paying attention to the consistent Aboriginal voice of the Northern Territory by pushing the boundaries of the political and mainstream education regulatory systems and finding the balance.

> Our job as educators is to convince the people who control mainstream education that we wish to be included. Until this happens, reconciliation is an empty word and an intellectual terra nullius (Marika-Mununggiritj, 1998, p. 9).

This chapter concludes with a call for Batchelor Institute (and other stakeholders) to recommence the conversation with the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory; to find the courage to lead the repositioning of teacher education in both the VET and HE spaces back to a place of true negotiation and collaboration; back to a strength base of knowledge, skills and experience and in doing so create a new common ground from which to continue the journey.

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Critical Race Theory and Indigenous higher education: towards a remaking of the university

Steven Larkin

Introduction

This chapter will focus on a potential future direction for Indigenous higher education in Australia. The promotion of these ideas is contextualised within themes of leadership, capacity building and innovation and what the next forty years might look like for Indigenous Australia and the Australian academy if these ideals are realised. There are certain strategic considerations that will structure the terrain upon which such ideas will materialise. These include: how do we encourage Indigenous primary and secondary students to aspire to university study? How do we maximise the learning outcomes for Indigenous students undertaking studies in higher education? How can we provide an optimal learning environment for these students? How can we ensure the fulfilment of their potential as students, professionals, and as future leaders? How can we *position* Indigenous staff, students and graduates as leaders in their fields? How can we work together to achieve higher education outcomes in Indigenous higher education? And how do we support staff, in particular, Indigenous staff in these endeavours?

The struggle of all Indigenous leaders in higher education is to position these challenges as core business within the university in which they work. Acknowledging that respective approaches to addressing the issues of Indigenous higher education will differ from one institution to the next, overall they continue to be the necessary activities, and one hopes all university Senior Executives would strive to achieve break-through results as part of their performance. Institutional efforts to address these challenges must take account of the prospect of sector de-regulation and accompanying increased competition in the broader policy-political higher education environment. This requires inter alia, that university brand quality becomes paramount in the higher education market, and that the quality of these brands as perceived by Indigenous Australia will be largely determined on how well universities respond to the specific issues outlined above.

Consequently, the significance of the Indigenous student experience at universities will become more influential given the positioning of students as primary consumers in the higher education market. Student choice in the market will determine – and be determined by – what constitutes 'best buys' in terms of quality and cost benefit. These issues present a particular level of non-commercial complexity for Indigenous students and staff who both study and work in Australian universities. This complexity arises from the racialised nature of Australian universities, as characterised by the asymmetrical race relations manifested in the white dominance of the institution.

This chapter firstly provides a brief overview of the nature of Indigenous participation in Australian higher education. I then discuss the nature of how this data profile is generally understood by the broader academy in ways that undermine Indigenous aspirations and perpetuate sub-optimal outcomes for Indigenous scholars. I then introduce Critical Race Theory (CRT) as an alternative framework for generating different explanations for Indigenous educational disadvantage, and outline the elements of a conceptual approach informed by CRT that could guide and direct professional practice, core activities and program delivery at higher education institutions across Australia.

The current profile of Indigenous Australian participation in higher education provides the evidence Indigenous of disadvantage as a consequence of asymmetrical race relations. The Behrendt Report (2012) summarised the following in schools:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' retention rates are lower than non-Indigenous students

• They are less likely to finish grade 12 (half the rate of non-Indigenous students)

• They are less likely to gain a university entrance score

In higher education as students, the report showed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders:

• Are less likely to participate in university

• Are less likely to be admitted to university on the basis of their prior educational attainment

• Have lower retention rates

• Have lower completion rates

Further, as staff in higher education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

• Are more likely to be in non-academic positions

• Are less likely to be in higher-classification academic positions

• Are less likely to be employed in a research-only function

In higher education research, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

• Make up 1.1% of HDR students at university

• Are 0.8% of all HDR completions (in 2010)

• Have slightly lower HDR retention rates

In accounting for these disparities, it is argued that mainstream explanations of the Indigenous experience of disadvantage reference master narratives created, maintained and justified by ideologies of racism (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 27; Espino, 2012; Abrams & Moio, 2009; Hylton, 2005). Racism provides the context and content for the perpetuity of these master narratives that seek to explain low educational achievement and lack of success by Indigenous students through primarily non-racial ways that are however structured by the application of racist logics (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Espino, 2012).

The 2011 Report by the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) confirmed the existence of racism in the Australian academy based on testimony from Indigenous staff that

they continued to experience racist incidents within the Australian universities (2011, p. 3). The report specifically noted that "Australian universities are recognized as the bastion of teaching, learning and research", and it also concluded that "racial discrimination can and does infiltrate the higher education sector".

Unsurprisingly, the NTEU study reported the existence of negative Indigenous stereotypes in Australian universities. For example, one respondent said:

> [I'm] often thought to be stupid or of low intelligence due to Aboriginality. [I'm] thought to have somehow cheated in gaining certificates or degrees because [I'm] Aboriginal (2011, p. 26).

Relatedly, Essed (1991) reported the dominance of eurocentrism in her research in the United States and The Netherlands, which dictated that the normative values of the dominant white culture operate to ensure cultural difference was overemphasized and then conceptualized hierarchically. For example, Essed found that attributed white values such as reason were assigned a superior status to those of emotion or passion which are racially attributed as characteristic of blackness and of gender. This implies that Indigenous students and staff are required to adapt to 'superior' white values if they want to progress in the mainstream academy.

Another NTEU survey respondent recounted their experience with racism as:

> Bullying by non-Indigenous academics, information withheld regularly because 'we' don't need to know details or it is considered too difficult for us to understand. Very racist comments about activities such as having the building smoked – it was dismissed as superstitious nonsense (2011, p. 29).

Contextualising Essed's conclusions in an Australian context, white staff are often incapable of understanding the world from an Indigenous point of view, instead relying on and/or bringing in a non-Indigenous perspective. This prevents non-Indigenous people from being systematically confronted with Indigenous

perceptions of reality (Essed, 1991). This is demonstrated in the following account from another Indigenous respondent:

> Many non-Indigenous people don't recognize or respect Indigenous knowledges, culture, protocols or people. This occurs on a continuing basis at work. It may be overt or covert institutional systemic racism that permeates in different forms or methods (2011, p. 27).

This can create a cognitive barrier for Indigenous people when they want to communicate important messages to non-Indigenous people - the common experience being one of having to repeat oneself time and time again in order to be acknowledged and understood (Essed, 1991). It generates an Indigenous perception of being 'passively tolerated' and a perceived indifference by non-Indigenous academics to the intellectual contributions of Indigenous scholars (Essed, 1991). This neglect can be non-verbal at times so it becomes difficult to address. As one respondent in the NTEU (2011) study recounted

> It has been assumed in some forums that I cannot have anything significant to contribute unless it is Aboriginal or cultural. My standing as an academic…and numerous scholarly outputs is continually ignored, I am assumed to have no expertise except Indigenous 'cultural' and then I am assumed to know everything (NTEU, 2011, 28).

According to Essed, the management of cultural difference can take several forms. Essed (1991) found that black issues were rarely tabled or problematized, largely because black issues were understood as only being relevant to black people. This was reiterated by another respondent in the NTEU study who reported:

> [I have] been ignored when Aboriginal affairs are discussed. Issues relating to Aboriginal affairs are deliberately left off meeting agendas (2011, p. 32).

In terms of pursuing Indigenous interests, the tendency has been for Indigenous people to not be taken seriously within the university. Plans and/or suggestions generated by Indigenous people are not heard, understood, or not acted upon. This occurs through what Essed (1991) refers to as a practice of repressive tolerance exercised by the white majority, so that an Indigenous view is not considered to be of any consequence.

Whilst these instances and examples are not exhaustive, they reflect a university culture that does not augur well for, or instil, confidence that Indigenous interests, issues and aspirations will be recognised, prioritised, understood or acted upon. However, the perpetuation of both an exclusion and subordination agenda means that non-Indigenous institutions like universities have not essentially changed the nature or structure of the asymmetrical race relations that occur within them. Although there have been some isolated examples of positive change, Indigenous people have generally not been included or represented in the normal fabric of university life at levels or in areas of responsibility consistent with their aspirations or interests. Consequently for Indigenous staff and students who access universities, nothing is to be taken for granted.

As stated earlier, a range of master narratives exist to account for white racial privilege in institutions such as universities, in ways that render such privilege as part of the natural order in the face of the breadth and depth – and indeed continuity - of Indigenous disadvantage (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, cited in Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Consequentially, the master narrative is one that justifies and rationalises the privileges of white, middle to upper class, heterosexual men and it achieves this by endorsing these subject positions as the "normative points of reference" on reality (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28; Yosso et al., 2001). These master narratives largely go unchallenged by most people in the white mainstream (with few exceptions) and only seem to face opposition by those who suffer as a consequence, i.e. Indigenous people. These stories are popularly received by dominant race group members as the most plausible accounts of racial inequality and

represent the 'so-called' natural order of the everyday (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The raced experiences of Indigenous people are erased and the experiences of white middle-upper class men are transposed as the de facto standard of identifying, prioritising and addressing all forms of subordination (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

As an example in the Australian context, Larkin (2013) demonstrated how mainstream explanations for low Indigenous unemployment participation rates in the Australian public service largely ignored any consideration of race and racism, and instead relied on Indigenous labour supply characteristics targeting Indigenous deficit and cultural liability as the dominant explanatory factors. Similarly the 2013 Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory (NT) made little reference to the impact and effects of race and racism in its analysis and subsequent recommendations, despite acknowledging that the situation for many Indigenous children in the NT education system had worsened since the last major review in 1999 (Wilson, 2013).

These (master) narratives are usually presented in ways that infer a neutrality and objectivity of perspective while simultaneously making implicit racial assumptions shaped by negative stereotypes about Indigenous people. Moreover, the standard majoritarian methodology is dependent on these stereotypes that directly and indirectly link Indigenous people with all that is 'bad' while reinforcing that white, middle-upper class people embody all that is 'good' (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 29). Essentially, in these master narratives, Indigenous people are described as less intelligent and irresponsible, while the white middle class are positioned as the converse.

Predictably, master narratives promote the idea of cultural assimilation as the answer for Indigenous 'failure'. Assimilation here means that Indigenous students must adopt the ways of the dominant white culture if they are to succeed in education and life more generally. These narratives therefore define a successful Indigenous student as an 'assimilated' Indigenous student (Solórzano

& Yosso, 2002). In this sense, reducing or rejecting the significance of race and racism in the discourse of Indigenous education provides the basis for master narratives to promote the insignificance of race as a factor in explaining Indigenous educational disparities. Culture becomes the new proxy for race and white privilege is maintained through notions of cultural inferiority.

An alternative model – Critical Race Theory

The Australian academy requires systemic transformation in order to better understand the effects of racism within its institutions. I propose that Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides a constructive framework from which to respond to the myriad of challenges posed by race and racism in Australian higher education. CRT provides a conceptual framework along with practical tools to approach these serious challenges. This call for CRT is not without precedent; a number of Australian scholars have similarly promoted CRT in education as well, such as McDonald (2003), Rudolph (2011), and McLaughlin and Whatman (2011).

What exactly is CRT? CRT draws on disciplines including sociology, history, feminist and post-colonial studies, economics, ethnic and cultural studies, "to analyse, deconstruct and transform for the better the relationship between race, racism and power" (Abrams & Moio, 2009, p. 250; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Yosso, 2005). In this sense, CRT is characterised "by a readiness to cross epistemological boundaries" (Gillborn, 2006, p. 10). CRT therefore represents "a strategy to foreground and account for the role of race and racism in education and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing and eliminating other forms of subordination" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 25). It provides a framework to explore and examine racism in society "that privileges whiteness as it disadvantages the (racial) other because of their blackness" (Hylton, 2008, p. 6) and provides a place of resistance to racism(s), "challenge[s] orthodoxies, canons and dogma" thereby

demonstrating the potential "to interrupt and transform social structures and racial power" to achieve "racial emancipation" (ibid, p. 6).

CRT has a number of main tenets to which its academics, researchers, practitioners and scholars ascribe:

1. The centralisation of race and racism

2. Commitment to challenging the dominant ideology

3. Commitment to social justice

4. Centrality of marginalised voices or the centrality of experiential knowledge

5. Transdisciplinarity

6. Interest convergence

1. Centralisation of race and racism

CRT has as its foundation that race and racism are "central, endemic, permanent and a fundamental part of defining and explaining how society functions" (Yosso, 2005, p. 73, Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Within this tenet, the interlocutory nature of oppressions is recognised, i.e. race cannot be theorised separate to class and vice versa (Hylton, 2008; Yosso, 2005; Ledesma & Calderon 2014; Gillborn 2006). The shift sought by educational theorists who engage with CRT is from a focus on questions of methodology to greater awareness of epistemologies as the means of better understanding the experiences of Indigenous Australians in society (Hylton, 2008; Gillborn, 2006), allowing exploration of forms of inclusion and exclusion, which "operate through the interplay of overt racist practice and implicit racialised coding" (Hylton, 2008; Yosso, 2005; Espino, 2012).

2. Challenging the dominant ideology

CRT refutes claims made by educational institutions toward objectivity, meritocracy, colour-blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity, and rejects notions of 'neutral' research or 'objective' researchers to reveal the nature of deficit-informed research that ignores, distorts or silences Indigenous epistemologies (Yosso, 2005; Ledesma & Calderon, 2015; Gillborn, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Espino, 2012). The focus on

colour-blindness is concerned with issues of liberalism, especially its ambivalence to matters of racism (Harper, 2012). The CRT perspective argues that such claims provide a subterfuge for the self-interest, power and privilege of the racially dominant group.

3. Commitment to social justice

CRT pursues an agenda of liberation and transformation of racial, gendered and classist oppressions. If it is to be valued as a politics of social change, the praxis of CRT must achieve social transformation and empower those who are oppressed to reform, among others, contemporary employment practices so that they value Indigenous people in academic leadership. There may be a discernible shift in policy discourses that would centre racism as the primary lever for the redistribution and/or reallocation of resources. In any case, historical notions of resource provision and the concept of a level playing field must be rejected and displaced by alternative paradigms that think through how the material differences between those disadvantaged in society can be balanced to ensure underlying ideologies of colour-blindness and associated institutional arrangements are made highly visible.

Accompanying this should be a critical ontology that ensures researchers, academic staff, managers and other leaders have an awareness of their racialised positionality and how their worlds have been structured accordingly. They must use this awareness as a starting point to apply ideas to how issues of racism and the distribution of power and resources marginalise the racial other and their position in major social structures such as universities. This would position these issues in the centre of their investigations, where they should be, rather than at the periphery.

4. Centrality of marginalised voices or the centrality of experiential knowledge

CRT privileges voices of colour (Abrams, 2009). It responds to how the dominant group's accounts of history routinely exclude racial and other minority perspectives

to justify and legitimise its power (Abrams, 2009). The silencing of alternative experiences minimises and obscures the dynamic of power and oppression (Abrams, 2009). CRT seeks to empower those normally excluded from the dominant perspectives to put forward views based on lived realities that have not been heard before (Hylton, 2008). These can involve counter-storytelling methodologies that centre black/racialised voices that present different and competing versions of reality to those that are often the prerogative of white social scientists and established epistemologies (Hylton, 2008).

If we are to target racism, a CRT viewpoint facilitates a clear understanding of major structures in management and administration of higher education. The counter narrative focuses on established power structures that underpin and maintain racism where liberal claims to neutrality, colour-blindness and universal truths are consistently ignored by mainstream theorists and analysts.

5. Transdisciplinarity

CRT eschews a mono-disciplinary, ahistorical approach to the analysis of race and racism and draws on scholarship from a range of disciplines such ethnic studies, feminist studies, sociology, history etc. CRT affirms both the complexity and inter-sectionality of various oppressions and understands a singular focus on race can mask other forms of exclusion (Abrams, 2009).

6. Interest convergence

CRT recognises that racism provides material and psychic advantage to the majority white race so the potential for change increases exponentially when the interests of the powerful (i.e. the white majority) happen to converge with those of the racially oppressed (Abrams, 2009). So how can CRT improve the futures of Indigenous people and their experiences of higher education and help us to better understand racialised, gendered and classed structures, processes, and discourses in Australian higher education?

There are specific areas of intervention provided by a CRT framework that are available to us in our efforts to better understand the impact of race and racism in universities and how we might respond to these challenges:

1. Critical race epistemology
2. Critical race methodology
3. Critical race pedagogy
4. Critical race curriculum
5. Critical race policy

I will briefly discuss these in turn.

1. Critical race epistemology

Where epistemology is the study of knowledge, CRT scholars in education are concerned with what counts as knowledge and explore how ways of knowing are privileged in the academy (Ladson-Billings, 2008; Yosso et al, 2001). In this field of activity, Indigenous people, students and staff are not seen as empty vessels but are recognised as knowledge holders.

A CR epistemology emphasises the inter-sectionality of the various forms of subordination and in doing so, further credentials the multiple knowledges held by Indigenous peoples (Ladson-Billings, 2008). In effect, a CR epistemology challenges research paradigms such as positivism that rely on the limited social, cultural and historical experiences of white people (Ladson-Billings, 2008; Gillborn, 2006). The use of counter story telling in activities such as research promotes stories of Indigenous people - whose experiences are often not told – and provides utility for exposing, analysing and challenging the prevailing master narratives of race privilege (Espino, 2012). Counter story telling facilitates an articulation of previously unheard stories of Indigenous people and their experiences of higher education and society, and this act in and of itself helps Indigenous peoples to resist acts of ongoing discrimination and oppression (Yosso et al, 2001; Gillborn, 2006; Ledesma & Calderon, 2015).

2. Critical race methodology

If methodology is the synthesis of theory and method (Yosso et al, 2001, p. 96), a CR methodology supplants traditional methodologies with a transformative agenda where knowledge production is directed at the determinants and conditions of human oppression, domination, suffering and deprivation and the addressing of these states of being (Ladson-Billings, 2008). Accordingly, a CR methodology seeks to "humanise quantitative data and to recognise the silenced voices in qualitative data" (Yosso et al, 2000, p. 96).

3. Critical race pedagogy

Within 'critical race pedagogy', pedagogy is the approach to teaching practice (Ladson-Billings, 2006). According to Yosso, "traditional pedagogies often marginalise students based on race and gender" amongst other forms of oppressions (2001, p. 96). CR pedagogy therefore recognises that power and privilege underpins all teaching and learning and therefore challenges the dominant white middle-class masculine privilege embedded in traditional pedagogical practices.

Current instructional strategies often presume that Indigenous students are deficient. This has led to ongoing efforts to control the risks associated with Indigenous deficit and failure to achieve some form of remediation. Embedded within a race-neutral perspective, deficiency is understood as an individual phenomenon so mainstream approaches to pedagogy manifest as a generic set of teaching skills that should work for all students. When these instructional strategies fail to achieve desired results, the pathology is inevitably located with the students, not the pedagogical techniques (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The objective of CR pedagogy is to create inclusive approaches that recognise and support spaces where Indigenous students can learn from culturally relevant pedagogies. CR pedagogy believes in the educability of all students (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Yosso, Villapanda, Bernal & Solorzano, 2001).

4. Critical race curriculum

Given that curriculum refers to the formal and/or informal methods of presenting knowledge, it usually takes the form of textbooks, courses and programs of study (Yosso, 2001, p. 97).

Unfortunately traditional curriculum can function not just to distort, omit and stereotype Indigenous knowledges and experiences, but also works to rationalise racial and gender inequality. CRT curriculum treats official curriculum as a non-Indigenous master script that silences multiple voices and perspectives whilst positioning white, middle to upper class male ideas as the standard knowledge required by students (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Yosso, Villapanda, Bernal, & Solorzano, 2001).

Master scripts work to ignore, silence or erase Indigenous stories that provide an alternative account of reality to that of the dominant cultural authority (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 18).

Colour-blindness has also impacted on curricula to present Indigenous people as a homogenised 'we' in an attempt to promote diversity (ibid). This can have the effect of - on the one hand - inculcating a common belief that 'we are all Australian', while reinforcing the colonialist logic that produces guilt in Indigenous students for failing to rise above their Indigenous status like most other groups (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 18).

5. Critical race policy

Where policies can be defined as a rule and guideline that is used to organise and regulate the functions of institutions, CRT policies steer away from historical approaches that emphasise Indigenous inferiority and instead construct policy from a position that regards Indigenous experiences as strengths from which to learn rather than as deficits that require correction (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Yosso, Villapando, Bernal & Solorzano, 2001).

Conclusion

It has not been my intent in this chapter to promote the idea that every racial disparity or negative experience an Indigenous person has on Australian campuses is attributable to racism. However, it would seem that nearly all higher education scholars and policy analysts rely on everything *but* racism when explaining, theorising and discussing the failure to achieve outcomes for Indigenous students at universities (Harper, 2012, p. 24). CRT offers both opportunities and challenges for those of us who work in higher education to make a difference for Indigenous students and staff. This chapter recognises that the call for a new direction through CRT does not occur in a context where there has been a paucity of effort but that many of us are and/or have been working in a number of these key areas for quite some time.

In my mind, CRT provides an exciting opportunity for the Indigenous academy to develop theoretical and practice orientated frameworks to not only critique existing Institutions in their management of dysfunctional race dynamics, but also presents a field of potential to instigate academic and corporate culture change within the academy. In doing so, it provides a foundation to challenge firstly, the standard common sense assumptions which underpin both non-racial explanations of racism in the academy, which consequently remains the site of much racism, and secondly, the mechanisms by which such explanations are legitimised (Gillborn, 2006). It allows each of us to develop our own particular approaches to dealing with the effects of race and racism in our respective universities providing we adhere to the underlying principles.

Finally, applying a CRT perspective to Indigenous higher education in Australia requires that such an approach maintains what Gillborn refers to as "a radical critical edge" (Gillborn, 2006, p. 7). The risk for CRT scholars in this field is the trap of placing their emphasis on system reform "while taking for granted the essential shape and character of the system itself" (Gillborn, 2006, p. 6). Pursuing a reform agenda is not without utility when it involves mapping the scale of inequality and the generation of local level approaches to improve the situation, but I echo Gillborn's counsel that CRT must also concern itself with "the most powerful forces operating at the societal level to sustain and extend these inequalities" or otherwise risk "tinkering with the system to make its outputs slightly less awful, but leaving untouched the fundamental shape, scale and purpose of the system itself" (Gillborn, 2006, p. 7). Our failure to seriously investigate and study racism and racist institutional norms will consign us to a trajectory where we will only study the 'symptom' (racial disparities) without understanding the 'disease' (racism and white supremacy).

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Being non-Indigenous in an Indigenous education space: Two perspectives on white privilege and the desire to move beyond mimicry

Eva McRae-Williams & Henk Huijser

Introduction

At the AIATSIS Conference in March of 2014, a key discussion emerged around Indigenous Studies and its position in the academy. Two of the keynote speakers at that conference (Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Martin Nakata) took up rather different positions in relation to this. Moreton-Robinson stressed the point that *all knowledge is racialised,* and that this needs to be acknowledged, and needs to be an integral part of the discussion *and* of Indigenous Studies itself. By contrast, Nakata seemed to suggest that there is a need to move beyond this discussion, and appeared to imply that this discussion prevents 'us' from moving forward. However, he was not entirely clear on how this could be achieved. Both Moreton-Robinson and Nakata work in mainstream universities where Indigenous Studies and Indigenous knowledges have a long history of being marginalised and/or 'tokenised'. Indigenous Studies academics in these settings are usually engaged in teaching a predominantly non-Indigenous student body and are often located or connected to peripheral university schools or Indigenous student support centres. Batchelor Institute presents a rather different context in this respect, with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students representing the whole of the student body. In contrast to the experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander academics in mainstream settings, here is a situation where predominantly (but not exclusively) non-Indigenous teaching and administration staff cater to a wholly Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cohort. In this context, what are the possibilities for learning, and what makes this space different from more mainstream institutions?

In this paper, we, as two non-Indigenous authors explore what the implications might be of engaging with diverse knowledges as racialised within the context of Batchelor Institute. In order to tease this out we have been inspired by, and will be drawing from, recent work by our colleague Kathryn Gilbey (2014). Of course we work on a daily basis with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at Batchelor Institute, and indeed we have regular discussions with those colleagues about the context in which we all work, including discussions about the meaning of 'both ways' and where the Institute (and Indigenous education more broadly) should be heading. However, rarely do we have in-depth conversations about white privilege and how it operates, even though it clearly permeates much of what we do, and it informs many of the organisational structures, processes and discourses within the Institute. Through engagement with Kathryn Gilbey's work, we will be sharing our own personal reflections on white privilege and Bhabha's (1994) concept of mimicry in order to raise questions and ideally open a new space for discussions on Batchelor Institute's espoused 'both ways' philosophy, whilst confronting the challenge of moving beyond the Institute as a site of interdiction.

Position 1: 'All knowledge is racialized' – Aileen Moreton-Robinson's position

As part of a Batchelor Institute cohort we had the privilege of attending the AIATSIS 50 year's celebration and Conference in Canberra. The experience provided us and our colleagues with fertile ground for reflecting on the unique position of Batchelor Institute in the Indigenous education landscape. Two of the keynote speeches particularly stimulated our critical reflections on the Institute's 'both-ways' philosophy and particularly our engagement in this space as non-Indigenous academics.

The first was by Aileen Moreton-Robinson who argued that 'all knowledge is racialised', and that that recognition should not be avoided within any Indigenous Studies agenda. This argument could be interpreted as an overstatement, as a position that overwhelms by locking us into an essentialised state of being with no way out. Indeed, Martin Nakata, in his own key note address raised Moreton-Robison's position as problematic, questioning where such a critical focus on the racialised nature of knowledge production ultimately leads to.

Yet as two non-Indigenous academics who have been involved in the Indigenous Studies space for some time, Moreton-Robinson's position continues to hold our interest. Rather than the acknowledgement that 'all knowledge is racialised' being essentially a dead end, we see it as a theoretical tool for understanding that can provide a productive challenge through continuing to force us to engage with the implications of racialised systems of thought and their structural accompaniments. Moreton-Robinson's (2011, p. 414) argument goes as follows:

> Patriarchal whiteness operates possessively as a raced and gendered epistemological *a priori* within knowledge production as universals, dominant norms, values and beliefs. Patriarchal whiteness is thus epistemologically and ontologically privileged but invisible within its socio-discursive regime capillarising through Australian disciplinary knowledges and modern colonial practices. [...] [Within this context] the social construction of Aboriginality violates our subjectivity by obliterating any trace of our different ontological and epistemological existences. [...] 'Aboriginal' signifies a commonality of shared conditions of colonisation but cannot fully capture our respective ontological, epistemological, axiological and cultural subjectivities.

The implication then is that even within the field of Indigenous Studies itself patriarchal whiteness is the underlying discursive regime that is always already

privileged. Such an argument raises significant challenges for some of our conceptualisations and metaphors for describing 'both-ways' at the Institute. For example, if 'both-ways' is metaphorically represented[1] as the meeting of two distinctly separate ways of knowing - the salt water and the fresh water for example, which entwine but maintain their own integrity to create new knowledge, the foam that sits on the surface (Wunungmurra, 1989; Marika-Munungiritj, 1991; Ober & Bat, 2007; Ober, 2009) – an assumption has already been made around the neutrality, impartiality or insignificance of the specific place of meeting. Moreton-Robinson's argument suggests that such an assumption of neutrality is naive and that, in terms of the theme of this book the 'ground' is always already racialised and therefore must be the starting point of any discussion, whichever way it goes. This fundamentally questions some of our common binary interpretations including assumptions regarding equivalence in power of 'both-ways' at the Institute. It raises questions about the nature of the 'common ground' and suggests that any attempt to look for it must first begin with an acknowledgement and exploration of the racialised nature of all knowledge within this space. It is not the common elements between equal knowledge systems but rather the racialised ground on which we are standing that becomes the focus of attention. Importantly, this racialised nature of all knowledge applies to 'both' in the 'both ways' context.

Yet this raises important questions regarding where such a focus would lead us, and how we could move beyond the identification and exploration of this highly racialised ground to see possibilities for, fundamentally dislodging

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1　It is important at this point to recognise that the 'both ways' concept at Batchelor Institute has a very strong Yolŋu influence and sense of ownership. While many at Batchelor Institute have embraced the concept as central to the Institute, it is still a contested concept and not everyone necessarily recognises it as a valid for the Batchelor context, including some of the Kungarakan custodians who work at Batchelor today.

this discursive regime to the point where Indigenous Studies becomes a new productive space, which is captured by the original 'both ways' Yolŋu metaphor of *ganma,* referring to the fertile potency of the place where fresh water and salt water come together (Christie, 2008; Stubbington & Dunbar-Hall, 1994).

Position 2: The Cultural Interface – Martin Nakata

At the AIATSIS Conference Martin Nakata challenged the usefulness of the racialised nature of knowledge being positioned as a primary place of exploration and a fundamental focus for Indigenous Studies agendas. Throughout his academic career Nakata continues to develop and argue for an alternative paradigm through his articulation of the concept of the Cultural Interface (Nakata, 2002; 2007; 2011). He explores ways to work through or around Moreton-Robinson's identified discursive regime in a productive way, with a specific focus on education and pedagogy. In his latest joined paper (Nakata, Nakata, Keech & Bolt, 2014), Nakata et al. focus on the complex entanglements that result from the convergences of Indigenous and Western knowledge and practice. There are two key parts to their argument, both of which are very relevant for our discussion here. Firstly,

> Teaching and learning that reinforces the binary oppositions of Indigenous-Western or coloniser-colonised or dominant-subordinated relies on and reproduces the simplification of Western knowledge influences and simplified explanations of Indigenous epistemologies that do not explore the complexities of either system or the historically layered interface between them with sufficient focus or rigour (Nakata et al., 2014, p. 13).

This is further developed through the second point, which is about the ways in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous students tend to be positioned in Indigenous Studies courses.

> Indigenous students are positioned as empowered by Indigenous worldviews, resistant to Western positions, and victims to be healed and affirmed through 'culturally safe' educational practices. Non-Indigenous students are positioned as neo-colonial identities, resistant to critical self-examination and Indigenous standpoints, and who need to undertake a journey of self-discovery and transition (Nakata et al., 2014, p. 13).

This leads to the crux of their argument which is that teaching and learning environments should neither be so safe nor so threatening that students' subjectivities are reduced to little more than that of victims or agents of ongoing colonialism on the basis of their 'raced' origins. In other words, Nakata et al. (2014) argue for a recognition of complexity and provide somewhat of a call to arms to engage with this complexity, which in essence is the complexity of the deeply entrenched discursive regime that Moreton-Robinson identifies. This is a crucial argument because it does not take *any* knowledge, nor knowledge systems, for granted, but rather urges *everyone* to continuously problematise *all* knowledges, and indeed to provide all students with the tools for such critical enquiry. This is not the same as ignoring historical legacies, nor the same as ignoring race as fundamental to the way knowledge is constructed in the Australian context. Quite the opposite, it is actually about *confronting* the recognition that 'all knowledge is racialised' through critical engagement yet with the aim of moving away beyond the trap of setting up binaries between knowledge systems.

Discussion

Both Moreton-Robinson and Nakata work in mainstream institutions where students are predominantly non-Indigenous. At Batchelor Institute, the context is

rather different, as all students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, while a majority of teachers are non-Indigenous, including us. This makes it an interesting case study, as the impact of Moreton-Robinson's discursive regime of patriarchal whiteness plays out in specific ways, but is nevertheless palpable. The more complex versions of the 'both-ways' philosophy espoused at Batchelor Institute are in principle closely aligned with Nakata's Cultural Interface. However, having been participants in numerous formal and informal staff workshops and discussions about 'both-ways' (that reflect current staff ratios with the majority of participants being non-Indigenous) there appears to be a continuous struggle to define what 'both-ways' means in theory and practice.

While it is the 'both-ways' philosophy which is the common ground on which we are to stand together at the Institute, once we find ourselves there, the ground becomes noticeably shaky, common approaches and interpretations are hard to identify, and challenges, confrontations and frustrations pervade. This in itself may not be problematic, and indeed it may be precisely the point, yet we often witness that these discussions and debates easily slip into frameworks founded on the binary oppositions that Nakata et al. (2014) warn against, which may be due to the term 'both-ways' implying always already a binary ('both' as opposed to 'multiple'). For example, differences between largely generalised Indigenous knowledge systems and Western knowledge systems, incompatibilities between them and compromises that could be made become a focus. This is not actually what the philosophy around 'both-ways' is about (Ober, 2009; Ober & Bat, 2007), but the term itself leaves it potentially open to such narrow interpretations in a way that the Cultural Interface may not. While the concept Cultural Interface may better capture the essence of the Institute's 'both-ways' philosophy, of strengthening students' (Indigenous) identities and exploring multiple ways of knowing, it is still to some extent just a tool for naming a space. Where this space is located, how it is

experienced, who sits within or outside of it and when, what critical practices it embraces and what approaches may evade it, seems to remain much harder to articulate. In addition, and to complicate matters even further, there are questions around those who engage in Indigenous Studies and their impact.

Judd (2014, p. 146) for example, points to an inherent paradox in Indigenous Studies: on the one hand "the interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary nature of contemporary Australian Indigenous studies makes this area of studies highly dynamic and innovative in a way that academic disciplines often are not". However, despite this interdisciplinary dynamism, he also argues that Indigenous Studies is "not the product of Indigenous traditions of knowledge, but rather those of Europe" (Judd, 2014, p. 148). In short, Judd worries about the theorising and 'writing back to empire', and how far removed this can sometimes be from everyday realities of many Indigenous people themselves. He usefully reminds us of the need for an "open-mindedness, a willingness to listen to, and be directed by the agendas of Indigenous peoples themselves, a commitment to commence a long-term relationship, and, above all, an honesty to admit that we don't know, [which] counts for just as much" (Judd, 2014, p. 158). As Judd argues, if we don't heed this warning, Indigenous studies runs the risk of becoming the new anthropology.

To illustrate the complexity of some of the arguments in this debate, we have chosen to engage with it through our own personal narratives and experiences. To help us extend our thinking and articulate our ideas we have engaged with Kathryn Gilbey's recently completed PhD thesis, *Privileging First Nations education: looking back to move forward* (2014). Gilbey (2014) through critical narrative and theoretical enquiry uses the concept of 'interdiction', along with other key concepts, to unpack how power operates and knowledges conflict within an Indigenous educational Institution. Her use of the concept of interdiction is an extension of Homi Bhabha's conceptualisation of the term as a "form of colonial

discourse that is uttered inter dicta: a discourse at the crossroads of what is known and permissible and that which, though known, must be concealed" (1994, p. 128). Gilbey provides a compelling argument that illustrates how whiteness centres itself within interdictory sites and how white privilege operates in practice and in everyday encounters. Gilbey (2014) argues that Batchelor Institute is a site of interdiction, where a battle to provide western education while affirming Indigenous identities is being fought. She uses the term interdiction in two related senses, both of which are relevant to our arguments:

> One pertaining to the contestation over the sacred sites of acceptable knowledge to be taught in educational institutions whether schools or tertiary institutes, the other pertaining to the denial of communications and materials for sustained effort leading to successful beachheads (Gilbey, 2014, p. 82).

Sometimes hidden from view, but powerfully operating within this institutional battle field, is a force that desires and subtly employs tactics to support the maintenance of white privilege and ignorance. Aligning with Moreton-Robinson's arguments, Gilbey highlights that the institutional field, the ground on which the battle is being fought, is not neutral territory, but instead is always already racialised, something which is often erased from the equation by stealth.

Gilbey, through looking back to move forward, concludes her thesis with 12 principles to challenge and guide further productive work in the field of First Nations education where Indigenous cultures, traditions, knowledges and ontologies remain at the core. Perhaps not surprisingly, the two principles which most grabbed our attention were two principles that directly related to our non-Indigenous experience and positioning:

Principle 3: White privilege and all its structural accompaniments must be made obvious, discussed and rectified as appropriate.

Principle 5: Introduce the concept of mimicry as an outcome of the assimilative intent of western education for Indigenous students and debate this concept with students and staff (Gilbey 2014, p. 279).

The following two narratives engage with the above principles and explore from our positions of white privilege the challenges associated with moving beyond the battles playing out in this 'site of interdiction'. The narratives, and this paper more generally, are also a practical and direct response to principle seven, which recommends that, "staff [should] collectively talk honestly about their cultural conditioning, their need for cultural competency learning and how their cultural conditionings influence their roles within the organisation" (Gilbey 2014, p. 280).

Eva's Narrative

As a 5th generation white Australian, with Scottish heritage, a farming background and a predominantly middleclass upbringing, what would it take for me to acknowledge, challenge and change a regime of patriarchal whiteness that privileges some and disenfranchises/disempowers others? Having two university educated parents, a somewhat uninterrupted journey through formal western education to well-paying work, a house mortgage and an unquestioned right to citizenship, what does it mean for me to participate at the cultural interface with integrity?

Gilbey (2014) has proposed that in Indigenous education spaces "white privilege and all its structural accompaniments must be made obvious, discussed and rectified as appropriate." Surrounded (and influenced) by dominant cultural regimes that define and structure accountability, standards and expectations, the Institute itself does not sit outside a highly racialised space, but is firmly embedded within one. If we were to embrace Gilbey's principle such an obviousness would have to be at the forefront and could not be blurred by a simple reference to doing things 'both-ways' with an assumption of power equalities. Similarly, the fact that

the majority of teaching and other staff at the Institute are of non-Indigenous heritage, many of whom have historically benefited and continue to derive privileges from established racialised systems, would have to be acknowledged and likewise discussed as a starting point.

Yet what does this mean in practice? As one of these non-Indigenous majority who has been privileged to maintain a position at the Institute for some time, I have been and continue to be on this journey of acknowledgement and discussion. This has involved a slow awakening to how racialised regimes influence structures that we engage with every day, both the public institutions we work in and the private institutions that influence how we think and behave. Personally, this process, of the increasing visibility of white privilege and its structural accompaniments, has involved a willingness on my part to acknowledge this huge wall of ignorance. This is a wall that I am both unconsciously and consciously invested in; it is a wall that seems to rebuild itself every time I look away. This solid structure hides the horizon, safeguarding my comfortable position of power. By providing me with protection it enables me to embrace inherent beliefs around the superiority of my own ways of being, knowing and doing. This is a wall that naturalises a certain form of cultural dominance, hiding the racialised nature of societal structures. Structures that when not made obvious, I can comfortably benefit from, not simply through my 'white skin' but through the educational and wealth advantages a racialised system has provided to some and not to others.

It is widely acknowledged, that this critical opening of eyes to 'white privilege' has a valuable purpose (Jensen, 2005). Helms (1990) has argued it is only when whiteness and its privileges are fully examined by white people that they are able to recognise their position in the racial order, and in my words, look beyond walls of assumed superiority. Personally this awakening has enabled me to more deeply question the assumptions that uphold certain values, rules, benchmarks and standards. I can at times now see room for having high standards and

quality processes that are different, that foster diversity, rather than simply normalise and conform to a dominant cultural regime. After these moments, I go back to my desk feeling my white privilege and worrying about how I am imposing and reinforcing this privilege.

But the moments pass, the wall begins to re-build itself, and before I know it I am back in a place of ignorance and arrogance and often even being rewarded for it. At these times, whether I am wearing the hat of program coordinator, lecturer or researcher I can become all about rules, standards and "progress" i.e. why can't those Others just not be more like 'us'? Or - how can I, as the benevolent good person that I am, support them to become more like me? This nicely draws attention to another of Gilbey's (2014) principles, "introducing the concept of mimicry as an outcome of the assimilative intent of western education for Indigenous students and debate this concept with students and staff" (p. 279), as it is mimicry that underlies my above reflection. Homi Bhabha (1997) has described the discourse of mimicry as stemming from the coloniser's desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, a subject of comfortable difference that is almost the same but not quite. So we reach again, another moment, a small hole in the wall. I want to 'help' them to get 'there', but this 'there' is really always at least one step behind me. Because if real power was on the table, really valuing difference or diversity was embraced, what would this mean for me? And here is the crux of my privileged position: at the end of the day I can choose to walk away from this space with little, if any, damage to my economic or social position.

What I am pointing to here is that by embracing Gilbey's principles, it isn't as Lampert (2003, p. 25) suggests "the 'world' or some vague thing called 'society' that needs to be changed," rather the change that needs to be embraced is embodied in our non-Indigenous selves. Without even attempting to unpack how such a process of awakening could be supported for non-Indigenous staff at the Institute, there is also the question of how such a journey would influence our non-Indigenous educators'

capacity, particularly their capacity to support students in the priviliging and critical exploration of Indigenous knowledges and identities beyond a focus on the injuries caused by the continuing regimes of power embodied in the ignorance of white identities and systems of privilege.

So then I move towards Nakata's concept of the Cultural Interface. But again, this does not prove to be the silver bullet. It is easy as a non-Indigenous person to fall into imagining this space as about finding the common ground, a place and space where we are all equal, where I can comfortably forget about racialised privilege and regimes of dominance. Or alternatively, as I have often seen emerge, the dualism and associated essentialisations of the both-ways notion again begin to reinforce themselves. Here we are, all looking at a white board with Western ways of knowing dot pointed on one side of the board and Indigenous ways on the other; we are all trying to look and add things into this middle space and no one is finding it easy. This is not what Nakata means by the Cultural Interface, but it points to the difficulties or complexities of understanding, let alone inhabiting, such a space. Similarly, discussing such a process as one of finding common ground, as opposed to one of shifting the lens to possibilities of new ground, also compounds these difficulties.

Henk's Narrative

My position is somewhat different from Eva's, as I am not from here. However, as a white, middle class male, I still very much benefit from patriarchal white privilege, and I feel this in both explicit and more subtle ways on a day to day basis. I too grew up with well-educated white middle class parents where opportunities were a given, rather than recognised as a privilege. Furthermore, I grew up being Dutch in The Netherlands, so there was never any question about where I belonged. The racial 'others' were migrants from the former colonies (Indonesians, Surinamers, people from the Carribean) or 'guest workers'

from Turkey and Morocco. My patriarchal white privilege was never questioned in this context, or at least not that I was aware of; why would I need to be aware?

Having left The Netherlands more than half a lifetime ago, my position has shifted somewhat, as it has become that of a migrant, an outsider of sorts, albeit without relinquishing the privilege outlined above. As an outsider (or perhaps this is partly my other identity as an academic), you question things and you pay attention to how power operates in context, in an attempt to 'blend in' as soon as possible. In the process however, you begin to notice very quickly who else is positioned as 'other', what the norms are, and how power relations operate in context. Living in different national contexts over the years (Israel, Scotland, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Australia, Bahrain) has thus positioned me as an outsider, but one who nevertheless benefits from patriarchal white privilege. In other words, I am in the privileged position of being able to *choose* my outsider status, rather than it being imposed on me.

So what does this mean in the Australian context, and in particular in the context of Batchelor Institute? For one, it means that I have a very keen sense of historical injustice, and a keen awareness of ongoing colonial legacies and power struggles, but in a way I am doubly privileged, because I can engage with this historical legacy without the burden of colonial anxiety it appears to invoke for many white Australians. In other words, I do not have the emotional investment that leads to the twin responses of anger and resentment on the one hand (as a follow on from 'why can't they be more like us'), or patronising benevolence of the missionary variety on the other. Both are a result of the impact of rigid binaries, without a recognition of the historical complexities. But I see both these attitudes on a daily basis at Batchelor Institute.

So how does patriarchal white privilege operate in this context? It is structurally embedded in everything we do. Yes, on the face of it, Batchelor Institute is an 'Indigenous' Institute, but ultimately the power (and the funding)

are elsewhere, and there is very little real opportunity for Indigenous perspectives, in the sense of Indigenous control over the educational and the knowledge agendas. And, to refer back to Judd's point, we rarely go and find out what Indigenous agendas might actually be; they are usually already defined and predetermined. Patriarchal white privilege is woven through funding structures, bureaucratic structures, employment structures, and educational structures. In other words, bureaucracies around employment opportunities at the Institute, as well as the actual recruitment practices, are such that Indigenous employees are often restricted in their career progression. This is not deliberate; it is rather an inevitable outcome of the structures that are put in place, in an unquestioned way, and the only people who benefit from this are those who have perfected mimicry, but there are no real winners in that game. Of course expressing this argument leaves me wide open for accusations of racism, and indeed as potentially aligned with what a good colleague of mine calls the 'bigotry of low expectations'. However, that accusation would actually miss the point in this case, as my expectations are in fact the opposite of 'low'. The expectation is that the structure is culturally appropriate for *everyone* involved, and that there is thus a certain amount of flexibility around practices in each of the areas outlined above. In short, *my* expectation is that both strategic decisions and especially everyday practices are continuously questioned and adjusted to fit individual contexts: that would be working in a 'both-ways' spirit and working at the Cultural Interface. And it would mean that patriarchal white privilege is both identified and challenged, both structurally and in everyday practices.

But alas, this is an ongoing struggle that sometimes feels like a losing battle…and like Eva, it is at those moments for me that my own patriarchal white privilege surfaces very clearly, for I can simply walk away…

Concluding remarks

The personal narratives above illustrate the complexity of the debate that we outlined at the beginning of this

chapter. Is all knowledge racialised? Yes, it definitely is. However, the notion of Cultural Interface potentially allows us to confront the complexity, but this will only be possible if that process of critical reflection is structurally embedded in everything we do. Finding common ground, while simultaneously avoiding slipping into a 'both-ways' dualism, is inherently challenging. For non-Indigenous educators this is particularly true, for our privileged positions within the space can weaken the strength of our commitments; walking away, or working at simplifying the space to avoid confrontation can be an appealing position.

Yet the alternative of continuing to engage in both personal and larger critical reflections on the continuing struggle for Indigenous existence and the racialised societal structures that inhibit such survival are paramount if Batchelor Institute is to truly embrace and enact its vision. This is worth fighting for even if from within a patriarchal white privileged position. While we have focused on the raising of questions rather than the provision of 'answers', we believe that this is in fact the point of this paper. We hope that our narratives and questioning can open a space for discussion at the Institute where, as staff, we can talk collectively and honestly about our cultural conditioning, our continued need for cultural competency learning, and where we can further build our capacity to understand how our own positioning influences our roles within the organisation and how we as individuals could adapt to and be better utilized for supporting the Institute's Indigenous empowerment agendas. This would be a first step towards building on the Institute's past in moving beyond a 'site of interdiction' to a genuine Cultural Interface, based on unapologetically privileging First Nations education (Gilbey, 2014), and exposing the full extent of white privilege. It is in this site that we may find a common ground, not as finalised space that can be reached, but rather as a process of continuous negotiation of culture, power and knowledge.

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Red Ochre Women: sisters in the struggle for educational reform

Jacqueline Amagula & Helen CD McCarthy

Introduction

At the beginning of the new millennium ameliorating Indigenous educational disadvantage was presented as a national priority. For many, this priority heralded great optimism in the hope that the educational disparity that existed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australian students was to be remedied. Yet despite significant fiscal intervention by the Department of Education, Science and Technology in supplementary funding across all sectors, the discrepancy in school level Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy achievement between the two groups remains. William Jonas in his role as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner wrote, "The failure of Aboriginal students to complete basic levels of education amounts to a crisis for future generations. There must be a change to the way Indigenous children and young people are schooled so that the education system can function as a vehicle for cultural and economic renewal" (Beresford, Partington & Gower, 2012, p. 36). Advocates of Indigenous education have endorsed this view and believe that it is in fact the system's lack of relevance that is the problem, since it has the propensity to neglect to understand the cultural needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples (Harris, 1990; Malin, 1989; Durnam & Boughton, 1999; Sharifian, Rochecouste, Malcolm, Konigberg, & Collard, 2004; Beresford, Partington & Gower, 2012).

For over thirty years educators Jacqueline Amagula and Helen McCarthy have observed and listened, as parents and teachers frequently express dissatisfaction with the way mainstream non-Indigenous education is delivered in their schools. Jacqueline as the past-Chairperson of the Ngakwurralangwa College Advisory Board has made it her life's work to challenge existing Anglo-centric paradigms for learning, urging that Aboriginal children must be taught in culturally sensitive ways. Helen has shared Jacqueline's agitation documenting this long-term commitment to crafting alternate ways of learning, different to many of those espoused by mainstream Departments of Education. This chapter presents the impact of these interventions, documenting what occurred in communities when government-directed programs were abolished, or when highly effective learning centres were shut down. They share some of many stories since Jacqueline Amagula believes that "we can't go forward if we don't learn from the past".

Jacqueline's story

My name is Jacqueline Amagula. I am a Warnindilyakwa woman and my language is Anindilyakwa. I come from Groote Eylandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria in the Northern Territory. Firstly I will share my journey; my pathway to teaching as a young student teacher who wanted to achieve literacy and numeracy in my community. Growing up I was humble and a shy student teacher, but I really wanted to make a difference especially through education in my community. In those days life was tough, as we had the church missionary running the community, which meant every child had to be at school. We had a strong Village Council and they would round kids up and take them to school every day and on time. We would talk to Elders, parents and community in big community meetings about how they wanted their children to learn. The people would say that they wanted their kids to learn Two-way, both Western and Indigenous learning.

I became a little stronger as I attended staff meetings, conferences, workshops and in-services. But I wasn't a strong leader. Not strong enough to stand and fight for the rights of my people. My life continued on the journey for this struggle. Then I met a new teacher to the island, Helen McCarthy, who became my diyabarrka (sister). We have worked together since the 1980s and Helen kept on talking to me to go on to do further teacher training. As the years passed I became stronger in dealing with

conflict and issues in education. It was not long after that when I met Jean Illingworth who was a lecturer and teacher. Jean came to my Community Education Centre and was a lecturer for 10 Indigenous students who were becoming teachers in their community. A lot of these students graduated with their degree: Associate Diploma in Teaching in Aboriginal Schools from Batchelor College.

Jean then became a teacher for senior secondary girls, where me and another Indigenous lady were her assistants. Having a big number of students was very tough and without her care and dignity these girls wouldn't have got out with a Certificate nor graduated from Year 12. A lot of these students Jean taught were from the local Angurugu community and parents and community members were very proud. These girls continued to seek proper jobs in the community and with the mining company on Groote Eylandt, and still today continue to have good jobs.

Jean Illingworth, like Helen, in traditional way is my sister. My father Numaljawarma gave her the name Dangmalgayukwa - the raindrops that come with the Eastern Mamarika winds. She is a special woman from the Amagula Clan and her name also contains a message; for example, it could be a forewarning of a death or a newborn baby coming into the world. Jean and Helen have been painted up, attended mortuary ceremonies and have kinship family connections right across from East to South Arnhem Land. They have taught Two-ways culture with respect and always believed our kids can get to the level like every other child in Australia.

In 2005 things were not going as well in our schools as they had done in the past. I thought we could make a change to see if things worked in our community on Groote Eylandt. This began with the establishment of the Ngakwurralangwa College, making the story right for us, to have control, our ownership. Ngakwurralangwa means 'Our Way': we own it and we lead it, we have our say and we have the voice. The story for setting up this college is likened to when we go hunting for wild yams. When we

find the vines of the yam we follow the stem to the ground and dig a hole going down as long as it is long. If we break it half way, this means it is not good, the message will break, but if we keep on digging until we get to the end, that means a strong powerful message is going to happen.

I had an opportunity to step in and have that power to lead and we had the needed change happen for five years. We had control of the four schools on Groote Eylandt and we reached out and established 'Partnerships with Innovation' with key stakeholders and service providers across the Eylandt. As allies all parties shared the responsibility of helping make sure kids went to school. School was a place where they wanted to be because it was culturally relevant with real opportunities to learn skills that would lead to a future. As an Indigenous Director I made sure all new staff coming to our schools would understand or do cultural awareness before entering our schools. Local Aboriginal people ran the cultural competency induction training. Last year in July the Government said that there was no more funding for the Director's position. Yet Ngakwurralangwa College performed very well in the Smart Schools Awards because of our 'Partnerships with Innovation'. We were recognised for running our own College through community leadership and we had our own structures developed, we ran workshops for Indigenous teachers and their tutors and mentors. We need to educate our kids by having community control and I am fighting to make an improvement in the lives of my people because education leads to better lifestyles, and is the key to a pathway towards a career. This is what my family wanted and it's been a struggle. Helen will follow on and share the story about other good things that we built up but were ended or had the funding taken away.

Helen's story

When Jacqueline told me that funding had been cut for the Director's position at Ngakwurralangwa College she was very angry. She asked why it is, whenever we

are achieving results and getting students through, the government shuts down the programs or withdraws funding? She was right. I can recall instances where schools had been operating successfully only to find that there was government intervention at some level and very soon the place or program was mothballed. The following section of this chapter provides a brief historical snapshot of that lived reality. As Leon White, Principal of Yirrkala School said at the 2004 Remote Schools Conference, "we have to re-examine and revisit the past and draw out of it lessons we can use to drive the way forward" (2004).

The strong message that Jacqueline and I heard as we listened to parents' concerns was that the mainstream ways of schooling were prejudiced against Aboriginal ways of knowing, unfairly eroding their cultural uniqueness by undermining their language and thereby their identity. We observed many students become disengaged, their compulsory education ended at 14 or 15 years of age, leaving school with underdeveloped literacy, numeracy and life skills, and thus being greatly limited in their options for the world of work or for participating as a valuable member within their own community. We witnessed young people reject what school offered, and systemic truancy inevitably "... leads into boredom, despair, substance abuse and criminal activity. The retention of Aboriginal students at this stage in their education seems one of the milestones in breaking the cycle of disadvantage" (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2005, p. 7). Research by Ah Chee, Beetson and Boughton (1997), Gordon, Hallahan, and Henry, (2002), and Wild and Anderson (2007) point to one finding: retention of students at this stage of their education is critical in breaking the cycle of a future life of deprivation, incarceration, domestic violence and suicide. A report produced by the United Nations Children's Fund has described "Australia's Indigenous children were among the most vulnerable to abuse and early death" (United Nations International Children's Education Fund, 2004, p. 3). The same report stated "an improved understanding

of Indigenous culture improves the spiritual health of Indigenous students which leads to better outcomes in areas such as health, family and community cohesion, education and employment" (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2005).

Schools were not always places where students encountered irrelevance or became disengaged. In our personal experiences we worked in schools that were the heartbeat of the community. They were the one place that everyone in the community wanted to be a part of, be involved in; most were keen to work in the literacy centre, the canteen, on the sports programs, or as liaison officers. Schools were staffed with qualified local Aboriginal teachers working side by side with non-Aboriginal teachers, who lived in the communities they taught in, sharing teaching practice and sharing language. Once the day time classes were finished the afternoon and night classes would start. Living and learning were words that were interchangeable, equally proper in outside spaces, in the jungle, on the sea, near the ground, in short, in "environments considered the third educator" (Gandini, 2012, p. 339), valued places creating traditionally appropriate experiential engagement. In true Indigenous teaching and learning ways, nature was nurtured.

Dhupuma College

In the eighties in the Northern Territory there had been a growing preference amongst both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators towards the Two Way Learning Model, an endeavour to respect each other's cultural tenets in an undertaking to find a common ground. At the time Yirrkala Principal, Dr M. Yunipingu articulated:

> What we want is BOTH WAYS education – Balanda and Yolŋu ways – but we want the Yolŋu to have control over both sides of the curriculum. We want our children to learn Yolŋu culture and history from the Yolŋu point of view. We do not want to keep the Balanda content out of the school, but we want control over the Balanda content. We want to decide for ourselves what our children learn about

the Balanda world. We all, Balanda and Yolŋu are trapped by our past experiences of school the Balanda way (as cited in Marginson, 2002, p. 197).

The Gumatj speaking Yolngu School, Dhupuma College, established at Nhulunbuy, incubated an entire cohort of both Yolngu and Balanda educators and students in Two Way education. Dhupuma, meaning 'looking up and ahead', and opened in 1972 by Prime Minister William McMahon, was largely unknown by the wider Australian community, but the success of the bicultural/bilingual Dhupuma College was unprecedented in the Northern Territory. With highly innovative programs designed and carefully implemented, the College developed qualities of both academic accomplishment and leadership success. A significant number of graduates went on to become influential leaders in both the mainstream and in their own communities; Jacqueline Amagula is testament to that. However, with promised intentions to rebuild the campus in two phases, the Government closed the college abruptly on the 21st of August 1980 without any prior notice. Dhupuma College alumni speak highly of what it did for them in terms of enabling them to acquire an education, a place in both worlds. The first Indigenous Australian school principal, and 1992 Australian of the Year, Dr M Yunipingu, when asked why the college was shut down replied, "Well I think the Northern Territory Government didn't want black people to be smart" (Corn, 2009).

Northern Territory bilingual program

Although discussions had first been undertaken in the sixties regarding bilingual education, it was not until 1972, on the eve of the Whitlam Government coming into power, that bilingual school programs were introduced. In 1973 five schools were established and by 1996 thirty-one bi-literacy programs had been rolled out across the Territory. The bilingual learning program was intricately linked with the community language, the community members, the seasons and ceremonial cycles. Parents and guardians would sit under the bough shelters in

the soft-river or beach sand close to where the classes were taking place, and observe what was happening. If students weren't behaving in a way deemed appropriate, a custodian would casually walk over, sit down and work with them until they settled into the task. Further, the vast corpus of literature and the rich productions of bilingual audio and visual resources generated by literacy centres was extensive, stimulating community members to read and write in their own languages and establishing a depository for future generations. Despite this apparent success, the Minister for Education Peter Adamson directed the Department of Education to close down all bilingual programs and centres, and bilingual education was abolished in the Northern Territory on the 1st of December 1998.

According to Nicholls (2005) the axing of the bilingual programs, "ran counter to the oft-articulated wishes of the overwhelming majority of Aboriginal community members" (Nicholls, 2005, p. 161). She argued that no hard evidence was ever provided to prove that bilingual education was failing students, "the government's lack of endorsement of Indigenous language programmes ultimately discredits the status of Indigenous languages by undermining their legitimacy in Australian classrooms, and by extension, in other social settings as well" (Nicholls, 2005, p. 162). Nothing filled the void that had once connected culture, language and cognition.

The Groote Eylandt Affair

The ongoing level of government interference in community processes was causing communities to feel increasingly disenfranchised by what they considered as undemocratic practices of a government not listening. There was widespread dissatisfaction with the Department of Education for failing to address claims of harassment and discriminatory practices occurring in several schools across the Northern Territory. As the Groote Eylandt Regional Council representative on the Northern Territory Teachers Federation Executive, I was hearing regional councillors reporting incidences occurring

in their regions. These incidents ranged from unsafe accommodation, unsustainable working conditions, and unfair dismissal claims to issues of nepotistic promotional processes. On Groote Eylandt a meeting was called with the sole purpose to ascertain the extent of local concerns raised by community members and teachers, and if necessary, form an affirmative action group to identify and resolve the issues. The Minutes of this initial meeting with an explanatory covering letter were sent to the Acting Regional Superintendent in East Arnhem Land.

Concurrent to this, a set of these Minutes, addressed to the Acting Regional Superintendent, were widely distributed and viewed by some to be a slur. Declining to retract or apologise for the documented claims Jean Illingworth and I were served Deformation Writs. As a consequence of this, a protracted court case ensued for five years and due to sub judice prevented three Aboriginal communities' educational issues from being addressed or resolved. The Northern Territory Teachers Federation (NTTF) Executive was of the opinion the significant allegations required investigation. This action was endorsed by rank and file membership across the Territory who voted unanimously to support the call for an independent inquiry into the claims.

The claims evolved from 20 Statutory Declarations, containing 63 specific allegations that stated that the Minister for Education, Tom Harris, had failed to protect the rights of Aboriginal teachers, students and parents and failed to exercise proper authority over his department generally and in particular, failed to ensure that a thorough and impartial inquiry was conducted by his department into the substantial allegation concerning individuals and the education system generally. Concurrent to this action a motion was put to the Legislative Assembly listing to censure Minister Harris demanding his resignation. The Labour Leader the Honourable Graeme Smith asked the following questions:

Does the Minister really expect people who have put their jobs on the line and made formal complaints to him and to his department to say, on the basis of an informal and secret inquiry of which no public report is made and from which no action results, to be satisfied?

Does the Minister really expect any reasonable person, any person who has had the guts to get up and say that something in the system stinks and to ask for help in fixing it, will be satisfied with that response?

[The Department] has brave, gutsy teachers out there who are prepared to stand up when they think that there is something wrong, not out of personal interest but out of a genuine desire to improve the system and make it work, and it will not even listen to them and treat them seriously. They have the right to have those allegations investigated. For those reasons the minister should be censured and should resign (Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, 1990).

The Education Minister remained in his position and the communities failed to get due consideration. Once again the system had unequivocally let Aboriginal people down and regardless of their struggle to record their dissent about what was happening in their schools...little seemed to change.

Conclusion

While the millennium announcement regarding Aboriginal education was a national priority, parity with non-Indigenous Australian students still remains wanting. Nevertheless, there have been significant developments in the number of innovative programs such as Dandjoo Darbalung, Dare to Lead, Follow the Dream, Partnerships for Success, Clontarf Academies, cultural competency training, scholarships to private school/university opportunities, particularly those advanced by philanthropic and mining company funding. However, now as much as ever, transformation towards culturally sensitive emergent educational frameworks

must underpin learning. "It is imperative that rather than providing a mainstream program into which Indigenous students must fit, the system should be changed to develop schooling that is intimately related to the backgrounds and needs of the students" (Partington, Godfrey, Harslett & Richer, 2000). Education has to be deeply rooted in respect for people and their relationships with their community, culture and each other. In doing it this way, students provided with authentic relevant learning can go on to live consequential long and worthy lives, contributing socially, culturally, economically, and becoming custodians guiding a new generation.

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PART II – FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Gun-ngaypa Rrawa 'My Country': a commitment to both-ways language documentation

Margaret Carew

Introduction

This paper outlines an approach to collaborative intercultural work in language documentation through a project called Gun-nartpa Stories (2010-2014). The work commenced as a repatriation of 75 digitized cassette tapes recorded during 1993-96 from elders at Gochan Jiny-jirra outstation in north-central Arnhem Land, and developed into a collaborative documentation and publishing project. A core project team emerged, consisting of this author and An-nguliny men Patrick Muchana, Crusoe Batara and Raymond Walanggay. We worked together to review the recordings and select, transcribe and translate a number of stories and numerous other family members also participated as transcribers, translators and consulted with the team on aspects of the project. Some contributed additional material to the project through recordings and conversations about history and clan connections (England, Muchana, Walanggay, & Carew, 2014, pp. xii-xix).

Throughout the process of working with the recordings, the project team enriched the stories as they provided more detail about events, places and people. In particular they were specific about family relationships between those telling the stories, the people referred to within them, those present at the story telling events, and the people alive today who have a relationship to the stories. To take account of these contributions, I wrote commentary text linking the stories together. Over a period of four years, I worked with the team to refine the text and compile the stories, along with photographs and artworks, into a book called *Gun-ngaypa Rrawa* 'My Country' (England et al., 2014). The book is produced with the technology of 'sound printing'. Using an audio player which scans a code embedded in the page, a person can both read the text and listen to the corresponding sound file. In this way, the book allows its readers to listen to the stories as told by the Gun-nartpa elders in the 1990s. This project was accomplished through support from Batchelor Institute, an organisation which has provided adult education for Indigenous people for 40 years in the Northern Territory of Australia.[1]

Our collaboration took place against a backdrop of cultural shift and changing demographics in the Maningrida region. The generation who held memories of pre-contact childhoods in the bush and lived through the settlement period from the late 1950s are mostly now gone. The lifestyles of these older people are now an important theme in the practice of constructing historicised local identities through oral storytelling, just as the events surrounding the visits of Macassan trepangers, Japanese pearlers, the Second World War and traditional warfare were for the generation before. These local identities are - at least in part - responses to the changed circumstances of life resulting from contact, engagement and influence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the region. They are 'intercultural' identity formations in the way that has been framed by (Merlan, 1998, 2005) and others working towards accounts of how social and cultural differences are negotiated between people from different cultural orientations in contemporary Australia, especially in remote Indigenous communities (Altman, 2005; Hinkson

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1   The Gun-nartpa Stories project was supported by a Batchelor Institute Internal Research Grant (2010-11), by the Australian Government's Indigenous Languages Support Program grants (Gun-nartpa Stories 2012-13; NT Language Centre Support 2013-16) and by the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (Small Grant SG0161 2012-13). Archiving support was also provided by the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures. See the publication *Gun-ngaypa Rrawa* 'My Country' for further acknowledgements (England et al., 2014, p. xxi).

& Smith, 2005). In our project, stories provided testimony of social and cultural continuities in the face of social and economic changes. Their tellings and retellings were a framework for articulation of these identities and to the aspects of traditional life that are key to them. The book projects these identities – for example the interpretative texts that frame each story emphasise the central importance of *rrawa* 'country', *bapurrurr* 'clans', *yakarrara* 'clan lineages' and other kinds of social connections within the dense cognatic descent groups that structure the Gun-nartpa social universe.[2] In particular, the repatriation of the recordings links to family memorial practices relating to the storytellers themselves. These practices refer to traditional ways of commemorating the deceased through funeral rites, alongside of more contemporary practices such as keeping and sharing photographs and maintaining grave sites. From the earliest stages of bringing the recordings back to the community, the memorialisation of the storytellers became central to the project. This shaped the scope of the project, the way that the project team worked together and the form that the final publication took.[3]

The approach of this project is also intercultural. It is situated within interactions between people from very different lifeworlds, and negotiated through various engagements with kinship networks, local organisations

and organisations further afield. Through these engagements we formed an alliance, a structured way of collaborating that allowed us to bring this work to completion. The importance of alliances rests upon local practices, such as collaborations towards staging major ceremonies, in which social roles are circumscribed in terms of kinship categories roles and responsibilities and economic exchange. Alliances are also a key strategy in how Indigenous people engage with people outside their kinship networks. They are relationships that develop within intercultural contexts: for example, through schools, non-government organisations, education and training providers and engagements with university-based researchers. Through alliances, people aim to support and sustain local practices "which are concerned with continually creating possibilities for the future of one's kin and the extended networks from which one draws strength and community" (Christen, 2009, p.viii).

In the following sections I outline an approach to collaborative language documentation and conservation which derives from Batchelor Institute's Both-Ways philosophy and practice in Indigenous education (Fraser, 2006; Ober & Bat, 2007a, 2007b). I argue that Both-Ways provides a practical orientation to intercultural collaborative work, and that its principles are consistent with current practices in the field of language documentation, conservation and description.

'Both-ways' - collaborative language research through Batchelor Institute

An important driver of Batchelor College's development throughout the late 1980s and 1990s was its role in providing teacher training for remote community people through the Federally funded Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE) program. Many local teachers held positions in their schools while undergoing teacher training with Batchelor College (Uibo, 1993). During these years Batchelor College was an important venue for the articulation of new educational philosophies, which aimed to integrate Indigenous educational perspectives

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2 For one example see the discussion of the relationships between England Banggala and his Balngarra kin which are mentioned by Banggala in his story about travelling to Bulman on foot patrol during the 1960s. These relationships were investigated and unpacked in detail by the project team (England et al., 2014, pp.93-106).

3 The book extends beyond memorialization of the story-tellers themselves to other deceased kin. See for example the double page spread which commemorates a number of deceased people of Gojok subsection (England et al., 2014, pp.xxii-xxiii), and Crusoe Batarra's eulogy for his *junggurda* 'father's father' Yamburrpa (England, 2014).

with Western ones. These are interculturally positioned discourses – they emerged as Indigenous people began to engage in structured interactions with outsiders in educational encounters. These teams of local teachers, and their (mostly) non-Indigenous colleagues and lecturers brought diverse cultural perspectives to a shared project to implement culturally appropriate schooling for Indigenous children in remote community schools. These various approaches have come to be known as 'Both-Ways' or 'Two-Way' education (Ober & Bat, 2007a). Both-Ways is in fact a heterogenous set of perspectives (Smith, 2006, p. 31) which share an orientation which values Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices in areas which can be otherwise construed as Western, such as the institutions of education and research. Framings of Both-Ways frequently highlight the existence of separate Western and Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural life practices (for example, Windy, 1996). Also central to Both-Ways are the differences and intersections between Indigenous kinship based social formations and Western institutional frameworks as the basis for social action. As an example, for Yolngu educators, roles and responsibilities in educational projects can be mediated through *galtha*, a means of "gathering together ideas as a starting point for sorting out important issues and problems, ceremonies and individuals' roles in participating in these ceremonies" (Marika-Munungiritj, 2002, p. 44).

Both-Ways offers an approach to undertaking collaborative language research, framing both ethical matters and research methods which draw from Batchelor Institute's decades of educational practice in partnership with Indigenous thinkers and practitioners. Since the 1990s the field of language documentation has been transformed by digital recordings, tools and data management strategies (Bird & Simons, 2003; Himmelmann, 1998; Thieberger, 2004). This has enabled a foundation for collaborative practice, as language data can be recorded, reproduced, stored and mobilized for a much broader range of purposes than previously

possible (Nathan, 2006b). This links to and overlaps with existing approaches to collaborative practice in language documentation (Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, & Richardson, 1993; Stebbins, 2012; Stenzel, 2014).

Such guiding principles support our aims for pertinent outcomes of language documentation practices (Nathan, 2006a). These are outcomes that combine the different priorities of collaborative allies, created within a framework for intercultural work that supports, sustains and develops a broader set of local practices, strategies and goals at the family and community level. One of the strengths of Both-Ways is that it values the ongoing learning and socialization that happens outside formal educational contexts, recognizing and validating the knowledge and practices of Aboriginal family and community lifeworlds (Ford & Klesch, 2003). Language documentation work intersects with these worlds, through interactions between language speakers and linguistic specialists and a set of 'situated practices' (Barton, 2007): practices that are aimed at recording, analyzing, describing language and mobilizing the resulting artifacts in various ways. In the next section I present a picture of what is meant by 'situated practices' in language documentation, before turning to consider the Gun-nartpa Stories project more specifically.

Research at Gochan Jiny-jirra 1993-96
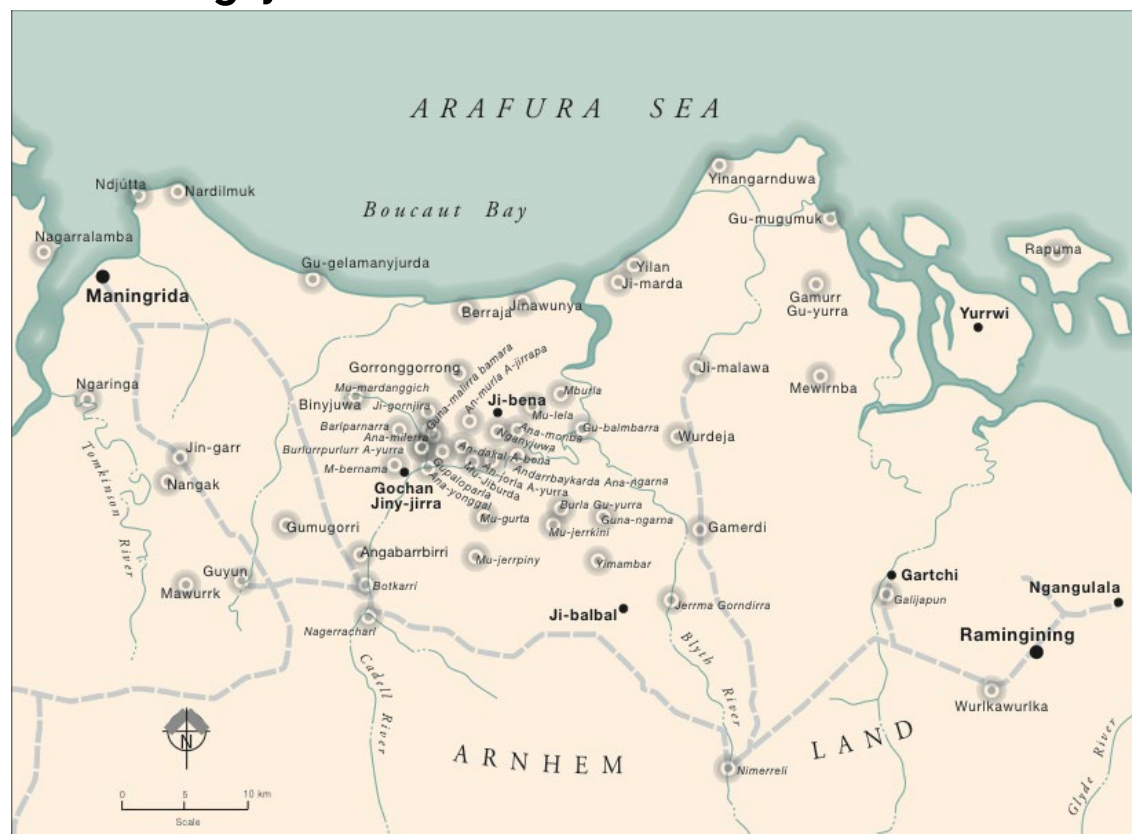
Figure 1: Map of the Maningrida region, with a focus on Gun-nartpa site names. Map: Brenda Thornley

Gochan Jiny-jirra is an outstation on the Cadell River, in the Maningrida region in north-central Arnhem Land. This region has long been noted for its linguistic diversity (Capell, 1942; Elwell, 1977), with up to ten Indigenous languages spoken as mother tongues in a multilingual language ecology. The main language spoken at Gochan Jiny-jirra is Gun-nartpa, which is a dialect of a larger language group often referred to as Burarra (Elwell, 1977; Glasgow, 1994; Green, 1987). The family maintain ongoing connections with their traditional country and ancestral creation spirits and are active participants in ceremonial life.

The Gun-nartpa have a history of engagement in language and cultural maintenance activities, through education, religious life, performance and visual arts. Many of the Gochan Jiny-jirra family had participated in the Burarra Bilingual program through Maningrida Community Education Centre from the early 1980s until 2008 as teachers and literacy workers (Christie, Bow, Devlin, & Simpson, 2014). Some senior family members had worked closely with Summer Institute of Linguistics

(SIL) linguist Kathy Glasgow on bible translation, literature development and the Burarra/Gun-nartpa dictionary project (Glasgow, 1980, 1994). Through such long-standing collaborations, both the practice of literacy and the value of texts as a means of presenting language and cultural knowledge developed in importance. For example, Katy Fry learned to read and write from the Glasgow's as a teenager in the 1960s. She taught family members literacy and was one of a number of people who helped the Glasgow's in bible translation work and language research more generally. She went on to study with the School of Australian Languages and in education at Batchelor College/Institute. She worked for many years as a literacy worker in the school at Maningrida, and produced numerous Gun-nartpa and Burarra language resources for the Burarra bilingual program.

I lived at Gochan Jiny-jirra and Maningrida between 1993 and 1996, while undertaking language research on Gun-nartpa. For much of this time I participated in everyday life at Gochan Jiny-jirra – this involved hunting and food preparation, participation in ceremonial events,

gathering and processing fibre for twining and looping bags and mats, and much time spent at the campfire talking with family groups. During this period of my research a number of people contributed to recordings of stories and other genres of speech, in particular England Banggala, Harry Ngamandara Litchfield, Jane Banyala Litchfield, Terry Ngamandara, Rosie Jin-mujinggul, Michael Burrurrbuma and Mary Karlbirra. These language recordings were made on cassette tape and supplemented by notes, drawings and photographs.

The community were interested and supportive of the work that I was doing at Gochan Jiny-jirra during this period. However their expectations and understandings of the role of a linguistic fieldworker were almost a polar opposite to my own at that time. I was preoccupied with what Bowern (2008) calls Type 1 linguistic research. My activities were oriented to producing research outcomes framed by academic questions and I was collecting language data to contribute to a dialogue almost exclusively conducted between academic specialists. The traditional academic fieldwork model puts the work of the linguistic fieldworker at the centre of fieldwork activities. Such activities include observation and participation, recording and working with consultants to transcribe, translate and interpret the content of recorded material. Away from the field, there is data analysis, theoretical modeling and writing for an audience of academic peers.

The lived experience was different to this. Throughout my time working at Gochan Jiny-jirra people were generous with their time and shared knowledge and resources that helped me survive in an unfamiliar environment. But there were expectations too, and they were different to mine. I came to understand that the community saw my main task as recording stories from old people and to work under their direction. It was my role to learn language so that I could participate in the kinship system and follow social norms and participate in a range of activities with the community such as hunting and ceremonies. Over time there was an expectation that I would use my knowledge, skills and connections to provide support

and assistance to the community. One important role was to communicate my knowledge to other *balanda* 'European person' so that others could also learn about Gun-nartpa language and culture. This is exemplified by England Banggala's description of how he and I were to visit his ancestral sites, which was published in Gun-ngaypa Rrawa (Banggala, 2014). This description reveals England's awareness of my work practice, which focused on recording notes in a notebook, which he referred to as *jurra* 'paper'[4]. He describes how he plans to show me *wangarr* 'ancestral spirits' at certain locations on his country and says that I will put them in my book:

guborlkanyjarri wangarr ama barra /
manymak gatparra nyirrinyileba /
jurra abarnja barra /
She will get the ancestral spirit at Guborlkanyjarri.
Ok, from there we will finish that,
she will put it on paper.
(T06-04:EB:16-18)

Towards the end of this recording Banggala described how he would show me the yellow ochre stone at Birduk Mu-yerrnyjiya, which is a manifestation of the ancestral *birduk* 'waterlily' spirit. He planned to give me a sample of this stone, and send it away with me when it was time for me to leave. He situates this gift explicitly within a wider social frame, projecting his view on how his sharing this knowledge with me would propagate it further. He didn't mention the university that I was enrolled in, or an archive, nor any other Western institutional structure - he talked about how I would take the ochre and show it to my family. Kinship was the model for knowledge sharing and exchange that he appealed to, as he planned how we would collaborate on our project together.

jinyukurrjibarra, nguwu barra / nguwu barra /
*nechtaym muga barra jinyboy yigapa *
wen nokop jinyini barra guguna wenga /
muga barra jinyboy -

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4   *jurra* 'paper' is a Macassan loanword shared by a number of Arnhem Land languages (Evans, 1992).

jinybuyubuka barra -
nipa muma jinyinaga - muma jinyinaga -
rrapa ninya | ninyachila -
rrapa, jinigipa worlapacha | worlapacha / rrapa, anurra |
worlapacha gigin | worlapacha -
rrapa - anigipa / anigipa - anigipa an.gumarrbipa | anigipa
an.gumarrbipa -
barra - awurrgaliya rrapa mbina barra birduk layk –
ngaypa barra - munngaype drimin ngubalika barra |
mun.gapa barra mbina |

She will write about it, and I will give it, I will give it

She will take it when she goes away

When she knocks off from here

She will take it

She will show her

She will demonstrate for her mother, she will do it for her
mother

And dad, her father

And her sister and brother

And her husband

They will all listen, and look at the waterlily stone, like

That's mine, I will send my dreaming

They will see it in that place far from here.

This text excerpt is one of a number of statements that England made about the purpose of my research. His work with me was oriented towards this, through his careful descriptions of his bark paintings and the many visits to sites that we went on together (see England et al., 2014-25). Work that primarily focused on such expectations can be typified as Type 2 linguistic research, where the work of a linguist is product oriented and works as a consultant for the community (Bowern, 2008). For the linguist there can be tensions between different sets of expectations especially in situations where research funding is tied to particular types of research outcomes, often which leave little scope for satisfying the expectations of the community group (for a discussion see: Bowern & Warner, 2015; Crippen & Robinson, 2015; Crippen & Robinson, 2013). However, these tensions also need to be considered in ethical terms. Within an

intercultural research collaboration, what is fair and what is right, and how do we work through the different perspectives on these questions? In fact as Bowern suggests, linguists and communities can usually achieve practical benefits through a marriage of Type 1 and Type 2 linguistic research. One consideration in combining Type 1 and Type 2 is to provide a model for language documentation that prioritises practical outcomes and honours the authority of knowledge holders, without effacing the role and contribution of the linguist, and without devaluing the important role of linguistic training for language description and analysis. The negotiation of such fine balances between priorities and expectations takes place in a dynamic context, as priorities and circumstances change throughout the lifecycle of projects and the relationships that they are situated within (Curran, 2013). To do this effectively requires careful attention to the processes of collaboration in these dynamic intercultural spaces (Holmes & Marcus, 2008, p. 85).

These considerations also index wider structural inequalities within Australian society and the systematic disadvantage of Indigenous peoples within them. While this project could do little to directly address these matters, as a professional ally of a family working to document, preserve and interpret valuable cultural material it was essential to consider how to proceed in a way that was not ad hoc, which mitigated the risks presented by working interculturally and where choices about the direction and content of the project were made by the people who had the highest investment in the material. Explicitly placing the work of language documentation in the framework of Both-Ways philosophies and methods enhanced our project in this way. This can be illustrated through an example from our project in which initial expectations about the form of repatriation were not met, and how this was resolved by the local team through asserting jurra 'paper' as the means by which they wanted their family to encounter the material and to memorialise the storytellers.

Decisions about the form of repatriation – *Jurra* is best.

In 2010 I returned to Gochan Jiny-jirra for the first time in many years, at the beginning of a new project aimed at repatriating the fieldwork tapes I had recorded during the 1990s.[5] Prior to the 2010 consultation I digitised the tape recordings and prepared a set of listening materials on CDs for the family. I made the digitised recordings machine readable through time-alignment software and annotation using ELAN (Wittenburg, Brugman, Russel, Klassmann, & Sloetjes, 2006). This resulted in a corpus of recorded material that could be searched and accessed for recordings from particular people and places, particular topics and genres of speech and performance. I extracted a number of stories and songs from longer digital files (one file per tape side), creating a set of audio clips of stories.

Crusoe Batara and Patrick Muchana represented the family in our discussions around the material and we met with many family members who listened to a selection of the recordings. It was clear from the outset that the family were deeply moved to hear the voices of their elders. It was less clear however how to repatriate the material in a meaningful or sustainable way. Initially it seemed feasible that providing copies of recordings on CD would enable people to listen to them on CD players. There was also the potential to copy the files onto a computer in the community school and to propagate copies from there. This proved possible but impractical as it rested on the community having access to the school for this purpose

(which they didn't have at that time)[6] . No one living at Gochan Jiny-jirra had a personal computer. The lack of support for access to digital formats also presented the risk of making the recordings somehow disposable as CDs and DVDs have a limited life at outstations without suitable storage and options for playing them. There was the risk of devaluing the stories by presenting them in an ephemeral form such as a CD or DVD.[7]

Most importantly, the main message from the early meetings was that to be meaningful, the form of repatriation should honour the memories of the people who were in the recordings. These were important people, the elders of the family, and the audio recordings of their voices needed to be treated with respect. The longer stories also needed some interpretation and context, to frame them for a listening audience. As we discussed the project, Patrick Muchana suggested that a book would be a good way to present the stories. Books and paper presented an existing means of honouring people's lives, relationships and achievements and had become an accepted way of looking at photographs of people who had passed away. As Patrick said during this visit '*Jurra* (paper) is best'. The challenge then became one to use the tools and methods of digital language documentation as a foundation for participatory practice to achieve this outcome. This shifted the project beyond simply returning a set of recordings to the task of creating a

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5   The full set of recordings is now archived at the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Languages (PARADISEC) (http://paradisec.org.au/), and with the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Archive (http://www.elar-archive.org/index.php). Photographs and selected recordings are available for local access through the Northern Territory Library's Maningrida Community Stories Project (http://maningrida.communitystories.net/archive/index.php).

6   Since 2010 the school at Gochan Jiny-jirra has been closed, apart from brief periods.

7   By 2010 mobile phones had become popular as devices for capturing, storing and transferring files and so were useful as a way of sharing the digitized photographs and short audio clips of songs from the 1990s. For these items, it was straightforward to put the files onto a micro SD card that could be inserted into a mobile phone, and to rely on existing sharing practices to distribute the files. However, the length of some of these stories made for longer listening and also took up more storage space, a barrier to file storage and sharing.

meaningful and linguistically rich tribute to the people who contributed their stories. The Gun-nartpa project proceeded on that basis, and the book *Gun-ngaypa Rrawa 'My Country'* is the result (England et al., 2014).

Conclusion

This paper has outlined a case study of empowered language documentation work relevant to the Northern Territory context. It supports well-established principles in language documentation and incorporates Batchelor Institute's Both-Ways approach to Indigenous education. Despite the emphasis on community empowerment our project also required the specialised role of the linguist within this model of collaboration. Skills in linguistic analysis underpin the work on transcription, language analysis and translation, and the synthesis of existing language description with previously undescribed lexical forms and grammatical structures encountered in the material (Garner & Glasgow, 1980; D. Glasgow & Glasgow, 1967; D. Glasgow & Kerr, 1964; K. Glasgow, 1964, 1981, 1988; Green, 1987). There are also benefits to other forms of linguistic research stemming from this project, such as the development of a rich corpus of time-aligned metadata that accompanies the set of recordings and archival deposits that preserve the corpus in the long term.

Through the work on this project the linguist also provided a service to the language community as a writer, trainer, technical support person, curator, advocate, project manager and grant administrator. Linguists don't learn these skills as part of their linguistic training, but develop them as part of an applied professional role. This is especially true for linguists working in community contexts (Owalsky, 2014). Linguists learn much else besides, through the intercultural training provided by language speakers and communities. This knowledge is currency, exchanged for linguistic services and the opportunity to undertake language research. Such exchanges are an essential part of Both-Ways collaboration.

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Finding common ground in a digital archive of Aboriginal languages

Michael Christie, Brian Devlin, &
Catherine Bow

Introduction: 40 Years On

As we paused to celebrate 40 years since the establishment of Batchelor Institute[1] we reflect on the conference theme for the 40 year celebrations: 'Finding the Common Ground with Indigenous and Western Knowledge Systems'. The Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages[2] is a growing archive of texts and related resources produced over the same 40 years in more than 25 Aboriginal languages. The archive is built on thousands of books which have been produced in Literature Production Centres in bilingual schools of the Northern Territory since 1973, and it continues to grow. Much of the literature was produced by Aboriginal language workers, who were trained to record, transcribe, edit and translate their own languages over many years at Batchelor. Now in 2014, in the second stage of its development, more resources, often previously unpublished and in rare languages, are being added. This is being achieved with the help and resources of Batchelor's Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (CALL), and will include materials currently in the CALL archive, produced in the centre (and its predecessors) and in remote communities by its students.

As a digital archive, the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages exists in many different locations, not

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1 We refer to the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and its predecessor Batchelor College both as 'Batchelor'.

2 The Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages is an ARC funded collaboration between Charles Darwin University, NT Department of Education, Batchelor Institute, NT Library, Australian National University and NT Catholic Education Office, available at www. cdu.edu.au/laal/

only on the large servers of digital content in Charles Darwin University's eSpace, but also in the offices and workspaces where people are developing its computer code, or collecting and digitising and uploading books and texts, and in remote communities where language owners are reviewing and giving permission for their stories to be included. But principally, it comes alive on computer screens around the NT and further afield, where interested people are searching through the texts for study or for sheer delight in the stories and their illustrations.

Our theme of 'Finding Common Ground' encourages us to think carefully about how these texts originated and what will happen to them as they move from the processes and places of their original production to their multiple manifestations as they come to life wherever the archive is used. What does 'common ground' mean in this context?

Both-ways philosophy and common ground

Batchelor has a long tradition of what has come to be known as 'both-ways' education (Ober & Bat, 2007). The term is often misinterpreted or taken to refer to conventional formal education practice in its attempts to foreground Aboriginal knowledge. When 'both-ways' is taken seriously it often finds significant opposition from people stuck in their commitment to the knowledge practices of the enlightenment tradition. So it is always worth returning to the question of 'both-ways' in order to keep the uniqueness of Batchelor's mission at the forefront of our practice. Aboriginal knowledge, we are often reminded, is celebrated as belonging to particular people in particular places (how different from the universalised knowledge claims of rationalism and positivism in the enlightenment tradition!). What happens to the located nature of Aboriginal knowledge when (in the official words of the Batchelor website) our practice

"brings together Indigenous Australian traditions of knowledge, and Western academic disciplinary positions and cultural contexts"[3] in both-ways education? Do we abandon Aboriginal claims of ownership and locatedness, or does a both-ways epistemology demand that we continue to search to create some common ground and collective ownership in the different particular contexts of our knowledge work?

Both-ways knowledge work demands that different knowledge traditions work together seriously and in good faith on common ground. It understands knowledge as *performative* (something you *do* rather that something you *have*), and *constructed* (rather than *discovered*) (Christie, 2005). It takes seriously the role of place (and of common ground) in producing knowledge, and thus it opens tricky questions for people theorising digital technologies. It forces a radical re-think of some of our most taken-for-granted theories. We realise, for example, that it is misconceived to think of a text or an archive as *containing* knowledge. The text is better conceived of as an artefact of some previous knowledge production episode (Christie, 2004). It contains traces of previous work which must be reconstituted, revitalised, reconfigured, renegotiated, and represented in each new context of knowledge work. We must preserve these traces if they are to take their part in new both-ways knowledge work. How do we do the work of ensuring that, as the texts become freely accessible everywhere in the world, they maintain their links to their origins and owners and do not escape into an alien knowledge economy? Or, put another way, how do we ensure that the archive is developed and activated on 'common ground' and to *produce* common ground? How is common ground theorised in digital environments?

A gathering of linguists, language workers and librarians: back on common ground

Batchelor is a partner in the second stage of the development of the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages, and in a recent two-day workshop (July 2014) we took the opportunity to look carefully at the contents of the CALL archive and to make decisions over hundreds of texts as to whether they might be suitable for inclusion into the Living Archive, and if so, who might be contacted to give permission and assistance for them to be evaluated and uploaded for public access. It was a great opportunity for linguists and language workers to sit down together and look over the work of the past 40 years. Someone tallied up all the time which people in the room had collectively spent working on NT languages and it came to a total of almost 800 years! We worked in groups at tables of languages and/or places — Wadeye languages, Tiwi, Maningrida languages, Yolŋu languages, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Borroloola, Gurindji, Warlpiri, Pintupi-Luritja, Warumungu, Arrernte and more beside.

Of particular interest and significance was the work which had been produced during Aboriginal Languages Fortnight (ALF), an annual event in many remote communities where Batchelor students would work for two weeks with their own cultural authorities (usually elders from their own or related clan groups) documenting a particular aspect of their own history and culture, in their own languages, on their own land. It was up to each student to negotiate their own project – finding some elder in the community to work with, agreeing upon a topic they had a right and a reason to explore, listening and sharing and learning how to document what they were learning, and the basis upon which they might be able to share it with others.

At the workshop (one of the biggest reunions of linguists and language workers ever on common ground in the NT), one group worked with a linguist and two language workers on texts in Yolŋu languages. Librarians and CALL

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3 http://www.batchelor.edu.au/

staff had opened the archive collection and sorted the many hundreds of manuscripts into boxes of languages or places of origin, and we went through the Yolŋu boxes one by one. In the bilingual programs, most of the Yolŋu books were in the official languages of Gupapuyŋu, Djambarrpuyŋu and Gumatj. But the texts from CALL and ALF showed a much greater range of Yolŋu languages. Going over the dozens of small documents was an emotional experience, often funny, often nostalgic. Most of the elders who supervised the students have long since passed away, and so in fact have many of the students. But each story we came across reminded us of people, of connections and of places where the collaborations over language and history had taken place. Only a few would require further work to identify the authors or owners. Various coloured stickers were used to show what was decided about each one. A red sticker meant that the story is very likely not one which should be made public. A green sticker meant that it is an interesting or important story which anyone should be able to access if we undertake the right negotiations.

Yirritja floodwater: coming together in good order

If we trace one of these Yolŋu texts, we might be able to use its story to think about its challenge to find common ground in a digital environment. For his ALF project, one year in the late 1970s, a young Yolŋu man was interested to investigate and to document how floodwater rushing down from the hills connected up many different clan groups which belong to the Yirritja moiety. His was quite a simple text, but it would have been carefully negotiated with the owners of about a dozen different ancestral lines. Linguists from Batchelor and the Department of Education were on hand to help with the linguistic work, as he and the other students went off each day to do further research and return for help writing it up.

When the heavy rains come, the waters start coming down from the Mitchell Ranges, and as they approach the sea through their many branches, they carry with them

the flotsam and jetsam accumulated during the long dry season. It is an important story told and sung in many languages and many places, which teaches us about how people are connected and the right approaches to problem solving and conflict resolution. This story didn't go into those philosophical details; it was a simple story of Yirritja water, places and peoples following the song lines. This song, his text concluded, reveals to us why, in the final stages of a big Yirritja ceremony, the different clan groups must each wait until the floodwaters reaches their own ancestral land, before they can walk down from the beach and into the sea, clan by clan, for the cleansing ritual. It is a short but beautiful story of connectedness to place and to other people, of important fundamental differences and of sameness, of the primacy of place in identity and celebration, of joyful dancing and music making, of environmental cycles, and of ancestral stories and ceremonies helping us to do things in an orderly, responsible collaborative way.

So there, at Batchelor, a couple of months ago, this story resurfaced with a flood of memories in a box of papers which had been stored in the CALL archive for over thirty years. What to do with it? We need to bear in mind that the original research project, when the young student would have walked around from camp to camp checking his facts with the right authorities and reading out and amending his drafts, became a story which was given particularly to him, tailored by his elders for his own study purposes. We could not assume that the story should be open to the public or that it is universally true in any sense. It still belongs to him, long after his untimely death, and bears the signs of its own production.

The Yolŋu language workers at the workshop studied the story carefully. It was given a green priority sticker as a significant story, important for all Yolŋu children to know, and containing no secret or potentially controversial material. We actually remembered how this version of the story had come into being, with whose help, and we decided upon which people we would need to consult to see if they were happy for this version of the story

to be made public, under the author's name. Once the appropriate permissions are obtained, the metadata for this item can be configured to include some of the additional information not included in the item itself, but remembered at the workshop or gathered through the seeking of permission. Various notes fields can include such information, and the item can be linked to other items in the collection. Such enrichment of metadata is a key component in ensuring that this is a Living Archive, encouraging users to enhance and customise information about each item. It is not clear yet whether that particular story will make it into the archive, as there is still a lot of negotiation to be done with people in remote places. But if it does, it will sit alongside other related stories by other authors in other languages, each enriching the complex web of stories and knowledges contained in the archive.

Grounding the archive

Another example may help us further develop our work of grounding the archive. In another version of the Yirritja floodwater story, an elder from a different clan told of the water as it arrives at a place called Dhalinybuy. He explored the detail from his ancestral song referring to how the water starts welling up in the ground adjacent to the water ways, and the grass starts crying and the frog croaks with joy and relief:

> When the water wells up inside Wangurri country, it starts to flow … and it talks … water with sound in its mouth – 'agreeing, negotiating, consulting, stating and empowering'. … This means that when Yolŋu advise and admonish each other the land tells the law straight. These … leaves and sticks, palm fronds and bits of paperbark the … water is carrying down the river… are bits of 'information, knowledge, wisdom, intellectual research'. Near the mouth of the river is a … bar where everything, anything comes together for agreement, and lays down the law '*rom*' – so that everything on the other side will

be good. The water on the other 'agreement' side is no longer rippling, it is calm … everyone comes to agreement.[4]

Leaves and sticks, information and knowledge, coming to a negotiation place for agreement making and laying down the law. What must be done to ensure that knowledge work engaging the archive remains faithful to the 'both-ways' tradition?

First we have to ensure that the digital artefacts which come to the surface bear within them the signs of their own histories and locatedness – whether through the interface maps which to some extent 'places' each story, or the faithfully digitised objects which preserve the scratches, scribbles, annotations and flyspots from the original documents. But, more importantly, common ground is created through the work which is done activating the possibilities for connections to be (re)forged between readers of the different texts and the story owners' languages and places to which they belong. Metadata contained within the book is faithfully reproduced in the archive, but can be supplemented by local knowledge of stories and people associated with each book. The database contains details (hidden from public view) of people in communities who are willing to collaborate with interested users to explore these stories, languages, cultures and people, and the project team is exploring different ways to encourage and facilitate such connections. The collection policy of the Living Archive allows for e-books and other derivatives of the original resources to be added to the archive if they have been produced with the permission and support of their owners.

Early in the development of the online archive, user testing was conducted to gauge what was working well in the Living Archive and what needed improvement. In a few cases we had supplemented an existing digital object by uploading an audio recording to the repository; in other cases we had experimented with the creation of

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4 http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/yaci/pdf/ Buthimang_Gularri.pdf

talking books in which a sound file had been added into a book itself. What was surprising was how well users responded to the availability of audio. So it was decided to create some prototypes and explore different ways of creating and delivering such multimedia items. However, out of respect for the original contributors (the artists and writers who created the content we had digitised) we wanted to encourage e-book development in partnership with them rather than aiming for individually produced derivatives. The latter would have been quicker to do, for sure, and we may have achieved some clever results in that way, but the latter approach was favoured because it ensured that the work of our teams was always aligned to the authority of Aboriginal story tellers, illustrators and writers.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the archive is to be seen as a resource for the creation of common ground between Aboriginal knowledge authorities and those who would work with them on their terms and in their languages – whether these learners be interested students and researchers of all ages and many places – or the new generation of Aboriginal young people joining their elders in reproducing the creative work of their ancestors. Such activities can be incorporated into existing structures, for example an assessment task in the course 'Learning A Central Australian Language 1' from the Bachelor of Indigenous Languages and Linguistics (BILL) course requires students to find appropriate materials on the Living Archive to work with. Another linguist suggested working with people in community to translate titles of some language materials in the archive into English to improve accessibility for users who don't speak the language.

We can think of the process of carefully and collaboratively accessing the resources of the digital archive under the supervision of Aboriginal authorities, as a process of actually *producing* common ground – momentary and situated – in which we learn to negotiate ways of going on together keeping these languages and cultures alive. It is yet to be seen what may happen on this common ground once it has been created.

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Digital technologies and language resources – finding common ground

Brian Devlin, Catherine Bow, Ailsa Purdon, & Maree Klesch

Introduction

Over the last four decades, Batchelor Institute has been involved in keeping Aboriginal languages and cultures strong and discovering new ways of bringing Western and traditional Aboriginal knowledge practices together, through initiatives such as the 'Aboriginal Languages Fortnights' and the establishment of the Centre for Aboriginal Languages and Linguistics (CALL), and through ongoing work of training and supporting Aboriginal educators. The integration of different knowledge systems has also produced a number of educational and linguistic resources which support the use, preservation and promotion of Indigenous languages, and has often included the use of digital technologies and the engagement of Aboriginal Elders from many communities. This paper, which is based on a panel presentation by the four authors, will discuss some of the issues arising from this blending of technologies and knowledges, and consider the implications for Indigenous communities and the wider academic context of research and teaching.

Since at least 1973, when the first Literature Production Centres (LPCs) in NT schools with bilingual programs began turning out materials in Aboriginal languages and English, those involved in that work have wrestled with questions such as: How could local ancestral knowledge be incorporated in appropriate ways to strengthen the curriculum and ensure the engagement of Aboriginal Elders? If Aboriginal stories, originally negotiated and performed, were 'fixed' in print, would the storybooks produced by LPCs be valued and used by students? What would the impact of these books be—quite apart from their advantages as tools for use in literacy programs—

given that they presented static versions of stories that might previously have been told and retold with individual interpretations?

As Christie et al. (2014, p. 7) explain:

> Many books were based on local stories, told mostly by community elders – their histories, their environment and its resources, their ancestral heroes and tricksters. These books were often painstakingly transcribed and edited from audio recordings, and carefully illustrated. Many hours of work by groups of people went into producing a single book, which was then printed on a local printing machine. Most editions were of around 100 copies, with light card covers, folded and stapled. They were used in the local school, or sent out to schools in other communities with the same language. Many communities also published a regular bilingual newspaper.

Telling the stories and turning them into Western products was empowering. It provided many opportunities for skill training (such as learning to use an IBM *Selectric* typewriter and, for some, operating an AM offset printer).

These books are a legacy of a time when common ground was established in the name of 'both ways education', bilingual education, *Dhinthun wayawu* (at Milingimbi), the Warlpiri curriculum cycle, team teaching etc. From the western perspective the search for common ground has been a continuing journey, a journey through time. From an Indigenous perspective the mingling of knowledge systems was often best represented as a place (*ganma, garma*, etc) (For more details see Marika-Mununggiritj & Christie, 1995; and Tamisari & Milmilany, 2003).

In our work over the last few decades one of the key aspects of finding common ground in our both-ways practices has been an emphasis on the learning journey. For Batchelor Institute staff this journey, scaffolded using action research, was critical in finding common ground in

order to create new learning spaces across the curriculum; sites of modernity as it were. In many ways this practice forced us to create our own language as a means to undertake the both-ways journey. The language of that journey was strong, but gentle, and always respectful; importantly, it was inclusive of all participants.

The four of us are now associated in various ways with the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages (LAAL) (see www.cdu.edu.au/laal). Now that we have funding, the technology and the support of artists, writers and their families in communities to turn print-based books into accessible online materials, we find we are asking ourselves additional questions. For example, what does it mean to 'find common ground' again in the digital era, when we seek to reuse these books and handwritten stories by turning them into digital objects that will be much more widely accessible? Throughout this journey it has, once again, been necessary to negotiate and to reconstruct common ground.

Digitising allows for skill training (e.g., in coding, writing metadata, scanning, image processing, using optical character recognition software). It also allows for blending, repurposing (by adding English and/or audio). Social media encourages engagement through the creation of mashups, 'likes', retweets, etc., and these, in turn, require the development of new skills. By 'mash-ups' we mean the combination of two or more pre-existing elements from any media format that have been put together with the aim of making something new. To use an example, this could involve bringing in an image from the internet, taking a photo of your cousins with your iPad, adding a photo of your country, getting your favourite footy player's number, drawing some patterns and slamming it together with your favourite song. These may represent exciting creative opportunities, but as we explain later, they need to be constrained by carefully negotiated standards and procedures.

The Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (CALL)

CALL acts as a resource for Batchelor Institute students and staff. One of its functions is to maintain an archive for documents and resources produced by LPCs as well as the language research undertaken by Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) students in connection with the Aboriginal Languages Fortnight, and the resources developed by students as part of their course work. The CALL archive holds published and unpublished works, some of which have been available to BIITE staff and students through the library database and now in partnership with the Living Archive project are becoming accessible to the wider community.

The majority of materials in the CALL archive were developed within the both-ways philosophy where Aboriginal and western educators sought to find common-ground in development of resources to support curriculum requirements, to meet the needs of bilingual programs in remote schools and also the needs of students that wanted language resources but were not part of a bilingual program. Common-ground practices have always been a site of modernity, shifting and changing to meet the needs of each group engaging in that space. The advent of digital technologies has meant that the common ground for language resource development is shifting and changing on a daily basis so that it is debatable whether there is the same need for negotiated common-ground practices as there was in the pre-digital age.

The use of tablets and other mobile devices, in particular, in remote communities is bringing new life to old resources in ways that are individual and personal (Devlin, Christie, Bow, Joy, & Green, 2014). Aboriginal teachers and their students can take old books and audio recordings, instantly create new videos and produce a language resource that is relevant to that day/week for those students in their learning space. The limitations of working within Western literacies and print media are

diminishing, allowing Aboriginal teachers and children to make dynamic language resources that are relevant and important to curriculum requirements and personal interests.

In the home, children are taking the skills learned at school to make mashups that might include documented clan stories, old and new photos, video, drawing new images, adding text and overlaying their voices to tell stories of their country and their family and to explore issues that are important to them. These mashups are mostly temporary expressions that are shared with family and friends or sometimes uploaded more publicly online to YouTube.

Aboriginal people in remote communities frequently find their voice through the arts; the new digital environment provides them with opportunities to create art forms that include intergenerational expressions of language, culture and contemporary issues, and ways of being creative that are individual, yet still inclusive of family and community.

Just as the philosophy of both-ways practices requires finding that common-ground and developing that site of modernity, it has to involve negotiation, sharing knowledge and resources, and developing ways in which Aboriginal and Western systems can work together. However, it would be possible to neglect this in development of digitised language resources: our common ground might just be a shared site on a server. What language resources do people want, and how, and where do they want to access those resources? We have a responsibility to engage in those discussions. The rest is up to individuals, families or classroom teams to make the digital resources that express who they are today. In that way they will create their own sites of modernity.

The era of bilingual education

During the era of bilingual education, the stories produced by Literature Production Centres were written for a very specific context, and only occasionally shared outside the community of origin. The digital era expands that original

audience well beyond what was ever envisaged, and so issues of copyright and intellectual property come into play.

According to Australian law, copyright for the books developed in Literature Production Centres belongs to the Northern Territory government, as they were first published under the direction or control of the NT Department of Education[1]. This means that the individual authors, illustrators, and others do not hold copyright to the materials; however, they do retain 'moral rights' with respect to attribution and any alterations. While these moral rights are automatically recognised, the right to reproduce and make the works public remains with the copyright owners, who can also license their rights, giving another person the right to use the copyright material. As partners in the Living Archive project, the Department of Education has licensed the digitisation and online sharing of these books through the LAAL website (www.cdu.edu. au/laal/copyright).

In order to assure the inclusion of Indigenous voices in the renewed digital life of these materials, the Living Archive project team has chosen to go beyond the simple attribution of moral rights (in the metadata on the archive) and has set out, deliberately, to seek the permission of the original contributors to put their materials online. This was done using a permission form written in plain English explaining the project and requesting consent to make the materials available online through the Living Archive website. The original creators or the family members of those who had passed away all agreed to sign these forms and see the materials become more widely available.

A challenge emerges with materials which have no attribution of authorship, as the moral rights of the creators are still maintained even when they are not named in the work. Legal advice suggests these 'orphan'

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1   In the case of LPCs which were part of Catholic schools (e.g., Santa Teresa, Wadeye and Nguiu), the copyright belongs to the NT Catholic Education Office.

materials carry a high risk, as a creator may come forward at any time and object to the distribution of their works. To mitigate this risk, the project team is working at spending time in communities asking people to identify the creators of these materials, which gives another way for local Indigenous people to engage with the materials in the archive.

Another means by which rights can be protected in the online environment is through the use of Creative Commons, which allows people to legally build on and share creative works. The license chosen for the Living Archive project is Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Australia, which means users are free to share the material in any medium or format as long as they give appropriate credit, and that any changes made may not be distributed. The non-commercial component means users may not use the material for commercial purposes.

While there are still risks involved in repurposing these valuable cultural and linguistic resources for a new era and a new audience, this project attempts to carefully navigate this complex area, and find appropriate common ground where both Indigenous and Western concepts of ownership and the transmission and sharing of knowledge are respected.

Indigenous Catholic community schools

What has been of particular interest in the Indigenous Catholic community schools has been the potential for curriculum development and teaching and learning in Aboriginal languages and cultures beyond the school. The use of digital technologies has allowed Aboriginal people the opportunity to use new technologies to create new cultural artefacts to continue to reproduce and often amplify continuing practices and narratives related to existing understandings of how life should be lived. These new artefacts include multi-modal texts and not just printed ones.

New digital materials, including those in the Living Archive, have allowed the books prepared for use in bilingual programs to be used outside of the schools concerned. Adults who did not learn to read their own languages have expressed interest in studying these materials as the archive has been viewed around the kitchen table. Some families and organisations have expressed some interest in reading these materials with small children on family-owned devices. This has allowed individuals, groups and organisations outside the school to have access to resources that were previously just located in the school.

Many of the written materials currently on the Living Archive were early print texts written specifically for use in the school. In many ways, they are tentative instructional texts, rather than natural cultural artefacts. Some of the stories are not attributed, as they were written by school employees and the copyright was thought to belong to the school. This has raised some issues, as teachers have planned to use these materials for teaching language and culture. For example, the Arrernte language program uses four key questions to analyse dreaming stories that are studied:

• Who do these stories belong to?

• What country do they belong to?

• What do the stories tell us?

• What do the stories mean?

This means that the stories have to be attributed and located geographically. The school has developed a large visual map on which they identify the location of family estates and the stories that belong to each. (For some readers the term 'estates' may conjure up images of properties owned by cattle barons or the landed gentry, but it is one used quite commonly by Indigenous people and anthropologists to refer to country or areas associated with particular clans.) Students then identify their country and their rights to both the country and the stories associated with it, through both the matriline and the patriline. The stories that are currently available

are not representative of all family groups. One planned teaching activity is for students to use iPads to collect a story, orally, from each of their mother's and their father's families. This story would then be located on the 'country' map. This map is one artefact that the teachers would like to have digitised in a way that would allow the stories to be stored behind each estate.

The integration of different knowledge systems

The integration of different knowledge systems has produced a number of educational and linguistic resources which support the use, preservation and promotion of Indigenous languages, and has often included the use of digital technologies and the engagement of Aboriginal Elders from many communities.

As scholars who have been using digital technology and Aboriginal language resources in our work, we are in agreement that we need to think carefully about digital technology and common ground if we are to do the right thing by the Aboriginal owners of knowledge and language in the digital era. We are in agreement that the moral rights of creators need to be asserted. Rights (documented permission and a respect for cultural sensitivities) need to be upheld to balance the wider benefits the resources may bring against the rights of the creators. As Bird & Simons (2003, p. 570) put it, it is sometimes the case that "…the sensitivity of the participants takes precedence over the sensitivities of the researcher".

Conclusion

We are aware of the move from a restricted creation and distribution context (whether literature production centre, school, Aboriginal Languages Fortnight, or School of Australian Linguistics) to one which allows worldwide access, so therefore we have been careful about obtaining permission, clarifying copyright, respecting the moral rights of the creators, and putting limits on how the material can be used and modified by people outside

the communities in which the books were originally produced. At the same time, we want the repository to be a living archive which facilitates the distribution of digital materials. Creative Commons licences and The Open Languages Archives Community provide agreed guidelines with respect to how that distribution is managed. These are the standards we have chosen to follow.

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Linguistic similarities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and international students from non-English backgrounds in higher education: implications for access and success

Ganesh Koramannil

All there is to thinking is seeing something noticeable which makes you see something you weren't noticing which makes you see something that isn't even visible (Maclean, 1976)

Overview

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and a large number of international students in Australian Higher Education (HE) sector speak English as an additional language and/or dialect (EALD). Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, EALD background is more common with those who live in remote and sometimes regional Australia than for those who come from urban areas. Similar to the international students from EALD backgrounds, many of these Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students speak more than one language other than English, which could be their second, third or even fourth language. This implies similar linguistic backgrounds vis-à-vis English. Both these cohorts have to negotiate their studies at Australian universities in English and their levels of proficiency in English impacts their access and success. Considering these similarities, this chapter will critically reflect on the implications for these two cohorts of students within the context of Higher Education and suggest some future research directions.

Introduction to author's background

I was born in a Malayalam speaking family from Kerala in India. I had my schooling in Hyderabad, the erstwhile largest princely state under the *Nizams* during the British Raj, which meant that I was able to acquire Urdu and Telugu as the local languages while I studied Hindi as the national language, and English was formally the third language at school. In reality, I spoke Malayalam, Hindi and Urdu most fluently, while Telugu was my fourth and English remained my fifth language. Later I studied English language, linguistics and literature for my undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. I commenced my career teaching mostly English language and occasionally English literature courses predominantly in higher education. Many years later when I went to Sydney University as an international student to study for a postgraduate program in TESOL, I had to prove my English language credentials, with an acceptable IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score. As life would have it, two years later I was teaching English language courses at NCELTR (Macquarie University) and I also became an IELTS examiner.

Another turning point in my personal and professional life was the choice of going to Maningrida where I mentored the assistant teachers with their Educational Support Work courses and thus began an active and engaging association with Aboriginal education. Three years later, joining Batchelor Institute to teach the Bachelor of Indigenous Language and Linguistics (BILL) program in 2011 brought my professional focus exclusively on to Aboriginal higher education.

It has to be said that this paper has its roots in my first experiences of reading assignments submitted by my students in the BILL units. In many of those essays and reports, I saw the potential for significant quality enhancement through improved and appropriate language use. The content of the work submitted deserved much higher grades than the form and the language used would permit. It emerged that the students' limitations in using English as the language

in those academic transactions was detrimental to the success their knowledge and efforts deserved. Although the author has referred to his experience with BILL students, the purview of this chapter would cover all EALD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian higher education.

My expertise, interest and background in ESL made me engage in discussions with those students regarding their English language backgrounds and past experiences with English. In conversations with those students I shared my language background and my own struggles to acquire confidence in using English in academic environments. What those students shared with me in return made me realize that we shared remarkable linguistic similarities.

Given the EALD background of the author, it seems valuable to contextualize the issues discussed in this chapter by referring to EALD students from international backgrounds. What follows is a critical reflection on this realization and an analysis of its implications in the context of higher education by comparing and contrasting EALD barriers experienced by international students in higher education.

Introduction to contextual background

Many factors influence language backgrounds of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Four of these are the impact of colonization, remoteness, a multilingual ecology that existed prior to European settlement, and the development of Aboriginal English as a dialect of English (see Williams, 1988; Eades, 1995). The impact of colonization meant that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had their traditional languages damaged and destroyed through the official government White Australia policy. As a result, Aboriginal English has emerged and has become the most widely spoken language by Aboriginal people across Australia (Eades, 1988, 1993, 1995; Hansen, 1998; Malcolm, 1994, 2013). The remote location of some of the Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander communities is important because these communities are more likely to retain their traditional languages today as they have had less colonial intrusion throughout the colonialisation process. These remote groups have also been less prone to direct interaction with colonisers and were therefore less prone to assimilation activity.

The multilingual ecology of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages is also important as there is much diversity, which includes linguistic diversity, among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006). Even today, this remains so in many remote communities and involves people using their mother's traditional language, their father's traditional language, the language of neighbouring communities, creoles and Aboriginal English. The current state of Central Australian languages as reported by the Director of National Parks (2009) provides an example of this. Aboriginal English is the fourth important factor here. It is very much "part of Australia's linguistic heritage" (Malcolm, 1994). It is more than a means of communication to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; it is also used to identify with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Malcolm & Grote, 2007, p. 166). The origins of Aboriginal English are in the assimilation activities that they were subjected to, which included deliberate attempts by governments to separate parents from their children to prevent them maintaining their traditional languages.

Today, these four factors contribute to linguistic diversity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Some continue to speak their heritage languages at home, while others use Aboriginal English as their first language, and still others use both interchangeably. Fryer-Smith (2002) had estimated that about one-tenth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population spoke their heritage language at home while the 2011 census identified over 11% of them use their heritage language at home (Biddle, 2012; ABS, 2012). This indicates that over 10% of Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander students in HE could be from an EALD background. The ratio could be more in contexts such as Batchelor Institute where over 76% of VET students during 2011 and 2012 spoke an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language at home (Pakeha, 2014). This is important in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as some of these VET students may make a transition to HE. At the same time, the business of international education continues to bring in a very large number of international students to Australian universities. As of June 2014 there were over 204,000 international student enrolments in HE alone, while over 75,000 enrolments were recorded by the ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) sector (Department of Education, 2014). Students from China, India, Vietnam, Korea, and Malaysia accounted for over 52% of the total international student enrolments (Austrade, 2014). Thus, of the 422,324 international students enrolled in June 2014 (Department of Education, 2014) a sizeable majority come from non-English backgrounds.
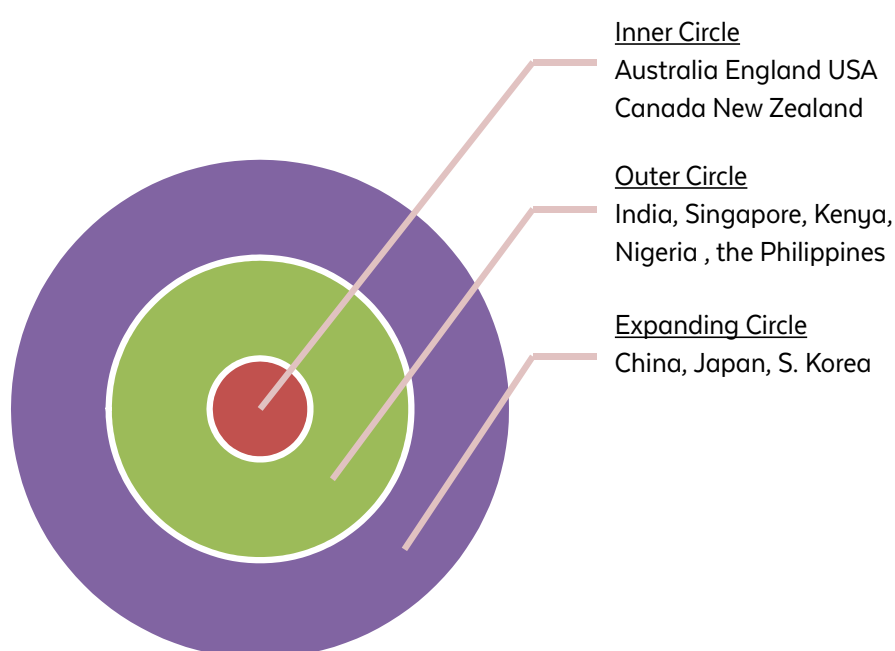
The ESL/EALD international students could have factors parallel to those described for Indigenous students that determine their English language backgrounds. For example, a student from India, Malaysia or any other commonwealth nation would have a colonial English legacy in their home country. At the same time, a student

from a predominantly monolingual nation, with very little or no linguistic impact of the British Empire and hence any historical links to English (i.e. nations like China, Japan or Korea), would have an entirely different English background. There could also be students from countries with colonial histories but with no past ties with Britain, and hence with no significant traces of English in their language ecology. In short, these students bring varied English language backgrounds to the universities in Australia and a comparison could be drawn between them and the Aboriginal students who speak English as an additional language and/or dialect.

To situate the varied English language backgrounds of the world's nations, Kachru (1982, 1985, 1986, 1990, 1996, and 2003) has presented a model of circles of English, in the form of three concentric circles. It needs to be acknowledged here that the countries in the inner circle indicate only the recognized variety of Standard English spoken there and it does not take into consideration the other Indigenous or migrant languages spoken, nor other varieties of English by non-Anglophone speakers. In the case of Australia, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians do not speak an Inner-Circle English but a non-standard dialect (Aboriginal English) and this has more in common with varieties from the Outer Circle.

Kachru's concentric circles of world Englishes

The inner circle in Kachru's model includes Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the US and the UK, and the representative English of this circle has a norm-providing or standard setting nature which gives this variety of English much more credibility and global privilege. The limitation to this outlook is that it does not address the palpable differences between the varieties of English within this 'English Club'. Hence the evident difference in spelling, usage and pronunciation between the British or Queen's English and its American counterpart do not get a mention. The outer circle consists of the Commonwealth nations, the post-colonial countries that shared their

Inner Circle
Australia England USA
Canada New Zealand

Outer Circle
India, Singapore, Kenya,
Nigeria , the Philippines

Expanding Circle
China, Japan, S. Korea

British colonial past. They are the likes of India, Singapore, Kenya, the Philippines, Pakistan and Nigeria where English has a norm-developing nature and this means the English/es in these countries are in the process of gaining credibility. The expanding circle consists of the rest of the world, including China, Japan and Korea, where English is of a norm-dependent nature as the speakers looked up to the norm-providing English from the inner circle as a model for acquisition.

International students from the outer and the expanding circles speak one or more languages at home that are not English. In the outer circle, in countries that endured British colonial rule (e.g. India, Singapore, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka), English still enjoys practical supremacy over other native languages as a key official language of the country, as well as the link to modern science, business education and hence economic prosperity. English is the preferred language of instruction in higher education in countries with British colonial history like India, where it serves as an instrument of advantage to those from high SES backgrounds (Annamalai, 2004). At the same time, many Asian universities within the expanding circle have adopted English as the medium of instruction as a response to the internationalization of higher education (Byun, Chu, Kim, Park, Kim, & Jung, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2011) as the adoption of English enables them to compete with the universities from the inner circle whose English-based education attracts large numbers of students. In spite of the growth of English-medium universities in Asian countries, large numbers of students from these countries come to Australia each year and these numbers continue to grow (Austrade, 2014). Hence this cohort of students form the majority of ESL/EALD students in Australian universities.

These students are also bilingual or multilingual to variable degrees. Students from India for example, could have the ability to speak two to three languages besides English. Post-independent India followed a three language policy where every student had to learn their state language (usually their mother tongue), Hindi the

national language and English the international and official language at school. This means that everyone who attended school had exposure to multiple languages and English for them remained the second, third or even the fourth language. In South Africa "nine African languages as well as English and Afrikaans make up the official languages of the country" (Dowse & Howie, 2013, p. 855) and hence students from there could have a strong multilingual background.

The ESL/EALD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students on the other hand speak their heritage language, Aboriginal English, and/or a Creole at home and in their communities. They do go to schools that offer English medium only education while providing an extremely limited and varied amount of heritage language instruction or none at all. Many of these students speak more than one Aboriginal language or dialect and English for them could be at the bottom of the list of languages they speak. These students would have acquired English as a second, third or as an additional language (Shnukal, 1993; McTaggart & Curro, 2009; Nahan, 2014) like the cohort of international students mentioned above. While these factors support the argument of linguistic similarities between international and Indigenous students, there is a significant difference in the attitude towards English in countries with an ESL background and in many Indigenous communities. For example, in India and in Malaysia, two ESL countries where Australia welcomes international students from, parents consciously choose English medium or English only education for their children (see Annamalai, 2005, Lin & Martin, 2005) while many migrant communities of non-English backgrounds acquire English as a second language even at the cost of their first or heritage language (Fillmore, 2005). Many parents of Indigenous students in Australia and the students themselves also desire "to be competent in standard English language and literacy" (Tripcony, 2000, p. 3), but the absence of

any alternative education for Indigenous Australians makes it a compelling reason to opt for an English-based education.

The focus on EALD Indigenous students suggests that within the Australian language scape, we could reapply Kachru's concentric circles, so that they become 'concentric circles of English backgrounds of Indigenous students in Australia':

Students with
SAE as L1

Students with
Aboriginal
English as L1

Students with
Aboriginal
Languages as L1
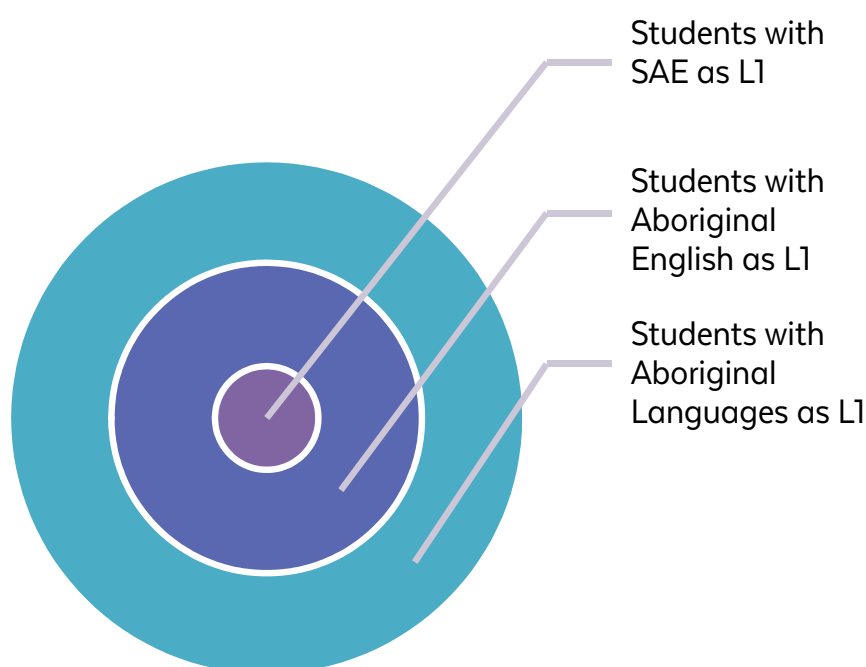
This indicates that there could be certain commonalities and differences between Indigenous and international students with ESL/EALD backgrounds. An analysis of this relationship points to implications for their higher education.

Indigenous and international students from ESL/EALD backgrounds – a comparison

It is within this context of language complexities that the implications of English language proficiency for international as well as Indigenous students from non-English speaking home environments in higher education need to be considered. Given the similarities in their English language backgrounds, it can be suggested that both Indigenous and international ESL/EALD students would face similar challenges while transitioning

into HE. Brandt (2010) identifies two categories of students who have to undergo academic acculturation in their first years. These students fall into two groups: "those for whom the language of instruction is their first, or equivalent, language, and those who are studying in a language other than this" (Brandt, 2010, p. 276), and both the above discussed cohorts of students fall into the second category. The Aboriginal students, who may not be literate in their own language or L1, would be in an even more precarious position than the international students who have high literacy and fluency in their primary languages.

ESL/EALD Indigenous students

- Get treated as mainstream Anglophone students
- Are assumed to have sufficient proficiency in English as an Australian (citizen)
- Are expected to have the cultural understanding of the Western academic system
- Are hence accepted to university studies like other 'domestic' (Australian) students

[Overlap]

- Speak more than one language
- English is the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th language
- Need special orientation to the Western education system
- Need high level of English language proficiency to achieve success in academics
- May struggle to understand English first and then the subject through English

ESL/EALD International students

- Undergo special scrutiny and admission procedures before admissions to university courses
- Require proven English credentials through IELTS, TOEFL etc.
- Are understood to require cultural induction
- Are provided English language pathways to HE courses if they do not have sufficient proficiency in English

Access to higher education

Indigenous, international, mainstream or any other specific cohort of students at Australian universities may approach higher education from a particular cultural, personal, socio-ethnic or a combination of perspectives. Hence the aspirations of the students may vary from gaining a degree qualification to trying successfully to make meaning out of what is provided to students as knowledge through the process of learning. Whatever may be the aim or expectation of the students, English language would play an important role in the success or failure of those aspirations. This provides a case for the exploration of the implications of English language backgrounds of both Indigenous and international students in Australian universities for their access to higher education.

There is a multitude of impediments caused by English language barriers to students from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) and other challenges faced by students commencing higher education or transitioning into universities. The language of instruction can become a natural impediment especially when it not the primary language of the student. Eisenchlas and Trevaskes (2003) indicate that both local and international students do not come to universities with the necessary academic and language skills, while Biggs (2003) concurs that transitioning into HE becomes difficult for students due to the difference between the academic culture of HE and that of a high school. However, in higher education students need higher language proficiency and in the Australian context, both Indigenous and international students would need higher English language proficiency.

The EALD Indigenous or international students in Australian universities need to negotiate the language

and medium of instruction while striving to demonstrate their learning through the use of academic English, a very formal type of English much different from basic spoken English. "There are no native speakers of *academic* English" (Mauranen, Hynninen, & Ranta, 2010), and with its distinct formal register it takes concentrated efforts for anyone, including speakers of English, to acquire proficiency in it. Hence, for these students, moving from secondary education into HE also means transitioning "from learning English at school to learning in English at university", as Brandt (2010, p. 278) points out, while asserting that these students are "required not only to learn English, but also to learn in English" (p. 279) while becoming familiar with academic culture and standards. Academic literacy, which is a critical component of this academic culture and which is achievable only through English language proficiency, provides "epistemological access to higher education" (Papashane & Hlalele, 2014 p. 669).

Though Biggs (2003) classified transition into social and cultural issues, learning and teaching issues and English language issues, the scope of this paper is limited to the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and international students as it relates to English language issues in Australian Higher Education only. With increased realization about the significance of attaining educational success for improvement in the quality of life, there is an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Islander students striving to gain a western education. Both access and success in education are viewed as a matter of equity where equity means equality of opportunity and results (Levin, 2003). In other words, equity in HE would mean access to and success in university education. So from the perspective of an EAL international student, English language proficiency is also a key factor in achieving equity, while for EAL Aboriginal student cohorts this is identified in the Behrendt review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education (Behrendt, Larkin, Griew, & Kelly, 2012).

The fact that there was a significantly larger enrolment of Indigenous students between 2006 and 2011, yet this does not amount to a representation proportionate to the Indigenous population (ACER, 2014), needs to be seen from the perspective of equity as well. It is this perspective that has given life and strength to the widening participation agenda being followed by Australian universities today.

With the widening participation agenda helping to improve enrolments of low SES students, which would include many EALD Indigenous students, together with the increase in the numbers of international students from similar language backgrounds, "it can no longer be assumed that students enter their university study with the level of academic language proficiency required to participate effectively in their studies" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 2).

These students would be entering a world that demands very high academic professional standards. The extreme nature of this challenge could be gauged from the fact that even students who are fully proficient in English may need attention to their language as "it can exhibit what are more accurately described as dialectal forms not in keeping with academic and professional standards and expectations" (Murray, 2010) and as such it cannot be expected that the students would come to the universities with the required or expected levels of English language proficiency (Dunworth, 2010).

It was the realization that English language ability has major implications for employment outcomes and that the international students have a significant role to play "in meeting skill shortages in the Australian workforce" (AUQA, 2009, p. 1) that the then Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) commissioned a project in 2008 to develop a set of good practice principles for the improvement of English language proficiency in education (DEEWR, 2009). However no similar policy approach was made to address the English language needs of EAL Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander students. No policy with an aim of achieving equity for Aboriginal students can ignore the significance of English language proficiency. These understandings point to the need for a comprehensive policy around English language proficiency in higher education and a relevant and reliable support system that will cater to the English language requirements of Indigenous as well as international students whose mother tongue or L1 is not English.

Success in higher education and English language proficiency

If access to higher education would make it more equitable, especially to those from low SES backgrounds, the success attainable by those students determines the usefulness of the education system for the individuals as well as for the society in general. There has been very active discussion around the question about the English language admission requirements for international students in Australian universities as well as about the support to be provided (Hirsh, 2007). However, a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from similar English language backgrounds in this perspective does not seem to be on the radar of those taking up issues related to English language in higher education for the international student cohort.

The need for an improved support for the development of English language skills of the international students has also been highlighted in the policy document of Universities Australia (2013) while in addition it expresses concern about unsuitable English proficiency for employment of these students. Considering that a lack of English competency can cause "anxiety, frustration, de-motivation and an inability to engage with the learning process" (Murray, 2010, p. 56) a lack of English language competency would greatly impede the chances of success for those students. It will also have negative implications for the issue of equity, work readiness of graduates, and the overall student experience in higher education. The bottom line remains that at present,

not many students "whether ESB or NESB, domestic or international, will come adequately equipped with the specific set of academic literacy practices they require for their particular degree" (Murray, 2011). This needs to be considered along with the fact that "efficient study and information gathering are part of the backbone of academic success and meaningful learning at university" (Papashane & Hlalele, 2014, p. 666).

English language proficiency in HE is a vast and complex topic and yet extremely significant for every player in the sector and hence it is practically impossible to encompass every aspect of even the linguistic similarities of international and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Therefore the discussion and the scope of this chapter have merely allowed us to identify the following questions for consideration and future research:

1. How does English language background influence subject choices of Indigenous and international students?

2. How does English proficiency support and improve academic practices?

3. How do English language abilities aid comprehension and hence support Indigenous and international students in achieving results on par with their potential?

Conclusion

When I was a child in post-colonial India, my parents made a conscious decision to send me to an English medium school and later as an adult I made a choice to invest in my professional upskilling and came to Australia to gain my second postgraduate qualification. I live with my Indian heritage and speak different tongues as they become useable. However, I use English to transact with Western knowledge and systems mostly as a functionary within the system. What made this possible for me is the acquisition of English not just as a language but as a tool to operate in the westernized world, as a currency for professional and intellectual transaction.

Language is like the different currencies we use when we travel abroad. Yet the fact remains that English is one of the key elements that need to be dealt with in time and in an appropriate way for non-English speakers to negotiate a common ground within or even at the periphery of the Western world. Since English language proficiency is one of the unavoidable necessities in the Anglo-Australian education system, such a practical approach will help in avoiding the application of deficit models, even at an institution like Batchelor Institute as highlighted in Arbon's (2006) research. Arbon categorically asserts that the provision of simultaneous and mutually respectful engagement between Aboriginal and Western knowledges is the responsibility of the academic institutions and their stakeholders. Fulfillment of this core responsibility would become instrumental in finding the common ground with Indigenous and Western knowledge systems.

Given that there are significant similarities between both international and Indigenous students with similar English language backgrounds, and given that there is ample research focus on the perspectives of international students, the case of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in HE from ESL/EALD backgrounds warrants equal attention, if not more, since they too have to negotiate with English as an outsider language. This suggested new research direction would address not only the criteria of equity but also will enable a student cohort with multiple disadvantages to find their rightful support in striving to avail themselves of the benefits of higher education, as well as provide better student experiences and hence a better reason and means to reduce the education gap.

> The future need not be a repetition of the past... Persistent attempts to explain the unknown in terms of what is already known, can lead to blind repetition of unsatisfactory patterns that limit growth and restrict possibilities (Vaughan, 1979).

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PART III – RESEARCH, ETHICS, AND OTHER PROVOCATIONS

Our contribution, our imperative: an argument beyond inclusion

Sandy O'Sullivan

Constituting inclusion

In late 2014 a text on performance was released by ANU press called *Circulating cultures: exchanges of Australian Indigenous music, dance and media* (Harris, 2014). This is an important contribution to historical and contemporary understandings of Indigenous performance and the vibrancy with which our[1] communities engage in complex and varied practices. The text fills a significant knowledge-gap, and the contributors are drawn from a range of disciplines. It is understood through inquiry that none of the authors are Indigenous Australians and no authorship is shared with those providing content to the publication.

There is a contemporary rethinking that positions the inclusion of an Indigenous[2] voice, not only in the information told, but in the process of undertaking research amongst our Peoples (Fredericks, 2009, p. 20; Rigney, 2001, p.1). In contrast to this aspiration, there

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1   *Our* and *We* is used as an active mode of positionality for the author, who belongs to the Wiradjuri community, and has a responsibility to the broader Indigenous and Aboriginal communities of the country now known as Australia.

2   Aboriginal and Indigenous are used interchangeably in this article and are placer terms for preferred community, tribal or language names. Named people should be traced in each instance to determine their current affiliation/s. The terms Aboriginal and Indigenous are capitalised for two reasons, the first that it shows a sign of respect as it swaps-out a collective proper noun for a specific naming. The second is that is that Indigenous when used to indicate a specific Indigenous group (i.e. Indigenous Australian) is a short-form for a proper noun and under rules of grammar should be capitalised. Similarly 'Peoples' operates as short-form for Indigenous Peoples.

remains research conducted with Indigenous Peoples that is outside of this Indigenous perspective on the epistemologies of engagement. Marie Battiste adds to this critical inquiry by suggesting that "...most existing research on Indigenous peoples is contaminated by Eurocentric biases" (2008, p. 503). Beyond a space of representation for Indigenous researchers, Battiste is suggesting that we bring an approach to research that potentially changes the outcomes of the research, the measures of engagement, and that disrupts some of the structures that apply within the academy.

The writers who contributed to *Circulating cultures* have undertaken significant research in their fields, are writing in a respectful and rigorous way, and are disseminating important information on the ways that Indigenous Knowledges are practiced and performed. Yet they are not Indigenous, and the academy that they work within allows limited capacity to formally understand or acknowledge their Indigenous engagement at a level of shared authorship, and there remains little requirement for a level of knowledge-transfer back to the community (Cadet-James, Wallace, & Watkin Lui, 2014). The academy provides another immersive barrier with ongoing references to the difficulty of locating Indigenous academic expertise across fields of inquiry, ensuring that the story told and the process of telling the story can remain legitimately within non-Indigenous purview (Rigney, 2001).

The example provided of *Circulating cultures* works within the disciplines in which there are an increasing number of Indigenous academics. Our capacity and our practice in working into disciplines do not, however, prepare us for the work required across all disciplines. Since the introduction of the requirements under the Bradley Report to support the embedding of 'Indigenous cultural competencies' across the disciplines, there has been a push in understanding how this can occur across every discipline in the sector (Bradley et al., 2008, p.27). The

desire for Indigenous inclusion can create a space in which Indigenous academics are expected to almost magically contain knowledge of a field in which we have not studied. I have frequently been invited to talk to people from the Maths or Science areas – areas in which I do not have even rudimentary knowledge – purely on the basis of my Indigeneity and availability. If taken up this could diminish the sense in students that Indigenous academics can provide a discipline-knowledgeable focus. Like many of the discussions across this chapter, these are resistible extrusions by the mainstream academy in reductively managing Indigenous Knowledges; a unique contribution is to ensure that in requiring inclusion, we also curate the context of this inclusion (Rigney 2001, p.2).

Inclusion, beyond representation

This chapter is neither a plea for Indigenous inclusion in an academic text nor is it proposing that research projects about us are automatically enriched by our participation. The chapter instead focuses on the power of inclusion of the Indigenous voice in the practice of research, and proposes strategies to challenge and disrupt the academy-led precepts of Indigenous Knowledge(s) reporting that exclude citation and keep at a distance those whose lives are reported. Central to the question of Indigenous inclusion and citation is whether Battiste's (2008, p. 503) explication of a Eurocentric view forms a framework for dismantling the system of citation and the expectation of the academy. Can academic processes sufficiently adjust to permit academic work to source individual community members as more than a congregate representation, and as the source of knowledge itself?

In estimating the power of Indigenous engagement in altering the act of undertaking research, it is important to consider the work of Aboriginal academic, Lester-Irabinna Rigney in his framing of Indigenist research practice. His central theory explores agency and self-determination through a process underpinned by privileging Indigenous voices and understanding all researchers' positionality

(Rigney 1999, p. 110). Indigenist approaches also require a positioning that articulates relational power and the structures present that subjugate (Moreton-Robinson 2004, p. 73). In Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's seminal text, *Decolonising methodologies,* she discusses the over-worrying of positionality between the extra-cultural researchers to the 'researched' as an undisclosed precept. She argues that writers from outside of the culture are compelled to think about cultural sensitivity as a base level expectation (Smith, 2002). While for non-Indigenous people the process is often to articulate and acknowledge the distance, as Indigenous researchers we explain our connections, our responsibilities to our communities, and articulate our relatedness (Fredericks, 2009; Smith, 2002).

In early 2014 an email was generated within a group of mostly non-Indigenous writers for a book to be released by Springer on service learning in Indigenous communities. I was included in this email exchange and there was a robust discussion, led by Naomi Sunderland and Brydie Bartleet, non-Indigenous academics who argued for the importance of framing each writer's positionality. I, too, argued for this (Personal Group Communication, 2014). Their argument posited that while it can articulate difference, it also describes an upfront relationship to the communities with which we are working. For many of the respondents this was foreign and uncomfortable, but it became the framing for the publication and the approach of disseminating the information by providing an explicit context and a background to the perspective of each writer. It resolved an internal dialogue that I was having where as an Indigenous author who represents cultural difference to most of the other writers, I am often the only one who must frame and explain my cultural background. In doing so, it also addressed the issue that Smith raised of a constant state of management, by it moving from a background position to making the relationship between

writer and community explicit, where they are forced to remain present, rather than distanced, in their research reporting.

Whose work is it anyway? The risks and power of inclusion

Universities are increasingly in the business of creating silos where knowledge is held and attributed according to requirements to build a strong researcher base, and they explicitly operate using these practices. For academics there is a 'publish or perish' (Laurence et al., 2013) imperative that drives the need to ensure their name appears on publications as an author. In academic contexts it is not the person who provides words or concepts but the author who can claim the overall work as theirs. Similarly these authors shape the context of how the work is received and how knowledge-transfer is accommodated. Indigenous Peoples around the world know this all too well, there are no more researched people than our communities (Martin, 2003, p. 1), and when the voices of those communities are not heard on what is - or is not - culturally valuable research, the arbiter remains the academy.

In recent years laying claim to ideas from Indigenous Peoples has been challenged, and the citation of ideas is expected practice. In noting this, there is no further expectation that authorship of an academic paper or book is shared with its subjects. Further, Australian universities explicitly benefit from an unshared citation, with a greater yield of research income paid to the academic's institution (HERDC, 2015). For Indigenous academics and writers, this presents both an opportunity and a challenge: an opportunity to contribute in a space that we were excluded from until very recently (Behrendt et al., 2012), and a challenge that many of us face in working with our communities and then recalibrating the work as our 'own'. For many Indigenous researchers, the notion of authority is neither taken without acknowledgement, nor without due care. Smith argues that for "...Indigenous researchers, sharing is about

demystifying knowledge and information and speaking in plain terms to the community" (Smith, 2002, p. 161), a notion seemingly at odds with the process of research dissemination to an academic community.

An academic author owns their published material. As Indigenous academics we can talk to Elders in our community, ask them questions and cite their contribution, but it is still considered by the academy to be our individual work. The researchers' names appear and will forever be associated with that work, and while contemporary practice suggests that source name should be cited, it is still possible for their ideas and thoughts to become lost in the citation and forever associated with the author. This is reinforced through an academic system that acknowledges communities of practice, networks, research teams and support systems in principle, but continues to assess and promote academics on individual academic merit.

In 2014, I was asked to contribute to a journal through conversation with a non-Indigenous academic. A series of emails between us would form the conversation, to be written and published in a special issue that promoted the Australian Indigenous Studies Learning and Teaching Network to which we both belonged (2013). In the end, it seemed a little more like an interview with me and I encouraged my co-writer to publish more of her own ideas, as she had been a leading figure in the development of the Network. Still lopsided in authority, she argued that we should be positing an Indigenous perspective and that I was a leader across the broader space in which we were working. We were both very pleased with the resulting text that was submitted to the journal and accepted for publication. I wrongly assumed that I would be listed as one of the two authors.

In the same publication and with the same author there appeared another article: 'Four scholars speak to navigating the complexities of naming in Indigenous Studies', with all four scholars, along with others, named as authors of the article (Carlson et al., 2014). I have

mused for some time on how this could possibly have occurred and was informed that my author-exclusion was standard practice for an interview. Far from an interview, the text entitled, 'A discussion with Sandy O'Sullivan about key issues for the Australian Indigenous Studies Learning and Teaching Network', I argued, was a scholarly and cultural contribution to which I was clearly connected. But this argument came far after publication and, while not consistent with the nominations in the other article, it served as a reminder that negotiation of our cultural and insider knowledge is not privileged in the academy. This discussion is not a challenge to the publication or even the author, for whom I hold a great deal of respect. I was, without question, deeply complicit in the actions that led to a failure to enact a citation in line with author-ownership by forgetting the central tenet of academic work, that it will always be publish or perish (Laurence et al., 2013) and that sharing a citation diminishes the power of the single-author work.

Within this cautionary tale is a reminder that even in Indigenous contexts nothing else is valued as highly as citation in academic research, and that it has moved from a prize to a requirement (Laurence et al., 2013), and that we must countenance caution against engaging without clear guidelines. The underlying concern is that if this could happen to me – a senior researcher with decades of experience within the academy - what hope was there for a community or community of practice outside of this environment?

Knowledge transfer, ownership and the academy: managing beyond inclusion

There have been notable exceptions to this practice that should be lauded as inclusive and accurate in citation. Non-Indigenous researchers Lyn Fasoli and Rebekah Farmer engaged in research to explore strategies for Early Childhood workers in working within Aboriginal communities. This work resulted in a 2011 report called

You're in New Country (Fasoli & Farmer [Compilers], 2011). Fasoli and Farmer do not author the text; rather they frame themselves as 'compilers'. Their contributors were mostly Aboriginal Early Childhood workers from across the Northern Territory, who had a range of material that they needed to disseminate as researchers across the field; Fasoli and Farmer privileged the information by clearly nominating the contributors and their knowledge set. In the imperfect world of academic citation, you will still find the names of the contributors largely excluded from a list (see this reference set), because of the volume of names involved, but their contribution is acknowledged beyond 'informant'.

Language researcher Maree Klesch of Batchelor Press rarely assumes a name assignation on the publication of collaborative research, instead assigning it to a community or researcher from the community.[3] Problematically this work – often significant community stories and Knowledges – becomes catalogued as children's books or uncitable research data. Other authors within the press will note their role as 'compiler' (Batchelor Press, 2015). Similarly the citation for *The people of Budj Bim: engineers of aquaculture, builders of stone house settlements and warriors defending country* can be seen in full in the reference section of this chapter, and clearly states authorship by Gunditjmara People & Wettenhall, G. (2010). Commissioned by a government department, the authorship is shared and this arrangement is discussed within the book with a clear indication that the text only exists because of this co-authorship (p. 4).

Most of these texts straddle the academic, publishing and community engagement worlds, and are not centrally placed in academic contexts. This may be the key to academic imperatives failing to drive the ownership, however each of the participants loses academic

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3   For example, see citation: Marri Amu Rak Tjindi Malimanhdhi people. (2003). *Mi-tjiwilirr i wulumen tulh.* Batchelor: Batchelor Press. Please note that Maree Klesch's name does not appear as an author.

credibility through each shared or community citation. I am proud to say that the first two publications arise from work we have undertaken at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education to recognise the value of a shared citation, and to encourage it, where appropriate. It is worth noting that if an institution is able to assert this as individual intellectual achievement, there is a beginning argument for its value in changing practices. The examples given here intentionally include non-Indigenous participants. Again, reinforcing those systems that reward and integrate alternative measures, incentivise Indigenous voices in the process of dissemination. The communities involved in each of these texts would not permit an engagement that failed to recognize their contribution. It also, at least at some level, provides a space to the compilers to 'opt out' of the process of the academy, by ensuring that the value of the material is primarily to the community (Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, 2012), rather than an iterative, ongoing journey of citation, further academic writing and the intended audience of academics.

The underlying question across this chapter is in what context this shared authorship would not be appropriate?

An aspect of the extra-curricular and off-track undertakings that many Indigenous academics undertake is often not understood by the academy, but can lead to transformative practice (Behrendt et al. 2012). While this may lead to education and research reform for Indigenous Peoples, the overwhelming approach recognizes the importance of social action, a central tenet of Rigney's Indigenist philosophy and practice (1999). The *Idle No More* project that academic Alex Wilson of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation has actively organized across her community may prove to be one of the more significant historical moments in First Nations challenges across Canada. The ongoing project has focused on stimulating action within communities

against racist and oppressive government practices and to ensure treaty plans are carried out (Febna 2013). Wilson's role as educator and intellectual within the mainstream academy is often lost in the public descriptors of her actions (Johnson & Ward, 2014), her movement from writer to news item transforms her voice and the relationship is, at times, separated. In other contexts she is described as both an instigator of the action and an employee of the university, with the connection between the two not always apparent, except in media where it is Indigenous-controlled. It is evidenced in her teaching practice that Wilson's movement oscillates between the action of the social movement, a transformation of understanding for her students, and the community-driven motivations (Johnson & Ward/ Wilson, 2014). In 2014 she incorporated Idle No More into a contemporary understanding of First Nations agency in Canada in her curriculum. In her institutional blog, Wilson takes control of her diverse identity markers, and creates a space in which her voice and the voices of her community are privileged, but where she operates applying an equally legitimate and rigorous reporting (Wilson, 2015).

Aboriginal education leader, Victor Hart in *Teaching black, teaching back*, frames the untenable base-line relationship that Aboriginal teachers have to the academy, and suggests strategies to disrupt, if not dismantle, the colonial project through applying our own complex positionalities (Hart, 2003, pp. 12-13). To do so he enlists critical race theory as a strategy to dismantle the idea that the post-colonial exists. He explores our role as Aboriginal educators teaching both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, and as inhabiting a space that is more accustomed to describing the actions and reactions of others, as distanced and historical overview (Hart, 2003, p. 5). Fast forward eleven years and Aboriginal/South Sea Islander academic, Chelsea Bond, who works across identity and representation in higher education teaching practice, writes of teaching *herself* as an object (Bond, 2014). While she worries about the value of an essentialising view and the problems it presents,

she reflects an awareness that presenting first-hand Indigenous perspectives in a mainstream university process can operate as "...disruptive, confrontational, and confusing, but... a necessary part of transformative *warrior scholarship*". Her concept of warrior draws on the importance of challenging her audience – her students – and transforming their perspectives. She encourages them to confront their feelings of guilt and discomfort, through her engagement as both teacher, and the othered object (Bond, 2014).

In 2014 I participated in a workshop with Indigenous academics Yvonne Cadet-James, Felecia Watkin-Lui and Valda Wallace at their home institution of James Cook University. Each of these researchers are proponents of centering knowledge-transfer as the base motivation for undertaking research with Indigenous communities (2014). This process moves beyond the idea that standard academic dissemination is the end-goal and positions community-led processes and useful end products delivered back for the benefit of the community as the primary objective. Using this model, an academically formatted research output is seen as a necessary, but secondary requirement. I participated as an 'academic in residence' and was able to observe in this workshop - comprised of mostly PhD and Masters candidates - a clear sense of their direction, value of their research and a positivity that I have rarely encountered. Their work was rigorous, and their accountabilities were clear to both the community and the academy; it was edifying.

Including the academy

In the criticism of an Indigenous-focused text that failed to have Indigenous contributors, except for the designer of the cover, Goenpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson, refers to the "...writer-knower as subject [being] racially invisible, while the Aboriginal as object is visible" (2004, p. 80). This analysis by a leading Aboriginal academic is a reminder that the gaze now comes from First Nations'

Peoples and that we are now participating in the academy, and are invested in interrogating an underlying insular research approach.

In a text that focuses on common ground, we must contemplate the contribution of our non-Indigenous allies and collaborators who remain present in the process of undertaking research across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts. Central to this is the importance of researcher positionality and a recalibration from an imperative of building a publication track record to undertaking research that has, as its primacy, the value to our communities. Many of us work across communities that are not our own, and carefully reject a pan-Indigenising lens, yet we remain Indigenous participants engaging with other Indigenous Peoples and our responsibilities are frequently explicit and complex (Smith, 2002). We should encourage our non-Indigenous colleagues to manage their own relationships in ways that acknowledge the contribution of communities to the research, and that ensure that their positions and engagements are clear.

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been argued that in order to challenge the colonial gaze within the academy, we must engage not only the representation of the Indigenous voice across both researcher and researched, but ensure that our contributions are relevant, adequately acknowledged, and that we encourage our communities to have a greater agency over research processes within the academy as they relate to the dissemination of our knowledges and ideas. The academy must learn from community processes of reciprocation and desire for agency, and in doing so realise that our insistence on inclusion does not reflect an aspiration to belong to the academic 'club', but rather a desire to revolutionise it.

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The learning is always going both ways: early childhood education action research with remote Indigenous[1] communities in the Northern Territory

Millie Olcay, Michele Willsher, & Lyn Fasoli

Introduction

Action research has been adopted as an ethical and effective way of working with remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory (NT) because of its capacity to engage people in defining and addressing issues of local concern. In this chapter, the authors reflect on the contribution that action research has made to their teaching and research in the sphere of early childhood education at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BI) where all of the students are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. The early childhood education pedagogy and curriculum at the Institute has been driven by community-based action research for over 30 years. This has continued in some form despite the fact that many decisions affecting community life have been dominated by policies and programs which have originated from outside the communities concerned. Drawing on concepts of action research promoted by Stephen Kemmis and Batchelor Institute, the authors seek to renew the value and purpose of action research as underpinning the both-ways philosophy applied to early childhood education teaching, learning and research at the Institute.

The Institute's 40th anniversary was a stimulus for the authors to reflect on how action research has driven change and equity in the development of early childhood education courses and materials. Our working experiences at the Institute have overlapped only briefly, but we each

inherit a history of action research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that has informed our practice. As non-Indigenous lecturers, we acknowledge the potentially colonising effects of education and the need to redress power imbalances that occur between any teacher and student but particularly between white teachers imbued with significant privilege and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students confronting multiple challenges in their pursuit of tertiary education, not least the fact that they often come to this experience with fluency in many languages other than English, which dominates as the language of instruction. Adopting an action research approach in our research, teaching and project work has required us to reflect on and become more aware of the relationships we enact as learners as well as teachers.

Action research is a powerful tool that can create a space for negotiation and engagement with multiple perspectives. For educators working across cultures this is a critical issue. We draw inspiration from Stephen Kemmis, noted action researcher who worked with the Institute back in the early days when it was known as Batchelor College, who reminds us that there are many justifications for engaging in action research but, for him, the most important is the capacity of action research to produce self-knowledge. It is this form of knowledge that underpins our discussion of how we have each been a part of the history of engagement in early childhood education research, teaching and learning at the Institute.

Action Research

Kemmis (2010) calls attention to consequences of action research and how it can affect 'history'. He maintains that action research "...can be part of the endless production, reproduction and transformation of practices that is the process by which collective practices evolve to meet the needs, circumstances and opportunities of new

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1   The term Indigenous is used here to refer to the range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live in Australia who have attended Batchelor Institute over the years.

times and new circumstances" (Kemmis, 2010, p. 420). The justification for action research often relies on the production of the kind of knowledge and understandings that sits outside of practice. We agree with Kemmis that action research does produce this kind of knowledge but it should also produce change and change creates history.

When action researchers (or other researchers) seek to justify action research as research on the grounds that it contributes to the production of such 'external' knowledge (and thus to justify it as 'scientific' in this particular sense), they turn their attention away from the most important thing – what happens in some particular place and time as a result of the action research (something that can only be known, we should note, by human understanding) (Kemmis, 2010, p. 425).

> When action research leads to individual and or collective self-knowledge, "…the knowledge a person has of himself or herself or the knowledge a community has of its communal practices" (Kemmis, 2010, p. 422), transformation of practice can occur. Transformed practice is an important product of action research. Therefore, practices emerge from a specific kind of process, action research, and it is engagement in that process which is pivotal. In the case of researchers at BI, this includes both the 'outsider', usually a non-Indigenous person, as well as the 'local' Indigenous person.

Action research is about engaging with multiple perspectives, ideas and questions to build understanding about identified issues. In doing so, action researchers become aware of gaps in their own knowledge and understandings. While this awareness is not usually counted as a research outcome, it does provide direction for key ethical obligations, responsibilities and practices of the action researcher (Laycock, Walker, Harrison & Brands, 2009). MacNaughton and Hughes (2009, pp. 82-83) in describing action research as 'open-ended' and collaborative, discuss how those involved in the research

are positioned less as 'objects' or 'subjects' of the research and move to being active and equal 'participants' or contributors in the process. They advise action researchers to be prepared for it to be 'politically risky', particularly when dealing with issues that may involve challenging the status quo and traditional power relationships or structures. Indeed, some researchers regard Participatory Action Research (PAR), by its nature, to be a political act (Brydon-Miller & Maguire, 2009; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) is useful in action research in Indigenous education because it can provide opportunities: to recognise and respect Indigenous knowledge, culture and traditional practices (Annex, para 11); to develop culturally appropriate education systems and methods of teaching and learning (Article 14); to facilitate full participation in decision-making (Article 18); to maintain and control traditional knowledge and cultural expression (Article 31); and to recognise Indigenous rights to self-determination (Article 3). This fits within a broader human and civil rights agenda, addressing anti-discrimination, to move social justice agendas forward, protecting the civil and political rights of Australians, including the full and active participation of all citizens, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, class, race, the presence of an impairment, language, religion, ethnicity, educational background and belief or value system.

Adopting an action research approach can provide a way to at least redress colonising pedagogies and research methodologies. With the addition of an Indigenous rights framework, this approach is strengthened. Being cognizant of Indigenous perspectives, action researchers can challenge the colonising gaze and impositions of the past. This approach by non-Indigenous researchers rejects traditional methods of research 'on' or 'about' Indigenous people as 'objects' or 'subjects' of scientific investigation to a focus on research 'with' Indigenous people who are recognised as equal, active agents.

In the next section we provide three examples of how our early childhood education work at Batchelor Institute has been informed by the adoption of action research.

Action Research in Early Childhood Education Course Design

When Batchelor College[2] offered the first teacher education programs in the late 1970s, its mandate was to "attempt to provide training for the needs of remote Aboriginal communities" (Uibo, 1993, p.45). In order to succeed, this mandate required innovation and creativity. Within a few short years, an action research approach became infused into the course design of the Teacher Education Program[3]. The value of action research lay in its provision of a pedagogical approach which could work to support the construction of new Indigenous knowledge. Its worth was also seen in the way it could be drawn upon to affect change. By the mid-1990s, the College offered separate early childhood qualifications and similarly these drew on an action research approach. Staff at Batchelor College both facilitated and were themselves participants in research. This work identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' ideas on education for their young children and fostered new models of early childhood services and programs.

Teacher Education courses at Batchelor College began with the Remote Area Teacher Education Program which were first offered in 1976 (Ingram, 2004). The course responded to the needs of remote Indigenous schools that needed to train a workforce capable of responding to the enormous changes which the Whitlam government policies had brought to Indigenous education[4]. As a

pedagogical approach, action research was drawn upon to explore and highlight Indigenous knowledge and understandings as well as to improve practice. The adoption of this approach responded to the needs of Indigenous teacher assistants[5], many of whom were already working in the early years programs in primary schools. These pre-service teachers were instrumental to the implementation of the bilingual education programs as well as other programs being implemented across the Northern Territory (NT). For these teachers, action research provided an opportunity to reinvigorate the teaching in their schools as well as to transform programs into ones that would affirm their indigenous language and culture.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, the range of higher education courses which Batchelor College offered grew. Action research, however, remained at the core of the pedagogical process. In 1986, Batchelor College partnered with Deakin University and the Yirrkala community and for the first time it was also able to offer a degree program[6]. The general primary teaching courses of the 1980s, where large numbers of early childhood teachers enrolled were the foundation for the first formally accredited Early Childhood Education courses that were offered in the 1990s. Finally, by 1993, the first students enrolled in the Associate Diploma and Diploma of Early Childhood Education courses which focused solely on

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2 In 2001, Batchelor College was renamed Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

3 In 1983, the first students graduated from Batchelor College with an Associate Diploma of Teaching (Aboriginal Schools).

4 A major influence was the introduction of bilingual education programs which commenced in 1973.

5 The term Teacher Assistant was commonly used up until a decade ago when the term Indigenous Education Worker started to be more commonly used by the Northern Territory Department of Education.

6 The D-Bate program provided support to complete, through a research program a Bachelor of Arts (Education) degree.

this newly emerging educational field[7]. Action research was integrated into several core subjects, providing students with the opportunity to undertake research in their communities to investigate issues related to language, culture and pedagogy. While research reports were published[8], more importantly, a variety of practical projects were undertaken which planted the seeds for local school community change. Liddy's action research undertaken as part of her degree provides insight into how it was drawn upon for instigating local change (Liddy, 1991). Action research became a valuable tool for exploring Indigenous approaches to 'growing up children' and how to respond best to their education. Small action research projects were developed so that, as pre-service teachers studied the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, they were also encouraged to return to their communities to investigate child development from an Indigenous perspective. Drawing on this knowledge, we, as lecturers, were then able to incorporate this knowledge into the course for future students.

Action Research in Remote Community Early Childhood Education Program Development

Action research also underpinned early childhood education program development in remote communities. Indeed these processes, action research and program development, were mutually constitutive. During the 1990s Batchelor Institute also responded to a groundswell of interest from remote communities to develop

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7   The first Associate Diploma of Education (Early Childhood) students graduated in 1996, and the first student enrolled in the Diploma of Education (Early childhood) graduated in 1997. Most students enrolled part-time as they also held teacher assistant positions in schools or worked in child care programs or community based crèches.

8   These were frequently published in the Batchelor College Journal, Ngoonjook.

small-scale Early Childhood Education programs for their children. A series of regional conferences held in Alice Springs, Katherine, Batchelor and Yirrkala were attended by over 200 women from 52 remote communities. The conferences generated interest among Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in undertaking small-scale, community-based action research projects. A common theme of 'collaborative action' was proposed at each of the regional conferences. The action, which was to be undertaken upon return to the communities, unfolded into four stages:

1. to find out what community people wanted for early childhood services on their community;

2. to design plans for getting started;

3. to implement plans; and

4. to reflect on implementation.

Community members were supported by pre-service teachers enrolled in the Diploma of Education (Early Childhood) who were able to draw upon these projects as part of their course assessments. They were also supported by the various non-Indigenous staff working in community services ranging from employment programs to what were then known as council crèches. Reports on several of these small-scale, emergent, early childhood services were made at the Northern Territory Children's Services Conference (1995), while others were documented by the *Talking Early Childhood Project* (McClay & Willsher, 1999).

These locally based action research projects led to the design of the first certificate level course in Early Childhood Education. The certificate course was designed specifically to support community members to develop their own early childhood education services while at the same time attain a formally accredited certificate. Throughout the 1990s action research projects succeeded in playing a key role in promoting a wider understanding of Indigenous approaches to education amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Lecturers were actively engaged in supporting students to design action

research projects, which were not only integrated into their course of study but which also helped to start up and develop small-scale early childhood programs.

In 2003, through a participatory action research project, the 'Both Ways Children's Services Project'[9] explored the development processes undertaken by early childhood services in six remote Indigenous communities: Ikuntji, Titjikala, Gurungu, Barunga, Nguiu and Galiwin'ku and involved 68 community members across these six communities. The project investigated the question 'What constitutes an effective and sustainable children's service in remote Northern Territory communities?' The research team included 11 researchers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, from the Institute and Charles Darwin University working in collaboration with community members. The pre-existing relationships that members of the research team had with local participants and their services, many of whom were, or had been, students of the Institute, provided a strong platform for intense engagement and serious discussion of issues of concern. The study documented and analysed the factors that contributed to the development and sustainability of services for children in 6 remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. Formal, funded and regulated children's services were, and even in 2014 still are, relatively new ways of working with children and families in these communities. Project processes and findings highlighted the fact that different communities held different views about what their services for children and families were for, and indeed what services might become. Action Research prompted critical reflection on the purposes of children's services by staff from the Institute as well, challenging conventional western views of child care. For example, mainstream regulations required particular sleeping arrangements for children. These were not seen as appropriate by Indigenous staff who found such arrangements difficult to implement where children

were more used to sleeping any time, in close proximity to each other and where they could still be part of what was going on.

While the 'Both Ways' project provided much needed information about, and some critical insights into, how early childhood programs were developing in remote Indigenous communities, by whom, for whom, and for what present and future purposes, it also changed participants, including staff from the Institute. The project affected how Institute staff operated, what they understood their roles to be in relation to each other and their students and continued a tradition of learning from each other about early childhood. For example, as staff learned more about Indigenous practices that were different to mainstream ways of working, they became more aware of their roles as advocates for Indigenous ways of working with children, rather than primarily as the transmitters of mainstream knowledge.

A number of other action research projects occurred during the early 2000s that continued in the same vein and led to the development of more customised early childhood resources reflective of the participant communities. These resources have been fed back into the development of early childhood curriculum and professional development activities at the Institute as well as in the communities involved. For example, the Talking Pictures project[10], in Gapuwiyak and Jilkminggan, explored Indigenous perspectives on young children's play. Community-based researchers, Alison Wunungmurra and Anna Godden, with Institute teaching and research staff and over 100 community members including children, were afforded the opportunity to look closely at their own play as children, as well as their children's play in the present, and concluded that play was an important and powerful vehicle for cultural learning. These insights created new conversations amongst community members about the roles that adult family members can and should play in fostering play opportunities for their children that could

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9   Also funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation

10 Funded by the Telstra Foundation 2004

lead to cultural learning, in the same ways that had occurred in the past. In Gapuwiyak, these conversations led to changes in the way the local child care service operated. New play activities were introduced explicitly to reinforce and support the cultural identities of children as strong Yolngu children and elders were invited to spend more time with children to teach language.

In 2008 community based researchers, Barbara Petrick, Noreen Bundy, Joanne White and Andrena Webb, in the small community of Atitjere, worked with Institute researchers and members of their community on an action research project entitled Transition to School Project[11]. The main aim of the project was to improve local community involvement and interest in the local school through strengthening the capacity of parents and school personnel to reflect on and identify information that could support young children's transition to school. The project also modelled a process for building stronger relationships and understanding between schools and their communities through action research. The research identified the valued, local cultural practices young Indigenous children acquire prior to entering school as reported by their parents and grandparents as well as important school practices that children needed to learn in order to be successful in their first years of school, as reported by their teachers and principal.

These action research projects, supported by and engaged in by local Indigenous community members working alongside Institute staff, created momentum for innovation, challenge and change for improved early childhood services and programs for children in participating communities. At the same time, these projects also drove change within the Institute through enabling the development of more culturally informed course materials, curricula, and staff members.

Action Research in Early Childhood Workforce Development

In 2013, the Institute was successful in winning the NT Training Initiative Award for the 'Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce' (BRECW) project in collaboration with the NT Department of Education; an action research pilot project on early childhood workforce development[12]. The project increased the number of training completions and the quality of graduates in early childhood education and care in four remote communities - Maningrida, Ngukurr, Gunbalanya and Yuendumu (Willsher, 2013)[13].

The community-based early childhood educators (VET trainers) employed in the four BRECW communities required a flexible, responsive tool that could provide integrated early childhood education and care training across the multiple work places. In order to satisfy this need, the Learning at Work Book approach was proposed; an accredited, clustered VET Certificate I and II in Community Services and Certificate III in Children's Services program. This curriculum was customised for senior school students (VET in Schools) and adult learners across the six different program sites in which they were employed (see diagram)[14].

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11 Project partners NT Council of Government Schools Organisation (COGSO), Batchelor Institute and the Atitjere community, funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) under the Parent School Partnership Initiative (PSPI).

12 See http://www.batchelor.edu.au/portfolio/batchelor-institute-winner-of-northern-territory-training-provider-of-the-year-2013/

13 These communities had been nominated as the sites for the construction and development of Child and Family Centres under the National Partnership Agreement for Indigenous Early Childhood Development.

14 FaFT in the diagram refers to the Family as First Teachers playgroup program of the NT Department of Education

The Learning at Work Book approach was initially developed through an action research and consultation process with key NT government agencies, NGOs, RTOs, Indigenous community members as well as past BI students in 2010. Common barriers to participation in training in remote communities were identified and addressed as much as possible and the materials were evaluated through a year-long trial in communities in the Central Australian region. An action research approach was also embedded within the training materials that asked learners to reflect on their own knowledge and values as they engaged with new ideas in the training materials. The questions acted as "mechanisms to accommodate and privilege the Indigenous cultural perspectives and values present in participating communities" (Bat & Fasoli, 2013, p. 6).

The 'both ways' philosophy, which BI pioneered in the NT, was employed as a catalyst to drive reflective practice of students and the early childhood educators engaged in the project. Viewed as a best practice model to support Indigenous adult learning, the approach built on existing knowledge and strengths of individuals, which was then bolstered by workplace mentoring to support the transfer of new knowledge from theory into practice. Teaching and learning both ways provided an opportunity for

exchange of non-Indigenous and Indigenous knowledge and meaning. In the words of Wali Wulanybuma Wunungmurra (1989, p. 12),

> ...as a minority society we can adapt by finding common ground with the majority society...In an exchange of knowledge both sides learn from each other instead of knowledge coming only from the Balanda side. But Yolngu and Balanda knowledge will only come together if there is respect for our knowledge and where Aboriginal people are taking the initiative, where we shape and develop the educational programs and implement them.

Conclusion

The title of this chapter, 'The learning is always going both ways', refers to the action research process from which each of us has learned so much. Action research changes people and what they do, and thus changes history. In this chapter, action research is described as providing opportunities for continuous learning to occur (through a cyclical process of planning, doing and reviewing) and is recognized as being valuable and valued. By engaging in an action research process, there is potential to witness a change in oneself, other individuals and organizations. Indeed, the history of the Institute has changed and continues to change as teachers and students engage in these processes (producing new knowledge, informing new curriculum, transforming pedagogical practices and transforming the lives of those who participate).

Whilst the full value of action research can never be known, as a process it provides a vehicle for sharing knowledge and creating opportunities for change and, as Freire (1976, p. 88) reminds us:

> In the learning process the only person who really learns is s/he who appropriates what is learned, who apprehends and thereby reinvents that learning; s/he who is able to apply the appropriated learning to concrete existential situations. On the

other hand, the person who is filled by another with 'contents' whose meaning s/he is not aware of, which contradicts his or her way of being in the world cannot learn because s/he is not challenged.

The authors believe that attainment of self-knowledge acquired through participation in action research is a continuous process both for individuals as well as for the collective group. Engaging in the process of inquiry and reflection is the first step; actively participating in creating change is the second. As individuals we were changed by our experiences, and in the process, through our participation, we were involved in changing situations.

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Indigenous research across continents: a comparison of ethically and culturally sound approaches to research in Australia and Sweden

Kristina Sehlin MacNeil & Jillian K Marsh

In the context of opposition to, or absence of, ethical engagement in Indigenous research, researchers are morally obligated to make a stand that ensures their engagement strategy and implementation plan uses an approach based on positionality, participation, mutual respect, and partnership. Whilst this may involve new challenges for the researcher, such an initiative maximises the likelihood of an empowering and culturally safe process for vulnerable participants, including inexperienced researchers. As two early career researchers, we reflect on our experiences amidst some of the challenges within Indigenous research. These challenges include ethical, methodological and structural issues. The main aims of this chapter are to advocate for practical and philosophical reform of Indigenous research ethics particularly in the context of decolonisation; ultimately to maximise the benefits of research primarily for community research participants, service providers, and policy makers as opposed to primarily for the academy. The authors' experiential and theoretical knowledge enables a critical understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of a decolonising research approach and how this guides the development of an appropriate ethics protocol.

We acknowledge that research impacts on Indigenous peoples' lives, often in a negative or unintended manner, and its governance varies dramatically according to individual as well as institutional values that are steeped in Western thought including colonialism. This paper draws on scholarly theoretical knowledge of cultural protocols and the governance of ethical processes from international and local sources, as well as our own experiences in cross-cultural communication to articulate

what we call a Decolonising Standpoint. We regard this as a necessary addition to the implementation of an Indigenous Standpoint in the context of research, which has provided a highly credible philosophy and practice for Indigenous researchers. We aim to create an additional and quite distinct position that non-Indigenous researchers can add to their repertoire of skills and knowledge in the context of Indigenous research.

Introduction

Kristina Sehlin MacNeil is a non-Indigenous PhD Candidate at the Centre for Sami Research at Umeå University in Northern Sweden and the David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research at University of South Australia in Adelaide. Kristina's PhD project investigates power relations between Indigenous groups and mining companies in Sweden and Australia. In Sweden the Indigenous people are the Sami and Sápmi, the Sami homeland, which stretches over the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Sápmi, 2014). Dr Jillian Marsh is an Adnyamathanha woman from northern South Australia, and a Research Fellow in the University Department of Rural Health at the University of South Australia. Jillian is actively involved in community-driven research as well as cross-institutional research collaborations.

Our experiences of participating in Indigenous research and undergoing Indigenous ethics reviews are varied. Beside our roles as researchers, Dr Jillian Marsh also holds experiences of hosting researchers in her community. Through these experiences we identify a need to discuss ethical issues that span the globe. In Sweden there are no particular procedures in place to ensure that research involving Indigenous peoples undergoes ethical review, and in many cases the researcher decides whether to put in an ethics application or not. Swedish practices

and philosophies contrast considerably with the broader international context and particularly with processes that insist on multiple levels of review, so as to ensure there is scrutiny at a professional as well as community level. The human research ethics governance process interacts with, and in many ways is a reflection of, scholarly discussions on the need for appropriate methodologies (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Ivanitz, 1998). In our experiences of Indigenous research, an ethics protocol based on a decolonising methodology maximises Indigenous participation through privileging Indigenous voices and rights to participate or withdraw from research based on participant terms and interests. We argue that methodology and ethics go hand in hand and both must continue to place greater emphasis on researcher positionality than is currently the norm.

We discuss in this chapter the merits of practically and philosophically applying an Indigenous Standpoint (theory and practice) and a Decolonising Standpoint (theory and practice) as a means of ensuring research processes are ethically sound. Indigenous Standpoint theory emerged from Feminist Standpoint theory, which advocates for women's rights in society (Chilisa, 2012). Feminist Standpoint theory provided a strong philosophical underpinning where very little had previously existed for Indigenous research (Hartmann, 1992; Rigney, 1999; Nakata, 1998; Smith, 1999). Indigenous Standpoint theory primarily advocates for the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous researchers, thus challenging the idea that only non-Indigenous people were researchers, while insisting that positionality is of paramount importance, and that Indigenous knowledge deserves to be prioritised. Foley claims, "The Indigenous epistemological approaches in an Indigenous Standpoint enables knowledge to be recorded for the community, not the Academy" (Foley, 2003, p. 50). Foley's insistence on prioritizing community concerns above academic priorities raises an important and ongoing challenge that each researcher, involved in the field of Indigenous research, should be prepared to face as part of their role.

Another interconnected challenge relates to the level of risk involved in making a stand for community wishes. Marsh claims "…all research involves risk factors…" and "…no paradigm or methodology guarantees a 'better way' of doing research" (Marsh, 2011, p. 27). Risk taking within research has many facets, more than can be adequately discussed in this chapter; however there is one that must be acknowledged, namely the risk of insisting on an Indigenous ethics protocol that is underpinned by an Indigenous paradigm.

An Indigenous Standpoint creates a paradigm shift from objectivity and otherness to subjectivity and inclusivity, and highlights that through paradigmatic shifts and decolonised philosophical underpinnings there is a greater chance of creating an ethics protocol that champions Indigenous knowledge. However, whilst this is empowering for Indigenous researchers and research participants, it does not emphasise the responsibilities of non-Indigenous researchers.

A Decolonising Standpoint on the other hand places responsibility on all researchers involved in Indigenous research to decolonise the research process. We argue that a further paradigm shift is required to ensure that the academy in its entirety recognises and accepts a shared responsibility to engage ethically and morally. Examples of initiatives that assume a shared responsibility include the reconciliation movement and NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration) week activities in Australia. We describe and discuss a Decolonising Standpoint in the context of cultural safety (Bin-Sallik, 2003; Coffin, 2007) and agreed protocols, positionality, compliance and philosophy.

Cultural safety and agreed protocols

Many scholars emphasise the importance of Indigenous academics undertaking or being active parts of Indigenous research projects in order to maintain the focus on issues from Indigenous Standpoints, and to ensure that the research process and results are relevant to the peoples and communities that will ultimately

be affected by the outcomes (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999; Rigney, 1999; Louis, 2007; Porsanger, 2004). We agree with this position and insist that Indigenous researcher participation and an Indigenous Standpoint are important, even though this may involve challenging or even offending some researchers who seek to uphold colonial positions of power. Furthermore, Dr Marsh highlights the importance of providing a culturally safe place for Indigenous researchers to work in, and the need to acknowledge community sources as an integral part of research education. In her case, when working with Adnyamathanha Elders and community, what becomes clear at every stage of the research process is the need to develop a culturally appropriate and clearly articulated methodology that is understood by all parties via a practically implemented ethical framework. As a member of the participant community or as a stranger with little or no connections, the process of negotiation is critical to ensure cultural safety for all. We argue that a Decolonising Standpoint, in addition to, or in place of, an Indigenous Standpoint, enables all researchers to position themselves both as researchers and as participants in the research environment rather than researchers 'doing research' on Indigenous issues. Through acknowledging the philosophical underpinnings and personal experiences brought to the research environment by the researcher, researchers can maximise cultural safety whilst negotiating entry into the field.

Similar to Australia, Swedish academe requires human research projects to undergo ethics reviews, although, research undertaken on a postgraduate level is not required to undergo ethics processes. Also, contrary to the Australian academic environment, where Indigenous research must be preceded by specific ethics reviews, Swedish academe requires no particular ethical protocols for Sami or Indigenous research (Ledman, 2012, p. 55; Lawrence, 2009, p. 66). When PhD Candidate Kristina Sehlin MacNeil initiated her PhD project within Umeå University in Sweden, she was told that the project did not have to undergo an ethics review unless seeking to

publish internationally, and that whether the research participants were Indigenous or not was irrelevant. In other words, in Sweden, there are no particular ethics protocols for research that involves Indigenous peoples, that goes beyond mainstream research involving human beings.

Swedish critical race and whiteness researcher Tobias Hübinette and colleagues (2012) point out that using the Swedish word *ras*, meaning race, is more or less taboo in Sweden and states that "instead, the term ethnicity, and to a certain extent also culture and religion, have replaced and also been made to include race" (Hübinette et al., 2012, p. 44, author's own translation). Hübinette et al. (2012) argue that rather than eliminating racist societal structures and expressions, the avoidance of the term race, in favour of a so called 'colour blind' society, has merely aggravated the discussion about issues of discrimination, racism and segregation experienced by non-white Swedes (ibid.). It seems likely that the avoidance of the word 'race' and fixation on 'colour blindness' is linked with the generic ethics procedures for research involving human beings. According to a Swedish national philosophy Sami people are simply Swedish people and run the same risk of being subjected to unethical research methods as any other Swedes. However, as evidenced by a report compiled by the Swedish Discrimination Ombudsman, Sami people experience a high degree of discrimination because of being Sami (Pikkarainen & Brodin, 2008). The question is whether ethical procedures regarding research involving Sami people that do not factor in issues of discrimination because of Saminess, can guide research that will promote social justice for Sami people. Or will this (lack of) ethics procedures merely add to unjust structures already in place? A Decolonising Standpoint would address structural discrimination promoted by a lack of appropriate ethics procedures and provide both non-Indigenous and Indigenous researchers with a philosophical grounding built on respect and reciprocity. To embrace a Decolonising Standpoint a researcher must

be ethically as well as methodologically committed to honouring the research participants' voices and perspectives, and to the concept of cultural safety.

Risk recognition and minimisation

Within current academic structures there are risks associated with taking a stand for Indigenous led or guided research and ethics as a primary philosophical position. These risks can include researchers being denied access to resources due to their commitment to follow Indigenous research ethics and protocol (Heikkilä & Fondahl, 2012), or the research not being regarded by some researchers as objective or even scientific. In a recent paper Denzin (2014) outlines the battles between research paradigms and whilst being optimistic about the development of qualitative research, he calls for a greater openness between paradigms as well as an:

> ...Ethical Agenda: The qualitative inquiry community needs an empowerment code of ethics that cross-cuts disciplines, honors indigenous voices, implements the values of love, care, compassion, community, spirituality, praxis and social justice (Denzin, 2014, p. 1125).

We agree with Denzin, however, we also argue that the emergence of a Decolonising Standpoint extends our understanding of Indigenous research ethics in a way that challenges where responsibilities currently lie; Indigenous research ethics must involve non-Indigenous as well as Indigenous commitment. Within the context of Indigenous inquiry we advocate a philosophical commitment to research that is based on participation by choice, and reciprocity by definition, as well as positions that are fully negotiated in Indigenous people's terms of respect, understanding, cultural appropriateness, and a willingness to consider others. This standpoint should not have to be fought for by Indigenous researchers in isolation but should be based on shared recognition and mutual respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers.

Compliance versus philosophical standing

We argue that in accepting responsibility to engage in Indigenous research, all researchers must broaden their focus from a narrow compliance perspective to include a philosophical Decolonising Standpoint. Researchers must make the effort to learn about, and be prepared to implement, an ethical framework that demonstrates understanding of the possible risks associated with Indigenous research and the range of methodological perspectives appropriate to Indigenous research. This includes a reflective and critical process that enables a researcher to learn from their practical experiences and enrich their philosophical understanding of the research process. Standpoint theory enables all researchers to be explicit in articulating their philosophical positionality for example as an insider or outsider, as an Indigenous or non-Indigenous person, or as a male or a female. A Decolonising Standpoint demonstrates a deep and genuine commitment to acknowledging the many negative impacts of research on Indigenous peoples and cultures, and contributes to the momentum of a shifting paradigm away from oppressive ways of thinking and working.

Active engagement with Indigenous research ethics and methodologies should include a review of critical commentary on these topics as championed by researchers such as Nakata (1998), Smith (1999), Atkinson (2001) and Foley (2003) and as laid out in various national and provincial guidelines. These and other scholars have not only raised the bar on integrity within the research process, they have also set the bar in place where no bar previously existed. Dr Marsh as an early career researcher shares her experiences of the scale of the ideological gap that exists between institutional compliance and ethically driven researcher philosophy (Marsh, 2011). This was prompted by her experiences and earlier inquiry into the level of attention being given by academic scholars to the research process. In

particular the phenomenon known as 'contested space' (Ball & Janyst, 2008; Laycock et al., 2011) offered a dialogue for investigating the power relations within research. Contested spaces become very apparent when navigating the various models of ethical engagement such as the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) model of multiple levels of approval, the Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) University model, and localised models such as the 'ways of working' community model that emerged in the 1990s in community research and development in Western Australia. Many people involved in research seek to find ways that complement the needs and priorities of communities, the requirements of academia, and the expectations of researchers both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. However these spaces remain highly contested because of entrenched colonial approaches by some senior researchers, internalised colonialism in some sectors of Indigenous communities, as well as a range of inconsistencies across ethics compliance and philosophy.

Our sense of future direction is firmly influenced by the knowledge that Indigenous research ethics is a worldwide phenomenon being led by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, and the time for a critical and radical approach to ethics more generally is long overdue (Sikes, 2013). These scholars have acknowledged the researcher's privilege in both philosophical terms as well as in practical compliance measures. Experienced and fledgling researchers alike have a responsibility to ensure that research goes beyond a level of ethics compliance that is tokenistic. Ethically sound Indigenous research should not be the sole responsibility of Indigenous researchers and Indigenous research bodies. We argue for a philosophical shift that embraces a power rebalance in favour of Indigenous peoples and knowledges, is culturally safe for all, and is based primarily on the values and priorities of Indigenous research participants. This is what we believe a Decolonising Standpoint is based on.

Research ethics governance

In a research environment of shrinking resources there is increasing pressure to ensure that funding is allocated according to outcome-driven criteria rather than participant-driven criteria, which can sometimes place institutions at odds with the concept of ethical research (Smith, 1999; Denzin et al., 2008). Stringent ethical measures do not guarantee that research funds will not be allocated to poorly designed projects or researchers with limited knowledge and experience of how to negotiate entry into the field in a culturally respectful manner. For example, in Australia there are often clear and detailed governance frameworks for addressing these shortfalls, yet there is still an element of philosophical resistance within the academy toward Indigenous-led research (Fredericks, 2008; Sherwood, 2009). Within this cohort of resistance there is an element of individuals (both researchers and policy makers) circumventing their responsibility to decolonise their practices, as well as individuals being pressured into conforming to the old ways of doing business in the Indigenous context (Sherwood, 2009). One example of an attempt at strengthening institutional and individual resolve to decolonise the governance of research is the South Australian Indigenous Research Accord (SAHMRI, 2014). This document was developed in consultation with a broad range of interest groups and endorsed by numerous parties, including three universities in South Australia. Its purpose is to pledge commitment at the highest level for ethical governance in Aboriginal health research in South Australia. At an individual level, we feel that all researchers working in Indigenous research should insist that research projects include the capacity to provide adequate opportunities to network, advocate, and strengthen their collective Decolonising Standpoints through informal networking as well as through opportunities to critically engage with methodological and ethical issues via seminars, conferences and through publication.

Conclusion

The tendency for some researchers, particularly those not familiar or comfortable with Indigenous research, is to view methodological and ethical reform as something primarily (or solely) an Indigenous responsibility, or to regard compliance measures as a gatekeeping practice. We endorse a very different set of priorities, where ethical engagement is a philosophical commitment derived from a Decolonising Standpoint that must always be prioritised both at an ideological as well as practical level. We acknowledge that this position remains little understood and poorly accepted within mainstream academies.

We argue that decolonisation of the research process requires identification and interrogation of resistance toward Indigenous-led research and Indigenous priorities at a theoretical as well as practical level. We claim that development of a Decolonising Standpoint based on the principles of Indigenous Standpoint theory will ideologically shift Indigenous research design and implementation to a new standard. We feel this is necessary to ensure issues such as positionality are openly discussed by all researchers, and critiqued with vigour by both new and seasoned researchers. This demands a critique of ideas such as mutual respect and reciprocity, to open up debates on more radical ideas around research control. We suggest that further development of a Decolonising Standpoint theory provides a way of emancipating Indigenous research participation through highlighting culturally appropriate ideology and ultimately greater Indigenous control. We feel this will create a shift that is urgently required across the academy, to ensure the intricacies of Indigenous research are fully understood or appreciated at the onset of an Indigenous research project. Decolonising Standpoint theory will strengthen our knowledge of power relations, including how Indigenous Standpoints ontologically change the framing of research. Decolonising Standpoint theory will shift control from the Western academy to the community in ways not currently possible due to the continued contestation of space and

resources. Through institutional as well as individual endorsement of decolonising theories and methodologies there is great potential to strengthen Indigenous research.

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Over 40,000 years of accountability to culture: connecting two systems of thinking

Bronwyn Rossingh

Introduction

Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and the Federal and State governments of Australia operate from very different philosophical world views. These positions prevent a mutual and meaningful understanding of the relationship between the management of program funding and the requirements of accountability for that funding. This chapter provides insights into the cultural differences that prevent government funding from achieving legitimacy in remote Aboriginal communities.

Connections between Indigenous notions of accountability and western accountability attributes are discussed in this chapter in light of the existing knowledge systems that are key to the success of programs. This chapter contrasts specific findings and common features between this study and Batchelor Institute's 'both ways' philosophy that is embedded in the Preparation for Tertiary Success (PTS) Program. The course adopts an approach that aligns with the findings of my study and demonstrates a successful model whereby Indigenous peoples overcome barriers to pursue a higher education. Government funded programs could learn from the common ground approach that provides an intercultural platform for productive and respectful relationships that can directly improve outcomes for Indigenous Peoples.

This chapter refers to findings from a study titled 'Culture legitimate accountability – finding the balance for Indigenous communities' (Rossingh, 2014). In the study, Government funding programs were used as the lens to tease out the weaknesses of existing government processes from the perspectives of Aboriginal peoples. The study utilised a flexible grounded theory approach that allowed a reflexive flow to capture modes of knowing and the representations therein. The emergent themes arose from an open and natural form of investigation, where data equates to the participants themselves and locates itself in these realities. The findings from this investigation highlighted the strengths of Indigenous culture and the foundational knowledge that has existed for tens of thousands of years that represents common ground but has not been uncovered or utilised by governments in their communications and relationship development with Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous people from remote Northern Territory Indigenous communities were the key participants in this study. The study found that critical elements of western and Indigenous world-views can be overlayed to harness the strengths of both worlds to create positive change based on a common ground approach to accountability. Later in this chapter recommendations arising from the study are contrasted with the philosophy, pedagogy and methodology of the PTS program currently offered through the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE) - a partnership between Batchelor Institute (BI) and Charles Darwin University (CDU).

Findings from the study suggest that western accounting practices and formulations of accountability are not compatible with Indigenous culture. It was found that for a common ground approach to prevail, policy and program design needs to incorporate Indigenous cultural perspectives and effective engagement must underlie the process (Rossingh, 2012). Indigenous people in remote communities are constantly required to navigate within these bureaucratic environments where the real challenge and onus rests with government to 'learn the language' of the complexities within remote communities.

There exists a small but important collection of literature that discusses the issues surrounding the burden of expectation for Indigenous peoples to operate within western-based organisational governance and administration systems that include managing financial affairs and negotiating contractual agreements expressed in the accounting and accountability language of government (Chew & Greer, 1997; Greer & Patel, 2000;

Neu, 2000; Gibson, 2000; Dillon and Westbury, 2007). From another perspective the literature also indicates that Indigenous people are, or have been, the object of accountability and accounting systems that restrict or constrain their lifestyle and behaviour.

Indigenous knowledge systems demonstrate strong accountability to culture that has been practised for 40,000 to 60,000 years. In contrast, western accounting is a relatively modern concept. The impact of western accounting and accountability concepts in this context creates tensions and prevents connection with the cultural nature and the lived reality of Indigenous Peoples (Rossingh, 2012; Rossingh, 2014). My study provides insight into these challenges that exist for Indigenous Peoples to understand the expectations and demands of government funding that creates further factors that counter attempts to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

Whose accountability is important?

Accountability operates at two levels. Firstly, the underlying notion of accountability to Ancestors, culture and to one another that occupies the thoughts and practises of Indigenous Peoples is a significant factor that needs consideration within the total meaning of 'accountability'. Secondly, where government imposes contractual power over Indigenous groups and organisations to produce financial reporting and other requirements associated with grant funding, thus creating an expectation for Indigenous groups to have a sense of responsibility to comply (Rossingh, 2014).

The 'accountability domain' remains a contested space. Laughlin (1996) debates the predominance of economic reason and the role of accounts in accountability arrangements, referring to the principal and agent relationship. Laughlin's (1996, p. 232) reference to the 'higher principal' and the clash of values between the principal and agent uses the example of a religious organisation where economic reason is taking precedence over the 'sacred' values that are the professional activities

of the agent. His key points are applicable to the formal funding arrangements and associated relationships between governments and Indigenous communities and organisations where governments hold the power to dictate what funding-based program accountability means.

Accountability from governments' perspective relies heavily on neo-liberal economic reasoning to the detriment of accountability from the Indigenous perspective. From the Indigenous perspective culture is deemed of high value and therefore the 'higher principals', to which Laughlin (1996) refers, relate to the ancestors, dreamtime spirits and culture and how this translates to community wellbeing.

Intercultural space

The intercultural space for the purposes of this study represents the potential for acceptance of different worldviews between government and Indigenous Peoples. The intercultural space is essentially a field of play. In this field players understand each other and value each other's knowledge and beliefs (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) – a mutual position of trust where everyone can share and grow together. The intercultural concept represents a field that has kept many researchers and theorists occupied in relation to how it was conceived and how it is constructed (Arbon 2008; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Martin, 2005; Nakata, 2007; Povinelli, 2002; Sullivan, 2005).

Nakata (2007) submits that the western framework shapes the intercultural space even though it is characterised by Indigenous foundations. He contends that Indigenous knowledge is vulnerable to representations and valuations that do not connect the knowledge, the knowers of knowledge and the social institutions that reinforce the intricacies and holistic foundations of the knowledge. Nakata considers that Indigenous knowledge is redistributed, thereby

constructing an intercultural space that is contested constantly giving forth a momentum of challenge and change in perpetuity.

Cultural notions that drive accountability arising from the study

My study found that many concepts used by government were interpreted very differently by Aboriginal people compared to governments' intended meaning. For example, a question from the funding form asked about the 'originality' of the program activity, the workshop participants answered as follows (Rossingh, 2014):

My originality is Tiwi, group originality is Tiwi.

and

Beginning, being old, the old original songs

The participants' understanding of originality related to their old and 'original' culture, as opposed to a new, unique and innovative project which the funding documentation was referring to. Their response demonstrates their connection with their cultural origins and the overarching nature of this connection in their life. Discussion about this concept led to stories about their ceremonial music that was 'original' and how they were contemporising some of the music to appeal more to young people and therefore the new sound was considered to be new and original due to a different beat, for example: hip hop. A further response arising from this discussion was:

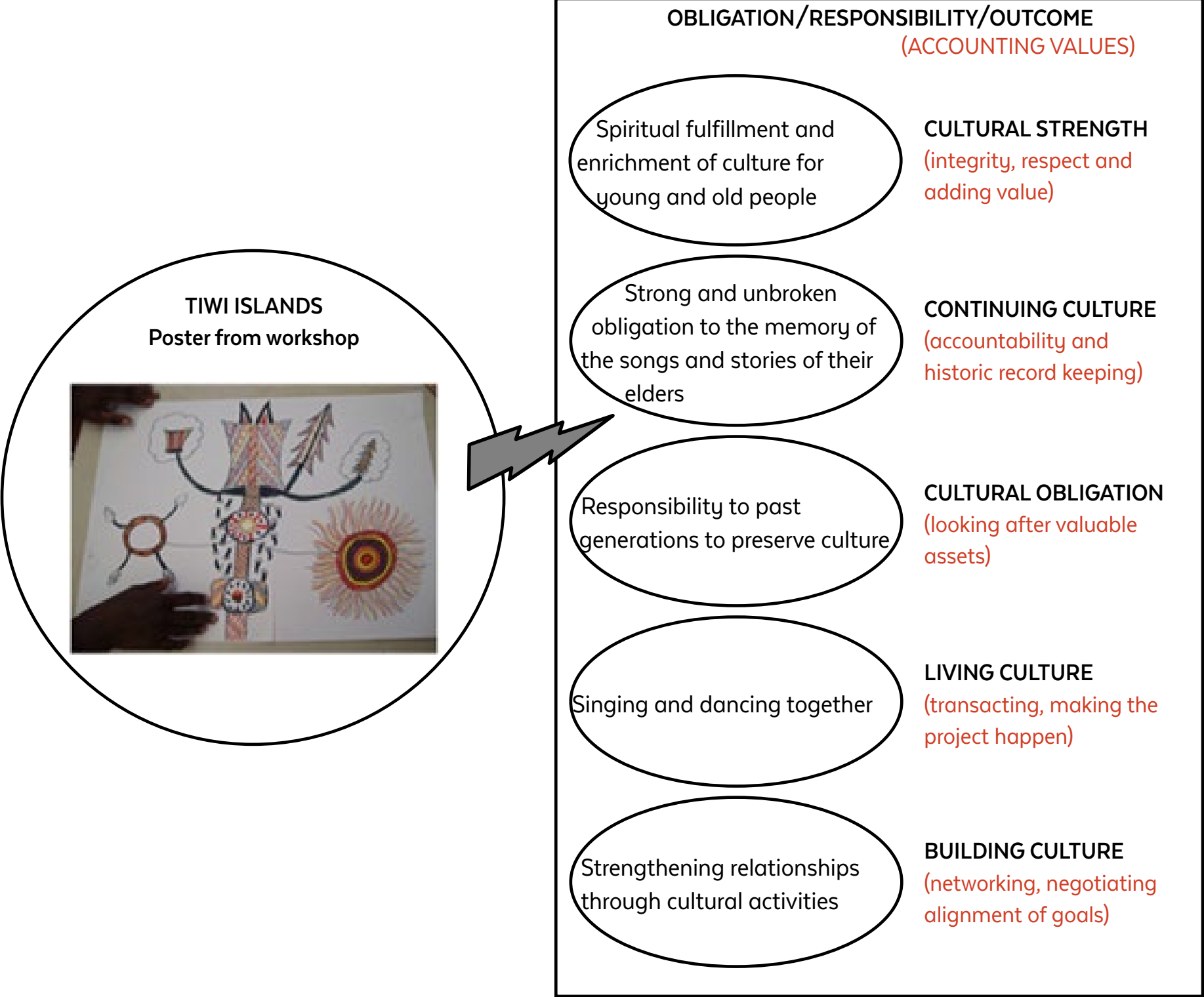*...that song was born, only had clap sticks and clapping hands. Now same song with guitars and music.*

This question was interpreted from a traditional cultural base and responded to on the basis that the contemporary sound with guitars and music was different to the old and original song, and therefore a new concept. This song has continued to exist and practised for tens of thousands of years and is still being performed today. This is not the same as the project funding requirements

that focus on a new project idea being 'original'. A comment made by government funding officers at the time was that the project idea must be original to get the funding. Therefore a funding bid could fail if the funding applicants are not able to articulate an original and unique idea.

Aboriginal people involved in the study constantly emphasised that they wanted government to come and talk to them so that they could tell their story. Their story stems back to the early work of an anthropologist (Baldwin Spencer) who filmed a ceremonial dance in 1912. This recording was discovered in 2009 at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies labelled as 'unknown' material (Campbell, 2011). The group of Elders needed funding to assist them to travel approximately 4000 kilometres to Canberra to repatriate this sacred material. They wanted to talk to government about their important story so they could make the cultural journey (project) happen as they knew it was too difficult to articulate this story in writing within the funding application form.

Indigenous people from remote communities want to share their story about cultural importance in the context of their lives and the future of their young people. They seek culture legitimate accountability but the funding process does not allow them to achieve this, from their own perspective. Flexibility is required in the funding process so it can incorporate culturally-based needs. Language does not present an insurmountable barrier; the barrier arises from the deeply ingrained stance of governments that are constantly acting out a position of authority, regulation and a lack of trust, all from a distance (Rossingh 2012; Rossingh, 2014). The language of governments is coercive and directive in nature and is the dominant language that undermines Indigenous peoples and enacts a symbolic violence that sees Indigenous peoples forgo their connection to culture (Oakes et al., 1998) and conform to the dominant position.

Diagram 1: accountability to culture – one groups' story

OBLIGATION/RESPONSIBILITY/OUTCOME
(ACCOUNTING VALUES)

Spiritual fulfillment and enrichment of culture for young and old people

CULTURAL STRENGTH
(integrity, respect and adding value)

TIWI ISLANDS
Poster from workshop

Strong and unbroken obligation to the memory of the songs and stories of their elders

CONTINUING CULTURE
(accountability and historic record keeping)

Responsibility to past generations to preserve culture

CULTURAL OBLIGATION
(looking after valuable assets)

Singing and dancing together

LIVING CULTURE
(transacting, making the project happen)

Strengthening relationships through cultural activities

BUILDING CULTURE
(networking, negotiating alignment of goals)

Findings from the study highlight the well-developed accountability notions that Aboriginal people from remote communities have based on their kinship systems. Diagram 1 above incorporates a picture to the left drawn by the group referred to above. This picture represents a metaphor that conveys the accountability to continuing, teaching and sharing culture through ceremonial music in a contemporary form, as listed to the right of the picture. I have then mapped western-based accounting and accountability attributes against these notions to demonstrate the existing and embedded cultural notions that yield strong governance and accountability in a western sense.

The common ground that this study shares with the PTS course

My research on accountability in remote communities has highlighted the importance of finding common ground and what this may look like where Indigenous knowledge systems are acknowledged as foundational to legitimating the process. In addition to this research, I have worked in an education institution for many years and seen the obstacles that prevent access to courses from the start of an Indigenous student's journey (enrolling) and the barriers thereafter that often impede students from completing.

According to Battiste (2013, p. 103), universities are taking steps to acknowledge Indigenous knowledges through providing professional development for teaching and other staff; setting up committees to embed Indigenous content in curriculum and incorporating inclusive curriculum content to improve access, recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students. Whilst Battiste sees these steps as a positive direction, she asserts that there is a need for universities to move beyond analysing problems and offering solutions. She contends that institutions must acknowledge the issues of the dominant cultural traditions that dictate attitudes, values and presumptions that bring about difference rather than a trans-systemic approach for all students to benefit from.

Batchelor Institute overcomes the dominance and difference issues referred to above through its 'both ways' philosophy that respects and acknowledges Indigenous knowledges. This approach conforms to what Battiste (2013, p. 103) refers to as an 'ethical space for decolonisation'. Findings from my study discussed above demonstrate that governments have not found this ethical space, yet there are institutions that have been working in this space for some time. Batchelor Institute is one such institution, through the PTS course, where dominance and difference have been broken down to give rise to respecting the student, and more importantly, learning from the student. These critical notions were

also the key findings that arose from my study during workshops, meetings and other discussions held with Aboriginal Peoples, as follows:
- Understand the target audience;
- Incorporate and understand Aboriginal cultural and accountability concepts;
- Assume a trusting position but be patient to earn trust;
- Assume Aboriginal Peoples will need to understand the documentation;
- Match language usage to funding recipients;
- Promote a mutual, equitable and reciprocal partnership spirit;
- Share knowledge;
- Do not assume people's level of knowledge or skill;
- Use common and natural language;
- Be concise and clear;
- Understand that people will have difficulty with English-based documentation;
- Focus on contextual and achievable outcomes;
- De-emphasise financial and regulative accountability;
- Incorporate a participative and collaborative approach.

These findings and recommendations arising from my study share a common ground with the founding principles and practices of the PTS course even though they are derived from very different perspectives. The 'both ways' philosophy that Batchelor Institute embeds in its courses has been in varying degrees of development and implementation since the 1970s (Ober, 2009). In contrast to this, my findings demonstrate that government funded programs have been around since the 1970s in remote Indigenous communities, yet still evade the common ground approach and do not allow for a culturally legitimate process that embeds the strength and knowledge of the people it targets and serves.

The PTS program utilises the strength of Batchelor Institute's both-ways approach to teaching and learning and is an enabling program that provides Indigenous students with skill development, knowledge and

confidence needed to succeed at university. The course is suitable for students that may not have university entrance eligibility or may be uncertain about how to manage university life and study. The PTS course builds the confidence and skills for starting undergraduate study (ACIKE, 2015, p. 5).

The following is a prospective list of student outcomes arising from the PTS program (ACIKE, 2015, p. 5):

• Strengthening student learning identity

• Building confidence and resilience as lifelong learners

• Understanding their own learning style and areas of challenge

• Develop confidence in listening and speaking

• Improving academic reading and writing

• Using skills in applied numeracy, mathematics and practical science

• Applying information and communication technology literacies

My study highlighted that westernised abstract concepts, such as accounting and compliance based accountability mechanisms, are not easily connected to traditional Aboriginal cultural thinking. Consequently, these concepts continue to hover without ever melding into a holistic system. This is where the PTS course has its strengths in that its emphasis is primarily based on a holistic process that captures a 'both ways' learning style. Ober (2004, p. 9) states the following about both-ways education:

> Both-ways education is about allowing the students to have the freedom to be who they are, yet at the same time empowering them with essential knowledge, skills and concepts from the western domain, to enable them to make key decisions in their lives, be it professional or personal.

My experience with the PTS course has been through lecturers who have encouraged my participation as a supporter of Indigenous students. Arising from this encouragement I have had the opportunity to work closely with the PTS team at CDU's Casuarina Campus.

I have observed the PTS classrooms, been involved in activities during PTS delivery and also listened to students presenting their work. These experiences have been both refreshing and uplifting as I have seen first-hand the conducive learning environment that enacts a shared sense of accountability and achieves productive outcomes. I have been very impressed with the development and progress of the students and the respectful spirit of each class over the past eighteen months.

The classroom is a collegial environment and the students show trust and respect for the lecturer and the lecturer shows trust and respect for each student and is always offering advice and encouragement. I have observed the following:

• Lecturers and students are accountable individually and collectively

• Wants and needs of students are listened to

• A presence of understanding and acknowledging Indigenous culture

• Stories and cultural representations are valued

• Understanding and respect for one another

• Individual context and background is a critical consideration

• Students' objective to complete the course is considered paramount

The strengths and attributes discussed above are generally not visible to government and this is demonstrated in governments' policy development and the implementation of its funding programs. The strengths and attributes of the PTS course represent important notions and reciprocal relationships that drive effective results and outcomes.

In summary

The accountability study outlined in this chapter found that there has been a failure by governments to achieve an intercultural and respectful balance that caters to the desires and needs of Indigenous peoples in remote

communities. The study suggests ways to achieve such a balance. Batchelor Institute in its delivery of PTS under the ACIKE partnership achieves this balance by respecting and valuing a student's knowledge and experience. Furthermore, providing a flexible approach that caters to the needs of Indigenous students enables a balance that builds knowledge and allows students to be themselves in tandem with negotiating a western-based framework of learning.

Arising from my research, I have developed the following formula of foundational notions that summarise the messages from Indigenous Peoples in remote communities. These notions have the potential to achieve an enabling position for government to achieve effective outcomes:

Together in collaboration
+ Respect for Indigenous culture
+ Understanding other perspectives
+ Sharing knowledge
+ Thinking together
+ Intercultural emphasis
+ Natural language
+ Growing together
= TRUSTING one another and therefore achieving a *Spirit of Partnership*

From my observations PTS engages in a spirit of partnership with the students and creates a 'trusting' environment whereby student success is borne from their own identity, which is fostered in a learning environment that builds capabilities in readiness for new and challenging educational and life pathways.

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Gouldian Finch recovery plan for Kungarakan and Warai traditional lands in North Australia

Lenore Dembski

Background

The Gouldian Finch (Erythrura gouldiae) is a small brightly coloured bird that is native to Australia. The males are more brightly coloured than the females, and the young birds are brown through to olive green colour. Face colours of the mature birds can be black, red or yellow and feather colours on their bodies include light to dark purple, blue, green, yellow and black. Breeding takes place between April and August. A pair may breed several times with about five babies produced each time. Usually only two survive. At one time Gouldians were found across Northern Australia in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory in very large numbers. Nationally, the Gouldian Finch is classed as 'endangered'. Within the last couple of years their status in the Northern Territory changed from 'Endangered' to 'Near Endangered'. Gouldians are bred around the world as pets and in Australia it is thought that there are over 100,000 in captivity.

Kungarakan and Warai are two tribes of Aboriginal people and our traditional lands range from approximately 50 kilometres south of Darwin to beyond Adelaide River. They go across past Litchfield National Park and over past Lake Bennett. Darwin River Dam and Manton Dam fall within this area, as does Berry Springs and Batchelor. Our neighbours to the North are Larrakia people. We are also landowners of over 300 square kilometres of land under the Finniss River Aboriginal Land Trust and parts of the Wagait Aboriginal Land Trust.

Within our traditional lands are two well-known former mines (Woodcutters and Rum Jungle), a current mine (Brown's Mine), and other mines at different stages of development, operation or rehabilitation. We also have the Territory Wildlife Park, Manton Dam, Darwin River Dam and a proposed third dam that will provide Darwin's future water supply. In addition, there are many private land holders that are involved in cattle, farming and primary industries, as well as tourism, education and country living. Generally the area is known as the Coomalie Shire and includes Batchelor and Adelaide River. Considerable amounts of land are untouched and are classed as savannah - flat and hilly land. Parts of our Country are described in sections 2.1.1 to 2.3.1 of the report *Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Planning - Coomalie Community Government Council* (AECOM Australia, 2010). With financial assistance of the Australian Government the *Land Management Situation – Finniss River Aboriginal Land Trust 2014 Report* (Alford & Schmid, 2014) was developed and covers a lot of information about our land.

In 2000, as a member of the Woodcutters Mine Finniss River Liaison Committee involved with the rehabilitation of the former Woodcutters mine, I thought about how we could help to conserve threatened species in our region. In 2003, I read that Gouldian Finches were classed as endangered and that they once lived on our traditional country (*A Natural Resource Strategy for Coomalie Sub-region* – draft for public comment July 2003, Price & Baker, 2003). In 2004, I started talking to Territory Wildlife Park managers about the re-introduction of Gouldians onto the Finniss River Aboriginal Land Trust as part of the rehabilitation of Woodcutters Mine. In 2012, Roger Potts, the Newmont NT Manager and a bird enthusiast from Adelaide River, said that some Gouldian Finches had been sighted on stations in the area.

As Traditional Owners of the country where the Territory Wildlife Park (TWP) is located in Berry Springs we have been working with management on a number of projects. Shael Martin, the Director of TWP, brought the Birdlife Australia Indigenous Researcher Grant to my attention. In 2013, I applied and was given a grant that was sponsored under the Australian Government's 'Caring for Our Country Program'.

According to research by a number of people including Sonia Tidemann (1996), John Woinarski (Woinarksi & Tidemann, 1992), Peter Dostine (Dostine et al., 2001) , Gabriel Crowley and Stephen Garnett (Crowley & Garnett, 1999), and others, the Gouldian Finch once lived and prospered on Kungarakan and Warai Traditional Country. The Gouldian Finch recovery plan that is being developed is for all people who live in the region or are neighbours and who want to help Gouldians increase in numbers and flourish so that they stretch across the top end of the Northern Territory.

Method

Using an Aboriginal perspective, I have carried out my research in a culturally inclusive, flexible, non-invasive way. Rather than following a strict research plan, I have adjusted my methods following each consultation. I have followed Aboriginal protocols as well as those one uses when part of an educational institution. I have had lots of conversations with people on a one-on-one basis, in small groups and at formal meetings. My conversations have been in person, over the telephone and online through emails. I have talked with people of all ages from small children to Senior Elders, with Kungarakan and Warai people as individuals and in groups and with non-Indigenous residents of Batchelor, Adelaide River and Darwin.

Since July 2013, I have made field trips to Beswick and Malkgulumbu (August 2013), Katherine, Binjari, Edith Falls Road, Ferguson River and Pine Creek (February 2014), Adelaide River (2013, 2014), Batchelor (2013, 2014), Berry Springs (2013, 2014) and Fog Dam (2013, 2014). Alice Bilby facilitated my visit to Binjari and told me about Mike Reed's book *Top End Birdwatching* (2014) that prompted my visits to Edith Falls Road, Ferguson River and Pine Creek. I have met with research colleagues in Katherine, Sydney and Melbourne (including Birdlife Australia). I had a table at the 2013 Linga Longa Festival in Batchelor to let people know about my research and to seek feedback. I have discussed Gouldians at Woodcutter

Liaison Committee meetings (2013, 2014) at Woodcutters Full Traditional Owners' (TO) meeting (2013), at a Rum Jungle Liaison Committee meeting (2014) and at development meetings for our land management report. I also discussed Gouldians at several presentations I did at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) (2013; 2014) and at October Business Month presentations (2013; 2014)

I have conducted extensive searches on the internet to see what exists about Gouldian Finches, their habitat, breeding cycles, food and shelter and potential threats. I have collected and read/watched over 100 papers and many videos and photographs.

I have also set up a website (www.gouldian-finch-nt.com.au) and a specific email account (gouldian.finch@bigpond.com)

Contact with other researchers

Michael Brand from the Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods (REIL) at Charles Darwin University (CDU) introduced me to Mike Lawes also from REIL who provided me with advice on fire management, native grasses and with Gouldian Finch contacts during the early stages. I was lucky to meet David Rhind on a personal basis early on in my research and he helped me source a number of very important papers. He also was available as a sounding board when I had issues contacting people. Peter Stephenson from BIITE put me on to Sonia Tidemann who provided me with further research information. Like me, Peter Dostine works with the Northern Territory Public Service and he gave me some more contacts in the Threatened Species Unit. I was thrilled to talk with Sonia and Peter as they know the stories from back in the 1990s so they can help fill in the Gouldian Finch history in our region.

I was so happy when James Brazill-Boast, one of the authors of the research document *Provisioning habitat with custom-designed nest-boxes increases reproductive success in an endangered finch,* (2013) answered my email asking him if I could contact him about my research.

James not only gave me lots of information but met with me in Sydney on two occasions. He especially then came to Darwin and met with two Kungarakan family groups living on country and talked about Gouldians and the nesting box project (*Save the Gouldian Fund*, n.d.). He also heard Gouldians calling at one property and saw a young bird near a spring on one of the other properties. Furthermore, James has agreed to help us introduce nesting boxes in suitable locations on country.

Lesley Alford from Denhamia (www.denhamia.com.au) and Michael Schmid from Veg North did the research and consultation with Kungarakan and Warai and then produced the *Land Management Situation - Finniss River Aboriginal Land Trust Report* (Alford & Schmid, 2014). Lesley provided some of the threated species information and also maps showing threatened species, fire and vegetation patterns from Brock Environmental Pty Ltd that were used in my discussions. She also put me in contact with Suzanne Casanova (n.d.) from the Finniss Reynolds Catchment Group Project.

Save the Gouldian Fund

Mike Lawes recommended that I contact Mike Fidler the founder of the Save the Gouldian Fund and also Sarah Pryke. Mike Fidler is a world renowned philanthropist and researcher. I tried to contact Mike Fidler by email. In the end I received an email from Sarah Pryke to say no one was available to meet or correspond with me regarding my research. However, I was able to view their *Save the Gouldian Fund* website and also their Facebook page (n.d.). Both had lots of photos and information that I have been able to use to help educate myself and other people about Gouldian Finches.

Results

Sightings

From speaking with people who have seen Gouldian Finches on our Traditional Country, I can confirm that Gouldian Finches currently live on our Country. Some of the people I talked to about their experiences during the

last few years were: Trevor Sullivan from Batchelor, who said he had them on his property at Lake Bennett in 2008. Michael Laws said he caught juvenile finches during a survey on private property south of Adelaide River in 2012/13. About the same time, Dion Wedd the Curator of Territory Wildlife Park saw them in remote country near Adelaide River. He said they were also at Marrakai and along the Arnhem Highway. Graham Kenyon, a senior Warai man, saw Gouldian Finches on the Mt Bundey road. As a ranger, he also surveyed them in the Yinberrie Hills.

During my presentation at BIITE as part of its 40th Anniversary Celebrations, Bronwyn Rossingh said she saw a Gouldians in about 2011 in bushland around Dripstone Beach when running with a friend. She said the friend said he often saw Gouldians during his run. At another presentation at the same event, a woman said she previously had Gouldians in her yard around Batchelor. During a presentation at BIITE for Facilities staff a woman from the library said she knew about 15 families living around Batchelor and Adelaide River who had Gouldians on their properties. When I was talking to Suzanne Casanova the manager of the Finniss Reynolds Catchment Group Project at Territory Natural Resource Management, she said that a number of property owners she dealt with had Gouldians on their properties.

Sightings reported on the internet

Whilst searching the internet I also came across reports of Gouldians being sighted in two places along Coomalie Creek. On birding-aus@vicnet.net.au, Savannah Hardy reported she saw a group of 40 to 50 at Coomalie Creek near Litchfield National Park on 9 September 2012. On the *IRES: Behavioural ecology of red-backed fairy wrens* site (n.d.), a researcher from the USA reported on the 1st of August 2012 that they had seen Gouldian Finches during a couple of days whilst researching red-backed fairy-wrens in the Coomalie Creek region. I recognised it was at Coomalie Farm which adjoins Coomalie Creek after reading their blogs going back to early 2012. There were also reports on the *Eremaea Birdlines* website (n.d.)

of sightings in or near our Country near Hayes Creek (40+ 30.9.13 List 199721), Copperfield Dam (large flock 2.11.10 List 70479); Bridge Creek (large flock 3.12.08 List 36549); Mt Bundey Scrape 11.8.05 List 12020).

Environment and Breeding

A number of papers and reports indicate that Gouldians prefer rocky hills during the dry season breeding period and wooded lowlands during the wet season. Gouldians build their nests in smoothbarked tree hollows. Both parents look after the babies. For breeding, the main trees Gouldians require are: snappy gum (*Eucalyptus brevifolia*), salmon gum (*Eucalyptus tintinnans*) or woollybutt (*Eucalyptus miniata*). Some of the important native grasses are: cockatoo grass (*Alloteropsis semialata*), golden beard grass (*Chysopogon fallax*), curly spinifex (*Triodia bitextura*), giant spear grass (*Heteropogon triticeus*) and annual spear grasses or native sorghum (*Sarga* species). Gouldians eat ripe or half ripe grass seeds. Gouldians need to drink each day and they prefer clean water that has gently sloping access and some form of shelter from predators. It is reported that they can fly up to 17 km to find water and prefer smaller waterholes to large spans of water.

Threats

The two main threats to Gouldians surviving and flourishing are fire management and cattle grazing. Late dry season fires often are very hot and burn the undergrowth and lower canopies of trees. They destroy the hollow branches that are used by gouldians to breed. They also destroy the grass seeds that have fallen the previous year and often burn the new grass before it can mature enough for early wet season feeding. Cattle often eat the grass too low so it does not have time to mature into seeds for the Gouldians. Also, property owners often cut down trees to produce pastures for their cattle and other stock using introduced grass species which end up killing off the native grasses.

Strategies to increase survival and breeding opportunities

Two strategies that are important in supporting the conservation of Gouldian Finches are: (1) installing artificial nesting boxes as outlined in the paper 'Provisioning habitat with custom-designed nest-boxes increases reproductive success in an endangered finch' (Brazill-Boast, Pryke & Griffith, 2013), and (2) instigating good fire management processes (Scott, Setterfield & Douglas, 2010).

Peter Hillier, Head of Facilities at BIITE submitted an application under the "20 Million Trees Programme Round One 2014-15." Peter's idea was to grow Gouldian favoured trees and undergrowth around the BIITE Campus in Batchelor to help provide shelter, food and nesting sites for Gouldians and other endangered species. I had input into the submission, which unfortunately was unsuccessful.

Other threatened species

My original reason for starting this and other projects was to look at options for threatened species in our region. Whilst reading research papers and talking to people during presentations and other conversations, a number of animals, birds, fish, reptiles and plants have been highlighted that are on the threatened, conservation significant or endangered list.

Information was supplied by Lesley Alford and Michael Schmid on threatened species by using information from the Department of Land Resource Management. 41 plants are listed as species with conservation significance. The information below has been taken from the *Land Management Situation Finniss River Aboriginal Land Trust Report* (2014).

The following information outlines a number of threatened species in our region:

Mammal	Bird	Reptile	Fish	Plant
Black-footed tree-rat	*Gouldian Finch*	Floodplain monitor	Lorentz grunter	Cycas armstrongii
Northern quoll	Masked owl	Mertens water monitor		Helicteres macrothrix
Pale field-rat	Partridge pigeon	Mitchell's water monitor		Zeuxine oblonga
	Red goshawk	Northern bandy-bandy		Grevillea Longicuspis

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has outlined the measures and activities that have been put in place, and continue to be pursued as part of a recovery plan for the Gouldian Finch on Kungarakan and Warai traditional lands. While the chapter has focused specifically on the Gouldian Finch, many of the measures that would help in the recovery of the Gouldian Finch would also help in the recovery of other threatened species on Kungarakan and Warai traditional lands, as the Gouldians' recovery and survival is directly linked to a complex ecosystem that is vulnerable, even if it is resilient. A thriving population of Gouldian Finches would be a strong indicator of the strength, resilience and health of Kungarakan and Warai traditional lands, and is therefore worth pursuing.

References & annotated relevant resources

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (2010). *Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Planning - Coomalie Shire Council.* Canberra: Australian Government – Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. [Describes part of Kungarakan and Warai Traditional Lands in sections 2.1.1 to 2.3.1, pages 7-10. Describes the "Natural Environment", "Flora and Fauna" and "Threatening Processes" on page 8. Also mentions the Gouldian Finch on page 8].

Alford, L. (Denhamia), & Schmid, M. (in consultation with Kungarakan and Warai) (2014). *Land Management Situation – Finniss River Aboriginal Land Trust 2014.* Batchelor: Australian Government. [This report had input from various NT Government, Australian Government and private organisations. It includes information on a wide group of land management issues, threats and opportunities. Maps (by Brock Environmental Pty Ltd) show threatened species, fire and vegetation patterns. Information from the Department of Land Resource Management shows 41 plants are listed as species with conservation significance. The development of the report was funded by the Australian Government]

Appendix to National Recovery Plan for the Gouldian Finch (Erythrura gouldiae) Background information. (n.d.). Retrieved 1 July 2015 from http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/05533ef8-79c8-4763-a2e3-cb50d2858b95/files/e-gouldiae-background.pdf

Australian Government Department of the Environment (n.d.). *Gouldian Finch – Erythrura gouldiae.* Retrieved 25 June 2015 from http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/gouldian-finch-erythrura-gouldiae-2002 & http://laptop.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/tsday08-gouldian-finch.html [This document is the second one I found after identifying that the Gouldian Finch was on our country]

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Birdlife Australia (n.d.). *Gouldian Finch - Erythrura Gouldiae Estrildidae*. Retrieved 25 June 2015 from http://www.birdlife.org.au/bird-profile/gouldian-finch [Birdlife Australia is a good place to find out information about the Gouldian Finch and other Australian birds]

Brazill-Boast, J., Pryke, S. R., & Griffith, S. C. (2013). Provisioning habitat with custom-designed nest-boxes increases reproductive success in an endangered finch. Austral Ecology, 38(4), 405- 412. [Describes the importance of nesting boxes to increasing population numbers of the Gouldian Finch. Describes how to build, locate and monitor the nesting boxes before and during breeding season. This was the paper that led to contact with James Brazill-Boast.]

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Dostine P., Johnson, G., Franklin, D., Zhang, Y., & Hempel, C. (2001). Seasonal use of savanna landscapes by the Gouldian finch, Erythrura gouldiae, in the Yinberrie Hills area, Northern Territory. *Wildlife Research, 28*, 445-458.

Eremaea Birdlines - Interesting and unusual bird observations (n.d.). Retrieved 1 July 2015 from http://www.eremaea.com/ [Website that reports on sightings of the Gouldian Finch and other birds]

Gouldian finch (n.d.). Retrieved 25 June 2015 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gouldian_finch [I looked up this website to find out more about the Gouldian Finch]

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Northern Territory Government Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (n.d.). *Sites of conservation significance: Keep River area.* Retrieved 1 July 2015 from http://www.lrm.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/13913/28_keepriver.pdf [Describes how threatened species including the Gouldian Finch are identified and managed in the Victoria River District which is approximately 300 kilometres south west of Kungarakan and Warai Traditional Country.]

Northern Territory Government Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (n.d.). *Sites of conservation significance: Yinberrie Hills.* Retrieved 1 July 2015 from http://www.lrm.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/13911/30_yinberrie.pdf [Describes how threatened species including the Gouldian Finch is identified and managed in the Yinberrie Hills which is approximately 150 kilometres south east of Kungarakan and Warai Traditional Country.]

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Price, O., & Baker, B. (2003). *A Natural Resource Strategy for Coomalie Sub-region DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT July 2003 - A Report to the Coomalie Community Government Council.* Darwin: Biodiversity Unit, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (DIPE). [The original report that brought to my attention that the Gouldian Finch once flourished in our Traditional Country and was classified as 'Vulnerable'. The report also described the Northern Bandy-bandy a snake that was rarely seen across our country. It is a comprehensive report describing flora and fauna, land forms, ecosystems and threatening impacts such as fire and feral animals. The Appendix outlines a comprehensive list of vertebrate species around Coomalie sub-region on pages 39-43].

Reed, M. (2014). *Top end birdwatching: Kakadu, Pine Creek, Katherine, Mataranka, Victoria River, Timber Creek, Kununurra.* Katherine: NT Birds. [This book offers great descriptions of sites where the Gouldian Finch is often sighted – mainly during the dry season. I visited some sights at Edith River where I sighted several Gouldians in the wild. I also visited sites around Pine Creek and talked to people who regularly see Gouldians during the dry season.]

Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods REIL – Charles Darwin University (n.d.). Retrieved 1 July 2015 from http://riel.cdu.edu.au/ [Experienced researchers doing research on fire management, the Gouldian Finch and flora and fauna in tropical and other environments across Northern Australia.]

Save the Gouldian Fund (n.d.). Retrieved 25 June 2015 from http://savethegouldian.net/ & https://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-the-Gouldian-Fund/172756969409137 [Established by Mike Fidler, founder and world renowned philanthropist and researcher, both sites have information about Save the Gouldian Finch projects and other initiatives. They also have lots of photographs of the Gouldians at all stages of life, and information about the nesting box project]

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Territory Wildlife Park Darwin (n.d.). Retrieved 25 June 2015 from http://www.territorywildlifepark.com.au/ [Management, curator and zoo keepers have been breeding and caring for about 20 Gouldian Finches. Visitors and interested people can see the three types of Gouldians up close at the park.]

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Woinarski, J., & Tidemann, S. (1992). Survivorship and some population parameters for the endangered Gouldian Finch *Erythrura gouldiae* and two other finch species at two sites in tropical northern Australia. *Emu, 92*, 33-38.

This book was developed out of the Batchelor Institute 40 year celebrations held in 2014. A significant element of those celebrations was a conference, and some of the chapters in this book are based on papers presented at that conference, with others responding to ideas and prompts that emerged. The central theme of the book, like the conference, is finding common ground, and the chapters in this collection provide wide ranging perspectives on that theme: some take the form of stories, others are provocative, some review process, while others report on the changing perspectives in education and communities. Reflecting the Batchelor Institute commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, this volume presents a rich tapestry of reflections on finding common ground at Batchelor Institute and beyond by an exciting range of authors.