Sharing Success
An Indigenous Perspective

**PAPERS FROM THE
SECOND NATIONAL AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS
EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

Edited by Sue McGinty

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Contents

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Introduction

Jeannie Herbert

The second national Australian Indigenous Education Conference was held in tropical Townsville 2–4 July, 2002. The conference was organised and hosted by the School of Indigenous Australian Studies, James Cook University. The theme, "Sharing Success: An Indigenous Perspective", reflected the focus of our work, in recent years, as Indigenous educators and researchers. Hence, the purpose of the conference was to demonstrate to the education and wider Australian communities that Indigenous Australians are achieving increased success at all levels of education. Keynote speakers were asked to focus on sharing their personal success stories to demonstrate how education had enabled them to achieve successful lives.

The conference was designed as an inclusive activity that would enable educators from all systems and across all sectors and levels of education to come together, to listen and learn from one another, to strengthen existing networks while simultaneously building new networks and alliances, and to reach out to each other in a spirit of co-operation that would enhance understanding and communication. Indigenous presenters were asked to consider sharing their stories of how they achieved success as a result of their education while non-Indigenous presenters were asked to share stories of the way in which they believe they have made a positive contribution toward Indigenous educational achievement.

Chapter 1 presents the text of Herbert's Inaugural Professorial Lecture delivered in a public forum during the conference. Just as the whole conference could be seen as an acknowledgement of the growing value of Indigenous Australian knowledges, so Herbert indicates that her lecture might be perceived as "a celebration that

recognises the establishment of the Chair of Indigenous Australian Studies at James Cook University, of the valuing of Indigenous knowledge within this university". Hence, she explains that, in opting to deliver a lecture that reflects both Indigenous and non-Indigenous pedagogies, she is demonstrating that Western and Indigenous knowledges can coexist and, in enhancing cross-cultural understandings, can enrich both the individual and collective learning experience. In this lecture Herbert discusses the notion of Indigenous "success" in education, with an examination of the historical and social factors that have influenced the way in which Indigenous Australians have been positioned within universities and how this may have impacted upon the "success" individuals have been able to achieve. Herbert also explores the diversity of Indigenous perspectives of what "success", within the context of university study, might be and the implications of such diversity within the context of general perceptions of Indigenous achievement in higher education. Herbert concludes her paper with speculation about how what happens within the university has the potential to influence the wider field of Indigenous education and ultimately educational provision for all Australians.

In chapter 2, Tripcony provides an overview of successes, policies and practices in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, in order to explore the notion of whether or not success is possible without inclusion. She considers success within the context of group or collective success, beginning with a discussion of the successes that can be attributed to Indigenous Australians—their survival and their capacity for resilience. Having outlined the range of activities that occurred within Indigenous education during the 1990s, Tripcony moves to a consideration of future directions, highlighting the importance of "the 1999 MCEETYA Declaration as a firm foundation upon which programs may be tailored to meet the educational needs and improve the educational outcomes of the range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from diverse locations, cultural and family backgrounds, and possessing differing levels of English language ability". Following a discussion of Indigenous success in education, Tripcony concludes her paper by reflecting upon the future and identifying specific issues that may need to be addressed. For example, she argues that "time" is a critical factor in Indigenous education, pointing out the need to allow "*time for consultation and*

negotiation when researching and/or planning programs and their intended outcomes" and "*time for achieving outcomes*—students often need to take time out of study … for family or community matters, for the purpose of consolidating learnings … to reflect on their future work/study options … etc". Tripcony reveals the inherent tension in imposing specific timeframes upon achievement objectives when considered within the context of previous and on-going educational disadvantage. Tripcony also highlights the importance of teacher education programs in improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students indicating that to be effective "mindsets need to change—not only those of teachers, but within Australian society generally". She concludes that, to date, "Indigenous Australians generally, do not experience real inclusion within education processes, nor within Australian society".

Williams considers the changing environment in chapter 3, suggesting that this is paving the way for the achievement of quality educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In highlighting the need to establish inclusive learning environments as the foundation for Indigenous success, Williams explores various aspects of a culturally inclusive educational framework for Indigenous students and their communities. In this paper, Williams specifically refers to the growing awareness of the importance of investing in intellectual, cultural and social capital as a means of changing educational outcomes for all groups, pointing out how current government policies and practices are designed to achieve such objectives. Significantly, Williams indicates that within this complex and changing environment, Indigenous Australians are continuing "to assert the right for their children to access quality education services that provide a security of culture and identity, and the best educational outcomes", arguing that, from an Indigenous perspective, this is perceived as the key to developing the individual's "capacity to successfully participate in paid work, family, the community and civic life".

Williams's arguments are supported by McGinty's discussion of the concept of community capacity building in chapter 4. In examining the historical antecedents and contemporary approaches to government policy making and implementation, McGinty reveals that the notion of community capacity building has a resonance with the way in which Indigenous groups have always operated. In considering

the value of community capacity building within the context of educational outcomes, McGinty suggests that the current Queensland Government's strategy, "Partners for Success", reflects the importance of community and capacity building as a basic premise. She highlights the importance of Garlick's (1999) five elements of capacity building—knowledge building, leadership, networking, valuing community and information gathering—as the observable indicators for education. McGinty's paper makes an important contribution in providing educators with a deeper theoretical insight into the new discourses that will impact upon the delivery of effective and worthwhile education provision in the future.

In chapter 5, McMahon provides an interdisciplinary perspective of what social work and community welfare can offer Australian Indigenous Education, indicating that the role of the Social Work and Community Welfare professions is not only to understand society, but to change it, particularly in relation to groups that are perceived as being oppressed. McMahon provides a brief overview of three positions, drawn from social work and community welfare, which he argues may provide useful insights for educators seeking to enable their students to achieve success.

Partington provides an outline of the conceptual structures that have been employed in the education of Indigenous children within both historical and contemporary contexts in chapter 6, arguing that analysing "these structures reveals the interaction of complex factors that contribute to schooling of Indigenous children and assists in the clarification of pathways to improvement". In providing suggestions for the future direction of Indigenous education, Partington highlights the importance of collaborative processes, further supporting the arguments presented by Williams and McGinty regarding the importance of partnerships in educational provision.

In chapter 7, White, Doring, Kennedy and O'Neill report on a research project undertaken within a university setting to provide an insight into Australian Indigenous learners on a journey of success. The authors point out that, while governments may seek to increase Indigenous participation in higher education, the outcomes of such policy depend upon the underlying motivation of individuals. The research project, embedded within a lifelong-learning framework, investigated the experiences of eight Indigenous students undertaking university study. The authors reported that "In listening to [the

Indigenous students'] stories of personal difficulties and struggles experienced in trying to attain their goal, the researchers became aware that the background underpinning [the students'] decision to undertake university study provided valuable insight into their life journey. Of particular note was the overcoming of earlier educational disadvantage while seeking to achieve personal and community success in an environment about which [the students] had limited understanding".

Gower and Mack, in chapter 8, report on a project that is still in its early stages as a means of demonstrating the practicalities of managing Indigenous involvement in and control over research. They argue that research in Indigenous communities has historically been controlled and dominated by non-Indigenous researchers using inappropriate research methodologies. The paper uses an interesting technique to provide an overview of the process the researchers used to gain access to informants and how the researchers involved Indigenous communities in the work. Their progress is considered through the use of reflective comments throughout their report. Although the project is continuing, the writers of this paper do provide an outline of a number of research principles which should be acknowledged when conducting research in Indigenous communities.

In chapter 9, Kessaris reports on the work of a small number of American and Australian authors who are concerned with minority group academic success. Kessaris indicates that, in Australia, this project focused on various aspects of Indigenous educational success and included an Australian Aboriginal and Navaho Native American comparative study. This paper concludes with a brief summary and discussion of the findings.

Brogden and Kelly report on an interesting initiative of Catholic Education in the Kimberley region of Western Australia in chapter 10. Their overview of an interactive multimedia program designed specifically to support the literacy programs of junior primary students in Kimberley schools will be of interest to all teachers of Indigenous students, as it explores a number of elements associated with teaching children whose home language is either Aboriginal English or Kriol.

In chapter 11, Malloch provides a useful insight into the collaborative working relationships adopted by teachers (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and Indigenous tutors in a primary school in Townsville, North Queensland, to provide Indigenous

students at the school with tutorial assistance during normal school hours. The program was approved under the Commonwealth Government-funded program called ATAS (Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme). This paper highlights the success of the program.

In chapter 12, Wilkinson provides an administrator's perspective of the way in which one of the largest secondary schools in Queensland set about changing the educational experiences of Indigenous students in their school. This paper provides an overview of the initiatives that were put in place and demonstrates the importance of the school's role in terms of the educational outcomes of Indigenous students. This is essentially a paper that provides hope for the future of Indigenous education.

In conjunction with this conference, we also produced a book entitled *Learning Journeys: Indigenous teachers sharing their success stories,* a compilation of stories written by individual Indigenous Australians who had qualified as teachers. Contributors were asked to discuss how they thought their teaching qualifications had enabled them to achieve success in their lives. Through this activity, we sought to provide Indigenous teachers with an opportunity to talk with their non-Indigenous colleagues in the hope that facilitating this dialogue between teachers would enable non-Indigenous teachers to:

- better understand the reality of being an Indigenous teacher in Australian schools; and
- begin to make the shift in individual and collective thinking that would allow them to recognise and appreciate Indigenous educational success.

Significantly, this book provides an important example of the way in which Indigenous peoples are willing to give of themselves, to share what they have for the benefit of others. All contributors to *Learning Journeys: Indigenous teachers sharing their success stories* were willing to share their knowledge and gave freely of their time in writing their stories. The proceeds from the sale of the resulting book are being directed into the Indigenous Scholarship Fund that has been established by the School of Indigenous Australian Studies, to provide financial assistance for future Indigenous students participating in JCU programs.

This collection of papers from the conference has been chosen for its insights into the way in which individual schools and educators can make a difference. We commend the collection to all educators in the

hope that it will inspire you to take up the challenge and contribute to changing the future for Indigenous peoples throughout this country.

Chapter 1

It's a Long Road That Has No Ending

Jeannie Herbert

In this paper I examine the notion of Indigenous "success" in education, as this is the focus of my research. The paper begins with a brief consideration of the historical and social factors that may influence the positioning of Indigenous Australians within the academy and, ultimately, the "success" individuals are able to achieve. This is followed by an examination of the way in which the university, as an educational institution, encourages or hinders Indigenous "success". Having established the context for "success", I then explore the notion of "success" from the perspective of various stakeholders, followed by a brief discussion of the implications the diversity of views might have within the context of Indigenous achievement in higher education. The paper concludes with a reflection upon the importance of this research within the sector and considers how the impact of what happens within the university might influence the wider field of Indigenous education and ultimately educational provision for all Australians.

Setting Out on the Long Road ...

My earliest memory of unexpectedly being thrust into something that was totally unfamiliar, totally beyond my experience, is of a little girl sitting atop the 44 gallon drum that was tied to the railing behind the cab of the old, red Bedford truck that was my grandmother's pride and joy. It seemed we were flying along the road, the wind in my face, my hair streaming out behind, eyes stinging. It was getting late and the heat had gone out of the wind, although the sun still beat down upon us. We had been travelling across wide flat plains for most of the day. No sign of vegetation—just the everlasting shimmer of the mirage stretching along the horizon and mobs of gaunt red cattle from time to time. Our dust cloud billowed out behind us. My brother and I were burnt from sitting in the sun and the wind all day. We were tired, wishing the day away so we would get to wherever we were going. Quite suddenly, we were in a cone of dark coolness. At the other end, the sunlit road still stretched away into the distance as far as we could

see, but right here was shade, the road a ribbon of dappled white powder. Incredible trees towered over the road, their canopies entwined above us so that it seemed we were driving through a tunnel. A dark tunnel, because the trees were very thick. My brother and I had never seen a tunnel before, let alone been in one. We glanced at one another but said nothing. We spoke of it, for the first time, forty years later. That experience had made a lasting impression upon both of us, for we each remembered in minute detail how we had felt as the old Bedford hurtled through the tunnel. Thankful for the sudden cool relief of the shade, captivated by the sudden change in the landscape, and exhilarated yet fearful at suddenly being catapulted into the unknown. A couple of minutes in time, and we emerged into the sun again. Just a quick look back, and a brief desire to have stayed awhile, but then faces forward again, minds concentrating on the motion of the old truck, waiting and longing to feel the change that would warn us that our journey over that long, *hard* road (those drums weren't padded) was coming to an end—at least for that day! In retrospect, it was almost an omen of what lay ahead of me, as if that particular journey is somehow synonymous with my life journey. The road has, at times, seemed very long, but I will be eternally grateful to my Grandmother for preparing me to travel it.

This paper is based on the first public lecture that I gave as the Chair of Indigenous Australian Studies at James Cook University. As such, it represents a momentous occasion in my personal journey through education. I decided to use that journey as the scaffolding for the lecture, so that my own experiences might provide a deeper insight into the historical and social factors that have influenced the positioning of Indigenous Australians within the academy and that may, ultimately, impact upon the "success" individuals are able to achieve.

An inaugural professorial lecture is an important occasion as it marks recognition: in this instance, James Cook University's recognition of the value of Indigenous Australian Studies. As the person who has taken up the position of Chair, the position that reflects that recognition, it is my honour to deliver the professorial lecture. I say this is an honour because I recognise this event as a part of tradition, a part of the ritual of the academy. And because it is a part of the ritual, there are certain protocols that are followed. For example, I must use the Western genre of the lecture because this is,

after all, the way in which knowledge is formally taught in a university. But it is also a celebration of a person being recognised for their knowledge and expertise in their field of learning. And, because this is a celebration that recognises the establishment of the Chair of Indigenous Australian Studies at James Cook University, and of the valuing of Indigenous knowledge within this university, I have decided that my lecture will reflect my own commitment to and belief in the value of Indigenous Australian epistemologies—in other words, how we know what we know. To do this, I have gone back to my own Aboriginal roots, the stories, and I will entwine my stories into this lecture to demonstrate that the two can coexist. In choosing to use the stories, I will demonstrate how Aboriginal people, through the use of our oral tradition, have been able to know the truth of our own histories, of the way our people have lived, and the realities of where we, as the first nations of this land, have been positioned in Australian society, including within our educational institutions. By inserting my Aboriginal experience into the formal Western style I hope to enrich your learning experience. I also acknowledge that the lecture format provided a strong structure in which I could develop the arguments I wish to present. In that sense, my presentation represents a coming together of both Western and Indigenous knowledges, an act that I hope will enhance cross-cultural understandings between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

I will begin with the Aboriginal protocol that requires me to introduce myself but which will, incidentally, also allow me to provide an insight into some of the historical and social factors that may have impacted upon the capacity of Indigenous peoples to achieve success. My name is Jeannie Herbert and I am originally from the Kimberley region in Western Australia. Both my mother and my grandmother were removed from their families, at an early age. To the best of my knowledge, my grandmother was a Nyikinya woman, born on a cattle station somewhere out near Fitzroy Crossing and taken from her people, to be raised in the station homestead as a servant. The station owners later abandoned her, probably between the age of 12 and 14 years, in Derby, the nearest coastal town. In due course she had six children, receiving virtually no support from the children's father, a teamster, who was rarely in town. Although my grandmother worked long hours as a domestic to feed and clothe her family, her

daughters were removed as young children in the early 1920s by the Native Welfare, and were sent to Perth to be raised in an institution.

My mother and her older sister finally made their way back to Derby and their mother when, as young women in their twenties, they had been able to save enough money to pay their fares. There had been no contact between them for almost twenty years. My grandmother was illiterate and the girls had been told that they were in the home because their mother did not want them. My mother married the Scotsman she met on that trip and, when I was six weeks old, in accordance with the wartime instructions that governed the north at that time, they set out to travel south. Unfortunately, due to the fact that it was wartime, entry to the next town south, Broome, was being monitored and the young American soldier checking them through the town gates told them that they could enter only for the purpose of refuelling and that they must leave again the following day. As they drove into town, my father, in his broad Scots accent, was very vocal about the fact that an "outsider" was telling them where they could go in their own country. Suffice to say, they did not leave the next day and Broome was the place where they both spent the remainder of their lives and where their next seven children were born.

My mother spent most of her life believing that she had been very fortunate because she had received an education that enabled her to read and write. I say "most" of her life, because in the mid-1990s she began, finally, to talk about her earlier life; what it had been like to grow up in an institution surrounded by a six-foot high corrugated iron fence that effectively removed them from public sight while simultaneously banishing them from society. Even their schooling, conducted inside the home, did not allow those children to be a part of society. And she recounted the long struggle to save enough money for her fare to return home to her family. I have always considered it a dreadful indictment on the system that removed my mother and her sisters, that she could not bring herself to talk about any of it until she was well into her seventies. But in talking about it she was finally able to deal with the truth of what had been done to her. She had always been so proud of her education but I can still see her face and hear her voice as she faced the truth about that as well. "Education? Mmh ... all we were educated for was to be slaves. That's the truth of it—slaves to white people!" She was very bitter about that for a while but eventually overcame it by acknowledging the reality that, as an avid

reader, she had really valued the literacy skills she had acquired through her schooling. And facing the truth did not alter her views concerning the value of education, in fact it strengthened them and made her even more thankful that she had been able to do what she had done.

There were no secondary schools north of the 26th parallel in Western Australia in those days, yet against all the odds my mother sent every one of her eight children away to high school. So completely committed had she been to the belief that all education was valuable that, when my father died in my first year away at school, she had managed to talk her way into his job as cook for the Public Works Department so that she could continue to support and educate her large family. That was no mean feat. There were no schemes such as Abstudy around in those days. Because there were no secondary schools in many country areas, however, the State Government did pay all parents £80 per year plus one return airfare, for each child they sent away to school. Nevertheless, we were desperately poor and, without those contributions from the State Government, I doubt that even my mother, as determined as she was, would have been able to manage the cost involved. Once I got to Year 11, I was able to get a teacher's bursary so that, between the State Government money and my part-time job, I was able to cover all of the costs associated with my remaining at school to complete Year 12. I survived at Teachers' College on the grant that we all got paid while doing our training. Of course, that meant we had to sign an agreement with the government that we would be bonded to teach for them for three years after completing our two years of training. For the thousands like myself, whose parents would not have been able to afford to keep them at Teachers' College, that allowance made our tertiary education possible and we certainly had no problems with government expectations that we should be required to work for them for three years as recompense for their investment in our futures. We wouldn't have had much of a future if that scheme had not been in place.

So, my career in education began just over forty years ago when I finished high school and started my teacher training. In fact, this is a very significant year for me as it was forty years ago, in 1962, that I was appointed to my first school—Shark Bay—a little two-teacher school in a small fishing village on the north-west coast of Western

Australia. I couldn't have asked for a better place to begin my career as a teacher. Most of the students were Aboriginal and, as it was a very small town, I was included in all of the social events that occurred. In this way parents and "locals" made me feel that I was a valued member of the community. I spent most of the next twenty years as a classroom teacher. I have taught from pre-school through to the tertiary sector, in a diversity of remote, rural and urban locations in Australia and Christmas Island, Papua New Guinea and Saudi Arabia. I first moved into educational administration and the university sector twenty years ago, when I went to work in the Northern Territory. Five years later I returned to Queensland and, in 1988, became the first student support officer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Townsville TAFE. In mid-1989, I moved to the Department of Education's northern region as the co-ordinator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education across the P–12 range. When my job disappeared in the restructuring of the early 1990s, I changed direction and completed my Masters Degree in Education—guidance and counselling—at this university. Subsequently, I worked in the Whitsunday Burdekin district as a guidance officer, senior guidance officer and professional development officer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and as acting principal in a large primary school.

And what was the reality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in the 1980s when I returned to Queensland? As the "tragic legacy" (Biskup, 1973, p.148–204) of colonial practices in terms of educational provision for Indigenous Australians became clearer, the demands for action increased. The hierarchy in our education systems and government kept directing us to "fix the problems" or to give teachers strategies (something similar to recipes, was what we thought they wanted) so that they could "fix the problems". As a result, we felt that we were continually in reactive mode, the demands for "fix-it" solutions coming at us from all directions. In time, I felt that it was a bit like the deficit model, for it seemed to me that we, the Indigenous people working in the area, somehow came to be seen as the ones responsible for the situation, the ones who were always supposed to have the answers. And, while we did want to change the situation, the work was highly political and quite stressful. We had our detractors—those who constantly reminded us of what was not happening, of how much money was being wasted, of what we should

be doing, etc. But we were also up against considerable apathy—those who didn't want to hear what we were saying: even though we kept talking, they weren't listening. Significantly, as I have discovered, universities are no different to other sectors of education in that regard.

Equity was big in the late 1980s/early 1990s and, for a while, we did think it might bring the much needed change in attitudes. But the old tensions remained simmering beneath the surface rhetoric. Certainly there were teachers who demonstrated a genuine commitment to working toward the achievement of more equitable outcomes for their Indigenous students, and we were grateful for those people. But there were also those who said we shouldn't be included because we already had enough money being thrown at Indigenous education; there were those who saw us as just another equity group—an attitude that meant our Indigenous identity became a disadvantage; and there were those from our own mob saying that to be part of the equity scene detracted from our rights, as the Indigenous peoples of this country, to an education that reflected our cultural values and beliefs, and so on. It was within that context that I began to think about moving outside of the system rather than continually struggling to overcome the resistance and achieve the outcomes we wanted, as Indigenous peoples, within the system. The time was right. My long experience in schools was finally recognised in 1994, when I was awarded the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander component of the national Women and Violence Project. Following a national consultation, with Indigenous Australians in remote, rural and urban locations about gender-based violence in schools, I developed a set of professional development materials for teachers across the P–12 range. In 1995, the Commonwealth Government asked me to develop a national training program to train those who would implement the professional development materials in the schools. I left the Department of Education in 1995 to work as a private consultant. Ending up with more work than I could handle, however, I moved back into the university sector, taking up the position as Director of the Oorala Aboriginal Centre at the University of New England in 1996. The following year I came back to James Cook University as the Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Participation, Research and Development—CATSIPRD, and in 1998 I became the first head of

the School of Indigenous Australian Studies when we achieved the status of school within the faculty structure of the university.

Changing Direction

I remember, it was October 1995 and I was in Alice Springs. I was sitting talking to Bev, an Aboriginal woman, daughter of a friend of mine. It was already hot, a promise of the scorching months to come, and we were sitting side-by-side on a stone bench under a stunted, scraggly tree looking out over the parched landscape, yarning while we had a cuppa. As usual, the topic was schools and the endless struggle we all faced with trying to get kids to come to school every day. It was not a conversation full of hope ... rather the contrary. Bev ended it with some words I have never forgotten:

> The problem for so many of our people is that they see schools as being the cause of all their problems. When they were kids, it was the school that took away their culture and their language. By the time the school had finished with them, they had nothing left.
> So many of them are still lost, still trying to find themselves ...

The sense of hopelessness that overwhelmed me at these words haunted me for months. In fact in retrospect, it seems that conversation was a defining moment for me, forcing me to question what is was I had been doing and compelling me to reassess my approach to the issues. I knew many Aboriginal people who had overcome great adversity and hardship, people who may or may not have gone through the schooling system yet had developed the capacity to get on with their lives. My own grandmother was a fiercely independent woman who, despite the fact that she had had no schooling, met life's challenges head on. And I knew others who as a result of their own life experience had come to see education as the panacea, the one thing that would save them, that would raise them (or their children) out of the desperate quagmire of poverty and enable them to take control of their own life journey. My mother was one such person. Reflecting upon the values and beliefs that had influenced my upbringing enabled me to comprehend, at last, what my mother had given me. By sending me off to school when I was 12 she had, in fact, given me independence, autonomy over my own actions. From that point on, whatever I did in my life was my choice. And I had chosen a career that gave me the "success" I wanted—a job I loved—and gave my mother the "success" she had wanted for all of her children: security of employment, a "job for life".

Interestingly, an important finding of my research has been that the reason most Indigenous peoples come to university is to improve their employment opportunities and to obtain the knowledge and skills they need to be able to access better types of jobs—jobs that offer some security of employment. The research also provides valuable insights into why so many mature-aged Indigenous students pursue higher education. Their involvement tends also to be related to employment. A number of the people I worked with in undertaking my research indicated that they had worked in various organisations for years, often as a volunteer or for a pittance that was justified on the basis that they had no qualifications. Yet those same organisations had no compunction in overloading those Indigenous people at the lower end of their pay scales with enormous responsibilities associated with looking after Indigenous clients and attending to anything "Indigenous" that came along and needed sorting. In fact, exploring this issue suggests that the word "Indigenous" attached to a position carries an invisible package of additional job expectations that are never mentioned in any salary negotiation. Some of the students I talked with simply said they had reached a point where they had had enough. They had finally recognised the reality: people, including management, continually told them how much they were valued, but where it counted most—in their pay packets—there was no demonstration of that valuing. Many people were achieving considerable success in their work with Indigenous clients over many years, yet if they ever questioned the value of their experience, the value of the contribution they were making to the organisation, they were invariably told they couldn't be paid any more because they didn't have the formal qualifications. Eventually, they would realise that there was going to be no recognition of their prior learning, and that if they wanted to better themselves in a financial sense, they were going to have to do something about it. And there are many mature-aged students who have gained considerable experience and success in their field of study before they come to the university but, once again, there is no recognition of the prior learning they have gained in those workplaces. Instead, they are faced with the prospect of three to four years' absence from their families and communities while they acquire "the piece of paper".

So how important is higher education for Indigenous Australians? Is it worth the struggle? To consider this issue, it is necessary to have

some understanding of where Indigenous students are positioned within the higher education sector. I would like to commend the Abstudy review undertaken by Stanley and Hansen in 1997–98. Their report used statistical evidence to reveal a serious flow-on of Indigenous disadvantage from the primary and secondary levels through into the higher education sector. Hence the tendency of Indigenous students to enrol and graduate in lower-level courses or basic education programs and to achieve a significantly lower rate of course completions when compared with all Australian completions, particularly in some regions of Australia. Stanley and Hansen highlighted that such outcomes ran contrary to the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (1990) and the priorities of the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA 1995), both of which were endorsed by the Commonwealth and all States and Territories (Stanley & Hansen, 1998, p. 2). In their analysis of the proposed changes to Abstudy and the likely impact of such changes upon Indigenous students, Stanley and Hansen drew attention to the fact that the proposed Abstudy changes were "likely to disadvantage a significant proportion of mature age students" (Stanley & Hansen, 1998, p. 135).

Yet—despite the recommendation of the 1985 Miller Report concerning the need to maintain the Commonwealth Government commitment to providing special measures for Aboriginal employment and training programs in order to fulfil its equity goals, and despite the findings of the Stanley and Hansen review,—the current Commonwealth Government implemented changes to the Abstudy scheme in 2000, by introducing means testing and a lower threshold for the commencement of repayments in relation to HECS debts. Such changes maintain tight government fiscal controls and place additional hardship on many Indigenous students whose income is often a crucial component in the overall survival of a large extended family. In fact, some students have told me that the only reason they have been able to survive is because they are single, pointing out that they don't know how people survive if they have dependants to worry about. One student concluded, "If I starve, well, it's only me."

Yet the behaviour of the Commonwealth Government is not new, according to Eckermann, who revealed that the neglect of Aboriginal peoples emerged out of the salvation policies of the late eighteenth

century. She cited Hartwig's (1973) argument that " ... 'forgetfulness' and 'disregard' of Aboriginal people have been a feature of the Australian education and social, as well as legal and economic systems, for generations" (Eckermann, 1992, p. 28). The concern regarding this situation is that, embedded within such inaction and rendered more urgent by its recency, lie the principles of social justice. Rhetoric? Or reality? From an Indigenous perspective, I would argue emphatically that the casting aside of the principles of social justice is our reality. Marcia Langton explains it as:

> The notion of social justice appears to have become boring and has disappeared from the rhetoric. But this, like the consumption of all ideas and styles including all that is regarded as "the primitive", is a symptom of postmodernism and economic rationalism. (Langton, 1993, p. 84)

Consider what Bill Jonas, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, in his 2001 Social Justice Report is saying when he suggests that Indigenous affairs "seem to have become a series of anniversaries—operating as an annual reminder of the unfulfilled promises and commitments of governments." Jonas revisited the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: ten-year anniversary in 2001; the Mabo decision: ten-year anniversary in 2002; the Bringing Them Home report: five-year anniversary in 2002; and the Australian Declaration of Reconciliation and the Roadmap to Reconciliation that have now been awaiting a national response and action plan from the Commonwealth Government for over two years. Jonas argues that this inaction on the part of government reveals a "lack of respect for the distinctive cultures of Indigenous people and a lack of commitment to seeking a just accommodation of our distinct identities within the Australian societal fabric" (Jonas, 2001, p. 8).

And let us pause for a moment and consider why the findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report clearly argued that change is vital to the process of dismantling the socio-historical framework that has served to position Indigenous Australians within contemporary Australian society and our educational institutions. As Commissioner Elliot Johnston wrote in his report:

> From that history many things flow ... first is the deliberate and systematic disempowerment of Aboriginal people starting with dispossession from their land and proceeding to almost every

aspect of their life. They were made dependent upon government or non-Aboriginal pastoralists or other employers for rations, clothing, education, living place and living conditions. Decisions were made about them and for them and imposed upon them ... Aboriginal people were gradually made dependent upon non-Aboriginal people ... many of them lost their capacity for independent action, and their communities likewise. With loss of independence goes a loss of self-esteem ... (and with) every turn in the policy of government and the practice of the non-Aboriginal community ... postulated on the inferiority of Aboriginal people ... Every step of the way is based upon an assumption of superiority and every new step is an entrenchment of that assumption. (Johnston, 1991, pp. 8–9)

Few Australians would argue against the need to remove the colonial framework that continues to oppress Indigenous Australians, and during the past two decades various writers (Dawkins, 1987, p. iii; Department of Education, Employment and Training, 1995; Walker, 2000; Bourke et al., 1996, p. 6) have argued that universities have a key responsibility to redress past educational disadvantage. Yet, how effectively are universities addressing the implications of Jonas' statement that "It is one thing to acknowledge the truth of our history, and another one to entirely deal with its consequences" (Jonas, 2001, p. 12)? Is it possible that by their very silence our universities could be seen to be condoning the current Commonwealth Government's desire to "shut down debate and avoid any engagement" (Jonas, 2001, p. 198) concerning the need to address the human rights of Indigenous Australians?

Let's consider this in the context of what is currently happening in universities. The growing emphasis on the need for all students to complete a whole course, preferably a degree program, within a specific timeframe is seen to be driven by expectations imposed by the Commonwealth government rather than by the aspirations of individual Indigenous students. While it could be argued that agendas to do with completions, time lines and levels of courses are ostensibly driven by the Commonwealth, they are being implemented by the universities. While Indigenous units may protest over the unfairness of changes to Abstudyand other funding allocations that are being used to enforce the government policies, the wider university community remains silent, offering little or no visible support for the Indigenous position. Such silence speaks volumes about how universities really value their Indigenous students and might also be

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seen as an indicator of the capacity of academic staff to deal sensitively with the learning needs of those Indigenous students. To be fair, in recent years the Commonwealth Government has used the allocation of funding as a means of achieving compliance from universities on a range of issues. Perhaps, within that context, it could be argued that the issue of Indigenous human rights may have been overlooked, by many universities.

Increasingly, Indigenous research has argued that the capacity of Indigenous students to persist with their higher education studies is dependent upon the establishment of inclusive learning environments. Such research also challenges the current reality from a human rights perspective, pointing out that many universities are failing to provide Indigenous Australians with a quality education that not only addresses their needs but also is their right. And by resisting change and maintaining the status quo, universities, in my opinion, seem to be pushing us off onto a road that is not of our choosing, but which will almost certainly be seen by many in the educational communities as having been made for us, signposted as it is, "Indigenous failure in education".

But we can refuse to take that road. It is my contention that the time has come for us to stand up for who we are—Indigenous Australians who have achieved success within the university. So what is "success in university" from an Indigenous perspective? I used a qualitative approach in my study because I believed that its emphasis on people's lived experience would allow me to draw upon the "experiences, ideas, traditions, dreams, interests, aspirations and struggles of Indigenous Australians" (Rigney, 1996, p. 4) that Rigney argues should be central to any research that is about Indigenous Australians. A small cohort of students from two universities participated in the formal study. All of the students who participated as informants were, in fact, students who were identifying as being satisfied with their achievements or their progress within the university. I used data gathered from focus groups, from respected senior Indigenous educators and from my own observations to validate my analysis of the data gathered through individual interviews.

In discussing what their family perceptions might be in terms of achieving "success" in relation to their participation in a university course, half the respondents indicated that employment or obtaining

the qualifications needed to ensure job security were the vital signifiers of having achieved "success" within the family, while the other half argued that in their family completion of the course in which they had enrolled would be sufficient. Almost half of those interviewed, however, pointed out that their family considered they had already achieved "success" simply on the basis that they had been accepted into a university program.

Other issues that a minority of respondents suggested their families would perceive as the achievement of success included: getting a qualification that would enable you to help your people; passing examinations; having the ability to be competitive (equal) with non-Indigenous people; remaining committed to your family by not losing family values or ties; undertaking postgraduate studies or achieving results of credit or above.

In response to the question of community perceptions of what might be perceived as "success", some respondents saw community as supportive but with no specific expectations of the students. Most students had not given any thought to what "community" might expect of them. This is an interesting outcome in relation to other research projects where community expectations are often argued to be critical motivators in terms of the decisions people make regarding their educational directions. Perhaps this response indicates that students committed to achieving "success" in the university have become more focused on individual as opposed to collective goals, at least in the short term. This finding would seem to be aligned to the finding of Bourke and colleagues (1996) that students who came to university in response to community expectations "had a significantly higher attrition rate than those who rate 'community expectations' as an unimportant factor in their decision to study at university" (Bourke et al., 1996, p.40). Walker (2000) found that studying at university was an important motivator for many students who identified that they wanted to help their people or work in their community (Walker, 2000, p.3, section 8). The senior female Aboriginal educator supported Walker's findings by indicating that the desire to pursue a profession that "takes them back to their community ... to be employed, to go back and work in their communities in the longer term" was the goal of many of the mature-aged, mainly women students who come to university. It was certainly the case that over

half the student sample interviewed in this study had indicated that they wanted to do something that would help their people.

My research has revealed that *most* Indigenous students who participated in this study perceived of "success" as: the completion of subjects, different year levels or the whole course; achieving what you, as an individual, want from your course, such as completing two subjects or completing a two-year program or whatever; the completion of a degree, either undergraduate or, ultimately, postgraduate; or the capacity to be financially independent, to be able to achieve a secure job.

In addition, some had a broader view of "success" that included: getting higher marks; having a balanced life in terms of family, work and social commitments; having the capacity for choice, thus being able to make decisions yourself; being able to recognise that undertaking university studies requires a commitment to hard work; being a successful role model; simply being at university; being able to compete as an equal; having commitment; being able to speak out from an informed position; developing the capacity for more sensitive interaction with other people; developing a strong sense of independence; developing skills such as planning, time management, study skills, sound work habits, etc., that are required to achieve success; and getting the most out of university, academically, socially and emotionally.

Significantly, however, many students appeared more interested in talking about the changes that they perceived as having happened for them as a result of their university education: the ability to engage in critical thinking and analysis; being more open minded and flexible about the way in which they view their world; being willing to accept the challenge of higher education to move into those spaces in academic discourse that will enable them to begin to regain control of their own lives; and the ability to achieve equality in their own right, on their own terms.

So what are the implications of the diversity of these views within the context of higher education? Interestingly, most students emphasised that "success" can mean different things for different people. Yet they argued that universities and the Commonwealth Government viewed success almost exclusively as successful completion of a course in as short a time as possible. There is an obvious tension between the broader view of success that Indigenous

people appear to have and the university's view. Furthermore, I would suggest that the two, particularly in the current political climate, are not necessarily compatible.

Weir, an Indigenous academic, argued in her Ph.D. thesis that there was an obvious tension between Indigenous postgraduate students contributing Indigenous knowledge into a system that would appear to marginalise those students who do not conform to Western knowledge traditions. Yet, in demonstrating the complexity to that tension, she cited Budby's 1981 argument that "success is measured by degree of acceptance of, and ability to function within, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities" (Weir, 2001, p. 78). For a growing number of Indigenous peoples, this would appear to be the "success" they seek. And this assertion would seem to be supported by the number of Indigenous students who have told me how they have felt valued in the university: when their opinions were sought, when they had been able to contribute their knowledge and ideas to class discussions, and when they had been able to provide an Indigenous perspective that was acknowledged as enhancing the learning experience of non-Indigenous students.

It is critical that universities appreciate that participation in university education does present something of a conundrum for Indigenous Australians. On the one hand, there is the view espoused by some Indigenous educators that Indigenous students come into the university to acquire a Western style education that will enable them to access the dominant society, especially in terms of employment and the capacity to change their socio-economic status. From another perspective, however, there are those who argue that this is an assimilationist approach that will ultimately cost the "successful" students their sense of identity as Indigenous people. They will become as one with the dominant society. Of course, it is not really as simple as that, for there are many gradations between those who resist Western education because they wish to maintain their Indigenous cultural identity and those who become a universalised Indigenous identity. In considering the diversity of Indigenous experience in contemporary Australia, however, I would argue that there must be room for both. And I say this because, ultimately, I believe that the only person who can decide what they want to get out of university education is the individual student. It is, however, the responsibility of

the university to provide students with an educational experience that enables them to make informed choices.

The danger inherent in attempting to define "success" simply within the context of educational outcomes is that of taking the easy route, of choosing the obvious outcome—the one that appears to reflect that which contemporary Western education most values—the academic result. While Indigenous educators such as Bourke, Hughes and Tripcony have clearly enunciated the need for Indigenous students in higher education to achieve the academic outcomes required to access employment and improved economic well-being for their peoples, each also warns, in the interests of equity, of the need for universities to embrace inclusive policies. Such policies enable Indigenous students to acquire their education in an environment that does allow them to be themselves and does value them for the difference they bring to the education experience of all Australian students. Student responses have clearly revealed the importance of higher education in broadening student perspectives thus enabling them to engage in the critical analysis that Hooks (Hooks, 1990) argues is so important and that will provide them with the capacity to reposition themselves as successful students, on their own terms.

The majority of Indigenous students do not view "success" as only related to academic outcomes. Many see it as more to do with becoming a better communicator or a more thinking person. And there were those who argued that "success" at university was related to the total experience at the university rather than simply the academic aspect. Thus people became equipped to deal with community attitudes including racism, became effective role models and developed a commitment to achieving goals through completing what they set out to do. Hence, successful people are able to manage their time effectively, make the right decisions for themselves, meet challenges in both a personal and professional sense, and meet their obligations to family and community and themselves.

The question is: can universities change? I believe change is possible, but it is premised on whether or not the institutions desire change. The Chief Scientist called for change in his 2000 Discussion Paper when he argued that now, more than ever before, "knowledge is the key to future prosperity" (Batterham, 2000, p. 6). While Batterham may have been arguing from a scientific viewpoint, I consider that he made some very critical comments on Australia's current situation

that should be heeded by all educational providers. In calling for change he stated that "People matter ... people who have progressed through a supportive educational system, from primary school through to tertiary. And beyond ... The culture needs to change" (Batterham, 2000, p. 2). Even more importantly, in a discussion of what needs to happen, Batterham argued that there must be a shift to "strategic alliances and other forms of collaboration" (Batterham, 2000, p. 7). Increasingly, in recent years, Indigenous educators have called for the establishment of meaningful partnerships that embrace the very alliances and collaboration that Batterham is suggesting. And while there is evidence, in relation to science, engineering and technology, that such calls are heeded, it would seem that those self-same calls from the Indigenous community continue to be ignored. What are the implications of such disregard for Indigenous higher education? Critically, one issue raised by a number of students was that of racism. In fact, a number of students indicated that the racist attitudes of other students, and a number of staff, had seriously impacted upon their capacity to operate effectively within the university. Having said that, however, I believe those discussions revealed evidence of positive change occurring. Not change in the way the universities deal with racism but change in the way that individual Indigenous students, and the Indigenous student cohort, are dealing with it. Most of the students indicated that with time their study had enabled them to develop a capacity within themselves to ignore the comments of those they now view as ignorant, or to refuse to be intimidated by the racist behaviours of those people they now see as mere bullies. Others argued that they had put up with the discriminatory comments, or behaviours, for a while but had then made a conscious decision to speak out and tell the perpetrators, *in situ*, how offensive they found their behaviour. I perceive this assertiveness on the part of Indigenous students to be a positive indicator that they are overcoming their own oppression through the liberating process of education. I would argue that these students will continue to empower themselves, and that in enhancing their own ability for self-determination they are establishing a solid foundation upon which to base their own future success. But what of the other side? What of the non-Indigenous students who persist in discriminatory behaviours? Unfortunately, the persistence of racist behaviours in many universities is confirmed by research undertaken by a number of educators including Bourke in

South Australia, Walker in Western Australia, and Anderson and others in Queensland. Bourke argues strongly for the need to address this serious issue by making Indigenous Studies, taught by Indigenous teachers, a mandatory subject across all discipline areas of the university. Walker revealed the impact of "'racism and discrimination" and "insensitivity to cultural issues"' on the students in her study, citing the work of Anderson et al. on institutional racism that revealed "University policies 'showed little concern for ... engaging in the complex and contradictory issues surrounding racism'" (Walker, 2000, p. 13, Section 8) to demonstrate that racism is alive and thriving in most universities and to add credence to Bourke's call for the teaching of Indigenous Studies. In considering the needs of those non-Indigenous students who engage in discriminatory behaviours, it could be argued that here is one way in which the university could fulfil its responsibility to more adequately prepare those students for life in a global environment.

Hence, in reflecting upon the implications of all of the issues I have discussed, I would argue that it is time for change. In particular, in view of the informed and positive discussions that I have had with numerous successful Indigenous students over recent years, I consider that we owe it to our students to create inclusive learning environments across all discipline areas of the university. And I would suggest that those universities with a real commitment to achieving more equitable outcomes for Indigenous students can begin by shifting their focus. Let's forget the litany of past failure and proudly showcase Indigenous success. This is not to say that there has been no Indigenous success in the past. There are many successful Indigenous people presenting at this conference. We, as Indigenous peoples, know that we have always had successful people; that has always been our truth. Rather, what I am suggesting is that educational institutions, including universities, must begin to accept that truth in a public sense. Universities are powerful institutions with considerable influence and serious responsibilities for leading the formation of public opinion. It is time they exercised that power in relation to their responsibilities to Indigenous Australians by taking the lead in effecting change in our society, by recognising, acknowledging and promoting the Indigenous success that occurs within their own institutions. This is a particularly critical issue, for, as argued by Bunda in a discussion concerning how universities might meet the

needs of Indigenous students, "Our histories, our cultures, our struggles cannot be isolated from our participation in higher education" (Bunda, 1998, p. 49). She acknowledges the complexity of what she is suggesting but states that failure to take account of the socio-historic-cultural issues has serious implications for the future, because:

> Indigenous peoples wish to contribute to the academy and the strength of our contribution will be a reflection of the institution's ability to receive it. A true partnership between Indigenous peoples and universities forges a path for understanding and respect. Without this, we are each diminished. (Bunda, 1998, p. 1)

I believe this research will contribute to current thinking in the discipline of education in that it provides Indigenous perspectives of what is success in education. This study was designed to open up a space in which Indigenous Australian respondents might speak back to non-Indigenous educators, thus becoming a part of the process that is needed to change the discourse about Indigenous Australian student achievement in higher education. How important is it for these students to understand their position within the academy? Is such knowledge an element in achieving success? I sought to collaborate with Indigenous Australian students in an attempt to understand the social process that has contributed to their current positioning within the university and to identify what circumstances in their lives have enabled these students to acquire the capacity for academic inquiry, to engage in a dialogue with non-Indigenous Australians. Reflecting upon the contemporary arguments emerging from the works of Indigenous scholars (Roberts et al., 1999; Martin, 2001; Rigney, 1997, 1999; Nakata, 1999), I perceived such a dialogue could provide a significant contribution to current efforts to change the timbre of the discourse surrounding Indigenous involvement within Australian universities by raising awareness of this issue and alerting Indigenous students to the need to engage in a different discourse—one that is of their own making. If, as Indigenous scholars such as Nakata, Smith and Barnhardt argue, effective change cannot occur until Indigenous people begin to talk back to non-Indigenous peoples—correcting assumptions, redefining beliefs and values, and setting their own parameters concerning what is important knowledge—then this research could mark the beginning of the process that encourages change in how educators perceive Indigenous achievement. Access to Indigenous Australian perceptions, and understanding and recognising

the importance of contextualising meaning, could provide tertiary educators with the potential to better understand what many continue to see as Indigenous "failure" to adequately "perform" within the higher education system. Through this process of "talking back" and "listening" both Indigenous students and the people who deliver the teaching programs would develop an enhanced capacity to "reconstruct the 'world'" (Guba, 1990: 27) in terms of their own practices and procedures. It may also enable universities, in the dawning of a new millennium, to reflect upon their place in a modern society, to critically consider their own relevance in terms of their teaching and research programs, and to gauge their capacity to effectively cater for the cultural diversity of their student body.

I titled my lecture "It's a long road that has no ending" because I was likening my life in education to a metaphorical journey. While it may seem that I was simply referring to the length of time I have been journeying or on the road, so to speak, I also wanted to emphasise the notion that education is a whole-of-life experience. It is not something that happens only in formal education settings. It is the sum total of all of our experiences, and what we learn as children often impacts upon the rest of our lives. So it has been with my life, and the road that I spoke of at the beginning of this lecture still stretches out into the distance. And while preparing to relive that journey with you has at times proved challenging, it has also been rewarding, for it has allowed me the space to tell you about the reality of Indigenous achievement in the university. I hope that in so doing I may have challenged some, at least, to begin the process of change that I believe is critical if Indigenous "success" in the university is to be truly visible and valued.

> Our deeds still travel with us from afar,
> And what we have been makes us what we are.
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> *George Eliot (1879)*

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Chapter 2

Success without Inclusion: Is Real Change in Sight?

An Overview of Successes, Policies and Practices in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

Penny Tripcony

Preamble

My work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education started out as a coincidence (although our old people tell us there is no such thing as " coincidence"), then developed into a passion … and as luck would have it, has become a career. I mention " luck" because I regard myself as " lucky" to have done, and to continue to do, what gives me great pleasure and an exhilarating sense of achievement. I've witnessed the growth and development of others during that process—people I have worked with and supported over the years—who are now accomplished professionals. Some of them have chosen pathways in education administration where a few have reached senior levels; others are continuing with quality teaching, curriculum development, academia and industrial relations. Most importantly, it is with both pleasure and pride that I see more of our young people completing school, studying at and graduating from universities, colleges and institutes (where they are joined by increasing numbers of mature-aged students), and taking up positions where they can progress towards a positive future for themselves and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people generally.

It was thirty years ago (1972) that I first learnt of the availability of Aboriginal study grants[1] from a woman I met accidentally in Melbourne. It could have been because her name was also Penny that we became friends; and coincidentally, she worked as an Education

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[1] The Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme was introduced in 1970.

Officer in the Aboriginal section of the Commonwealth Department of Education (now Department of Education, Science and Training). In the course of one of our conversations, I told Penny that I had left school at Year 10 but always wanted to continue my education. Of course, she encouraged me to do so … and to apply for an Aboriginal study grant. I sat the aptitude tests (a requirement at the time) and my grant application was approved to study Year 12 as a full-time student. On successful completion, I was one of two Aboriginal students admitted to the University of Melbourne, where I gained a Bachelor of Arts degree, and went on to complete a Diploma of Education. Then my life as a formally qualified educator began.

A point I wish to make is that, had there been no Commonwealth study grants and subsequent programs since the early 1970s, I would not have returned to study at that time, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education programs in which I later participated would not have existed. Indeed, one has to ask what the present status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people might have been without Commonwealth directions and their supporting funds. These specific policies and programs, while an essential factor in the educational achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, provide a clear indication that we have not been adequately or appropriately included in the education directions of mainstream systems and institutions.

Introduction

The notion of success is contextual and therefore has varying interpretations. Perceived success aligns with achievement—often, although not always, achievement of significance. As individuals, each of us may achieve goals we set ourselves for our health, sport, education, workplace, profession … in other words, our life choices. On achieving our specific goals, we are seen to be successful—we often celebrate, and we feel good about ourselves. In addition to individual success, there is group (or collective) success. It is the latter that is the topic of this paper, which acknowledges the successes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Before discussing success in education, however, I wish to acknowledge what I believe to be the major related achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Without these successes we would not be where we are today.

The Successes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

a)   Survival

The first major success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is survival, despite the policies and practices aimed at our destruction as distinct cultural groups of traditional owners and custodians of this country.

Initially, Europeans making contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups neither saw nor understood the complexity of Aboriginal society. They failed to recognise a society organised into moieties, clans and intricate kinship systems based on strictly applied values, laws and observances. Because there appeared to be no recognisable formal government, Europeans did not acknowledge the existence of a system of authority based on physical and spiritual knowledge and experience—a system in which order was maintained by way of rights and responsibilities towards other people and towards "country", or the natural environment. Hence the concept of *terra nullius* or "uninhabited land"—the basis upon which possession of this land was taken by the British in 1770 and, until the High Court decision on the Murray Island case in 1992 that negated *terra nullius*, the basis of the introduced laws and practices since settlement began. This year, the tenth anniversary of that decision—the successful outcome of years of struggle before it was reached—was celebrated on Murray Island and in many other parts of the country.

Our survival means also that our identity, values, much of our cultures and many languages have been retained and are celebrated often, especially during NAIDOC week (as expressed in the south-east Queensland NAIDOC theme for this year, "The Culture Lives").

b)   Resilience

The second major success marks the outcomes of resilience. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have weathered environmental change for millennia as well as adapting to and surviving the rapid social and political changes of the relatively recent past. Our ancestors did not passively accept the usurpation and misuse of their traditional lands, seas and waterways. They fought those who deliberately and blatantly broke traditional laws of respect for country

and its peoples. For this, they were punished severely, suffered indignities, were herded onto reserves often distant from their traditional lands, and were provided with basic British education so that they could become a semi-literate, Christianised, labour force for the colonisers.

The skills of observation and adaptation then led our ancestors—our forefathers (and mothers)—to learn how to work within the introduced social environment. They learnt about the hierarchy that maintained order, about the lawmakers, the systems of government and how to gain the support of others in fighting for recognition, and the links between education, employment and self-sufficiency. They led numerous protests in various parts of the country, and eventually—with strong representation on the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI)—campaigned for a referendum that was conducted in 1967, and became the turning point that firmly positioned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the new order. The fight did not end there of course. It led to the introduction of specific policies to redress the disadvantage that is the legacy of the past, and opened the doors for our people to challenge existing laws and practices.

The changes to the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, 1900*, brought about by the referendum of 1967, permitted the Australian Government to include Indigenous Australians "in reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth …"; and "… to make laws for the peace, order and good Government of the Commonwealth …" with respect to Indigenous Australians "… for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws …".

The latter constitutional amendment led to changes from earlier often *ad hoc* education programs for Aboriginal people. These programs, implemented by the State departments/ministries responsible for Aboriginal affairs, had been largely compensatory, based on models of cultural deficit, and for the most part delivered by unskilled teachers employed through State Aboriginal affairs departments. Through the constitutional changes, Aboriginal affairs became the responsibility of the Commonwealth government who allocated specific funds to the States and Territories for Aboriginal programs across States' portfolios. The education of Aboriginal

people was secured within the responsibilities of State education portfolios, with supplementary funding from the Commonwealth.

Thus, for some years it has been the Commonwealth government that has "driven" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. It is because of annual budget allocations by the Commonwealth government, and the development and implementation of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (NATSIEP) with its related programs, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education has become part of the education agenda for States and Territories.

Journeying through a Time of Change

When I qualified as a teacher in 1976 I had little awareness of the importance of political and legislative changes that had taken place only a few years earlier; and I certainly knew nothing about the administrative arrangements for Aboriginal education. Neither the university course nor the subsequent one-year Diploma of Education included Aboriginal content, and at that time there were no Aboriginal support units within the tertiary institutions where I had studied.[2] On leaving these institutions, I did not know that I was about to embark on a journey through a time of enormous change in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs.

My work in schools was brief. It was the 1970s—the time when Commonwealth funding was available for the establishment of Aboriginal organisations and community-based education programs. While teaching in Victorian schools I had little opportunity to work with Aboriginal students, so when approached to teach in community-based courses, I accepted, and went on to work in these courses and in newly-formed Aboriginal organisations.

Nineteen seventy-six was also the year in which the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) was established to provide advice to the Commonwealth Minister for Education. In the same year, State Aboriginal education consultative committees were established in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales, followed by other States in the next few years, and national Aboriginal education conferences were conducted annually by the NAEC from 1976 to 1985. The consultative committees and national conferences

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[2] Aboriginal tertiary students reported to, and sought advice from, assigned education officers at the Commonwealth Department of Education.

were important steps in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were presented with opportunities for input to planned directions for both State and national education programs. During the next few years, statements and position papers were developed demonstrating a coordinated national approach to principles and objectives for preschooling, schooling, teacher education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, language programs and higher education.

At the end of 1988, the National Aboriginal Education Committee was disbanded and replaced with a taskforce, chaired by Dr Paul Hughes, to develop a national policy. Thus, the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* was developed in 1989, and implementation began in 1990. To support the *NATSIEP*'s implementation, the Commonwealth government legislated for specific budget allocations (now known as the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program, or *IESIP*) which recognised the importance of parent and community input to schools by including the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness scheme.[3]

Although I was not a member of the taskforce, I had opportunities for input into its development through my involvement with State Aboriginal education consultative groups, and through my position as head of the Aboriginal section of the Victorian Education Department (until April 1989) and through my appointment, in the same year, as Principal Education Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Branch with the Queensland Department of Education.[4]

The 1990s—Focused Directions

The 1990s were years of national activity in education generally, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. For example:

- The *NATSIEP* was being implemented across all education sectors in States and Territories.
- Senior officers responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in State and Territory systems formed a group

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[3] *ASSPA* has contributed to increased parent involvement with schools, but sadly, in many schools the extent of that involvement is minimal.

[4] I was employed in these positions as follows: Victorian Department of Education—October 1983 to April 1989; and Queensland Department of Education—July 1989 to October 1994.

(Coordinators of Aboriginal Education) which became a sub-committee of the Conference of Directors-General, who in turn reported to the Australian Education Council (later to become the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, or MCEETYA).

- The Australian Education Council through its *National Collaborative Curriculum Project* had determined the eight key learning areas and produced curriculum statements and profiles—all of which included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content provided by the Coordinators of Education and funded by the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.[5]
- The seven Mayer (employment related) competencies were defined, and embedded in schools' curriculum (MCEETYA, 1996b).[6]
- The *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* report (1991) included recommendations for education, and funding to implement these recommendations was allocated to States and Territories.
- Social justice policies and programs (incorporating equity) were introduced.
- Languages and literacy became a focus for schools.
- Implementation of the *NATSIEP* was reviewed (1994–95), and recommendations were made about areas requiring further attention.
- The MCEETYA Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 1996–2002 (1996a) redefined the goals and objectives of the *NATSIEP* into eight priority areas.
- Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (HREOC, 1997) contained implications for schooling.
- National literacy and numeracy testing of primary school children was implemented which highlighted inequitable outcomes,

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[5] This came about through an approach by the Coordinators of Aboriginal Education (see previous bullet-point) whose submission was taken to the Australian Education Council by the only Indigenous Director-General of Education, Dr Eric Willmot. (I was chair of the Coordinators of Aboriginal Education 1990–1994, and of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Project Committee.)

[6] Unfortunately, an eighth competency (cultural understandings) was not adopted.

particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students …

National Directions for the Twenty-First Century

National Goals for Schooling

Implementation of the *NATSIEP* and other policy directions by States and Territories has contributed to the recent formulation, by MCEETYA, of goals of inclusion.

On 22–23 April 1999, the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) announced the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*. To those involved in Indigenous education, this announcement is particularly significant. It is the first occasion on which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are specifically mentioned in a highest-level national schooling document.

An earlier statement—the *Hobart Declaration* (Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling, 1990)—referred to students of all cultures, rather than specifying goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

It has been the experience of those of us with some years' involvement in Indigenous education that, when programs are planned by our respective systems, the translation of "students of all cultures" has not necessarily included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Thus we welcome the 1999 MCEETYA Declaration as a firm foundation upon which programs may be tailored to meet the educational needs and improve the educational outcomes of the range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: those from diverse locations, from diverse cultural and family backgrounds, and who possess differing levels of English language ability.

The *Adelaide Declaration* clearly signifies the links between education and employment by its inclusion of goals for varying education pathways, for vocational education, for links with business and industry, for literacy and numeracy competence, for skilling teachers, for involving parents and communities, etc. In terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, the document presents a unified direction for States and Territories—including public and private sectors—in providing education and training for their respective Indigenous school-aged constituents. The social

justice goals of the *Adelaide Declaration*, presented here for those who may not be fully aware of them, encompass the two aspects of Indigenous education, i.e. education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and education for all students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, societies and contemporary issues:

> 3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students;

> 3.4 All students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;

> 3.5 All students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally;

> 3.6 All students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable the completion of school education to Year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training.

National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy,

2000–2004

In order to accelerate progress towards the attainment of both the *NATSIEP* and *Adelaide Declaration* goals, in March 2000 the *National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy* (*NIELNS*) was launched by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs. The *NIELNS'* objective is *to achieve English literacy and numeracy for Indigenous students at levels comparable to those achieved by other young Australians*; and its six key elements address those factors that are seen to inhibit the

attainment of equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Although the *Adelaide Declaration* espouses inclusion the *NIELNS,* by its very nature as a specific policy for Indigenous students, follows the practice of "adding on" to State and Territory directions.

Further, it is not common for a Prime Minister to launch an education document. This action, together with the planned evaluation of the *Strategy* throughout the four years of its implementation—with the requirement that reports be presented to Parliament by the Commonwealth Minister responsible for Education from 2002—signifies the importance the Commonwealth Government places on the success of the *NIELNS*. In addition, to align with the *NIELNS'* proposed period of implementation, the Commonwealth funding period was extended from triennial budgets to quadrennial allocations.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Successes through Education

Since the enactment of legislative changes following the 1967 referendum, little more than a mere thirty years ago, we have come a long way. Rather than encouraging inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education programs, specific national policies and strategies have been largely added on to States'/Territories' directions: however, there has been considerable success in increasing the educational attainment levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. For example:

- There are currently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people formally qualified in education (all sectors), the health professions (including doctors, nurses, administrators …), psychology, social work and welfare, law, criminology, science, engineering and architecture, information technology, visual and performing arts, and a range of other vocations.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people possessing and undertaking higher degrees.
- Overall access and participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have improved dramatically, with participation rates in some but not all sectors of education and training either meeting or exceeding the rate for other Australians.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' participation in vocational education and training is proportionally higher than the remainder of the population.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary school participation has increased, and is now almost equal to the remainder of the population.
- Secondary school participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have increased. (However, these still fall short of those for the overall population; and a large proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students leave school at Year 10.)

These successes, built on earlier achievements, were accelerated by the implementation from 1990 of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (NATSIEP), which began to impact on the previous 175 years of largely *ad hoc* education practices that rarely, if at all, recognised Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander aspirations, cultures and values. However, Indigenous Australians recently stated that:

Our people have the right to a good education. Our children need the skills, experience and qualifications to be able to choose their future. Our communities need young people coming through with the education and confidence to be effective leaders. We need young people who can be advocates for our people, able to take their place in Australian society and business and still keep their culture strong.

Over the past 30 years, despite some public perceptions to the contrary, a great deal of progress has been made in increasing the education levels of Indigenous Australians:

- Participation in early childhood and primary schooling has improved dramatically;
- Year 12 retention rates have shifted from single digits to above 32% in 1998;
- The involvement of Indigenous parents and communities in education has increased with over 3800 parent committees in 1998 (run through the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness programme), covering about 105,000 Indigenous school and preschool students;
- Indigenous participation in university courses has increased from under 100 people 30 years ago to some 7800 in 1998;

- The participation rates of Indigenous 15 to 24-year-olds in vocational education and training have actually reached levels about the same as for other Australians.

However, we still have a long way to go …[7]

It is true that there is some way to go if Indigenous Australians are to achieve parity of education outcomes and overall social equality. Until these objectives are reached by and for Indigenous Australians—and indeed for all groups within society—the goal of real inclusion will not be achieved. Further, until this occurs, additional "targeted" strategies and programs need to continue.

In an address subsequent to the launch of the *NIELNS* the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp, stated that progress towards equitable outcomes for Indigenous Australians had been delayed because

> … too many people still look at Indigenous students in terms of the deficit model and as the most difficult students in terms of remediation. Too many people still do not regard racial bias in educational outcomes as a sign of the failure of the education and training system to respond appropriately ...

> (Kemp 2000, p. 6).

Implications for Consideration in Future Directions

In December 2000, the National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation delivered its final report to the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Parliament. In terms of educating for the future, the report states:

> A constant theme of Council's consultations has been that "education is the key" to achieving reconciliation. By this, people imply three things. They seek education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in culturally sensitive ways to a point where they can participate as equals, with good jobs and economic security. They seek education of decision-makers and people who provide services so that they work through respectful partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Finally, they seek education of the wider community to understand the issues of education.

> *(Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 2000, p. 53).*

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[7] Accompanying statement, *National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, 2000–2004.*

In order to achieve these objectives, and the related objectives and goals of the *NATSIEP* and *NIELNS*, there are a number of challenges.

School-community partnerships will be effective and successful if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and community members are equal with other partners. Such an arrangement must recognise and value the skills, knowledge and experience of individual partners, and utilise such expertise to the fullest. Each partner needs to know what others bring to the arrangement, to focus on strengths and develop strategies to overcome weaknesses. To do this in terms of partnerships with Indigenous students, parents and community members, schools need to have some understanding of Indigenous aspirations and issues (particularly those within their specific communities); and likewise, Indigenous families and community members need to know about current policies and directions for Indigenous education and how individual schools operate.

Boston (2000, p. 10) considers that "Partnerships require that schools and teachers open themselves to local community cultures." To take this one step further, Kemp suggests that:

> … addressing the educational impact of the often wide scale disadvantage that Indigenous communities experience requires us to turn upside down the traditional model of community involvement in education. We need to put the school in the community, rather than the community in the school.
>
> (Kemp 2000, p. 6)

There must be *no modified education objectives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students*—in other words, objectives must be the same for *all* students. However, pathways for students to achieve these objectives may vary in accordance with knowledge, abilities, access to programs, etc., but objectives must be the same for all students.

The element of time—an important factor that is often overlooked—must be built in to programs and pathways. That is:

- *time for consultation and negotiation* when researching and/or planning programs and their intended outcomes; and
- *time for achieving outcomes*—students often need to take time out of study … for family or community matters, for the purpose of consolidating learnings.… to reflect on their future work/study options … etc.

Currently, students' success is measured in terms of completions which are expected to be achieved within specific timeframes: for example, the completion of twelve years of schooling, and the completion of vocational and tertiary education courses. There is a tension here. We know that large numbers of students leave school at Year 10, and we know also that the rate of mature-aged students' entry to post-school courses is increasing, yet because they do not remain at school to complete Year 12, the performance of students (and schools) is perceived as a non-achievement.

Completion of Year 12, or its equivalent—currently this objective is supported by the notion that a student completing twelve years of schooling, or equivalent, is more likely to find employment. I believe that many Indigenous students who live in rural and remote communities (and indeed, in the cities …) might question this statement. In locations where full-time paid employment is minimal, many relatives and other people who might be "role models" for students are either unemployed or participants of the local Community Development Employment Program (CDEP—or "work for the dole" program). In other words, an Indigenous student in such situations might ask, "Why should I complete school and have to leave my community to find work … or to stay at home and become a CDEP participant?" Obviously much depends on community, industry and whole-of-government partnerships to find solutions to this historic problem.

Indigenous students' lack of dominant cultural capital—It must be widely recognised that "many Indigenous students find the cultural assumptions of formal education puzzling, frustrating and alienating" (Buckskin 2002, p. 160), that formal education focuses on the individual rather than the group or collective, and that these notions, and an understanding of the power relationships in society, need to be acquired and accommodated by Indigenous students in order to achieve within mainstream education.

Teacher education—much has been written and spoken about the need for teacher education that, if Indigenous students are expected to attend school, to participate in school programs and to achieve equitable outcomes, must be relevant to meeting the educational needs of Indigenous students. Teachers must become knowledgeable on matters such as Indigenous values, lifestyles, cultures, languages and contemporary issues. They must also know protocols for interacting

with Indigenous families and communities—particularly if "real" partnerships are to be achieved. Most importantly, mindsets need to change—not only those of teachers, but within Australian society generally. *We, as Indigenous educators, need to ensure that relevant input is made to current discussions on teaching standards.*

Indigenous education workers—these valuable staff must be recognised for the work they do in providing an important link between the school, Indigenous students and families, and Indigenous communities. In many schools, Indigenous education workers provide continuity in terms of school–community relationships (whereas principals and teachers may transfer to other locations).

As educators we need to remind ourselves that "Indeed, we cannot, nor in education of all places, should we wish to control other people. When they are limited by our power then their reality is diminished and their effectiveness as creative autonomous colleagues is compromised" (Hinchcliff 1993, p. 52).

If we are to improve the extent and the quality of Indigenous involvement in schooling programs, Indigenous education workers must be presented with opportunities for fixed employment, professional development and career pathways, as expressions of the value of these positions to schools (teachers, students and administrators), to Indigenous communities, and to education systems generally.

Values—

> For those nation states that have evolved historically, politically, socially and freely in what might be called the "Western tradition", the yoking together of liberal democracy and economic development is not so problematic. Yet for nation states whose history, culture and social mores derive from other sources, Western democratic values are neither natural nor necessarily consistent with local values and cultures.
>
> (Kennedy 2000, p. 25).

Schools, however, are in an unusual position in this regard. On one hand, schools (education generally) reflect and reproduce social values, lifestyles, etc., yet schools can also reinforce specific values and develop in students the knowledge and skills to contribute to social change and justice; hence the power of pedagogy and of curriculum. Keeffe (1992, p. 8) writes of the "... negative and positive force ... of curriculum as ... something which both works on and through people ... its mode of operation (viewed) as both enabling and

constraining." He adds that "Only such a sense of power is capable of viewing cultural change from two perspectives, those of the relatively powerful and the relatively powerless."

The National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation has strongly supported Indigenous people who are trying to educate other Australians about their connections to land, culture, place and time; and at the same time wanting their own children to be strong in their identity, culture and language, as well as in the knowledge, skills and understanding that will allow them to achieve their potential and to participate fully in Australian society (Buckskin 2002, p. 158). These values—and others yet to be defined through consultation and negotiation—are not conflicting: they can be incorporated into school curriculum and program offerings. As Boston sees it:

> Schools have a dual purpose: in partnership with Indigenous communities, not only to initiate children into their home culture … but also to build their capacity and confidence as free and autonomous human beings, able to choose to participate in many cultures, while keeping their foundations in their own, and able to create their own identities as citizens in a democratic, pluralist Australia, and in the larger world.
>
> (Boston 2000, p. 6).

At present, major professional teaching and curriculum associations are exploring issues related to embedding values in education at all levels. Indigenous Australians need input into this debate. First, we need to ask ourselves what values we want our young people to carry with them throughout their working and family lives. Our societies possess some excellent values, for example: "caring and sharing"; respect for people, "country" and lore/law; reciprocity … Do we want these to be reinforced in our young people during their years of schooling? If so, as Indigenous educators, *we must ensure that agreed Indigenous values are defined and included in values statements. The time to do this is now.*

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, the past thirty years have brought enormous changes in Indigenous education in terms of policy, curriculum and overall directions. The Commonwealth government initially led these changes, but policies are only as good as their implementation. The Commonwealth cannot implement the policies and directions: it is the responsibility of states and territories' governments to do so. A

number of programs had been in place in states and territories prior to the development of a national coordinated approach to Indigenous education in the form of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (1989). Since that time, there have been many successes, and the momentum has increased. It is true that we still have a way to go, but I believe that the knowledge we have gained from our experience of policies, strategies and their implementation by systems equips us well to tackle issues such as those outlined in this paper, particularly the underlying values and assumptions that are barriers to the achievement of social justice and equality for Indigenous Australians.

For the present, Indigenous Australians generally do not experience real inclusion within education processes, nor within Australian society. Indeed, as Shane Williams reminds us (chapter 3), in the words of Mick Dodson, "When the rhetoric … refers to 'inclusion', we would ask, 'Inclusion into what?' The unspoken answer is: inclusion into political, economic and social structures which are themselves culture specific and exclusive" (Dodson 1993, p. 10).

Although the notion of a reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians has grown in recent years to become "a people's movement"—demonstrated by the thousands of people who marched in cities and towns across the country in May and June, 2000—racism and prejudice continue to exist. It will take a long time to change these attitudes. We do not have the time to wait for such change to occur. We must continue with the progress we have made during the past thirty years.

To do this, we need to observe and possibly replicate the qualities possessed by Indigenous Australians who are recognised as working successfully. It seems that each of them has the ability to move confidently between their own Indigenous cultures and the dominant Australian culture.

> One or more "bicultural figures" appeared frequently in most successful projects. These people had the capacity to operate comfortably in both white and Indigenous societies, interpreting each to the other with the respect of members of each.
>
> (Boston 2000, p. 6).[8]

While we work towards real recognition, inclusion and equality as members of Australian society, I believe we should aim for our children to gain the skills and knowledge to be bi-cultural—to be able to confidently communicate with and/or work within mainstream organisations, while at the same time maintaining their own unique identities and connections with their families, communities and cultures.

I refer again to the words of Dr Ken Boston:

> The freedom and capacity to interpret and to move fluently amongst cultures is an inescapable condition for the mastery and enjoyment of modern life, and for participation in democratic society and the wider global community. Such an accomplishment is critical to effective life-long learning.
>
> (Boston 2000, p. 6).

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[8] Quoting from the report, *What works?*, on the IESIP Strategic Results Projects.

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Chapter 3

The Changing Environment

A Way Forward to Achieving Quality Educational Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

Shane Williams

This paper builds on the argument for education systems to adopt significant changes in the delivery of services. It highlights the key issues associated with establishing a culturally inclusive education framework for Indigenous students and their communities.

Introduction

New realities, new opportunities and new threats are emerging from a range of dynamics currently impacting on education systems. These dynamics include:
- the impact of information communication technology (ICT) on the global economy;
- a focus on increasing the number of people completing a full twelve years of schooling or equivalent qualification;
- facilitating access to the labour market for young people through a range of post-school options;
- investing in life-long learning opportunities; and
- the role of schools and schooling in building social capital/social connectedness as a means of reducing social exclusion, encouraging sustainable growth, increasing awareness of quality of life issues, and celebrating diversity.

Intellectual, cultural and social capital is becoming more highly valued, creating a new generation of alternative solutions to societal problems (Carter, 2002). What is occurring is a societal shift from information to knowledge, and from knowledge to wisdom; sharpening the need for schools to skill students to develop the

wisdom to view knowledge through the lenses of keen judgement, insight, interconnected relationships and diverse experiences (Carter, 2002). This requires education leaders, policy workers, and school staff to open their hearts and minds to the dynamic and compelling new contexts, new constructs and new information that are shaping our future.

Within this complex and changing environment, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to assert the right for their children to access quality education services that provide a security of culture and identity, and the best educational outcomes. This assertion is fundamental to enabling Indigenous students to acquire the knowledge and skills both to achieve their potential in school life and to develop the capacity to successfully participate in paid work, family, the community and civic life.

If Indigenous people are to experience success at school and to exercise control over their civic life in this increasingly complex and rapidly changing environment, education authorities have a social function and responsibility to reinvigorate the systemic and school-based cultures, policies and practices.

What is needed is the building of supportive, networked learning communities which value difference and foster high academic and social achievement, ensuring all Indigenous students are given the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills for the practice of responsible and transformative citizenship which values their cultural identity and enables them to engage productively in personal relationships, work, civic and community life.

"The history of government policy and practice in Australia and its interaction with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has often been based on the premise that education inequality is 'normal'" (MCEETYA 2000, p. 15). Work over recent decades to achieve quality educational outcomes for Indigenous people commensurate with the general student population has failed to completely eliminate this perception.

Social policy responses have been platformed upon improving the self-determination of Indigenous people to have the ability and right to determine their own future and to chart their own development. While substantial progress has been made in areas of improving access to and participation in education for Indigenous people, inequality remains.

It is apparent that when viewed on the indicators of attendance, retention and achievement, the majority of Indigenous students across Australia are still not engaging productively in the schooling process to the same degree as their non-Indigenous peers, nor are they gaining maximum benefit from their experiences at school.

This experience of schooling, along with other factors in their lives, makes most Indigenous students vulnerable to the high levels of poverty and unemployment currently prevalent within their communities. This, coupled with limited English literacy skills, significantly hinders their ability to lead fulfilling personal lives and to engage productively in the life of the community.

Towards the Development of a Culturally Inclusive Education Framework for Indigenous Students and Their Communities

Education authorities need to sharpen their focus on improving the quality of school experience, school completion and achievement levels of Indigenous students. There is growing recognition that the whole community benefits from reducing educational failure and that individual schools alone may not overcome the impact of social and economic forces in the lives of its Indigenous students.

Research on improving the education outcomes of Indigenous students has been around for decades; the issues are complex and interrelated and not amenable to simple solutions. Silos make it impossible to go forward effectively, and it is timely to sort out how systems and schools are to work more effectively, together with Indigenous students and their communities, as a learning community to resolve the pressing Indigenous education, social and cultural issues of our times.

The phrase "learning community" is used to describe a wide range of different phenomena in the educational literature. Interpretations include tertiary-level curriculum innovations that aim to build a sense of group identity among first-year students through group work, team teaching and interdisciplinary courses, and the emerging concept of "cyber-communities" which involve networks of individuals linked by information communication technology (Schwab and Sutherland, 2001).

Only recently has literature within Australia begun to link the phrase "social capital and community development" with learning (Schwab and Sutherland, 2001).

According to Schwab and Sutherland (2001, p3):

> … the notion of learning community has recently appeared in discussions of learning as a life-long process linking families, schools and communities (including business and government) working together to identify and deploy resources to address community needs.

In this context, education authorities require integrated school/systemic support, and greater community and interagency collaboration.

Past responses by education authorities to address the educational needs of Indigenous people have focused upon developing separate target group strategies that frequently ignored the way the different dimensions of inequality are interrelated. This perpetuated an assumption that an individual's capacity to learn is based on single dimensions of class, race, ethnicity, gender or disability.

During this period, theories of a distinct "Aboriginal learning style" emerged, which conveniently focused school failure and school alienation on the Indigenous student rather than on the capacity of the teacher to teach to difference, valuing the diversity of students' biographies and individual approaches to learning all children bring to classroom.

It is extremely important for education systems to retain a focus on an Indigenous target group approach but through a more comprehensive social justice policy framework that affirms the positive social and cultural benefits to the broader community and that values diversity and cultural difference. This approach takes into account the historical and other contextual factors that have contributed to the economic and social marginalisation of Indigenous people in Australian society.

In this context, significant factors such as Indigenous poverty and location become key indicators in determining the level of educational risk of Indigenous students, as individuals and in groups. These indicators lead to better judgements about allocating needs-based resources or implementing specific teaching practices.

The report of the MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education affirms this approach, stating:

For decades, education systems have been conducting compensatory programmes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to provide additional support. While these programmes have been responsible for the considerable progress made in Indigenous educational achievements, they often have two unintended side-effects: first, they marginalise the target group and the personnel who implement the programmes, and second, they become the focus of perceptions about unfair access.

(MCEETYA 2000, p. 21)

Recent social policy interventions have shifted in focus in an attempt to accommodate this critique by providing inclusive education services and building inclusive school communities. Definitions surrounding the concept of "inclusive education" within the broader schooling context vary, but its intent can be described in terms of a school building a culture, curriculum and pedagogical framework that aims to increase levels of participation and successful achievement for all students.

However, for Indigenous people, "When the rhetoric ... refers to 'inclusion', we ask, 'Inclusion into what?' The unspoken answer is: inclusion into political, economic and social structures which are themselves culture specific and exclusive" (Dodson 1993, p. 10).

If inclusive education policy responses for Indigenous people are to be effective, the agreed actions and accountabilities must be premised on the fundamental principle of understanding and respecting diversity and cultural difference. This means school-based and systemic cultures, policies and practices must "value" and "represent" the diverse social, cultural, economic, and linguistic circumstances of Indigenous people and their communities.

In essence, an inclusive education framework for Indigenous people must articulate a range of flexible curriculum and pedagogical strategies that demonstrate commitment to providing a security of culture and identity, and the best educational outcomes that are:

- futures-oriented;
- responsive to rapidly changing contexts;
- committed to valuing and respecting difference and diversity; and
- necessary for the growth of social capital.

To illustrate the notion of "valuing difference and diversity", I hold the view that productive societies are those that are able to negotiate cultural differences, and to build alliances and intercultural collaborations.

In this context valuing diversity must be a distinctive characteristic of schools, particularly in relation to curriculum and pedagogical leadership. Key elements include:

- valuing the diversity of Indigenous students as a critical indicator in judgements about quality at all levels—within systems and within schools—in planning, delivery and performance management;
- culturally inclusive teaching, learning and community-based processes working to build inter-group knowledge and respect, fostering a sense of pride in richly diverse communities working together;
- schools communicating consistently high expectations for Indigenous students, and looking for growth in the quality of performance by Indigenous groups;
- evaluations of curriculum and pedagogical practice to ensure a demonstration of evidence of the interests and backgrounds of diverse Indigenous groups as central to the design of learning activities: not "adding colour", but enhancing learning;
- difference being identified and valued in constructing knowledge, lending integrity to learning activities about social and cultural structures, values and barriers to Indigenous people's inclusion across society, and creating learning experiences as relevant for homogeneous communities as for those with differing levels of Indigenous diversity; and
- the viewing of diversity as a resource, calling attention to stereotypes about capacity to learn based on single factors such as race, geography, class, cultural or linguistic background or gender as inappropriate.

The 2000 report of the MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education proposed a model for building more culturally inclusive and educationally effective schools, premised on the interconnectedness between community, school and the classroom. To strengthen this focus, education authorities need to develop an integrated, culturally inclusive planning and accountability framework for coordinating effective and coherent school/community practices, systemic support mechanisms and interagency collaboration.

This framework responds to:

- the historical fragmentation of programs for Indigenous students arising from the target group structure and focus;

- the disconnection of systemic intervention initiatives for Indigenous students at educational risk; and
- the need to enhance workforce leadership, knowledge and skills for sustaining high intellectual demand through curriculum and pedagogies that value difference as a learning asset (Education Queensland, Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study, 2000).

Its objectives would be to strengthen the leadership capacity of the organisation to respond to social justice and educational risk factors associated with Indigenous students; to establish schools as productive learning communities; and to provide a focus on developing effective, culturally inclusive curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices.

Systemic mechanisms should be premised on supporting the capacity of schools to respond flexibly to the educational needs of diverse Indigenous communities. This support would involve conducting research to identify emerging social, cultural, economic and educational trends; supporting schools' access to best practice; and ensuring that system-level programs and initiatives contribute to the outcomes of Indigenous students.

In this instance, all staff working in education authorities and agencies need to consider partnerships, cooperation and other forms of collaboration, on a continuum from formal and regular to informal and day-to-day, in the context of understanding the importance of fostering social capital across the community at local, state and national levels. At the systemic level, a cultural transformation needs to take place that involves staff connecting practice-based leaders into appropriate virtual and actual networking; building broader system learning communities around particularly inspiring developments; and capturing the narratives of pedagogical pioneering in local contexts.

Partnerships and networking processes should take into account not only building relationships with successful school-based practitioners, but also the need for staff to have productive networks, internal and external to the organisation, that keep them in touch with emerging education reforms and international and national research and practice.

Only with both of these processes working well can staff at a systemic level be in a position to generate quality strategic policy outcomes and extended options for schools' consideration, based on

innovative and pioneering practices, challenges, and interrogations and research from across the globe.

Sound judgement is especially important given the high stakes involved with implementing social justice policies for Indigenous students that require innovative and flexible responses. This is critical in recognising and justifying potential risks across system support, school-based and interagency contexts.

At the school-based level, strategies need to be developed in partnership with Indigenous people, built upon successful practice, to sustain the innovative and locally customised practices many schools, communities and teachers have created.

Schools must be resourced according to needs that take into account the social, cultural, economic and linguistic circumstances of their Indigenous students and their community context. Systems and schools must recognise that some students, for a variety of reasons, cost more money to educate than others. In this instance, equity of resourcing does not mean sameness.

Management practices associated with the implementation, evaluation and review of outcomes must be premised on a transformational approach that is process-oriented, value-added, ecologically driven, and holistic (Limerick, Cunnington & Crowther, 2002).

An improvement in the educational outcomes of any student is best measured over a period of three to four years. To this end, achievable, culturally inclusive, performance measures and timelines must be established and designed to allow for qualified rather than absolute judgements. When "goals are stated as absolutes … anything less than complete success tends to be construed as failure. This reading masks the real accomplishments of many public policies" (Anderson 1994, p. 266, cited in Bridgman & Davis 1998, p. 118).

This is important given the scale of economic and social inequality Indigenous people have, and continue to be subjected to, and the broader community's perception that targeted resources will manifest immediate measurable changes.

The stories associated with data sets for monitoring, reporting upon and improving levels of attendance, retention and achievement of Indigenous students must represent interpretations of achievements, barriers and enablers from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous paradigms.

To achieve significant improvements in educational outcomes for Indigenous students, greater interagency collaboration and integrated school/community and systemic support are required. This approach should be underpinned by a set of deliberate interconnected and outcomes-oriented strategies across six general domains (recognising that none of these domains is exclusive, and all overlap in practice):

- **School/Community Linkages and Partnerships**—developing strong and genuine relationships among the school and the parents/caregivers of its Indigenous student population and the broader Indigenous community provides the opportunity for a model of rights and responsibilities to be negotiated based on trust, mutual responsibility and personal and group empowerment.**Quality Learning Outcomes**—providing quality curriculum, pedagogy and assessment experiences and practices which are aligned, intellectually demanding, and transformative, and which value and represent the diversity of Indigenous cultures, enables Indigenous students to achieve to their potential in school life, and to develop the capacity to successfully participate in paid work, family, the community and civic life.
- **Literacy Specially Needs Support**—providing specialised Standard Australian English literacy learning strategies that recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as second language learners values the students' language(s) or dialect(s) spoken at home or in the local community, and provides the foundation for expanding existing knowledge, understanding and usage of the English language. In this context, teachers need to consider the individual language experiences of Indigenous students on a continuum which extends from those who are ESL Creole or vernacular speakers, to second dialect speakers, to competent speakers of Standard Australian English.
- **School Leadership and Professional Learning**—providing the leadership and support for professional development and training of school staff to understand and respect the cultural diversity of Indigenous people enables teachers to value difference as a resource for building effective teacher/student relationships and classroom practices. Concomitantly, school leaders need to reflect on their emotional intelligence in respect to self-management and relationship management capabilities with Indigenous people, i.e. staff, students and parents/caregivers. They need to demonstrate

creativity and to pursue continuous learning, proposing innovative approaches to improve and shape the school's pedagogical and curriculum practices.

- **School Services**—closely aligning systemic outreach services to the needs of schools maximises conditions for school administrators and teachers to network and build culturally inclusive learning communities concerned with the interrelationships among student differences; learning outcomes; curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices; and strategic community partnerships.

- **Strategic Community Partnerships**—building alliances and partnerships between the school and local community groups, agencies, and business and industry extends the school's capacity to respond to the social and academic needs of its Indigenous students and builds support networks and social cohesion in our communities. It provides for a multidisciplinary team approach that is the most effective way to tackle the interconnected issues associated with educational risk, post-school options or community capacity building. This establishes the school as a valuable community asset for learning and development.

In conclusion, integral to the development of policy responses that interconnect across each of the above domains is the productive engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of decision-making processes. This is important if the education system's cultures, curriculum and pedagogical frameworks are committed to producing sustainable educational outcomes for its Indigenous students.

In this instance, the Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) plays an important role, both in the monitoring of agreed performance outcomes, and with the provision of ongoing feedback from Indigenous people and their school communities on the impact of strategies, policies and initiatives.

This independent advice and support is crucial for making changes to the department's cultures, curriculum and pedagogical frameworks for producing culturally inclusive, sustainable educational outcomes for Indigenous students and their communities. It provides for a collaborative definition and analysis of the educational needs and aspirations of Indigenous people and their links with economic and

social trends, political directions, and the vision and goals of the organisation.

A constellation of social, economic and political factors are shaping the world in which our Indigenous students and their communities live. This process is leading to new realities, new expectations and new threats for education systems. In this changing environment, we need to continue to demonstrate a joint commitment to providing a "security of culture and identity" and "the best educational outcomes for Indigenous students", necessary for the growth of this nation's social capital.

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Chapter 4

The Literature and Theories behind Community Capacity Building

Sue McGinty

This paper explores the concept of community capacity building from its origins to the present day. In attempting to define the concept, it looks at the historical antecedents, such as community development, at partnerships, and at the role of government and the role of the non-government sector in the development of learning communities. It notes the change from a 'top-down' to a more 'participative' approach. While Indigenous leaders have been calling for a more collaborative approach for years, it is only recently that the Government of Queensland has adopted a more collaborative approach to its policy production and implementation. Key to the Queensland Government's approach is its *whole of government* policy. The educational component of this approach is captured in the document "Partners for Success". Garlick's (1999) five elements of capacity building: knowledge building, leadership, networking, valuing community and information gathering, are outlined, as are the observable indicators for education. The paper concludes with an investigation of the theoretical underpinnings of the new discourses of capacity building and partnerships.

> If we really want to change the participation patterns of Aboriginal people in schools, then schools have to change as well.
>
> *(O'Brien, 2000)*

> There is no point in Aboriginal people having power to make decisions unless we make sure they have the knowledge, skills and capacity to make those decisions.
>
> *(Ah Kit 2002)*

May O'Brien's call to schools to change is a reminder that all stakeholders are involved in and responsible for educational outcomes. John Ah Kit identifies the need for capacity development to

implement decisions and policies as one of the challenges for all educational systems. Non-Indigenous administrators and teachers also need the capacity to engage with local communities to bring about the outcomes desired. Bob Collins, in his report on Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory (Collins 1999), gave what he called "a wake-up-call" to all involved "to reverse a trend that is utterly destructive". Poor educational attainment and achievement on the part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students continues to be an issue of grave concern. However, the approach taken by the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Body (QIECB) in their interim strategic plan highlighted the

> … urgent need to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners reach their potential and experience success in education at the same level as their non-Indigenous counter-parts (QIECB 2001).

Like the "2010" document of Education Queensland, the QIECB's strategy is visionary, and is a move away from the deficit discourses that have driven policy and change in the past. It sets out six long-term areas of focus, identifying strategies for achievement. The six areas of focus target:

- completion of twelve years of schooling or its equivalent
- the pre-schooling experience
- teacher education
- Standard and Australian English and languages
- community capacity building
- accountability

This review arises from the strategies relating to the fifth area of focus:

> The establishment of learning communities that have the capacity to address collaboratively issues contributing to educational disadvantage (QIECB 2001).

The rationale for the goal places educational achievement within the context of overall socio-economic advantage, relating it to wealth, health, housing and access to government services. It highlights the role that the schooling system plays as a conduit between the local culture and the socio-economic world beyond schooling. The strategy aims to establish a true partnership between the school and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families—a partnership where the community is able to influence the nature and content of the curriculum and the schooling experience and the school is able to

provide students with the educational outcomes required to succeed and thrive in the future. While focusing on the education process, the intention of the goal is to place the outcomes of the education process firmly within the overall socio-economic picture:

> This partnership will provide the foundation for children to develop socially, culturally and academically. It will be partnership that will shape the lives and future of all learners. It will provide them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes they will need for an independent and productive adult life (QIECB 2001).

Implicit in all of the above is an understanding that all the stakeholders require some development of their ability to communicate and work with other stakeholders. In order for a true partnership to exist, all the players must achieve a higher degree of understanding of one another and, with it, a higher degree of respect for the skills, knowledge and underpinning value that each player contributes to the process. This process is known as community capacity building (CCB).

Purpose of the Literature Review

This review outlines the historical antecedents to the CCB concept. It looks at the international literature and at projects that have emerged from this philosophical thinking. Then, by way of defining the concept, it identifies the key elements of CCB, explains them in education terms and draws up a taxonomy of observable indicators for education systems and schools. The chapter concludes with a review of the theoretical underpinnings of community capacity building.

Historical Antecedents of Community Capacity Building

Community Capacity Building as a concept has its roots in a much older movement called Community Development. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s much was written about education and community collaboration, or the lack of it. This work came from writers such as Ivan Illich (1976) in his *Deschooling Society*, and Paolo Freire (1971) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In the critiques of schooling were the seeds of recognition that education could be a radical tool for change if it was linked with community needs and desires.

At the same time as this educational thinking was being developed, work was being done in the area of social development in communities, particularly urban sites. In 1980, Schoenberg and

Rosenbaum explored the concept of viability in local communities and the way residents pursue their livelihood, and identified the capable community as one in which its residents work together for social order, setting goals and carrying through with these goals. *Community capability* was achieved if communities established mechanisms to define and enforce public roles and responsibilities; set up communications, leadership and training for those jobs; made decisions about policy; and established networks for exchange. The point is made that in most communities this is done without outside intervention. Where professional workers are appointed they need to deliver services in a way that enhances people's autonomy, self-respect, and ability to work things out for themselves. While community development requires input from outside experts, control needs to be located firmly within the community.

Early research work on the antecedents of CCB is found within the disciplines of Adult Education (Freire 1972a, 1972b), Community Work (Alinsky 1969, 1971), and Regional Development and Social Economics (Stanley 1983). All of these early writings indicate that strategic partnerships are essential for real development to occur. Community development required education that was based on the direct needs of the community as identified by that community, and action once problems were identified. The development literature throughout this period highlighted the value and productivity of partnerships.

Today in social development there is a focus on integrating all the various components and stakeholders in capacity building:

> Capacity building refers to investment in people, institutions and practices that will, together, enable countries in the region to achieve their development objectives (World Bank 1997).

Investment in people, institutions and practices requires knowledge, time and dollars. Because tensions arise out of some community expectations of providers, capacity building "includes institutional support in the form of finances for office space, salaries and vehicles" (Makumbe 1998). But while some emphasis on the physical resources is a part of the capacity building process, it is not the whole:

> Capacity development is the process by which individuals, organisations, institutions and societies develop abilities (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve

problems and set and achieve objectives (UN Development Programme 1997).

The 1994 report to the Commission on Sustainable Development on capacity building, prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), focused mainly on the role of United Nations system agencies in supporting capacity-building. Most were engaged in building capacity for the formulation of plans and strategies in support of sustainable development in areas such as health, industry, education, the environment and human settlements. More research into the dynamics of capacity building was seen to be necessary, as was improved inter-agency coordination and more United Nations system capacity at the field level. The acknowledgement that the UN needed better capacity in its interface with communities was the point at which the discussion of community capacity building for provider organisations and government shifted to a more participative model.

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (1996, p. 2) defines Community Capacity Building thus:

> Capacity-development, like sustainable development, encompasses a wide range of aspects, including the human, technological, organizational, financial, scientific, cultural and institutional. It is not easy to define. Indeed, most discussions on the topic quickly tend to broaden out to deal with the overall process of development ... capacity-building is the process and means through which national Governments and local communities develop the necessary skills and expertise to manage their environment and natural resources in a sustainable manner within their daily activities. The main ideas behind this concept are the following:
>
> (a) Strengthening peoples' capacity to achieve sustainable livelihoods;
> (b) A cross-sectoral multidisciplinary approach to planning and implementation;
> (c) Emphasis on organizational and technological change and innovation;
> (d) Emphasis on the need to build social capital (i.e., voluntary forms of social regulation) through experimentation and learning;
> (e) Emphasis on developing the skills and performance of both individuals and institutions.

Capacity development was originally used as a strategy to implement state plans. But through the work of non-government organisations (NGOs) the pressure to widen the focus to include

communities in development plans has increased. To respond to this changing context for capacity building, there are attempts to develop a deeper understanding of the institutional and capacity-building issues. More emphasis is now being placed on the role of users and beneficiaries.

> [They] are becoming less directive and less technocratic, more supportive and facilitative. In the past, [they] concentrated on the "supply" side of capacity-building programmes, including the provision of more **training**, more systems improvement, more equipment and infrastructure, more financial resources and more technical cooperation. The water and agriculture sectors are obvious examples. Increasingly, the focus is now on the "demand" side of capacity-building programmes. Work on HIV/AIDS is a case in point. Rather than fund direct organizational improvements for government agencies, UNDP is now funding the growth of **networks** of private organizations in South Asia with a view to developing their ability both to mobilize public involvement and to encourage Governments in the region to build their capacity to respond. In this sense, capacity "building" is becoming capacity "enhancement", as donor programmes try to augment the abilities, motivations, needs and pattern of incentives that already exist. Such an emphasis on the "demand" side raises deeper issues about the capacity of the political and bureaucratic systems of countries to both capture and respond to the wishes of its [*sic*] citizens.
>
> (UN Commission on Sustainable Development 1996, p. 2).

The ongoing work of the NGOs has significantly influenced donor organisations. The shift from the donor being the provider to being a **partner** is clear in the previous quotation. The ability of different groups and organisations to work together has become more important at all levels. The growing scale and complexity of capacity issues at the level of networks of organisations (e.g., improving national systems of primary school education or criminal justice) are compelling development organisations and governments to collaborate on a wider scale. While the demand for change emerges from civil society, it is also apparent that there are other drivers; information **technology** not being the least of these. The growth in telecommunications makes networking easier, and networking is a major component of successful modern community capacity building. This theme will be taken up later.

At the Australian Commonwealth and local Queensland government level the call by Indigenous peak bodies for governments

to form collaborative relationships has, for years, mostly fallen on deaf ears. However, in 1992 after intense lobbying there was a national commitment to improve outcomes in the delivery of programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. And in 1997 the Prime Minister requested the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth and State Service Provision to develop indicators that measured performance of mainstream services in meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The Ministerial Advisory Committee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (MACATSIE 1999) in Queensland and the report of the Ministerial Committee for Education Employment and Training and Youth Affairs Taskforce on Indigenous Education (MCEETYA 2000) are landmark documents in moving the government forward in accountability.

This historical backgrounding is preliminary to defining the nature of CCB. It gives an understanding of the antecedents of the current approach. The next section attempts to define CCB within the Australian context.

The Elements of Capacity Building

In this section various elements of community capacity building are analysed with specific reference to their potential to work for Indigenous education. Because the Queensland Government's *Whole of Government Approach* to community capacity building has been influenced by regional development literature and research, and the work of the UN in particular, it is a good place to start to see what is understood by *community capacity building*.

Garlick is a Professor of Management and director of the Regional Research Institute at Southern Cross University and a key player in regional development in Australia. He identified (1999) five major elements of capacity building for regional Australia:

- Knowledge building: the capacity to enhance skills, utilise research and development and foster learning
- Leadership: the capacity to develop shared directions and influence what happens in the regions
- Network building: the capacity to form partnerships and alliances
- Valuing community and the capacity of the community to work together to achieve their own objectives

- Supporting information: the capacity to collect, access and utilise quality information.
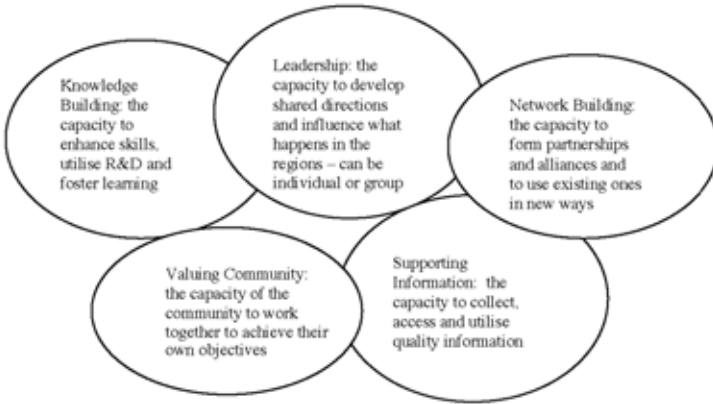
Figure 1
The Elements of Capacity (adapted from Garlick 1999, Capacity Building in Regional Western Australia)

Garlick draws his framework from several sources including the classic *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics As If People Mattered,* by E. F. Schumacher (1974). What Schumacher saw as beautiful was not small communities as such, but the close association people had based on ethical relationships and common goals that produced recognisable outcomes.

A number of studies (McKinsey et al. 1996, Fulop & Brennan 1997) show that leadership is the ingredient that makes this happen. Those who make good leaders are able to establish a leadership team, build trust among stakeholders, and forge a strong identity; they have a clear energising vision for their region, set tough but achievable goals, and get some "quick runs on the board". Creating learning communities requires leaders of communities to be inclusive of educational institutions in their planning, e.g. annual operational plans and other such strategies, so that they become embedded in the strategic plans of the region or community.

Valuing the community relates to the more intangible but distinctive qualities of a place that make it worthwhile for the community to invest their social capital by working together to enhance the efficiency and quality of life. It is the socio-cultural attributes and historical influences that provide the essence of what makes a particular community or school unique. This is particularly so in Indigenous communities.

The other elements of *connectivity and embeddedness* relate to the extent to which a region can *network to form partnerships* and strategic alliances within the region and outside. All of the elements aim to improve the economic standing of the communities in question.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has worked on these concepts for some time and concludes that one of the characteristics of the learning economy is the degree of linkage between outcomes and input from universities and research institutions (OECD 2001). Research institutions can assist in the collection and interpretation of *data* to inform decision-making and data to benchmark performance. How these elements might be incorporated into strategic plans of schools is taken up later in the report. But the value of research, whether it be action research or other, cannot be underestimated.

Table 1 is an attempt to take the five elements of community capacity building and to identify possible observable indicators for Indigenous education against each of them. This activity was conducted by the research team with administrators and teachers from Education Queensland and Catholic Education. Other frameworks have been developed for different situations, such as the United Nations.

Table 1

The key elements and observable indicators of Community Capacity Building

Element	Possible observable indicators in school environments

1. Knowledge building—this relates to the school's capacity to adopt continuous improvement processes, generate and implement new ideas, link R&D with regional needs, build and retain needed skills and pursue organisational learning that yields changes in the way people think and act to create the results they desire.	• Knowledge of the full range of funding options and access to these sources for the benefit of students and community
	• Entrepreneurship curriculum options
	   • ICT skills – providing opportunity to community to participate
	   • Management skills
	   • Mentoring and upskilling communities that school could help broker (career teachers have a major role here)
	• Staff professional development in capacity building

2. Leadership—The ability to represent the interests of all stakeholder groups in such a way that they *work together* to achieve the sustainable vision and strategic directions of the community. Credibility has to be earned through results of partnerships, inclusion and the resolution of conflict though dialogue and working together across sectors rather than the vertical lines of power. A leader gets quick runs on the ladder, has tough but achievable goals, has a strong identity and vision, establishes trust and has the capacity to build a team.	• Promotion of CCB by the Principal and the System (e.g. Ed Qld or CEO) • Ensuring ASSPA committees can operate. • Review of outcomes of ASSPA as part of the Annual Operational Plan (AOP) of the school • Community consultation process to contribute to AOPs • Report to ASSPA Committees • Documented goals in Principal's Annual Goal Statements • Evidence of leadership in regard to CCB
3. Network building—relates to the extent to which a school can form partnerships and strategic alliances for the benefit of the community. The role of technology is important here.	• Practical focus on establishing partnerships with communities and other agencies • Participation (with DATSIP) by the Principal or System Rep. on AOPs of particular communities • Schools have the opportunities to meet/network, share ideas etc., e.g. Principals Forums, Secondary Principals Associations, Primary Principals Associations • Ongoing dialogue with Indigenous leaders • Networking in cross-sectoral manner
4. Valuing community—refers to the value placed on the distinctive qualities of the community that make it worthwhile for a group to invest their social capital by working together to enhance the quality of life.	• Staff having the opportunity to broaden their responsibilities beyond the classroom—the extended classroom • Use of Indigenous expertise in curriculum • Employment of Indigenous people in the school

5. Supporting information and analysis—refers to the availability of data that is accessible and updateable about the institution's own performance and access to data that enables performance benchmarking.	• Strategy for tracking students on completion of Year 12 (or equivalent) e.g. student alumni association • Data is available and benchmarked appropriately, e.g. records of student attendance, student learning outcomes, suspensions & exclusions, and enrolment profiling • Ongoing critique of the organisational discourse

The UN has developed a framework of four interrelated dimensions for sustainable capacity development (OECD 2001):

1. *Individual.* Education, on-the-job training, and formal and informal skills development to accomplish tasks and solve problems are core requirements. Individuals must be able to participate in decisions and have a clear understanding of their role and function. They must also have *adequate incentives*, salary structures and accountability. Values, expectations and power relations need to be recognized. But this is no guarantee that the person will be productive or effective. Other things are necessary.

2. *Entity.* A well-trained, productive person needs access to finance, information, technology, infrastructure and other resources. This often means working within (or related to) an entity that has an organizational structure with a clear mission, and clear goals, functions, systems and resources (such as a public body, a private business, an NGO or community-based group). Some of these entities may be informal groups working at the community level.

3. *Interrelationships between entities*. Organizations and groups interact with others for a common purpose. These can often be seen as a system. For example, a micro-credit system for women could include a credit institution, relevant line ministries, cooperative/business/marketing NGOs, small businesses and women's community-based groups. Themes, sections, institutions and geographic divisions comprise one or more systems where entities interact for a common purpose.

4. *Enabling environment*. Sustainable capacities for individuals, entities and systems require a positive enabling environment for addressing cross-sectoral issues relevant to all parts of society–the state, civil society and the private sector.

For an enabling environment to work, four kinds of issues need to be taken into account. According to the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) these are:

- Institutional–development policies and plans, legal frameworks, ability and willingness to reform, distribution of institutional responsibilities, public sector and human resource policies, incentives, and so on.
- Sociopolitical–society vision; formal and informal values and standards; democratic processes; power relationships, particularly the role of women; sources of consensus and conflict; human security and the special cases of countries in crises or transition that need to be taken into consideration.
- Economic–stable and equitable fiscal and monetary policy; management and distribution of resources and assets; and the impact of the external sector, particularly trade, investment, official development assistance, technology and debt management.
- Natural resource management and environment—the impact and importance of the natural resource base and the sustainable management of the environment.

It is also suggested that ongoing assessment and evaluation be built into the plan. This capacity assessment approach involves four steps:

Step 1. Mapping the starting point

Step 2. Determining where to be—and establishing objectives

Step 3. Determining a change strategy to get there—**the How**

Step 4. Determining what capacities are needed to get there—**the What**.

A similar approach has been adopted for the Queensland Community Enhancement Strategy and for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Annual Operational Plans.

The Australian Approach—Indigenous Education and Community Capacity Building

With an eye to partnerships, Ken Wyatt (2001) suggested that a Partnership Cube (collaboration among educational institutions, communities and government departments) bears investigation. The concept was originally mooted at a meeting of the Ministerial Council

on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs, (MCEETYA 2000). The notion of partnerships has been promoted for some time around Indigenous education and health issues. The MCEETYA Task Force on Indigenous Education released a discussion paper (2001) called *Solid Foundations: Health and Education Partnerships for Indigenous Children Aged 0–8 Years.* This paper urged collaboration and partnerships between government agencies to overcome the major problems of Indigenous children's poor health. However, Partington (2002) suggests that trying to come up with one framework for all Indigenous education settings has never worked and wonders if this model will succeed.
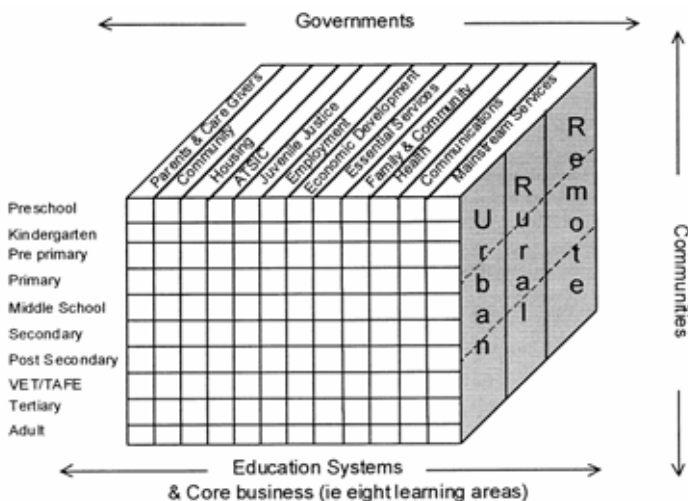
Figure 2
The Partnership Cube for Indigenous Education (MCEETYA 2000, p. 54)

While much of this model is built into the Queensland Government's 2010 document, more needs to be done in terms of raising the levels of outcomes for Indigenous students.

> There is a challenge facing education in Queensland as we move into an era where knowledge supercedes information and technology transforms longstanding relationships of time and space. It is to become a learning society—the Smart State—in which global forces favour the adaptable, and the key resources

will be human and social capital rather than just physical and material resources (2010 Education Queensland).

The 2010 document goes on to encourage Queenslanders to reconceptualise their schools as part of the learning society, embedding them in communities in new ways. It is an optimistic document on the whole, stating "education needs something other than the popular metaphors of decay, disaster and erosion as driving forces of change." This is particularly pertinent for educators of Indigenous children. The disparities in opportunity arising from wealth distribution, cultures and location need dedication to overcome. While acknowledging that schools are community assets, they must be "shared with parents and community, cooperate with business, and be coordinated with other government and community services."

Community Capacity Building is a new term for Australian Education. While it has been around for some time in the approaches of the OECD and fields like Community Development, it has now been taken up by the Queensland Government in its Community Engagement Policy as a major platform.[9] The principles for engagement are:

- Inclusiveness: connecting with those hardest to reach;
- Reaching out: changing ways government and community work together for the better;
- Mutual respect: listening, understanding and acting on experiences different from our own;
- Integrity: engagement as a means of promoting integrity in the democratic processes of government; and
- Affirming diversity: changing the processes of government to incorporate diverse values and interests.

The Government Department that has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this policy is the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (DATSIP). In order to implement the policy DATSIP has developed a Ten Year Partnership with the Queensland Government. Its aim is to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through a *whole-of-government* approach to outcomes and performance measures in partnership with other agencies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The

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[9] Community Engagement Division Queensland Government. Department of Premier and Cabinet.

plan is to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the planning, design and delivery of their core business. A steering committee was set up with specialist working groups to identify key outcomes and performance measures. The key areas identified are: Justice, Family Violence, Reconciliation, Human Services (including Education), Service Delivery, Economic Development, Community Governance, Land Heritage and Natural Resources.

The Queensland Government's response to the Cape York Justice Plan (13 May 2002 Draft), "Meeting the Challenges, Making the Choices," gave Education Queensland four tasks, including improving school attendance rates (in partnership with Queensland Health and the Department of Families). This is to be done through the following broad strategies:

- Public awareness campaigns targeting parents and students;
- Working with Community Justice Groups and community councils to develop attendance and truancy strategies;
- Implementing meal/breakfast programs;
- Addressing major health issues impacting on attendance;
- Using information and communication technology; and
- Linking attendance strategies to drug and alcohol reduction strategies.

The results to be achieved from this strategy are to be decided upon by Education Queensland in consultation with partnering agencies.

The second task is to develop curriculum and implement relevant curriculum through:

- further application of the New Basics curriculum to all Cape York Schools following the evaluation of current trials;
- the extension of the Partners for Success strategy to all Cape York schools;
- implementing teaching and learning practices in Indigenous English as a second language;
- using cross-cultural pedagogy that engages students and delivers improved outcomes; and
- more effective linkages between schools, TAFE and appropriate sport and recreation programs and other life skills programs promoting job readiness.

The third task is fostering workforce reform by increasing cultural responsiveness, competence and professionalism of the workforce of the Cape. This is to be done by:

- changing current expectations and practices of school staff and administration through professional development;
- establishing accountabilities for teachers to achieve agreed targets;
- providing enhanced flexibility to school principals and leadership teams in the use of resources, including staff, which are linked to clear accountability outcomes;
- joint health, education and police orientation and professional development programs working with public sector unions to encourage innovation in teaching, administration and resource usage and rewarding such practice.

The fourth task is to encourage school leaders to work with other agencies and communities to improve learning conditions for students. This is to done by:

- building the conditions in which students are safe, well nourished, healthy and able to engage in education;
- developing opportunities for training and work experience outside the community;
- fostering innovation and linking this to improved learning outcomes for students by clear accountabilities for improving systematic learning about what works, what doesn't and why.

The general thrust of the government's response is to place responsibility back on its staff, and this is good. However, in terms of CCB, there are a few gaps. The encouragement to be "innovative" in teaching practices has often resulted in a "watered down" or "dumbing down" approach to existing curriculum. Accountability measures will need to be built into this freedom. There is little encouragement for school personnel to engage with the Indigenous community. One of the fundamental tenets of community development is to engage the community at all levels of decision making. If this is implicit in the strategies, then it needs to be made explicit. The government's response lacks this engagement with the Indigenous communities.

Education Queensland's *Partners for Success* (2001) outlines the whole-of-government approach to educational community capacity building. Performance measures for the whole-ofgovernment

approach in education are the retention rates from year 8 to year 12, and the literacy and numeracy levels in years 3, 5, and 7. (See Table 2).

Prior to the *Partners For Success* policy, the Ministerial Advisory Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education (MACATSIE)—which has since been replaced by the QIECB—developed a document that supports the challenge of building the capacity of Indigenous communities. *Walking our Talk—A Framework for Increasing Participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Educational Decision Making* (MACATSIE 1999) sets out the stages necessary for increasing community involvement. Capacity assessment has been conducted in some leading agencies, e.g. Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation (2001).

The group that has been appointed to support *Partners for Success* is the Indigenous Education and Training Alliance (IETA). Based in Cairns, this Education Queensland initiative was formed in 2001 to "broker and present professional development and training to support Partners for Success" (Queensland Government brochure 2001). It is a branch of the Learning Foundation and the Staff College structure in Education Queensland. The target audiences are community members, teachers, teacher aides, administration staff, principals and advisory visiting staff. Among the initial programs listed is "Community Capacity and Contribution". The Indigenous Education and Training Alliance's website[10] throws light on community capacity building:

> Strengthening of the ability of a community—or a region, or society in general—to become collectively self-reliant by increasing social cohesion and building social capital, is often described as developing its *community capacity*.
>
> Community capacity is the extent to which members of a community can work together effectively, and includes the ability to:
> • develop and sustain strong relationships,
> • solve problems and make group decisions, and
> • collaborate effectively to identify goals and get work done.

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[10]

http://www.pa.ash.org.au/ieta/deliver/content.asp?orgid=1&suborgid=10&ssid=99&pid=397&ppid=0

The following quotations from *Measuring Community Capacity Building* (Aspen Institute, 1996), seem to exemplify IETA's understandings of community capacity building:

> People live in communities. But the real importance of "living in community" is that people—and groups of people—develop the ways and means to care for each other, to nurture the talents and leadership that enhance the quality of community life, and to tackle the problems that threaten the community and the opportunities which can help it.
>
> When people do these things, communities become healthy; when they do not, communities deteriorate. Communities that have the ways and means to undertake challenges demonstrate "capacity".
>
> Without capacity, communities are merely collections of individuals acting without concern for the common good; they are without the necessary ingredients required to develop a healthier community. Communities without capacity really are not communities in any meaningful sense, but have given way to negative conditions like apathy, poverty or ineptitude.

These quotations are set in an understanding of the "partnership" as being between parents, community and the school. There is little mention of the broader understandings of partnerships that the 2010 document alludes to: business, whole-of-government and community connections. On the page about community connections there is some mention of community justice groups and the health department, but that is about as far as it goes.

Community capacity has also been described as the 'combined influence of a community's commitment, resources, and skills which can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems' (Mayer, cited in Mattesich and Monsey, 1997). While this quote seems to incorporate groups outside the school and family, there is no mention of practical ways to do this on the web page dedicated to that purpose.[11].

Indigenous education peak bodies have, in fact, been calling for collaborative approaches for over a decade. The most serious effort to make accountable those organisations involved in Indigenous issues came from the Reconciliation Council in 1992. They called for a coordination of effort and benchmarking of outcomes.

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[11]

http://www.pa.ash.org.au/ieta/deliver/content.asp?orgid=1&suborgid=10&ssid=108&pid=403&ppid=0

One of the conclusions that must be drawn is that the understanding of the school being a "hub of the community", beyond the traditional parent/teacher nexus, will take some time to achieve.

Possibilities of Community Capacity Building in Queensland

In Queensland schools principals need to have adequate incentive to lead the community capacity building exercise so that it will impact positively on outcomes for Indigenous education. This "incentive" should not be a negative one. Clear directions and reporting structures within the school's annual operational plans would assist this process. The Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs program, Dare to Lead (DETYA 2000), encouraged principals to take up the challenge of reaching out beyond their schools to the communities in which they were located, seeking support in setting and achieving beneficial outputs for the local region.

Information technology access is important and has been identified as one of the primary needs of regional Indigenous communities. Programs that are effective have been identified.

- i-STAR[12] provides financial assistance to industry, educational and training institutions and local authorities to undertake projects that contribute to overcoming the information communication technology (ICT) skills shortage, especially in regional Queensland. James Cook University's Cairns campus received funding for a rural and remote program that included an ICT camp and career nights focused on the special needs of students underrepresented in ICT careers, including women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.
- There are various other initiatives under the State Government's Department of Innovation and Information Economy. A commitment has been made to put broadband through the north of the State.
- Balkanu's Strategic Direction paper (2001) identifies the lack of skills in entrepreneurship and intends to address this through the Family Income Management program and in cooperation with Education Queensland. Remote communities also have the option

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[12] http://www.iib.qld.gov.au/i-star.html

of applying for funding through the Step-by-Step Program,[13] which is a five-step program to assist communities in applying for funding for training.

The ability to tap into funding sources is vital for capacity enhancement.

Queensland's *Whole of Government Approach* is an attempt to bring all government departments together to address the issues of educational outcomes. The Department responsible for making this happen is the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (DATSIP). There are some examples of TAFE being brought to the table in terms of discussing training needs. Schools tend not to be involved in the Annual Operational Plans of communities at this stage (personal communication, DATSIP, June, 2002).

The desired outcomes for Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are improvements in retention rates and literacy and numeracy. (See Table 2.)

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[13] http://www.training.qld.gov.au/indig/workbook.pdf

Table 2
Human Services—Education

Apparent retention rates, Yr 8 to Yr 12, Qld 1994 to 2000

Source: OESR 2002a

Indigenous and non-Indigenous literacy scores, Qld, 2000

Source: OESR 2001h

Indigenous and non-Indigenous numeracy scores, Qld, 2000
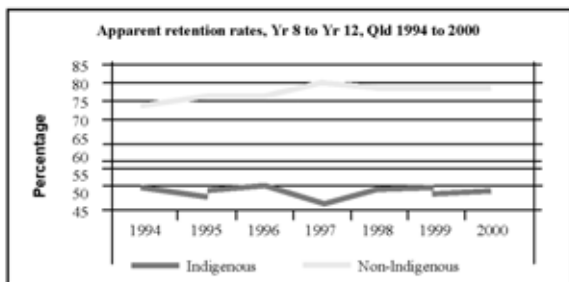
Source: OESR 2001h

Theoretical Underpinnings of Community Capacity Building

The discourses behind the concept of "capacity building" come out of the globalised discourses of human capital theory and new public management theory (Taylor & Henry, n.d.). Human capital theory emphasises lifelong learning and user pays strategies with a focus on individual achievement for the common good. New public management theory has frameworks for governance with tighter accountability. In educational terms these theories can be seen to inform areas of curriculum and assessment and administrative accountability measures. The focus is on outcomes.

Both *2010* and *Partners for Success* adopt the neo-liberal agenda of the OECD with its focus on social cohesion and social exclusion as discourses which validate such strategies as negotiated accountability frameworks, agreed targets and mutual obligation. Fast capitalism has negated talk of socio-economic status as a measure of poverty and instead talks of the digital divide and social exclusion as a reason for capacity building. *2010* makes a shift in its terminology from "at-risk" students to the "educationally at-risk", thus retaining some hope and some mechanisms for structural change:

> [The] existence of a differentiated school system can be a source of social exclusion, particularly if the system works largely on a hierarchical basis forcing the students with the least educational promise into a lower tier school system that can become exclusionary in its own right, apart from the impact on educational achievement it may have … The differentiation itself can lead not only to poorer education in the bottom tier, but also to a less inclusive education process as children in the lower tier may feel less valued by society.
>
> (Klasen 2000)

Ultimately, the children in the lower tier begin to believe that they are not smart enough to get well paying jobs and, eventually, lose faith in themselves and the value of the school system.

Social Exclusion Theory

In order to understand the relationship between the education system that serves the needs of the majority and those individuals who make up the minority, it is useful to look at the theoretical framework mentioned in the section above. The quotation from Klasen used the

term "social exclusion". The idea of social exclusion was originally used in France in the 1970s. The then Secretary of State for Social Action, Rene Lenoir, recognised the need to "improve conditions for those the economy was leaving behind and to strengthen social cohesion" (Evans et al. 2000). The notion of social exclusion has taken on broader significance over time and has been applied to many situations both within the OECD context and in terms of analysing international development contexts. At its most simplistic level, social exclusion is best expressed as the failure to participate in and be recognised by society.

The social exclusion perspective states that all individuals should be able to participate in society and to feel that they are valued by it. It is different from the poverty perspective in that it places the emphasis on the dynamics of the relationship between the individual and society (Evans et al. 2000). The social exclusion argument highlights the role that political, economic and social arrangements play in excluding individuals from the normal routines of the community and society, and the role that solidarity amongst those people who are excluded can play in changing the situation to their benefit (Klasen 2000).

It may seem from a quick analysis that the way to solve the problem of exclusion is to ensure that all people have the right both to participate in society and to access the systems and services that society provides. In fact, equality of access does not mean that all people are able to benefit from services, because not everyone is equally capable of accessing the services that are available. Poverty is often seen as the main reason preventing individuals from feeling fully part of social processes, but issues such as language capabilities, an understanding of how the system works, cultural differences, etc., may influence or impact upon an individual's perceived ability to participate fully in society. Klasen discusses this further:

> While income poverty is only one possible (and neither necessary nor sufficient) factor causing social exclusion, persistent or recurrent unemployment can generate social exclusion directly as the involuntarily unemployed are excluded from the world of work, an important aspect of citizenship and participation. In this way, unemployment is seen as an intrinsic problem, even if there are appropriate systems in place that ensure that unemployment does not lead to poverty.
>
> (Klasen 2000)

In exploring the notion of social exclusion in relation to children, education and future opportunities, Klasen draws heavily from Amartya Sen's (1999) work, stating that social exclusion can be seen to be a:

> … denial of integration into the community, ability to participate in the community and public life and enjoy the bases of self-respect.

Why Talk about Social Exclusion?

The social exclusion framework is simply a way of helping us to understand why some people are excluded and some are not. It is particularly useful in helping us to understand the factors that contribute to social inequity because it goes beyond poverty and incorporates the roles that political, economic and social factors play. In terms of education, it helps to understand why, in being denied access to an adequate and effective education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are being denied the opportunity to integrate themselves into the social and economic aspects of broader society. In the longer term, this translates into being denied the opportunity to feel that they are valid and contributing members of society. In practical terms, the framework also enables us to identify areas where capacity-building activities are most necessary.

The social exclusion argument is very similar to the one used by Noel Pearson in a number of his speeches and writings. In his Charles Perkins Memorial Oration at the University of Sydney (October 25, 2000), Pearson restated his position on "passive welfare". He maintains that rather than experiencing the "enabling" aspects of welfare (for example, the safety net between jobs and the provision of adequate and responsive healthcare), Indigenous Australians have become permanently unemployed and marginalised by the system. Instead of income support being something that is temporary, it has become a permanent destination. The situation becomes a vicious cycle—poor education, unemployment, receiving welfare benefits, feeling that they are unable/incapable of contributing to the system/economy because they are unemployed, resignation to passive welfare dependence.

Pearson (2000) argues that efforts to address issues such as imprisonment and substance abuse have been ineffective because they have not required that the individuals or the communities themselves

take responsibility for the issues. He states that responses such as the provision of legal aid and drug and alcohol rehabilitation allow individuals to take the role of the victim of an unjust system. While it may be true that the system is unjust (and many would argue effectively that it is), Pearson is stating that, in passively accepting that they are victims of an unjust system, Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander communities are condemning themselves to perpetuating the cycle of dependence. In other words, as long as they remain "passive welfare dependants", they will continue to be socially excluded, with little or no sense of control or influence, and no capacity to change.

Pearson argues that in order to break free of the welfare dependency, communities must take charge themselves and demand that conditions change. He argues that, in order to make the government accountable to them, Indigenous communities must first be morally accountable to themselves—they must take responsibility for their own situation and they must organise and act to bring about changes that will change their community for the good. Such change will require that communities mobilise in order to have influence inside their own "cultural" structures. Equally, they must gain the skills to enable them to interact more effectively with structures outside their own culture—for example education and health systems. For the purposes of this paper, this means that the community must build the capacity to work with the education system to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander children receive the skills and qualifications that are necessary to enable them to operate comfortably both in their own culture and in the wider culture of the "Australian State". Equally, they must set about changing the systems to meet their own needs. [14]

Community Capacity Building and the Status Quo

As this literature review stated from the outset, there has been a good deal of policy that attempts to address the issues of poor educational attainment on the part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also recounted how, despite the presence of these policies, improvements have been slow and insufficient. The knock-

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[14] See also: Penny Tripcony (1999) *Indigenous Cultures in Education* (Lecture Notes) at http://www.qut.edu.au/chan/oodgeroo/leb335_pt.html and Patrick Dodson (2000) *Beyond the Mourning Gate—Dealing With Unfinished Business,* Wentworth Lecture.

on effect of consistently poor education results has implications for the health sector, for employment opportunities, for rates of detention, and for long-term optimism. Something has got to change.

If we are to take a social exclusion perspective on analysing the set of problems and issues that contribute to the current situation, it quickly becomes apparent that the situation is complex. The recently released *Fitzgerald Report (Cape York Justice Study* 2001), while looking at the socio-economic context from the perspective of assessing the impact of substance abuse, echoes the same sentiments:

> The Government's task … is to encourage the community to accept responsibility, to empower it to deal with its problems, to assist it to do so and to provide necessary resources, facilities and support (Cape York Justice Study 2001).

In other words, in order for things to change, those people who are currently excluded from "regular society" must acquire the skills and capacities to organise themselves and reform the social system to meet their needs. Equally, those bureaucrats and community members who currently are most influential in determining what the social structures look like (i.e. the education system) must recognise their own responsibility to enable those people who are excluded to gain access to the system. All of this boils down to one thing: community capacity building—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must gain the skills and the confidence to influence the education system in a way that enables them to benefit from it in the same way that other people do.

Broad Analysis of "Whole of Government" Policy

The current policy climate in Australia is very supportive towards the notion of community capacity building. The notion of "whole of government"[15] is meant to enable different ministries or departments to work together more effectively and to enable services from different sectors to become integrated. Equally, in order for services to be responsive to the needs of the population, the whole-of-government approach acknowledges that individual "communities" within the population must be able to articulate their own needs and to lobby for change. This process of lobbying and influencing government is

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[15] The term "whole of government" has been used more frequently in recent years to indicate an understanding that holistic approaches to problem solving should include all government departments working together rather than separately on the same issues. The term itself does not explicitly include the "community" as a partner.

known as "civil society". There will inevitably be a certain amount of competition for attention and, ultimately, funds—the government has a finite budget and eventually decisions must be made with regard to whose interests to put first and hence whose interests merit the most money.

The process of competition and prioritisation of need is a part of a healthy democratic process. However, within civil society some groups will be more powerful than others simply because they are more articulate or more adept at influencing the government to favour their perspective. The weakness of the lobbying approach lies in the fact that the more deprived communities tend to have the least skills and capacities to influence for change, yet they are the ones with the most need to influence. In order to overcome the inequity, the ideal is to have an overarching state framework which provides consistency in terms of policy and goals, but which allows communities to work within the framework to suit their members' needs. Furthermore, a great deal of attention must be given to providing those individuals having the least capacity to change with the skills they require—i.e. capacity building.

Conclusion

Clearly there is a good deal farther to go before the education system is able to fulfil its obligation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families. The policy groundwork is, for the most part, in place. The key need will be to support and enable Indigenous communities to have their say and to effectively influence the schooling system at the local and State level. However, there is an equal, and probably less overtly acknowledged, need for the education systems (and the individuals within them) to take the necessary actions towards opening up to the inputs from the Indigenous communities and allowing themselves to be receptive to new and creative ways of working.[*]

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[*] Thanks to Shona Wynd for her assistance in developing the theoretical framework.

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Chapter 5

Strengths, Justice and Collective Action

What Social Work and Community Welfare Can Offer Australian Indigenous Education

Anthony McMahon

Social work and community welfare are professions with a long association with Indigenous Australians, some of it good, some of it bad. But these professions also have traditions of social commitment and social action that reject the *status quo* when it continues to oppress people. We believe that it is not enough just to understand society; the task is to change it.

Three positions drawn from social work and community welfare may be useful for educators. These positions move well away from attitudes of stigma, failure and blame in working with people. We are no longer interested in describing failure but in assisting and achieving success. The three approaches are the strengths perspective, critical theory and social action.

Briefly, the strengths perspective is an approach to working with people that rejects problem-based assessment and concentrates on developing the resources individuals and communities possess. Critical theory analyses the unjust historical, cultural and material conditions of our society and its negative impact on individuals, families and communities. Social action emphasises strategies to change these unjust social conditions through consciousness raising, participation, education and collective action.

The strengths perspective in social work (Saleebey 1992) is the idea that we should build on what people have rather than blame them for what they do not have. Social work, like many helping professions, has built its theory and practice around negative

understandings of people that have emphasised their problems, pathologies and defects. This is not a very productive way of working with people when you're trying to support them to change their circumstances or live a better life. It's all very well to emphasise what's wrong with people but it's not very useful when you, and they, have to do something about it.

There are three consequences that flow from accepting this perspective:

> 1. People have many strengths.
> Individuals and groups have vast, often uncapped and frequently unappreciated reservoirs of physical, emotional, cognitive, interpersonal, social, and spiritual energies, resources, and competencies. These are invaluable in constructing the possibility of change, transformation, and hope (Saleebey 1992, p. 6).

> 2. The worker is a collaborator *with* the client, not someone who works on the client or merely for them. One of the enduring principles in social work is that the other person is the expert on their own situation. Just as the social worker has expertise, so, in their own situation, does the client. There is no progress unless there is collaboration.

> 3. Don't blame the victim. It's very easy to see what's wrong with people and then presume that this is the cause of their difficulties. One of the worst consequences of a "blaming the victim" attitude is that after a while the other person begins to share it as well. If we see the problem as being only in the other individual, or group, or family, or community, we ignore the various contexts which may have given rise to their problem, or we gloss over how that individual, family or community has managed to survive and maybe even thrive in a harmful environment. There is a lot of blaming the victim going on in Australian society, especially in regard to Indigenous peoples. The sad thing is that many Indigenous people believe it, too. When people, whether they be Indigenous or not, see themselves as always and only victims, they lock themselves into a situation from which there is no way forward.

The second idea that is used in social work is critical theory. By "critical" I mean a way of thinking and acting that seeks to change what are considered as unjust or oppressive conditions. From this point of view, every social reality has hidden, but real, structures of power underlying it. In areas of disadvantage and oppression, these

oppressive structures have been created by unjust and oppressive social and political relationships including historical, social, political and cultural factors (Neuman 1997, p. 75). The consequences of this realisation are that people's personal troubles can be seen as symptomatic of deeper, underlying political injustices. Unjust historical, cultural and material conditions in our society have negative impacts on individuals, families and communities. When we see similar personal troubles manifested by a whole class of people—for example, Indigenous students—we can be sure that there are underlying social and political reasons for this, not just the inadequacies of those students.

The point here is that it is no use dealing continually with the effects of social injustice and oppression unless we also deal, at the same time, with the causes of injustice and oppression. I'm sure we have all heard the story of the people who kept on falling off the cliff. And the question was asked, "Is it better to have an ambulance at the bottom to pick up the injured people or is it better to have a fence at the top to stop them falling over in the first place?" A critical analysis implies that we deal with the underlying causes of personal and political troubles as well as dealing with the effects of those troubles. As Ife says, "There has always been a radical tradition in social work, which has identified social work's basic agenda as being to work towards the kind of fundamental social change necessary if society is to be based on principles of social justice" (1997, p. 176).

Social work is an inherently political activity because it deals with the causes of social problems as well as with the symptoms. We believe that what someone has caused, another can change. Education, and particularly Indigenous education, is no less a political activity than social work.

The third approach that may be useful for you as educators is the concept of social action. One of the abiding values in social work and community welfare is the idea that social change is central to the idea of being a social worker. This position emphasises strategies to change unjust social conditions through consciousness raising, participation, education and collective action. If we work according to the collaboration/ partnership implied in the strengths perspective, social action will begin in a shared raising of consciousness and education about the personal and political troubles afflicting people. It

is only then that workers will be able to take part in some form of collective action.

It is important to emphasise that action should be collective for two reasons. If action is instigated by only one person or one group there will be no "owning" of the action by other people or groups affected. The action will fail and any future actions will be much harder to organise and to accomplish. At the same time, if only one person or group instigates action, they are more likely to be overcome by those who wish to retain the *status quo*. Social action is about power, and the powerful are always ready to use their power. The processes of collective action, which encompass consciousness-raising, participation and education, are the best guarantee of effective results.

What has all this to do with Indigenous education? From where I am standing, Education in Australia has the same strengths and weaknesses as other institutions in Australia, including the professions of social work and community welfare. Any discussion of Indigenous education, therefore, needs structures that help reframe the negative and deficit ideas of Indigenous people espoused by political and social commentators, and should provide some sort of direction for action to counterbalance both the perceptions and the harsh reality of the lives of many Indigenous people. I offer these thoughts from the professions of social work and community welfare to assist a dialogue, which I know has already begun, about what needs to be done.

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Chapter 6

Conceptual Frameworks for Indigenous Education

Review and Analysis

Gary Partington

This paper traces the range of conceptual structures that have been employed in the education of Indigenous children both historically and in the present day. An analysis of these structures reveals the interaction of complex factors that contribute to schooling of Indigenous children and assists in the clarification of pathways to improvement.

Following millennia of traditional education within the family group, European invasion resulted in the imposition of new institutional structures that reflected the intentions of governments and agencies towards Indigenous children. Underlying these structures were the ideas and theories that framed them. As government policies towards Indigenous people changed, so did these institutional and conceptual structures.

More recent policy developments in Indigenous education have given rise to new conceptual frameworks which, when analysed, provide insights into the potential success of programs that are based on the policies. Suggestions are made in the paper for the future directions of Indigenous education.

Education for Indigenous students has gone through a series of identifiable stages over the last century (Partington 1998). Each stage is marked by changing principles governing the nature of schooling received and the processes and practices employed. However, when these stages are subjected to close analysis, it becomes apparent that there has not been a linear development from a state of minimal provision through to the efforts being made today. Linearity in development is appealing because it simplifies the description of development and implies a process of steady improvement. The situation is far more complex. On the one hand, visionaries perceived the needs of Indigenous education long before systems were in place to endeavour to meet those needs. On the other hand, reactionaries continue to promote the kinds of education that should have

disappeared from schools years ago. Rather than a linear development of Aboriginal education through a series of models, different models arose in parallel and simultaneously. At different times, however, one or another achieved dominance in the policy-making process, and particularly in the education of teachers.

Segregated Schooling

Segregated schooling for Indigenous students was common in Australian States during the first half of the twentieth century. The schooling provided in Aboriginal schools—usually associated with missions and reserves—was of poor quality. Where education was provided, teachers were usually untrained and the curriculum was restricted to reading, writing and simple arithmetic. For many children no schooling was provided, particularly if they lived in an area with few Indigenous students, or if their labour was needed on the mission farm (Partington 1998). While there were exceptions (Partington 1998), and although the policy of assimilation demanded effective education of Indigenous children in the period between the late 1930s and the 1960s, the failure to adequately fund the separate education system and the lack of a coherent curriculum and teaching service meant that most Indigenous children received a very poor education.

Principles of Education
Indigenous students should be prepared for work as labourers and domestics.

Minimal Curriculum
Based on Western knowledge: reading, writing, simple arithmetic

Community participation
Prohibited

Teachers
Non-Indigenous, usually unqualified

Outcomes
Limited skills, segregation
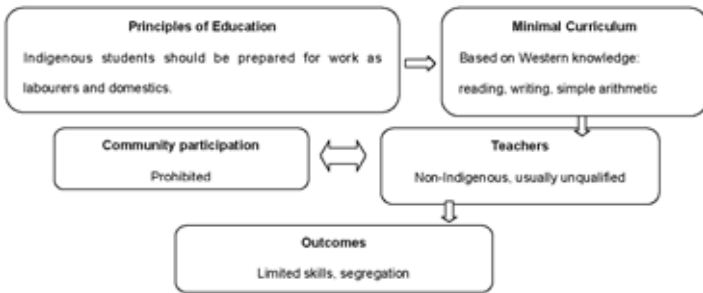
Figure 1
The Separate Schooling Model

Cultural Deprivation and Assimilation

In the 1960s, the general explanation for educational failure of lower socio-economic groups and ethnic minorities was based on intellectual

ability (for example, see Deutsch, Katz, & Jensen 1968). This was gradually replaced by other explanations in the 1970s but deficit explanations for the failure of Indigenous children continued to dominate thought into the mid 1970s. For example, Makin (1973) attributed what he termed "cumulative intellectual deficit" to a learning environment that was inadequate and inappropriate. He identified Aboriginal family types on a continuum based on degree of assimilation to European culture, with those at one end more likely to suffer cultural deprivation and intellectual deficit than those at the other, who were fully assimilated. Makin states:

> Family Type C: Poor living conditions, no fixed address, rough bush camps in the metropolitan area. Irresponsible behaviour (no adherence to normative "social" rules). Marriages unstable and characterized by de facto unions and husband desertion. Little coherence as a family unit. Deviant behaviour (many have police records which, in many cases, reflect lack of knowledge of what is expected by European-Australian society). Behaviour tends to be concerned with meeting basic biological needs—food, clothing, shelter. Instrumental adaptation (i.e. making provision for the future by working now, studying now, etc.), elementary. No deferring of gratification (i.e. "live for today" attitude). Pathogenic factors evident. Women "battle" for their families, men relatively insignificant as "family men". Language pattern in home situation not well developed: lack of reading.
>
> <div align="right">(Makin 1973.)</div>

The solution to this deprivation and deficit was seen to be assimilation of the children into the mainstream. Although the support of parents was considered to be essential to the effective education of children, in the case of Indigenous children this was not considered possible. For example Palmer (1971b, p. 3) stated that:

> It is most desirable, but in these circumstances almost impossible for the school and the parents to work together in order to exert a consistent, educational influence on the child. Often the teacher must work in the face of parental indifference, sometimes antagonism, to interest the child in his own educational welfare and development.

Palmer's solution was to assimilate the children so that, given the same conditions as non-Indigenous children, they would achieve the same outcomes:

> Our Government policy in relation to aborigines is that of "integration". This term has different meanings for different

> people, but to me it means "successful induction to the cultural, social and economic life of our community." It involves a house with good living standards, and a job with economic security so that future generations of children may be raised in worthwhile conditions … Our basic objective is not to preserve aboriginal culture, but to educate children so that they may enjoy greater social and economic independence.
>
> (Palmer 1971b, p. 3)

Palmer identifies integration as the goal, but unlike the use of the term elsewhere (Duke 1972), he uses it as a synonym for assimilation. In Duke (1972) the term "entails a positive valuation of the minority group's culture … and in 'integration' minority group identity is retained" (p. 23). There is no acknowledgment of the worth of Indigenous culture in Palmer's statements.

Palmer (1971a, p. 67) expressed prevailing attitudes when he said:

> It is not logical to expect that education alone can lift the aboriginal race from a climate of mendicant indolence to one of positive self-respect and economic independence)

There is no consideration of the influence of wider social factors on the location of Indigenous people in society. Instead, all responsibility for success or otherwise is placed on the individual. Palmer effectively blamed the victims for their own disadvantages:

> It is difficult to measure the value of [*sic*] a child of a stable home with a purposive parental influence, stable employment and a satisfactory family integration with the community. But it is obvious what a damaging effect an absence of these advantages has on the child's education. Advantages are lacking we cannot rectify the situation. We can only do our best with the resources at our disposal. We can attempt to make school more interesting for the pupil, to provide learning tasks in which the child can succeed and make a conscious effort to develop any special natural gifts which a child may have. By doing this we will be building up the child's self respect and encouraging the development of worthwhile attitudes and interests. Even if the child's family is not accepted in the community, there is no reason why the child should not be accepted in the school. Our approach to teaching should therefore be to promote each child's self respect and sense of achievement.
>
> (Palmer 1971a, p. 67)

Inglis (1971) supported the notion of deprivation—environmental and social—as the major explanation for the failure of Indigenous students:

> Where a favourable situation exists the home provides a varied and abstract environment where curiosity and achievement are rewarded; and this lessens any deprivation suffered through educational neglect. For native children, however, an unplanned intellectual diet during those vital years up to school age and the lack of language and global experiences leads them to failure in school and adult life unless our schools can make a significant impact in the short span available to them....

(Inglis 1971, p. 5)

He said:

> The school should provide a climate that will allow the child to develop his own interests and natural talents; and structured experiences should be related to life situations and the environment where possible. Children should enjoy success at their own level of ability and not be forced to work to grade level standards. Personal pride, confidence and a degree of independence should be fostered to improve attitudes in the classroom situation.
>
> Teachers are encouraged to base work on centres of interest. The Thematic approach provides for the development of a "Theme" and requires flexibility in timetabling, programming and the use of teacher strengths. The teaching skill subjects cannot always be included in the scheme, but approaches should be varied, practical and where possible activity centred.

(Inglis 1971, p. 6)

The subjects he nominated for this approach were art, craft, phys ed, music, social studies, science, and literature (Inglis, 1971, p. 6). There is no mention of reading or mathematics, but it is likely that these were the only subjects in the timetable for Indigenous children and he was promoting the idea of a more extensive syllabus. The absence of a desire that teachers should strive to achieve goals equivalent to those for non-Indigenous students is notable, given that the author was a superintendent of schools. Enjoyment was to take precedence over achievement for these students.

Similarities and differences in learning program for Aborigines were discussed in a workshop for teachers in Perth (Teacher discussion groups, 1971). A number of conclusions were reached in this meeting. "Lack of environment" was considered to have far reaching effects for Indigenous students:

> 1) Powers of reasoning limited by lack of environment and thus lack of experience on which to base reasoning.

2)   Lack of knowledge of conditions, jobs etc. outside their environment usually resulted in the height of their ambition being limited to attaining the position of stockman. Limitations lead to lack of incentive and purpose.

3)   Parents are not cooperative in assisting with education and do not value the educations their children are receiving.

In a discussion of teaching strategies to use with Indigenous students, Quinn (1971) urged that "English should be the only language used in the classroom and in the playground" (p. 22).

The combination of a deficit explanation for educational failure and assimilationist social processes to overcome the deficits that were perceived was possibly the most unlikely recipe for educational success for Indigenous students. It made no provision for community input and focused solely on the curriculum of the dominant group in society.
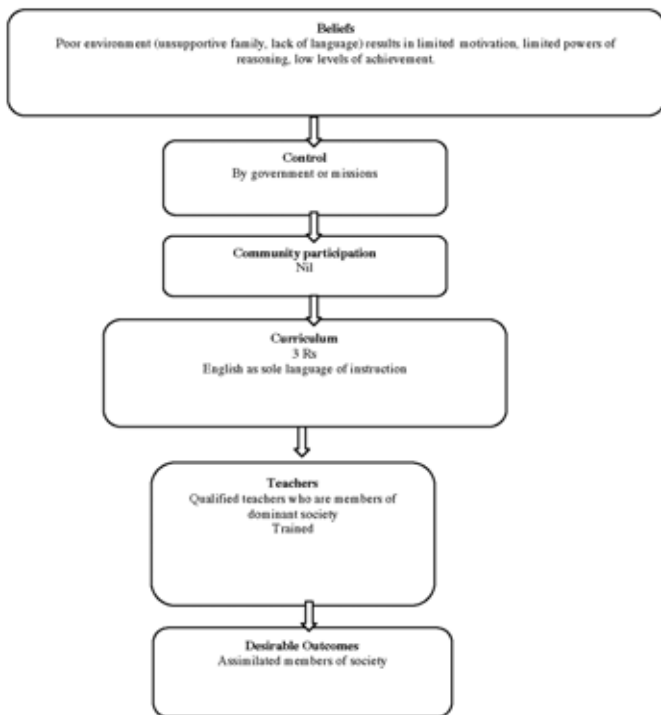
Figure 2
The Deficit/Assimilation Model

The Shift to a Cultural Model

During the early 1970s there was a steady rise in an alternative perspective on Indigenous education—a cultural explanation for failure. This did not occur overnight and the change involved varying degrees of acceptance of deficit and difference models. For example, Makin & Ibbotson (1973) recognised the need for culturally relevant readers in Indigenous schools, while Wright (1973) expressed misgivings about the usefulness of IQ tests with Aboriginal students. He reported the ongoing debate on intelligence and race and noted that a range of factors contribute to differential scores for Aboriginal

children compared with European children. He identified language development, experience enrichment, concept development, new teaching strategies and motivation as factors teachers should focus on. He concluded, "We must adjust the programme to the children—not try to adjust the children to the programme!" (p. 18).

Wright made assumptions in his paper regarding the prior experiences of Indigenous children. For example, he considered that deficiency in English may occur because of the existence of another language spoken in the home. Earlier approaches that blamed the child ignored social influences. Wright and others at this time saw the group as the focus. The individual, from this perspective, became an innocent victim of social circumstances.

Dargin (1974) refer to deficits in language, but he states that the term "deficit" "has rather unfortunate undertones" (p. 40)—an indication that attitudes were changing. He also observed that parents were interested in their children's education but were unable to help them. He astutely observed that:

> To believe that the overall problem can be alleviated by the relevance or irrelevance of classroom activities in isolation from welfare programs in housing, health, subculture values, community values, job opportunities and incentives or lack of them borders on the ridiculous.
>
> (Dargin 1974, p.16)

By the late 1970s, the move to a more Indigenous-centred curriculum was much more acceptable. For example, Rogers (1977) stated that:

> People at Ngukurr want bi-cultural education—they want children to reach a good standard in English, Reading and Maths, to gain knowledge to inform others and also to work for the community.
> However, perhaps most important for us, we want children to be Aboriginal—to respect and understand their Aboriginal heritage.
>
> (Rogers 1977, p. 10)

The changes that were occurring at the forefront of thought in Indigenous education, in such centres as Mt Lawley CAE (Brumby & Green 1977), Macquarie University (Coppell 1974) and Australian National University (Duke 1972), promoted alternative models of education for Indigenous students. These changes included greater emphasis on motivation, Aboriginal control over their own affairs, both educationally and generally, and improved methods and resources (Duke 1972).

This change was heralded by Prime Minister William McMahon in his Australia Day speech in 1972, when he said:

> The fundamental objectives of Government policy in relation to Aboriginal Australians are that they should be assisted as individuals and if they wish as groups, at the local community level, to hold effective and respected places within one Australian society with equal access to the rights and opportunities it provides and acceptance of responsibilities towards it. At the same time they should be encouraged and assisted to preserve and develop their own culture, languages, traditions and arts so that these can become living elements in the diverse culture of the Australian society.
>
> (cited in Duke, 1972, p. 31)

The report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission (1973) made only a brief mention of Indigenous education, noting the need for ongoing consultation. In its next report, however, (Schools Commission 1975) a chapter was devoted to Aboriginal education. The recommendations of this report relied heavily upon the report of the Aboriginal Consultative Group (1975), a move which was a landmark change in the education of Indigenous students. The Group identified a number of key issues for Aboriginal education including self-determination for Aboriginal people; education for participation in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures; acceptance of values of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; and development of skills that allow equal participation in the economy.

In particular, the Group identified Aboriginal participation in decision making as a key element of successful policymaking for Indigenous education. The recommendations of this group have provided a blueprint for the development of Indigenous education over the subsequent quarter of a century. This includes parental participation in education; training for Aboriginal teachers; appointment of Aboriginal liaison officers and teacher aides to schools; teaching of Indigenous languages; implementation of Aboriginal studies courses for teacher education students and in schools for all students; establishment of curriculum units for the development of Indigenous curriculum materials. The Schools Commission recommended, and the government approved, that the administration of federal grants for Aboriginal education to schools and systems become a responsibility of the Australian department of

education. The implementation of this recommendation has had a significant impact on Indigenous education in the subsequent years.

The 1979 National Aboriginal Education Conference was a landmark conference because it was conducted by Indigenous people for Indigenous people. This was a major turnaround in control and represents a significant advance in control of education for Indigenous people. There was considerable support for the establishment of Indigenous colleges or schools locally or nationally (Budby, Kelly, & Massey 1979).

Education and Culture

Many Aboriginal people rejected education because of its potential to destroy their identity (Watts 1971, cited in Kauffman 1975). A more effective model of education required participation of Indigenous people in developing a full educational framework that would enable them to maintain their values and still participate effectively in society. Preparation of teachers to equip them to teach Indigenous students was seen as a principal solution to the problem of alienation. Despite acknowledging that education involves development of skills for participation in society, education for cultural purposes was the principal focus of proposed changes to education. For example, most of the content of a workshop on education for teachers in an Aboriginal context (Sommerlad & Duke 1973) focused on the transmission of appropriate culture and language.

There were exceptions to this focus on culture. In a report on education in the Kimberley region, recommendations for improved instruction in English as a second language, achievement of literacy and numeracy and skilling Aboriginal students for careers featured prominently (Joint Kimberley Research Project 1975). Consideration was given to the implementation of secondary sections in primary schools for Indigenous students. In addition, the Project recommended the establishment of community education councils which, among their responsibilities, would develop courses to meet the needs of the communities and coordinate submissions, services and staff to meet those needs. The report devoted considerable attention to language education, noting the issues that hindered development of English language acquisition. Language teaching was affected by four factors: lack of teaching resources; lack of agreement on the approach to teach English; the shortage of teachers with skills in teaching language to

Aboriginal students; and the lack of skills among teachers in teaching English as a second language.

Aboriginal Studies

The move to a curriculum focused on Indigenous culture initially was restricted by a lack of material on which to base such a curriculum, but in the late 1970s pressure for Aboriginal studies in schools grew. Hughes (1979, p. 28) identified six reasons for the development of such courses:

- to preserve Australia's heritage
- to break stereotypes
- to have Australia recognise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander races as the original inhabitants of this country
- to attack prejudice by presenting knowledge
- to assert the right of people to their own heritage
- to develop the bases of Australian society today

In a report on the current state of Indigenous education in Australia, Watts (1982) reported sceptically on initiatives in Indigenous education. She said:

> Even when they find their way into the literature, one has no knowledge of how well the initiative is implemented, the full range of its effects, or whether it is sustained; in some cases, it is known that the departure of a given teacher from the staff and/or the adoption by the school of new priorities, has led to the abandonment of programs which were reported enthusiastically. Poor practices are rarely reported publicly.
>
> (Watts 1982, p. 59)

Watts indicated that the period around 1980 was marked by an increase in the resources available to teachers, with State and Commonwealth agencies expending considerable effort to produce curriculum guides and resource materials that were relevant to the education of Indigenous students. Most of this work was in the early childhood area. Watts stated, "To some degree, the low level of the educational achievement of children currently enrolled at schools must be attributed to the absence of firm and well-researched curriculum guidelines" (p. 60). If that is the case, then curriculum guidelines have changed little over the past twenty years.

As well as central curriculum directorate offerings, individual schools were producing their own materials, partly due to dissatisfaction with general curriculum materials, but also due to stimulus from resource units, teacher education institutions,

committed principals and teachers, and Schools Commission funding. Most initiatives were in the areas of Aboriginal studies, language arts, and reading materials. With the reading books, the function they serve is an introductory one—to attract the child to what is, for some, a new activity, to provide immediate meaningfulness and to ensure success and hence to arouse interest and motivation (Watts 1982, p. 65). Another initiative is in experiential enrichment to widen children's backgrounds.

Watts reported that, even in schools where Indigenous language was used, it was mainly to support the focus on acquisition of Western skills and knowledge. But there were some schools where bilingual education was used: 7–8% of children.

The Culture Curriculum

In 1985, the Queensland Department of Education produced an in-service booklet for teachers that outlined strategies for teaching Indigenous students (Department of Education Queensland 1985). The publication focused on cultural differences that teachers needed to be aware of when teaching Indigenous students. Content for this publication was taken from the work of John Fanshawe (1976), Stephen Harris (1980) and Michael Christie (1981), and included such strategies as being a "warm demander" (Fanshawe 1976), awareness of the cultural significance of teasing and swearing, non-verbal communication and working from the known to the unknown, concrete to abstract (Harris 1980) and using repetition and individual praise (Christie 1981). It also focused on the importance of differences in cognition that resulted from cultural and environmental factors. This issue continues to receive attention and has redefined the debate over cognition from cognitive deficiencies to cognitive differences. The work covered field sensitivity, external locus of control and other psychological explanations for success and failure of Indigenous students (Davidson 1988; Kearins 1976; Kearins 1981; McInerney 1991; McInerney & McInerney 1994; Queensland Department of Education 1985).

This emphasis on components of culture as a key element of instruction for Indigenous Australian students was to become common among education providers (Aboriginal Education Services Equal Educational Opportunities Branch 1984). The approach was strengthened with the publication of Christie, Harris & McClay's

book, *Teaching Aboriginal Children*, in 1987. The focus of the book was on cultural differences and their relevance in the classroom. It covered differences in communication, in world-views, in Western and traditional forms of education, and in learning styles and teaching strategies.

Furthermore, the emphasis on cultural differences as an influence on learning was timely: it gave teachers an alternative explanation to prevailing views on the deficit perspective many teachers still held in the 1980s. Also, it gave teachers a set of strategies that could be instrumental in bringing about more interesting and relevant instruction.

For the majority of teachers of Indigenous students, however, the advice would have been of little value. The diversity of Indigenous children and the lack of deeper knowledge of the cultural attributes identified in such booklets as those above would have limited the effectiveness of the strategies. During the middle and late 1980s, there was a backlash against the simplistic approach adopted in the book. More importantly, it neglected a significant variable in success for Indigenous students: their disempowerment, and the disempowerment of their parents, in schooling. It was recognised as early as the first statement of aims and objectives of Aboriginal education by the National Aboriginal Education Committee in 1980 that empowerment of Indigenous people in education was vital. This was reinforced by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy in 1989 (Department of Employment Education and Training 1989), which identified involvement of Indigenous people in educational decision making as a major priority. It was reinforced again in 1994 in the national review of education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Department of Employment Education and Training 1994), which also identified a range of needs in the areas of involvement and self-determination, equitable access, participation and outcomes. Throughout the document, emphasis is given to the empowerment of Indigenous people in educational matters that affect them. A corollary of empowerment in the review was the need for the development of skills that would enable Aboriginal students to obtain employment equal to that of non-Indigenous graduates.
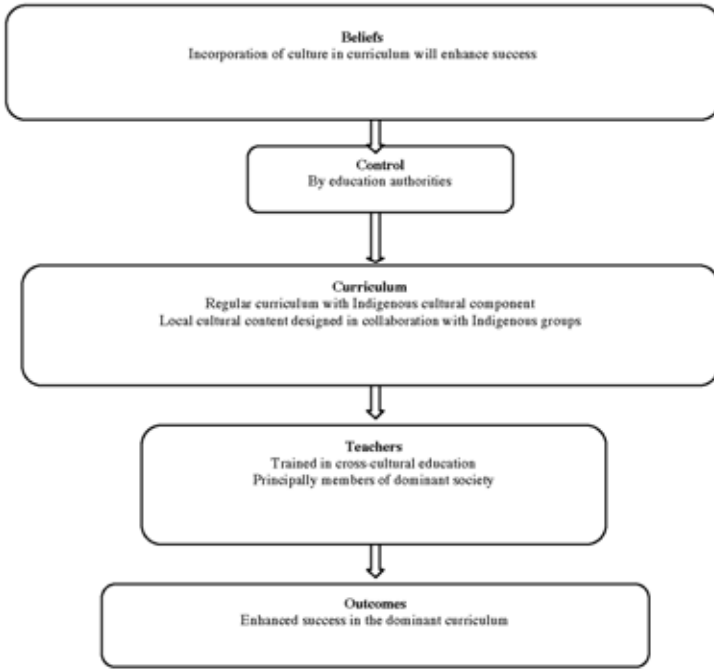
Figure 3
The Cultural Model of Indigenous Education

The Empowerment Model

In 1985, the House of Representatives established a select committee on Aboriginal education. The report of this committee (House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education 1985) provided a comprehensive overview of Indigenous education at the time. They identified two key needs for Indigenous education that were expressed by Indigenous groups. These were the desire to gain the skills of literacy and numeracy in English, and "the desire to preserve Aboriginal identity and to have education as far as possible provided in their local communities so that children could remain in communities to be raised as Aboriginals" (p. 37).

The report by the select committee acknowledges the tension that existed between the two goals of acquiring skills to participate in the mainstream and retaining culture. In preschool education, for example, while the committee acknowledged the benefits for schooling of attendance at preschool, it also noted that "an effective education ought to relate, as closely as possible, and to grow out of the contemporary experiences of the child concerned" (House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education 1985 p. 87). The report also observed the difficulty of adhering to this approach in schools with a minority of Indigenous students but called for the employment of staff "who understand the meaning of the child's Aboriginality and who are able to interact with the children accordingly" (p. 87).

For primary schooling, the report acknowledged the problems facing schooling Indigenous students.

> Primary schooling should provide the grounding for students in the basic skills which will prepare them for successful later studies. Often the schooling system has failed to provide these skills to Aboriginal children. At primary school there is a particular need for the programs which provide these skills—language programs and curricula which stress the development of literacy and numeracy skills.
>
> (House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education 1985, p. 92)

The report noted the difficulties associated with teaching Indigenous students: the diversity of students, the poor socio-economic circumstances, health problems, and isolation. The report also outlined the variety of programs being offered to cater for this diversity: bilingual programs, specially designed English language programs such as Leaps and Bounds, Tracks and the Van Leer program. It recommended more pre-service and in-service education for teachers in teaching English as a second language and the employment of more teachers with these skills.

Other issues considered in the report included development of appropriate curriculum materials for Indigenous students, employment of Aboriginal people in schools, parental involvement in the schooling of their children, the importance of principals and teaches who are aware of the special needs of Indigenous students, health and nutrition programs, tutorial support for students and absenteeism. A separate

analysis of the needs of Torres Strait Islander students was made, with similar provision for these students as for Aboriginal students.

Beliefs
Educational success requires literacy and numeracy in English
Identity, language and culture must be preserved
Self-determination in education is necessary

Control
Significant direction by Indigenous people

Curriculum
Skills oriented—ESL, literacy and numeracy
Culture and language of the local community
Elimination of barriers to education: health, etc.

Teachers
Skills in ESL, language development
Indigenous teachers for cultural component

Outcomes
Retention of culture and language
Skills for mainstream success
Empowered to take charge of own affairs

Figure 4
The Empowerment Curriculum

Language Issues

Douglas (1974) noted that Aboriginal children in the schools he studied:

> Are bilingual in the sense that they do communicate at home, they have an English of their own. It is not our school English, it lacks the structure of our school English, it lacks the vocabulary of our school English, but it is a language and children and parents can use it and can communicate through it.

(Douglas 1974, p. 43)

Before the 1980s there was limited acknowledgment of first language skills and Aboriginal languages were usually regarded as a deficit for a child. For example, Craddock stated, "Aboriginal children generally come from a language deprived environment and to get them to a comparable standard in the communications skills by the end of primary school requires considerable curriculum modification" (Craddock 1974, p. 26).

A component of empowerment in Indigenous education was the growing emphasis on bilingual education through the 1970s and 1980s. First commenced on a significant scale in the Northern Territory in the 1970s, the introduction of bilingual education in communities was regarded as "a matter of considerable pride in each community" (Lee 1993). Although the Northern Territory model was not entirely successful (Harris & Jones, cited in Lee 1993), the gains made by adults as a consequence of involvement in the programs were significant. Lee stated:

> The most significant educational gains of the NT program ... relate to the education of adults, their consequent increased confidence and competence to demand a greater say in the way their schools are run, their increased control of decisions about structure and content of the teaching program and about school organization in general and, most recently, their promotion to top administrative positions within school structures.

(Lee 1993, p. 7)

The influence of bilingual education on Indigenous students depends upon how it is viewed. Cognitivists regarded it as a more efficient pathway to English literacy, in which case a transitional approach to bilingual education would be stressed. Supporters of cultural survival through the maintenance of Indigenous languages supported maintenance programs for bilingual education. This means that students would continue to learn their first language after

acquiring English. In the transitional approach, the belief that L1 acquisition is beneficial to the learning of L2 means that only short-term emphasis is placed on L1.

Harris (1990) argued that bilingual education for promoting cognitive and academic gains was no longer appropriate and that educational planning needed to take into account the promotion of Aboriginal cultural maintenance. He developed the idea of two-way Indigenous schooling—a concept that was first put in writing by McConvell (1982, cited in Harris 1990). McConvell, in turn, presented a model of two-way schooling developed by a Gurindji elder, Pincher Nyurrmiyarrii. This model had three components:

> 1. Two-way schooling would be a matter of fair representation of cultural content. Both Aboriginal and Western culture should be taught, including the three Rs.
>
> 2. A school should reflect a spirit of exchange between the European Australians and Aborigines involved, in terms of equal power relations. There should be a two-way flow in reciprocity and recognition of equality; a two-way exchange of knowledge.
>
> 3. A two-way school should help re-establish a healthy relationship between the younger and older generations of Gurindji.
>
> (McConvell, cited in Harris 1990, p. 13).

Two-way schooling was seen as an avenue towards empowerment through gaining the skills conferred by Western education while at the same time retaining the skills and knowledge of the local Indigenous culture. Harris argued that the most effective way to attain this was to engage in "culture domain separation", by which there were separate domains of knowledge for each part of the curriculum. In relation to instruction, he said:

> Teachers in the Aboriginal domain of a two-way school would need to be Aboriginal people who were regarded by parents as being strong models of Aboriginal language and culture. The Aboriginal organisers of this learning domain would need to have the freedom to spend substantial school time in Aboriginal contexts, details of which would be defined by each local group.
>
> (Harris 1990, p. 15)

It is possible to extrapolate a model from Harris's description of two-way schooling and the following is an attempt to construct such a model.
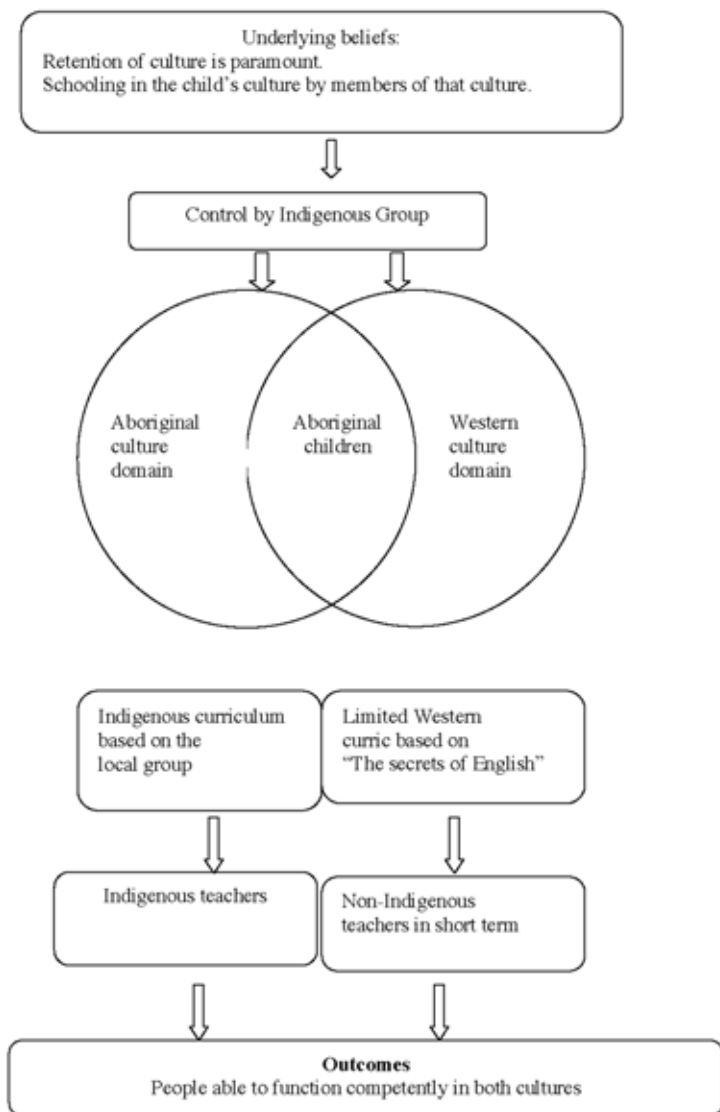
Figure 5
Model of Two-way Schooling

The major problem with the two-way model is domain separation. As McConvell (1991) contended, this would not work in practice because of the blurred lines of separation, the impossibility of maintaining the separation and the power relationships implied in the structure. Although some independent schools have operated on this model with success (Harris 1990), its extension to large numbers of Indigenous communities is unlikely given the requirements for success: effective local leadership in educational issues, availability of skilled personnel, cooperation by non-Indigenous educators and time and resources to develop the Indigenous curriculum.

By the mid 1990s, language development was firmly lodged within cultural relevance in the more advanced programs. This was accompanied by a more strident demand for empowerment of Indigenous people in relation to schooling. There had been steps towards Indigenous empowerment for many years, but pressure for change increased during the 1990s. Nicholls (1993) for example, argued that the real issue in Indigenous education was the lack of Aboriginal control of Aboriginal education. In rejecting the views of writers who argued that differences in learning styles and cognitive styles were the cause of academic failure of Indigenous students, she stated:

> For these theorists, equality of educational opportunity seems to be accepted as a given. There is no suggestion, for instance, that part of our schools' failure might arise from or at least be related to unequal social and political relationships—that these differences in power—within our broader society. Rather, educational failure is attributed to Aboriginal children's inability to handle "White" styles of learning and "White" inability to accommodate Aboriginal learning styles in the classrooms.
>
> (Nicholls 1993, p. 19)
>
> {Author query: check above quote. Second sentence doesn't make sense – looks like something is missing}.

Other writers also focused on the need for the curriculum to empower students. Slattery (1993), for example, reported that the success of an English language acquisition program was due in part to the empowerment of students in negotiating their curriculum. Similarly, McKenry (1993), Munns & Connelly (1996) and Bourke, Dow, Lucas and Budby (1993) presented further examples of the need for empowerment. One report (Wammarra Aboriginal Education Centre 1992) pointed out that Indigenous parents also used their

power over the curriculum when they refused to participate in schools despite being asked, particularly when they were displeased with the direction the curriculum was taking.

The Cube Model for a Multifaceted Approach

The empowerment model moved the focus to the dominant group and argued that they are at fault in not acknowledging the disempowerment of indigenous people, but more recent multifaceted models throw everything at the problem, identifying individual factors (e.g. health), social factors (racism, family support), cultural factors and empowerment issues.

By 2000, frustration at the lack of achievement of goals in Indigenous education brought Commonwealth and State providers to approach the task with a more holistic view. In part, this was a consequence of the increasingly tough stance of the Commonwealth government in relation to Indigenous education (Education Department of Western Australia 1997). The establishment of specific goals for Indigenous education across the country motivated the development of alternative approaches. This view encompassed not only teaching strategies and curriculum content but also the role of the community and the nature of school leadership. The substance of the new approach, detailed in a report by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (2000), was a partnership between the community and the school, with the school integrating leadership, school environment, organisation, professional development, a framework of standards, the curriculum and the processes of monitoring, assessment and reporting. At the more specific classroom level, teaching strategies and learning styles were to "provide multiple creative opportunities for Indigenous students to learn, achieve and reflect on their own learning in a supportive environment in which truth, honesty and a respect for diversity are promoted" (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs 2000, p. 46).

The new model was based on a belief that these changes could succeed. DETYA had recently funded a range of Indigenous education projects around the country (Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs 2000) and these had demonstrated that success was possible through "combining a relentless approach with high expectations and what educators generally regarded as good

teaching and learning practice (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs 2000, p. 47).

The report went beyond a solution to Indigenous student success that incorporated only educational solutions. Cognisant of the diverse influences on Indigenous children's schooling, the report noted that:

> The failure to achieve educational equality can not only be attributed to poor health, but also to other factors such as poverty, housing, employment, low community participation, lack of communication, high levels of detention, and lack of mainstream services.
>
> (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs 2000, p. 53)

The report recommended a new partnership model that incorporated partnerships between government, communities and education systems to address education from a cross-portfolio perspective. Even so, they agreed it was worth developing pilot programs to try out the proposed model.
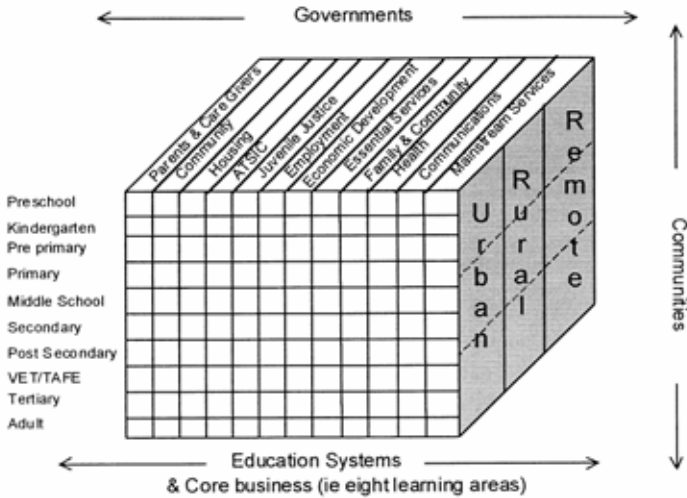
Figure 6
The Partnership Cube for Indigenous Education (MCEETYA 2000, p. 54)

The partnership cube encompassed all levels of education and the full range of agencies involved in providing services to Indigenous people. An accompanying education systems cube hypothesised the relationship among the various education providers. However, there was some scepticism on the part of consultants who commented on the proposed cubes of partnership and education systems. They commented, "There is … some scepticism about the ability of developing better cross-portfolio mechanisms to produce better educational outcomes for Indigenous students" (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs 2000, p. 57). Cross-agency cooperation on a small scale is sometimes successful and fruitful (Partington, Kickett-Tucker, & Mack 1999) but it can also be short-lived and fail to produce long-term changes. The cube models illustrate what is possible but do not demonstrate the means by which they can be implemented effectively. Action at high levels of government to push inter-agency collaboration into effect is needed before the cube models will become reality.

The cube does not give adequate attention to the influence of the dominant society on reform in Indigenous education. The reforms that have been identified might be feasible in schools that have only Indigenous students but in schools with a minority of Indigenous children—those that cater for the greatest proportion of these students—the reforms are problematic. The model has been constructed in a power-free zone and dominant social influences have been ignored. What is needed is greater awareness of the ways that the dynamics of the school and classroom disadvantage and alienate Indigenous students: through classroom discourse, symbolism such as the significance of certain acts such as swearing, the absence of Indigenous influences, the focus on selective elements of Indigenous knowledge, and active discrimination.

Conclusion

The cube models represent the latest permutation of a variety of models to cater for the education of Indigenous students. It is likely, however, that no one model will adequately provide for the diversity of Indigenous students. Some students will have their needs met quite effectively in the dominant culture's school system. Others, beset by a myriad of problems in their upbringing and family lives, are unlikely to be well served by any model. Ultimately, the problem resides not in

the models as much as in the structural conditions of society which alienate Indigenous people and restrict their opportunities to succeed in any social or cultural setting.

Earlier models that ignored the social and cultural locations of Indigenous students were grounded in the beliefs of their times. They failed to acknowledge the validity and relevance of background to school success and they sought to impose an alien structure on students who were equipped to deal with a different reality. Simply thrusting these students into school and demanding success when prevailing attitudes to them were negative and expectations were limited was unrealistic.

The move to cultural models for the provision of education represented a landmark in Indigenous education. While these models did not ensure empowerment of Indigenous people, they did at last acknowledge the validity of the culture of the people. This was a sound foundation from which to address other issues of control and skilling. A major weakness of these models was not internal to them but was a result of their inappropriate application. Developed as a result of research and work with Indigenous children in traditionally oriented communities, the cultural models were inappropriately applied to Indigenous children in a wide range of socio-cultural settings and as a result were not always successful. Associated with this was the oversimplification of cultural attributes that contributed to success at school and the lack of recognition of the complexities of the interrelationships among the diverse factors that contribute to success at school.

Ensuring that Indigenous children acquired the skills necessary to manage their own lives without the need to rely on members of the dominant society was the foundation of the move to empowerment. This movement was associated with the growing confidence of Indigenous groups to participate in mainstream social and economic life on an equal level. The removal of racist legislation inhibiting equality for Indigenous people and the implementation of steps to ensure a more equal participation in society were having an effect by the late 1970s, and in the 1980s this was reflected in educational programs to empower Indigenous students.

Despite the implementation of skilling programs that, where relevant, combined strategies relevant to Indigenous cultural characteristics with instruction in skills for success, schools failed to

bring about successful outcomes for sufficient Indigenous students. This failure has led to the most recent, multifaceted models that are intended to tackle all the issues inhibiting success simultaneously. Represented by the cube models, this approach has the design for success but, without appropriate political pressure to make it work, will remain an interesting construct in the history of Indigenous education. It is more likely that small projects, utilising the constructs of the cube models, will make a difference in a variety of circumstances. Perhaps, rather than starting on a grand scale, the interagency/ intersectoral collaboration identified as the solution to the ills of Indigenous education (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs 2000) will become a reality from the bottom up, rather than from the top down. The structure of this approach needs to be explored by those involved in Indigenous education.

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Chapter 7

Australian Indigenous Learners

A Journey of Success

Nereda White, Allan Doring, Joy Kennedy and Hana O'Neill

As a result of government initiatives, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students has steadily increased. While government policy sought to increase participation in higher education, the underlying motivation of individuals is not necessarily similar. The research project reported here was embedded in a lifelong learning framework, in keeping with traditional Indigenous learning which takes place throughout the lifespan. The researchers sought to identify the experiences of a cohort of eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking university study. In listening to the students' stories of personal difficulties and struggles experienced in trying to attain their goal, the researchers became aware that the background underpinning the students' decision to undertake university study provided valuable insight into their life journey. Of particular note was the overcoming of earlier educational disadvantage while seeking to achieve personal and community success in an environment about which the students had limited understanding.

Since the 1970s, Australia has embarked on a concentrated effort to eliminate the inequalities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the rest of Australia's population with respect to participation in, and outcomes from, all levels of education and training (Robinson and Bamblett 1998). As a result, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students has increased considerably to a peak of over 8000 in 1999 (DETYA 2001).

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are mature age entrants with a variety of life experiences. They bring to their studies a rich life of learning that is often unique, combining educational disadvantage, a strong sense of community, and their own cultural understanding in addition to family and work commitments. For many, undertaking university study in not only an opportunity but

also another step in life's journey of learning. Despite the gains, the pathway to success for many has not always been easy. "Success" in this paper refers to a group of Indigenous Australians who, despite backgrounds of cultural and social disadvantage within the dominant culture of Australian society generally, have gained admission to further formal study. As such, this notion of success contrasts with the current outcomes focus employed by education systems where success is measured in terms of course completions.

Various reports and studies (for example, Bourke, Burden & Moore 1996) have focused on a variety of factors associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment at university: for example, graduation rates, attrition patterns and appropriate learning and teaching styles. More recent work, for example Di Gregorio, Farrington and Page (2000), highlights continuing tensions between university goals and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences.

To date, little attention has been paid to identifying the experiences that these students bring with them. It is suggested that, rather than risk being seen as insensitive, higher education institutions must continually listen to students' experiences as part of the continued need for sensitivity and improvement. As McInnes and James (1995) note, both universities and academics have yet to come to terms with the full implications of student diversity. The life experiences of many students, especially those of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, are not well understood, especially with respect to motives, interests and academic abilities.

The stories told in this paper reveal that many factors play crucial roles in starting people on a learning pathway. They also highlight the fact that educational progress towards a formal qualification, albeit a desirable outcome, is not necessarily the most important benefit of learning: the benefits to individuals, families and communities may be more far-reaching (McGivney 1999).

From contact with several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending a university on-campus residential, the writers became interested in the stories students shared of their educational experiences. The writers saw benefit in trying to achieve a better understanding of both on- and off-campus experiences including those factors which were likely to influence students' continued enrolment and likelihood of success. During the necessary consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student community and staff

from their on-campus support unit (AIATSIS 2000), it became obvious that listening to the students reflect on their experiences would provide valuable insights that would help enhance future students' opportunities for success in education.

In response to a request from the writers, eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in a semi-structured interview. During the interviews, the students were invited to reflect on their personal experiences to date including such matters as their reasons for enrolling at a university, their lows and highs during that time and some of the factors that impinged on their "*life as a student*". In giving voice to these experiences, each story has a message for any person involved in education. The stories, grouped under the five sub-headings of motivation, experiences, barriers, support and success, reflect critical steps in the students' journeys towards their future goals. After the interviews were transcribed, students were given the opportunity to read the records and to suggest amendments.

Motivations to Undertake University Study

The motives of students have long been considered important influences on the way they approach their university studies. As McInnes and James (1995) confirmed, there appears to be a reasonable level of commitment among students towards the university as a place of learning for its own sake and for personal growth balanced against vocational goals. While the reasons that the students in this project gave for undertaking university study reflected similar motives, they also revealed other factors and influences.

A sense of readiness or self-preparedness emerged quite strongly. Rather than being motivated just by a primary desire to achieve an academic qualification, these students attached considerable secondary benefit to the value of personal achievement. This appeared to come from a firm belief not only that they would benefit themselves, but that they had something to offer their family and their community. As one student explained:

> … well I've been doing some teacher aide work on Palm Island where I was born and [...] State School where my children attend … I mean yeah … a couple of years ago … I only resigned last year … only because of commitments at the university … I guess because my mum as well … my mum never had the opportunity of becoming a teacher … she was supervising teacher on Palm Island but she only went to grade six … and I guess today with so much

> opportunity available for our people … Indigenous people … why shouldn't we …

This strong sense of altruism emerged in different ways. One that was particularly interesting was a desire to share personal experience so that future generations might avoid similar pitfalls experienced during the speaker's life.

> I feel I had something to share with people … I'm not that old and I feel that I have something to share ... in terms of life experience and I wanted to try and shortcut things like … I wanted them to learn from the mistakes that I've made … and that I wanted to teach them the shortcuts, instead of going the long way around and going through the hardship of it all and through that and I thought teaching is a good way to learn ...

Growing self-awareness often seemed to be associated with the recognition or acknowledgment that a change was warranted. One student, in seeking to improve the quality of life for herself and her family, reflected on past events. Some were obviously very emotional for her, but in reflecting on them, she demonstrated the level of learning and recognition she had reached:

> … I think it was to prove to myself that I can actually do something better because I was in a cycle of violence myself and having children at a younger age and I just wanted to show that I can do something better for myself … and show them that they can actually do something instead of being in the same circle that I've been … and being in Brisbane I went from one circle of violence and then I went to another circle of being on the streets … and then I just got tired of being on the streets and doing stupid things and my children got taken away from me … then I only had one son with me and he was three … and [I] didn't pay much attention to his education … so when he started school I started to think about what were his needs, not only my needs … so I tried to support him being at school because at that stage I was thinking about his needs to be at school and I didn't want him to like start off on the street at an early age … so I started working with him … with the school and I just be involved with him at school … just made me think that I can broaden my mind a little bit more …

As the students reflected on their motivation and reasons for undertaking university study, it became clear from their comments that the decision was not necessarily made in isolation.

These reflections indicate that a powerful motivational force for these students was the shared commitment to a career and a desire for personal achievement. This was frequently expressed as a sense of

individual improvement combined with a belief that each had something to offer the wider community.

The Experiences of University

Many Australian Indigenous students are often the first from their immediate and extended families to enrol at university. The reality of this and the personal value of what was seen as a beneficial but indirect outcome of enrolment was revealed in the following comments:

> well ... I am probably the first in my family to be a university student … none of my family that I know of have been to university and though I think my husband's family … they … all his nieces and nephews were all university students and I knew they weren't any smarter than I was … so I thought I may as well give it a go …

For some students, the experience already gained was deemed valuable regardless of any long-term outcome:

> … even if something really major happened and I couldn't come back tomorrow and couldn't come back at all … I'd still know that I'd gained a lot from it and I've grown since I've been here as a person … you know … and the residentials are so good because like you say … you can bounce off other people … but it's not just the academic stuff …

Beyond a sense of achievement, and personal growth, a desire to share their learning experiences and to be an example to family and community members was also expressed:

> … I think my idea in the first place was I've got to go to uni because I've got to get that piece of paper … but now that I've been here … a bit … its more about my own personal growth … its more about I'm growing as a person and I'm learning all of these things and I'm taking these things home, back to my community … and can share them with people there and can say … hey look, you know, I didn't finish high school and stuff like that and you know me I like to muck around with all you fellas … but if I can do it then you can do it too … and it doesn't mean that you have to go to uni or anything … but if I can work at achieving what … like my goals … then my family especially and people in my community, then they can do it as well … if they can see that I am working at it … then it might give them a little bit more courage to have a go at some other things as well …

As well as a sense of personal value two other factors that were associated and intertwined were a growth in confidence both as a person and as a learner. One factor of particular significance was a positive attitude towards "failure" as a means of further learning. As one student explained:

> … that's exactly what I've learnt this year and last year since I've been at uni … it's okay you don't have to get high distinctions all the time … you know … you work at things at your own pace … you don't … its about your own learning experience … not anybody else's … Don't judge yourself by everybody else's standards … you know and don't set your sights too high either … like you know … to make steps towards that goal and sort of thing and if you just keep pecking away at it you'll eventually get there … and if you fail sometimes … well it's a knock-back … just learn from it … just have a look at the experience why did you fail … or what went wrong and then just to reflect on a lot of things as well … and don't go … oh I've failed so I am not doing it now and just throw it in …

Another student alluded to personal growth and confidence gained through reflection and practice:

> … for me that's yeah … that's become the most important part … its about growing as a person and we do so much … without having a subject on … there's so much … you just grow so much as a person by doing a lot of these things … like with all the things … its about becoming more reflective and stuff like that and it just starts to become … you know … you try … I do … I try a lot of things out on myself first before you go and try it on other people … but through trying out things with yourself … you learn a lot more about yourself as well … when you're doing the subjects that you do … you're learning things about yourself and I don't know if that's the intention at a   st seems to happen that way … yeah I think the intention is to come here and learn … learn the subject matter … but learn about yourself and grow as a person as well …

Associated with this growth in confidence, a determination to achieve was evident, particularly through an awareness that some personal sacrifice was necessary in order to meet the challenge of completing study requirements:

> … I'm willing to make those sacrifices … I can see why and its just part of growing now … its not like … oh the world's going to end because I have to cut my hours back at work … or maybe not do this or not do that or I can't go and see my aunty or somebody

today … it will have to be a couple of days later or whatever … its like I just accept those things now and I just think well … sometimes sacrifices have to be made … but in the end ... that's going to get me to where I'm going and that's what's making me who I am …

A sense of determination was also linked to time and energy expended in study:

… I suppose it's a determination thing with me … I started this and I am gonna finish it … I'm going to try and I've been trying really hard so I guess you see a lot of people who do go to uni and drop out … I just think … you know … you wasted a lot of time … a lot of energy and a lot of heartache there and I guess that's what makes me so more determined to get to the end …

For some, university enrolment brought an acute awareness of the limitations of their formal education to date. Interestingly, several students were able to identify improved learning skills, either through plain observation or personal experience. As one student explained:

… my eldest is nineteen and I worked with her … at home … helped her to develop better school habits and I sort of learnt all that from teaching her how to pick up her study … yep which has made it a lot easier for me now to take on uni and I look back but it reflects in my study habits that I have formed … with my daughter I didn't participate in school … I wasn't the tuckshop lady or the Mum who went up and did the letters … with the younger ones I did the homework program and did my teacher aiding … but I've also helped in their learning styles … I've adapted them … made it easier for them to cope with the school experience … I sat back and watched other people how they've gone through it … and watched how they've developed it … even though I've got five … not one is the same … they are all different…

These comments illustrate the personal change associated with the students' learning process during their brief experience of university study, providing a good example of the development of their "*self*", a key pillar of lifelong education (Delors 1995). However, the realisation of the students' self-development ideal required the support of others and the overcoming of various challenges or barriers, another theme evident in the students' reflections.

Barriers

The students related many stories of challenge and hardship. Challenges came in the form of lack of family support, surviving poor health, facing family crises, suffering low self-esteem as learners and overcoming the isolation of off-campus study.

In terms of family support, some students lacked the cooperation and understanding of spouses and children and one student spoke of broken marriages:

> … oh … gosh … since I started here … oh goodness … well my husband was studying too so that was a big barrier … you know … I've heard some ladies talking about how even coming to study has even cost their marriage … you know … a piece of paper cost a marriage …

This student went on to describe how her study became a challenge in her own family but she kept going:

> … I mean at times when … gosh … I'd leave the housework go … there'd be a pile of washing in the laundry … dust piled right up in the corner then and cobwebs everywhere and I'm going ... no … I'm not going to worry about that … I'm just going to do my assignment and do my reading … get it out of the way … you know… and you know … even working … work commitments ... I had to stop work last year because I knew I was going down in my studies … I lost all interest … probably after three years I guess … I don't know if anybody will come up with answers but after three years … I was just so snowed down … I thought …three years … gosh … and I was feeling really down … I was going down … but then I said … no … what's more important … this is more important … my future … my kids' future … my life … you know and my kids are my motivators … cause they're part of me and I'm a part of them and if we learn together … how rewarding it is … you know?…

The students faced many personal challenges. One student related her struggle to overcome health problems and family bereavement:

> … I had my first year … I was pregnant and then that also came to an accident when I thought I was going to lose my mum … but she survived … then in the second year I lost my brother and my third year I fell into depression for three months … so this is my fourth year and like this month I've only just lost my aunty … and I'm still hangin' in there … so there's just a lot of … yeah … there's a lot of issues …

Another barrier to study identified by the students was linked to low self-esteem. Shyness, fear and a need to belong made the journey into university study daunting for some. As this student revealed:

> … well I remember when I first started ... I was very fearful … I only had … you know … I only went to grade 11 and I didn't complete 11 and 12 … I thought I was going to … you know … jump over a cliff because it just felt so … I felt this place was scary … it was frightening … it was a very scary experience for me because it made me feel disqualified in terms of education because I didn't feel a sense of belonging … and I didn't feel a sense of I could do it … I had low self esteem and I just didn't feel that I could do it … but university has made me feel more confident now because I am a changed person in terms of … you know … from the past and its just created a new me …

Despite the effect of such barriers, the students were determined to continue with their studies. Here the value of support became very evident.

Support

It became clear from the students that personal support from others was a critical aspect of the personal realisation of their vocational goals. In sharing their stories, they were able to identify specific sources of support including family, fellow students, university staff, the Weemala Indigenous Support Unit and especially the spirit of "oneness" that bound the group.

One student, referring to the support from her family, also identified their pride in her studies. This also served to motivate her to persist with her enrolment:

> … and you know, even though I have had setbacks and things like that … it doesn't matter … I pick myself up … I keep on going and that's what my family are proud of me for is that I keep going … I don't throw it all in because they know as much as I know … this is what I really … really want … and it's okay to fail … it's okay to have setbacks … and because family is so much a part of my life … sometimes its because of commitments I have with my family that … you know … study sort of gets put aside… but it's okay … it's okay with me that that happens …

Students also identified the influence of fellow students and work friends as key supporters of their continued study. This sense of "oneness" and support for each other is consistent with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultural norms of giving and sharing as brothers and

sisters. A number of students actually described the other students at the residential as sisters or as a family. As one explained:

> … yeah and I think for a lot of people that's why they do come back to residential … for some people that … you know … oh … I have to make it to the residential cause I've got to catch up with everybody as well … its not just to say oh … you know don't worry about the work … I'm just going to res to socialise… it's not like that … it's like you look forward to coming to residential cause that's when you get to catch up … that's when you get to see everybody again … you haven't seen them for a while and you miss them and it's like family … it's just the same as family …

Other students spoke about how the friendship and support of a particular student was vital. They often described the very strong individual relationships that form during the course. One student shared the importance of these close contacts as a way to stay motivated despite the tyranny of distance:

> … oh my, definitely it would have to be other students … I think that that's really important and I know that there's one student in our group that particularly rings me every week and although she lives in Townsville and I dread my phone bill … it's been really great … I know that she really prods me along all the time and even though I don't want to do it … she is sort of discussing some text … so that you HAVE to get up and get that text so you can discuss it over the phone … I definitely would say it's the bond between everybody at this university …

A significant source of support discussed by the students was the Weemala Indigenous Support Unit located on the McAuley campus of the Australian Catholic University and staffed by Indigenous Australians. The centre provides social, emotional, cultural and academic support to all Indigenous students studying at the university. The students were united in their view of the significance of this centre in supporting their sense of identity, which in turn supports their self-confidence to study. The comments by one student echoed the voices of many others:

> … yeah … I see that coming to this university has made me feel a sense of belonging like I have explained … but a warm family environment … but at this university … how it is set apart and it's … you know … they've got an Aboriginal unit … Aboriginal little environment there for the Aboriginal students and I feel a sense of belonging …

One student was wary of attending a university where she suspected the Indigenous Australian staff had probably adopted "white man's thinking". To her surprise, she found support provided for herself and her own community as her knowledge of her own culture and sense of "self" were extended:

> … a lot of the community here … you come from Palm or even Cherbourg … you know … and you come to university and think oh … you've trained at university level … you know your "white man thinking" … you know you're like them … but the fact is coming here to McAuley and studying the cultural courses … you're learning more … it's actually adding to your knowledge about your own … your own identity … your own culture … your own people … and taking that richness of that knowledge back to your own people and you are not really like "white man thinking" … you know … you are still your own … you still got that identity … you're still a part of your community … you haven't left the community … but you're taking back a richness to them … you know what I mean?… its just so wonderful about this whole thing at uni …

However, a key source of support that the students mentioned was an intangible sense of "oneness" that permeates participation in the course. This sense of "*oneness*" was talked about in terms of being a member of a wider family and in a place they identified with. It also extended to a sense of "*oneness*" as lecturers and students became learners together, inspired by each other, and working towards achieving a common goal. As two students explained:

> … it's the connection really … you're getting people from Thursday Island and a lady brings her child down … she is so inspiring … she brings this child with her and she just studies … I don't have those hiccups … because I waited for my children to be big enough to climb into the fridge themselves … what an inspiration … she must want it that much that she would bring her child … you know … I mean that's what I love is … the people that I see too … and if I see them at next res … that's fantastic … and if they go … that's a grief more so than "oh, they've failed" … it's more I won't see them …
>
> … and it's like, the group that we all have here it's not like "there's the first years so I am not going to go near them" sort of thing … it's all family … you know? … we are all family and my group is very close but then we like to extend that to everybody that is down at Weemala you know … like you say it's like family

> and if somebody can't come back … it's really sad because I am not going to get to see that person again and you know … I've learnt a lot from that person or such a beautiful person … we had really good conversations or something … but there's something that everybody brings … everybody brings something different with them and we all just share that sort of thing … and yeah … it's really good … I think we do a lot more cursing in groups sometimes than the academic side of it … but that's what life's about …

Recognising and acknowledging both the support from others and the need to overcome various barriers demonstrates a particular level of learning that these students have gained from life's experience. For some, the learning was obviously difficult; for others, it was a time of immense personal development. Ultimately, they all gained a unique level of personal development that underpinned and strengthened their resolve to undertake learning at a more formal level.

Success

What became clear to the writers during this study was the warm sense of achievement and success that these students voiced. The pride associated with achievement was often revealed as greater than the individual. The connection of personal achievement and wider social issues was revealed. References and links between the individual and their cultural heritage were often made, often through references to "*our mob*" or "*our community*". This combination of personal pride, influence and wider sensitivity can be seen in one student's comment:

> … when I rang him [eldest son] up earlier this year when we graduated and I said … you should have seen all the people … I didn't expect it … people just coming up to me … little old ladies you know … but everyone was coming up to me congratulating me … people I didn't even know … I just felt so good … in myself I said this was worth it … not big noting myself or anything … I was proud … you know … I am a humble person … but you know … they were just coming up to me and congratulating me … and I was feeling so overwhelmed you know … and when I said that to my boy … he said … you know mum … you deserve it you know because of what you did … you're one of the few of your own people coming through the system … going on and being a teacher and they're looking at you as a role model … and for my son to say that to me … that was so special

… and this is the influence I wanted to make … on my own kids … for my own kids and all those little kids I want to teach in the classroom … not just in our community … our Aboriginal community, but in the wider community … I mean Australia is a community in itself … I mean we talk about reconciliation … you know … we want everything for us … but we've got to give too … we've got to give out the wider community … I mean we gotta keep giving … God says… you know … we just keep giving in this way and learning … you gotta learn what the other community is like and then get them to learn ours … it's a give and take situation … for us to live in harmony and have this reconciliation so that it can be positive … you know what I mean… do you understand what I am talking about? …

Conclusion

As seen from the stories told in this paper, the eight students while undertaking formal university study are learning a great deal about themselves. The learning process being experienced is encouraging the fullest development of each individual's potential thus enabling them to act with even greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility. Of the four pillars Delors identified as the foundation of learning through life, one in particular, "Learning to be" (Delors 1995, p. 37), encapsulates so well the learning recorded here. Unfortunately, the reader, without hearing the actual voices telling the stories, can only share a limited appreciation of the personal development each speaker is experiencing. As they struggled to tell their stories, the emotion, even passion, associated with the self-determination and success of these people emerged. The transcripts do not adequately share that experience. Despite what might be seen as considerable personal, social and academic barriers, these students were united in their commitment to achieve their goals. At the same time, the influence of their actions on others, including their family and community, was similarly noteworthy. In this respect, their journey was truly one of success.

Almost by default, the students, in the very process of sharing their stories, blurred the traditional barriers between teacher and student and so taught the writers. In being part of their journey we became acutely aware of and sensitive to the trust that was being displayed toward us. We sat and listened to people who told us of the highs and

lows of their personal struggle to learn and to achieve. For that, we were humbled as we, too, learnt.

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Chapter 8

Managing Indigenous Involvement in and Control over Research

Graeme Gower and Les Mack

Research in Indigenous communities has historically been controlled and dominated by non-Indigenous researchers. The research methodologies used have been inappropriate and have centred on non-Indigenous frames of reference which in turn has not promoted Indigenous involvement and ownership over the research activity. By using the notion of Indigenous self determination to underscore the research processes with a view to establishing partnerships informed and framed by Indigenous social, cultural decision making processes, Indigenous communities could achieve significant benefits from research and be enriched and empowered by it. This paper discusses a number of research principles which should be acknowledged when conducting research in Indigenous communities. These principles will then be used to analyse fieldwork experiences in a range of Indigenous community contexts.

Introduction

The principle of Indigenous self-determination underpins the approach to research used by Kurongkurl Katitjin: School of Indigenous Australian Studies at Edith Cowan University. This is reflected in the primary objective of its strategic plan:

> [To ensure that] Indigenous Australian people are involved in and have control over research involving Indigenous people.
> *(Kurongkurl Katitjin 2000, p.11)*

A framework of principles developed to guide the management of a major research project defines this objective. The research project is an investigation of effective teaching strategies aimed at addressing consequences of conductive hearing loss (CHL) in Indigenous students in urban, rural and remote environments. The challenge for

this project, in relation to the Kurongkurl Katitjin's commitment to community involvement, lies in the diverse contexts in which it is being conducted, including urban, rural and remote schools. Although the project is in the early stages of its implementation, a number of issues are beginning to emerge. The research project has been designed to fulfil one of the strategies of the National Indigenous English, Literacy & Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS), a comprehensive assault by Commonwealth agencies and government, Catholic and independent authorities on low levels of literacy and numeracy among Aboriginal students.

This paper has been prepared in the context of the early stages of the research project. Its insights are therefore formative in nature and presented with the aim of exploring the boundaries of research in Indigenous communities and clarifying the notion of "self-determination" in educational research in a range of Indigenous social environments.

This paper commences by outlining the response of Indigenous communities to research. It then provides a brief overview of the principles which have been developed by Kurongkurl Katitjin to guide the approach taken by members of the research team. These principles are then used to analyse fieldwork experiences in a range of Indigenous community contexts. This is done with a view to developing insights into some of the issues that the research team has had to deal with.

Indigenous Experiences and Responses to Research

Barbara Shaw expressed with great passion the views of many Indigenous people towards non-Indigenous appropriation of their knowledge:

> White people have destroyed a lot of our culture, they have stolen our land, and stolen our children. They have learnt our languages to use for their own advantage. They will not be allowed to steal our knowledge. Aboriginal people can no longer share the intimacy of their identity (Cited in Williams & Stewart 1992, unpaged).

Her position is one that has been held for some time by Indigenous people, as illustrated by McNamara's address, some thirteen years earlier, to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs:

> For years [Indigenous Australians] have been researched to death, first by anthropologists, later by social scientists, and, in more

recent years, they have been almost inundated by almost everyone else (1979, unpaged).

More recently Foley (2000) describes current approaches to research involving Indigenous people as "neo-colonial and paternalistic" and as providing little benefit to the communities involved and having the potential to do them serious harm. His views echo those of Melville and Rankine (2000), Smith (1997), and Roberts, all of whom argue that research involving Indigenous people must be "within culturally intelligible and acceptable frames of reference" (Roberts, quoted in Harslett, Harrison, Godfrey, Partington, & Richer 1999, p. 17).

For many Indigenous communities that have been the subjects of research their experience has been disempowering where local decision-making processes have been undermined and devalued and researchers have failed to take into account community social, cultural and economic priorities. Indeed, it is common for Indigenous people to cite examples of research being undertaken through the application of "inappropriate, unacceptable, devious and degrading research methodologies" (Anderson et al., cited in Melville and Rankine 2000, p. 71) and for this to cause harm to individuals and communities.

A Case for Participatory Research

Researchers must accept that intergenerational marginalisation experienced by Indigenous communities and their limited access to mainstream educational resources (Eckerman 1981, p. 6) mean a significantly unequal power relationship exists between the researchers and the majority of Indigenous Australians, many of whom do not have the resources to influence the application of research or the interpretation of its findings. Researchers therefore need to accept that "equality does not mean identical treatment" (Dodson & Prichard 1998) and that protocols for conducting research with Indigenous people and communities require special consideration with a view to ensuring that investigations are conducted in a manner that is committed to the notion of developing research "partnerships based on equivalent levels of authority" with Indigenous communities (Mack & Gower 2001, p. 4).

Williams and Stewart (1992) support the notion of partnerships in education research and describe the research processes used at Yirrikala as "an outstanding example of [the transformation of]

critical thought into emancipatory action" (p. 9). They argue that participatory action research which involves the development of knowledge through genuine partnerships between the researchers and the communities is "the most appropriate and powerful research methodology for achieving … a self-sustaining process of critical analysis and enlightened action" (p. 6) in Indigenous communities. Waldram's (1998) experience of research involving prisoners (the least powerful social group in any society) in the United States supports this view. Like Williams and Stewart, Waldram argues that for this process to occur the research needs to be conducted on the basis of mutual benefit. The Kurongkurl Katitjin CHL research project team members are of the view that such an approach avoids the consequences of Eurocentric data collection, analysis and interpretation which often lead to the construction of Indigenous communities as the problem (Melville & Rankin 2000 p. 71).

Kurongkurl Katitjin's Guiding Principles for Conducting Education Research in Indigenous Communities

Kurongkurl Katitjin's research team has drawn on the ideas of Indigenous education leaders such as Williams, the research experience of academics working at the school and other community and higher education institutions, such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2000), the University of Queensland (2002), and the National Health and Medical Research Council, when developing its framework for this research project. The framework is outlined below and was first published in a paper presented at the 2001 Australian Association for Research in Education conference (2001 pp. 5–7).

Commitment to Indigenous Self-determination

Local Indigenous decision-making frameworks must be the starting point for all research in Indigenous contexts. This is necessary for two reasons: to ensure that the Indigenous community's role in any investigation is founded on real authority and to enable researchers to gain insights which go beyond their cultural framework and experience.

Research as a Process of Empowerment

Research that involves Indigenous communities must be implemented in a way that creates opportunities for empowering the community. The key to this idea lies in the nature of research partnerships and the conditions under which they are established and informed by Indigenous frameworks and understandings.

Informed Consent

The development of partnerships commences with the process of gaining informed consent. Informed consent must be founded on the notion of mutual benefit. The partnership should not be coercive in nature; that is, the community should not find itself in a position where it is unable to refuse to participate and, therefore, becomes a reluctant partner.

Research Partnerships

Self-determination must go beyond the initial consent processes. Partnerships between the researcher and the researched need to be established in a way which ensures that Indigenous sensibilities are acknowledged and incorporated through a process of ongoing negotiation and review.

Indigenous Community Researchers

Community researchers have a key role to play in the establishment and maintenance of partnerships. Local people who understand the culture, ethics, relationships and language of the communities need to be employed. Their role should be aligned with the interests of the communities they serve; they should keep the communities informed of the true nature of the research, while at the same time advising the researchers of appropriate modes of engaging the community.

Community Cultural Priorities

It is important that research does not interfere with the cultural fabric of Indigenous communities and that investigations operate within the social and cultural framework that the community has defined through its way of life and stated protocols. Therefore, Kurongkurl Katitjin's approach to research includes the maintenance and support of the cultural priorities of the communities involved.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data should be undertaken with a view to reinforcing and refining the research partnership with the aim of considering how the findings can be used to benefit the development of the community. This is the most important element in the research cycle, from an Indigenous community point of view, as it is through a process of informed reflection that the community is empowered by the findings and insights that may be created.

Publication of Findings

The final principle concerns the publication of findings. This aspect of a research project is often the stage that causes the most tension as it has the potential to harm communities by placing intimate details of their lives in the public domain. Material prepared for publication therefore needs to be vetted through mechanisms that are appropriate to the Indigenous communities concerned.

Fieldwork Experiences to Date

This section of the paper will outline a number of fieldwork experiences encountered by the research team and will highlight some emerging issues which conflict with the ideal research framework proposed in this paper. A brief outline of some related logistical issues is also provided.

1. Ethical Clearance

While this is an education research project, medical ethical clearances are required from State Indigenous health and medical services. Although ethical clearance to conduct research involving humans has been obtained through Edith Cowan University's Ethical Research Committee, delays have been experienced in obtaining medical ethical clearances. This has been due to the postponement of meetings as a result of the membership failing to reach a quorum and the absence of a committee chairperson.

In addition, local health services and Indigenous health agencies have also required ethical approval. This is in line with guidelines outlined by the National Health and Medical Research Council on ethical matters concerning Indigenous health research (2002). Without medical clearance from State and local levels, the research team has

been unable to access medical records of participating students. Consequently, the team has had to proceed on the assumption that all participating students may have some level of hearing loss. Once permission to access medical records is received, the students concerned will be able to be identified and their progress tracked more specifically. Discussions regarding the research project, however, have taken place with all government and Indigenous health organisations involved in the research project (A. Galloway, Research Associate, personal communication, April 30, 2002).

Reflective Comment

A commitment to self-determination is one of the principles outlined in the research framework that has been identified in this paper. Although it is necessary to liaise with and to seek ethical clearance from peak Indigenous bodies, such as health services and other Indigenous agencies, self-determination at the community level is often overlooked in the initial approval process. The liaison process takes time away from dealing and consulting with Indigenous communities who are involved in the research. Kurongkurl Katitjin in this context defines self-determination as dealing at the "grassroots" level, where maximum engagement at the community level is emphasised.

2. Responses to Consent

Consent for this research project falls under two categories: one for the collection of academic data and the other, the collection of medical data concerning those children who have been identified as having Conductive Hearing Loss. The focus of this project is the effectiveness of teaching strategies being used with Indigenous students with CHL. Participants in the project include Indigenous students, non-Indigenous students in the participating classes, Indigenous education workers, and teachers. Consent to participate in this project is required from all of these groups.

In relation to Indigenous students with CHL, the team needs access to both their academic and medical records. In addition, video and audio recordings will be made of these students' classroom interactions. Permission for these facets of the project is covered by the consent forms sent to caregivers of Indigenous students. This form involves positive consent: that is, caregivers must sign a consent form

to say that they are willing for their children to be involved in the project. In most school contexts, an Indigenous education worker or a teacher well-known to the caregivers visits each family and discusses involvement in the project, and seeks the caregiver's consent for the child's participation.

In relation to non-Indigenous students in participating classes, permission has to be obtained from caregivers of these students, also, for their children to be included in any recordings of classroom interaction. This incidental recording has been able to be handled through a process of negative consent, whereby caregivers only have to respond to the request for their children's participation if they do not want their children included in any recordings. The University Ethics Committee was reluctant to agree to the use of negative consent, but did so subject to certain conditions in recognition of the special nature of the situation. Under this arrangement consent forms had to be mailed to the caregivers, and a reply paid envelope included to facilitate response. If caregivers do not reply, it is assumed that they agree to their children's participating in the project. This approach has been adopted because the material obtained in relation to non-Indigenous students is not directly relevant to the research.

In relation to Indigenous education workers and teachers, positive consent is used. Their signing of the consent form indicates that they are willing to participate in the project.

To date, most caregivers of Indigenous students are willing to have their children participate, and most Indigenous education workers and teachers are also willing to be involved in the project. However, not all are willing to participate in videotaped lessons. In these cases, data will be collected by audio recording only. The reasons for unwillingness to be videoed vary. In the case of Indigenous students, where caregivers refuse permission for their children to be videoed, the main reasons are caregiver concerns revolving around issues of custody and domestic violence. In the case of teachers, the main reason for not wishing to be videoed is reticence to be filmed for fear of highlighting pedagogic shortcomings, or embarrassment about appearance in front of a camera. Another issue for some teachers is that of confidence. Many of the teachers in participating schools are recent graduates, and so still "finding their feet" in the classroom. Hence, the thought of being observed by experienced and relatively unknown educators is rather daunting. Further, they do not want the

additional threat to classroom equilibrium that the presence of video recording equipment inevitably brings. It is likely that as some of them get to know the research team, they may be more willing to agree to some videoing. A case in point is one young teacher at a rural school, who, in her first term of teaching, has had a very bad experience with a student whom the principal describes as a challenge even to very experienced staff. At present, the incident has shaken the young teacher's confidence very badly, and the principal has suggested that she should not be videoed for the time being. The principal feels that in time, as the teacher's confidence returns, she will probably see the benefits of this form of recording and be interested in this aspect of the project. However, the teacher needs to regain her confidence and to develop confidence in the researchers first (A. Galloway, personal communication, April 19 & 30).

Reflective Comments

The responses received so far appear to indicate that, overall, the consent process used by the research team is good and that there has been "informed consent". On the other hand, however, the use of "negative" consent for non-Indigenous participants by the research team does not reinforce the principles of informed consent among parents and caregivers of non-Indigenous children. Many research projects, including the CHL project, are subject to strict timeframes. Smith (1997) suggests that sufficient time be requested from funding authorities in order to achieve meaningful consultation and understanding among Indigenous participants. This will in turn lead to quality and meaningful results. The use of "negative" consent is possibly a very convenient way of increasing the number of participants in an exercise; however, it does not promote the principles underlying informed consent, nor does it create opportunities for partnerships and engagement at the community level.

3. Gaining Access to School Communities

A total of fifteen schools have been contacted and have agreed to participate in the CHL research project. Six schools are located in the metropolitan area, a further six in rural areas and three in remote locations. The three industry partners who are involved in the CHL research project, Education Department, Catholic Education and Aboriginal Independent Schools, have selected a number of schools to

participate in the study. Two schools have delayed their decision to participate in the project. One school is currently dealing with a conflict situation involving parents and teachers while the second school has referred the matter to a non-Indigenous person to negotiate with the research team. It is probable that the community has appointed this person to assess all external interests as previous experiences with researchers and other officials have not been regarded as beneficial (G. Partington, personal communication, April 17, 2002).

Reflective comment

The responses from three community schools will be described in highlighting the range of acceptance of the CHL project:

Remote School No.1

The school community has given its full support to the project and has provided good access to the research team and this response has greatly assisted in the development of a sound working relationship between the two parties. It is believed that this relationship will allow for quality time with relevant community people and will promote a sound level of community participation and understanding of the project. This scenario reinforces a number of research principles outlined in the paper including self-determination, informed consent, research partnerships and research as a process of empowerment.

Remote school No.2

This school was identified as a possible location due to its proximity to other schools with similar profiles. In this case the research team could not gain access to the community chairperson and was referred to a non-Indigenous senior teacher of the school who played a dominant role in community affairs. As a result, the research team decided to withdraw this school from the project as it was felt that a lengthy process of negotiation would have created an unreasonable burden on the resources of the research team.

Rural school

The research team has encountered a situation where both school staff and community members are supportive of being involved in the CHL research project, but a conflict issue involving parents and staff from the school has arisen. This has resulted in differences between the two stakeholders and the project team has been unable to involve this school in the project.

4. Privacy Act Provisions

Under the Privacy Act, access to names of students and their addresses could not be obtained directly by the research team due to the issue of confidentiality. After consulting with the Education Department it was decided that schools be given the responsibility of mailing consent forms (for the purposes of incidental video and audio recordings) and receiving responses covering all students from pre-primary to Year 1. Only the names of those students whose caregivers had consented were to be passed on to the research team (A. Galloway, personal communication, April 19 & 30, 2002).

Reflective Comment

Although provisions under the Privacy Act are enforced to protect individuals from harm in all aspects, the process can inadvertently create a further step for researchers to engage directly with community participants. Under the principle of informed consent, which is described in this paper, the Privacy Act in this context does not allow those targeted in the research to engage in open discussion regarding the activity proposed and any implications the activity may have for the individual. It is considered that the requirements of the Privacy Act may prevent informed consent being achieved or at least delay it for significant lengths of time.

5. Contacting School Principals

Difficulties have been experienced in making telephone contact with some school principals when trying to make appointments and gathering information. In some instances, the principal has been dealing with crisis situations within the school, while in smaller schools principals often have a teaching load themselves (A. Galloway, personal communication, April 19 & 30, 2002) and this has the effect of their treating the CHL Research Project as a low priority.

Reflective comment

Although school principals and staff may support the CHL research project, they often have higher priorities to deal with in their daily work. As a consequence they give less time and attach less importance to the research project. This circumstance has the potential to inhibit the level of community involvement in the project, as the cooperation

of the administration of schools is usually the only means of gaining initial access to the community.

6. Incidental Logistical Issues

There have also been some related logistical issues and events that have taken place. These include:

- Dealing with bureaucracy or other administrative layers. When we were making arrangements to obtain reply paid envelopes, Australia Post advised that we had to comply with their systems by using bar coding and street numbers for each individual school. In addition, a private firm had to be approached to undertake the printing of the reply paid envelopes as the volume required was too small to be handled by Australia Post.
- Large distances between the various research locations made travelling arduous and dangerous. For example, two members of the research team were involved in a vehicle rollover after a collision with a cow in a remote area of the State. Airline schedules to some destinations are orientated to holidaymakers rather than business people and have contributed to researchers' having to spend additional time away.
- The NIELN strategy includes the funding of a number of elements including those focused on conductive hearing loss initiatives in specific districts. Some initiatives are competing with each other, and this has made it difficult to maintain rigorous controls, causing the selections of schools to be changed.

Conclusion

Research with Indigenous communities has historically been demeaning for them, as it has been centred on non-Indigenous frames of reference. The knowledge that has been developed from processes of this kind has often been of little tangible benefit to the communities involved in the research and in many cases has caused them harm. As part of its management of a large research project Kurongkurl Katitjin has developed a set of principles to guide the research team in the methods that it uses. Core elements of these principles include the notion of Indigenous self-determination through the development of research partnerships that are established on community-based decision-making frameworks.

Early stages of the research project indicate that the guiding principles have been largely met and are a useful tool for the research team. It was found, however, that the time constraints that the team members are working under, as a result of a range of issues, impact directly on the ability of team members to develop sound working relationships with Indigenous communities. This was anticipated and reflected in the element of the guiding principle concerned with informed consent, published in Mack and Gower (2001). However, it is felt that the issue of suitable timeframes, as identified by Smith (1997 p. 28), is one which needs to be treated as a separate element of the guiding principles if the notion of Indigenous self-determination is to be a substantial part of the research process.

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Chapter 9

Minority Group Educational Success

A Review of Research in the United States and Australia

Terry Kessaris

This paper examines the works of a small number of American and Australian authors who are concerned with minority group academic success. The American focus is primarily on African-American academic achievement but it includes studies on Native American students and Asian-American students and also makes cross-references to studies on Hispanic students. The Australian research focuses solely on various aspects of Indigenous educational success and includes an Australian Aboriginal and Navaho Native American comparative study. The paper concludes with a brief summary and discussion of the findings.

The authors include Rindone (1988), Ford (1992), Ford, Harrison III, Webb, Jones (1994), Sue and Okazaki (1990), Lee, Winfield and Wilson, (1991), McInerney (1994), Day (1996), Forbes-Harper (1996) and Gibson (1996). The work of each author will be outlined in the order in which they appear above.

The research of Pauline Rindone (1988) is largely concerned with the effect of culture on defining achievement and achievement motivation amongst Native Americans. She refers to the work of Maehr (1974) and Nichols (1980) who suggest that "success" or "failure" appear to be culturally and situationally determined rather than universal concepts. It was on this premise that she set out to examine the backgrounds of Navajo college graduates who had completed at least a four-year degree course to determine the "most influential" factors in the attainment of their degrees. The participants numbered 107 and were interviewed, through written correspondence, about factors such as family characteristics, educational background, socio-economic status, language background and demographic data. The results were as follows:

- Parents and family members were the driving force in the student's desire to achieve.

- Socio-economic status bore little or no correlation to achievement motivation and academic achievement. The majority of students came from families whose incomes were very low, and the father's occupation was that of labourer.
- Parents generally had low educational levels.
- Approximately half (53%) the participants indicate that their teacher encouraged them to succeed in schools.
- Over two thirds (68%) stated that they desired to achieve academically.

On the last point, Rindone asserts that this is in contrast with the overwhelming amount of literature stating that minority students underachieve because of "lack of motivation" and "having no desire to excel" (Bryde, 1971; Kluckholm & Leighton, 1966 cited in Rindone 1988, p. 2).

Rindone infers from her findings that "It may be for Navajo families a stable family life with traditional values becomes a more important determinant of achievement" than more widely reported factors of higher educational and occupational family levels (1988, p. 3). She adds that in a similar study by Amodeo and Martin (1982), family encouragement was the most motivating factor in Hispanic students' academic success as well. She also contends that desire to achieve is high amongst Native Americans and other minority groups but that it is only recently that "these groups have been afforded the opportunities to express these motives via education" (1988, p. 4).

Donna Ford's (1992) study explored the social, cultural and psychological factors that can influence achievement among early adolescent African-American students in gifted and regular academic programs. A total of 148 fifth and sixth graders participated in the study. They came from a small, urban school district in north-eastern Ohio, USA. The school district was 99.9% African-American. Students were surveyed individually and responded to questions on a scale of 1–4, that is, strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Ford's findings include the following:

1. Gifted students were more supportive of the American achievement ideology and less supportive of items that reflected pessimism about schooling than were average students.

2. Gifted students were more likely to hold positive ideas and values about education and democracy.

3. Students not identified as gifted were less hopeful and less positive.

4. These students tended to personify a paradox of under-achievement more than did gifted students.

She concludes that educators need to place more emphasis on students' beliefs, values and perceptions and should encourage students to see the value of achievement ideology and of schooling.

Research by Ford, Harrison III, Webb & Jones (1994) presents a critique of Fordham's (1988) article on "racelessness" as a factor in Black educational achievement. They discuss peer pressure, and the phenomenon of "acting white" in educational settings as a strategy for achievement.

Signithia Fordham's definition of "acting white" is behaviour that is associated with denying one's Indigenous culture and assimilating into the dominant culture as a strategy for success. She questions the usefulness of such a strategy because it is has high psychological costs.

Ford et al. (1994) support the assertion that "racial"/ethnic difference affects the psychological health of minority students, noting that some African-Americans have used the term "hellish confusion" (McClain, 1983) to describe the pressure of having to operate in two social cultural contexts which are embedded with dominant/subordinate power disparities. The authors also note that educational processes portray many negative perceptions of Blacks and their culture, so students often distance themselves from "Blackness" by "acting white" or underachieve or drop out. These writers assert too that the issue of colour may be more of an issue for Black students than for any other minority group (Cross & Thomas).

However, Ford et al. (1994) give another view of the racelessness theory by referring to the work of Banks (1979), Exum and Colangelo (1981), and others who have demonstrated that Blacks can successfully function in distinctly different cultures, primarily by "code switching". That is, by adapting to whatever cultural situation they find themselves in by modifying such things as speech and dress. This behaviour is not intended to minimise their "blackness" as they are proud of their cultural heritage. Rather, as reported by Hare (1965), "acting white" can be used as a strategy to break down discrimination. So quite often they are comfortably Black in the absence of Whites and "act white" in the presence of Whites.

Ford et al. (1994) also point out that Fordham's study was conducted in "racially" integrated settings where "acting white" is a survival strategy which has greater immediacy in its responses. In contrast, they refer to Ford's (1992) study in an almost one hundred per cent Black school environment which found that Black youth did not necessarily equate acting white with achievement, success in life or even behaviour unique to white students. Instead, they associated acting white with certain social behaviours, such as speech and dress, rather than with academic achievement. Consequently, the concept of race rejection may be less pressing and less academically and psychologically deleterious to early adolescent Black students in predominantly or all-Black school districts.

They stress that it is important for educators to teach Black students how to cope effectively with feeling different, inferior and otherwise isolated from both cultures. They also believe that educators are advised to speak openly with Blacks about racial issues. They quote Kochman (1981) as saying that Blacks prefer to speak openly about racism and discrimination rather than to ignore or avoid such discussions. A positive identity or enhanced self concept is critical for academic, social and personal success. They conclude that "achieving a measure of success in society is, by and large, a far more difficult task for blacks than it is for other Americans. All of society—educators, parents and community leaders, have a role to play in enhancing the racial identity and achievement of black youth. A positive racial identity may result when black students are freed from the racial stereotypes others impose on them" (Ford et al. 1994, p. 29).

Asian-American students are the subject of research authored by Stanley Sue and Sumie Okazaki (1990).

Asian-American students are amongst the most highly achieving students in America of all groups, and academics have tried to explain their success against the backdrop of minority group status and racism. These authors put forward the concept of relative functionalism to explain this group's success. That is, Asian-Americans have pursued education as the only viable means of upward mobility because they have experienced limitations and restrictions in other achievement endeavours which do not rely on education.

Sue and Okazaki say that researchers, in trying to explain this phenomenon, have presented two contrasting hypotheses, one being inherited differences in intelligence between Asians and whites and the other being Asian cultural values that encourage education. These authors support neither of these hypotheses as they are not convinced by the data presented and they believe that education for Asian-American students takes on a greater importance than can be predicted from cultural values. They argue that "educational success, increased numbers of educated Asian role models, and limitations in mobility in other areas contribute to performance, above and beyond that which can be predicted from Asian cultural values" (Sue and Okazaki 1990).

Valerie E. Lee, Linda F. Winfield and Thomas C. Wilson (Lee et al. 1991) focused their efforts on identifying individual family and school factors that influence high-achieving African-American students. They also paid special attention to identifying particular academic behaviours displayed by these students. The target group was 661 African-American eighth-graders who scored above the population mean on reading proficiency. The comparison group was 1894 African-American eighth graders whose reading proficiency level was below the population mean. Their findings were organised under the headings of background differences, school differences and academic behavioural differences.

The findings from this study can be summarised as follows:

Most of the African-American students were relatively poor and had working mothers, although the higher achieving group had better financial circumstances than the average group of students. As well, high-achieving African-American students read considerably more, completed homework and watched a little less television—they generally made better use of their time. Schools conducive to achieving higher grades tended to offer a more disciplined environment, an enriched curriculum including science, art and music and rigorous reading remediation programs. Consequently the authors concluded that school-based factors rather than family background factors accounted more for the differences in higher and lower achieving students.

Australian Research Findings

Although there appears to be very little research into successful academic achievement with Indigenous groups in Australia, we have

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located four studies and will discuss each in turn. McInerney and McInerney (1994), Day (1996), Forbes-Harper (1996) and Gibson (1996) explore the topic of academic achievement across a diverse age and cultural cross-section of Indigenous students.

McInerney and McInerney (1994) explored the application of achievement goal theory in their cross-cultural research with Australian Aboriginal children and Navajo children. These writers examined the topic of achievement goal theory with two Indigenous minorities, New South Wales Aboriginal Australians and Navajo Indians of the United States. The focus of the research was to assess the relevance of achievement goal theory across distinctive cultural school settings. The researchers asked the following questions:

- Are the dimensions of the *Maehr* model (multiple goals and sense of self) relevant to the Australian Aboriginal and Navajo groups?
- What are the most important motivational goals of Australian Aboriginal and Navajo students derived from this model and how do these relate to extant literature?
- How do these goals relate to important criteria of school motivation such as school confidence, perceived value of school, desired occupation after leaving school, GPA (grade point average), absenteeism and intention to complete schooling?

The significant finding of this research was that Aboriginal and Navajo children's school motivation were linked to "sense of self". In addition, the research also found that Aboriginal and Navajo parental attitudes towards school greatly influenced children's perceptions of school and continued interest in school. Students were more likely to achieve at school if they got the message from their family that school was important and worthwhile. Successful Aboriginal students had parents who monitored their school work and provided resources that helped their children's education. As well, it was important that students got clear messages from the school that they could succeed and were given challenging and interesting work. The study clearly recognises that further research is needed to take into account culturally specific factors or motivation.

Day's (1996) ethnographic study examined the academic success of six Indigenous high school students in Darwin, Northern Territory. His question was: What are the "specific and powerful factors that contribute to success for Indigenous students?"

His study revealed the following key characteristics pertaining to successful academic achievement for secondary students.

- Strong personal and Aboriginal identity. For example, all students and their parents were very proud of their Aboriginal culture and heritage and at the same time students valued individualism and claimed the right to be accepted for who they were.

- Display of academically purposeful learning behaviour. For instance, students had a strong desire to succeed at school; most had clear, long-term career goals; and most put study before family or peer obligations.

- Positive relationship and support within the family. That is, all students seemed to have good relationship with their parents and had strong support from their family to do well at school.

- Parents and students possessed some school and Western cultural knowledge and attitudes which were important for success at school. These included students' consciously choosing friends on the basis of their attitude toward school; parents and students understanding the importance of homework; and parental support in the provision of a quiet study space at home (Day 1996).

Forbes-Harper (1996) and Gibson (1996) approach the notion of successful academic achievement differently from the other writers, in that they both sought to assist the reader to identify giftedness among Aboriginal students rather than explore the phenomenon of Indigenous students succeeding academically.

Forbes-Harper (1996) looked at identifying giftedness, and critiqued the prescribed ways in which giftedness has been determined by non-Indigenous values. Her examination of students at Kormilda College in Darwin highlights the extreme Indigenous cultural differences that need to be considered when determining giftedness amongst students. Forbes-Harper also discusses the role of Indigenous people in defining their own giftedness and success criteria. Gibson (1996) essentially recommends a ten-point measure of giftedness which was developed by Frasier (1996) from her minority group research in the United States. Forbes-Harper (1996) reminds readers that although identifying giftedness amongst culturally different students is a difficult and often conflicting exercise, schools should not avoid their responsibility to cater for all students.

Discussion

Often successful Indigenous students are overlooked or classed as exceptions to the rule. However, why these students achieve in spite of, and possibly because of, the barriers that plague Indigenous students, is not fully understood. Indigenous education has extensively explored the reasons for academic and school failure of Indigenous students but limited research has been invested in attempting to understand successful academic achievement. The main findings of this analysis indicate the following key themes which might be the subject of further research on this most important topic:

Student Characteristics

- Strong personal identity
- Strong cultural identity
- Clear long-term goals
- Parental support of educational goals
- Strong student motivation to succeed academically
- Positive student beliefs about the value of education
- Student and family prioritisation of school demands such as completion of assignments and homework
- Effective use of time
- Familiarity with and ability to operate effectively within the culture of the school

Structural Characteristics

- School support for student cultural identity and strategies for coping effectively with feeling different and perhaps, sometimes, isolated from both cultures
- High teacher expectations of all students
- Support for students in setting and achieving goals
- Strong emphasis on reading proficiency programs, culturally relevant content and appropriate feedback
- Teacher emphasis on understanding students' beliefs, values, and perceptions about the value of school
- Teacher encouragement for students to see the value of school achievement
- Importance of identifying and supporting gifted students

- Issues related to poverty need to be addressed to increase students' opportunities to succeed

Key lessons for Indigenous Australians might include ongoing support for programs which encourage family involvement in the school such as Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness (ASSPA) as well as urgently encouraging high teacher expectations of Indigenous abilities. They might also include concentrating the numbers of Indigenous students in higher level academic school programs to minimise chronic stress caused by the pressure of being different and being perceived as inferior. It is clear from the research that individual progression through a white majority school is psychologically stressful and inhibitive to Indigenous achievement.

It can also be inferred from the research that financial support for Indigenous students pursuing education would be a contributing factor to Indigenous academic success and still needs to be addressed on a number of levels. As reported, minority group students in America, who managed to succeed despite their low family incomes, were still considerably better off than academically average students. At the very least, economic support should be reflected in maintaining DETYA programs for Indigenous education rather than continuing the perceived current trend of cutbacks and mainstreaming of Indigenous funding programs.

Indigenous people somehow manage to be successful despite the compelling odds which are stacked against them, and little is understood of how this is so. It is hoped that a focus on factors pertaining to success will significantly add to our knowledge of improving Indigenous educational outcomes and will greatly enhance the relatively slow rate of change.

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Chapter 10

The Adventures of Eli the Dragonfly

Standard Australian English CD-ROM Project

Sandra Brogden and Marisa Kelly

Background

"We call upon the Church—her people, her leaders and her children—to listen with new ears, to see with new eyes, what was and what always will be—to be awakened to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life ways, cultures and spiritualities" (as spoken by Aboriginal representatives at the National Catholic Education Conference ACT 1996).

The above statement supports and reflects the policy of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) recognises the uniqueness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their identity and culture.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the primary educators of their children. They are concerned with issues of education and the CECWA supports their involvement in decisions concerning the education of their children (CECWA Policy 2001).

Aboriginal people are involved in all levels of decision making within the Catholic Education system in Western Australia. The Catholic Education Office has established an Aboriginal consultative body in each of the four dioceses of Western Australia, the Catholic Education Aboriginal Committees (CEAC). Membership from the four regional committees constitutes the State CEAC. The purpose of CEAC is to provide advice on all matters related to Aboriginal education to Catholic Education in Western Australia.[16] In 1995 the CEAC became a standing committee of the CECWA. In the following

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[16] The Catholic Education Aboriginal Committee (CEAC) have stated the preferred use of the term Aboriginal to describe the Indigenous people of Western Australia. This term will be used throughout this paper.

year the Chairman of CEAC became a member of the CECWA—a move which provided a vehicle for Aboriginal involvement in all areas of decision making within Catholic education.

The Catholic Education Office (CEO) of WA is responsible for 156 schools, approximately 62,000 students, 2400 of whom are Aboriginal. Of the total number of Aboriginal students, 1400 attend schools in the Kimberley.

The CEO Broome provides ongoing support for thirteen Catholic schools in the Kimberley region and is the sole provider of education for seven Kimberley communities.
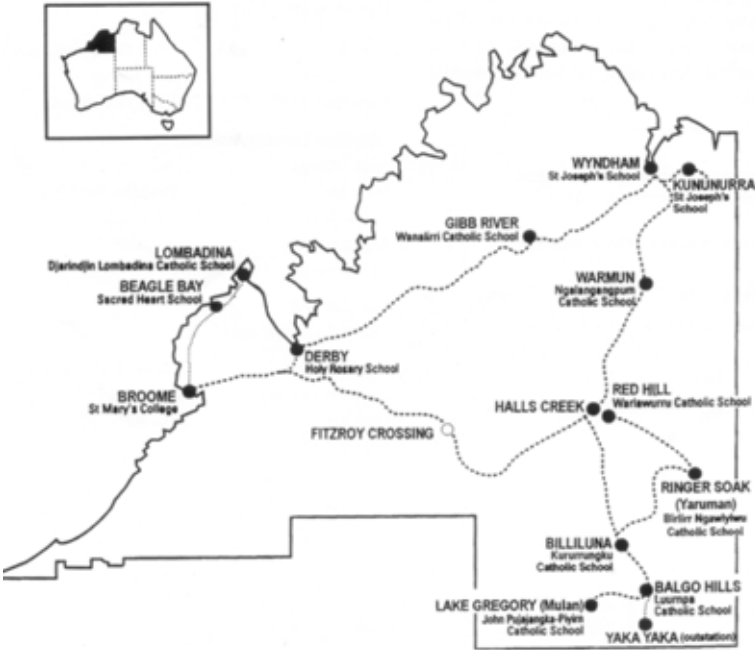
Figure 1
{caption required for figure 1}

In keeping with the CECWA policy and with support from the Kimberley Regional CEAC, Catholic Education in the Kimberley has adopted and promoted a policy of Two Way Learning:

> There shall be a two way approach to education between Catholic schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people learn from each other. A two way approach to education is experienced when the Aboriginal perspectives in the teaching and learning process are given equal importance to that of the non-Aboriginal culture (CECWA Policy 2001).

Two Way Learning can be defined as:

> … a philosophy of education which aims to provide students with a broad outlook on life, skills and knowledge coming from the two cultural ways of life, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. By having two way learning in their schooling, students can learn to value both traditions. Non-Aboriginal students will grow in their understanding of Aboriginal people and learn to appreciate the richness of that culture. Aboriginal students will better understand the non-Aboriginal ways and learn to operate in the modern world without losing their own cultural identity.
>
> <div align="right">(CEO, Kimberley Region, 1994)</div>

The process of engaging in Two Way Learning is more complex than simply adding a bit of "Aboriginal content" to the curriculum. Ideally, it means more than acknowledging the different cultures. Rather, it involves a deeper sharing and exchange between cultures.

There are many ways in which Catholic Education in the Kimberley endeavours to foster this exchange. The highly valued Aboriginal teaching assistants (ATAs) play a pivotal role in Catholic schools and, along with other Aboriginal people, are actively supported in becoming qualified teachers within their own communities. In 2002, eight per cent of teachers new to Kimberley Catholic schools were Aboriginal. This is a five per cent increase from 2001 and, though the numbers are still small, demonstrates an exciting growth trend.

For Two Way Learning to be effective the relationship between the school and the community is of great importance. The vision statement for 2002 of the Broome CEO reflects the ongoing commitment of Catholic Education in the Kimberley to continue to build positive relationships with all stakeholders in the education process:

> Families, Schools, Communities—Partners in learning
> With Christ as our leader:
> We acknowledge parents and families as the primary educators of their children;

> We recognise, value and build upon the children's home
> knowledge;
> We contribute to the physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual,
> and social development of each child;
> We value the diversity and uniqueness of all members of our
> school community whilst building shared understanding and
> respect;
> We support our schools in fostering true partnerships with families
> and communities.

Language Acquisition in the Kimberley

Aboriginal children come to school with a rich cultural and linguistic
background. This background is not always obvious, nor utilised fully
by teachers. The majority of the children in Kimberley Catholic
schools have an Aboriginal language or Kriol (an English-based
Creole spoken across the eastern Kimberley Region) as their first
language. As a result, these students have real and specialised needs in
terms of learning English as another language.

In today's terms, literacy is understood as *the ability to
communicate with a range of people in a variety of situations*. For
students in Kimberley Catholic schools this means ensuring that they
have the knowledge and skills to use Standard Australian English
(SAE) with confidence.

Aboriginal parents place great value on learning to communicate
effectively within non-Aboriginal peoples' terms of reference.
Through the acquisition of SAE, it is expected students will have a
better chance of achieving their *own* long- and short-term goals within
mainstream Australia. Parents have recognised the acquisition of SAE
as an important factor in self-determination for students in schools and
communities.

As highlighted earlier, the underlying philosophy of the CEO in
the Kimberley is one of Two Way Learning which acknowledges the
culture of both home and school. In 1994 The Catholic Education
Office developed the FELIKS (Fostering English Language in
Kimberley Schools) professional development course for primary
schools. This course was designed for teachers who were teaching
English to Kriol or Aboriginal English speaking students. The course
was a huge success and, in response to continual demands for more of
the same, in 1997 *Making the Jump—A Resource Book for Teachers
of Aboriginal Students* was published.

The FELIKS approach focuses on teaching Standard Australian English as a second dialect. Central to FELIKS is the Code-switching Stairway, which has two functions. Firstly, it serves as the framework for describing the approach and for planning language work in the classroom. Secondly it acts as an important aspect of the approach in the identification of English features that have proved difficult for Aboriginal students. These are addressed through explicit teaching, involving the use of specifically designed and adapted games (Berry & Hudson 1997, p.1). The areas of difficulty identified are:

- Prepositions
- Singular/plurals in nouns
- Singular/plurals in verbs
- Tense
- Personal pronouns
- Questions
- Possession
- Word meaning
- Sounds
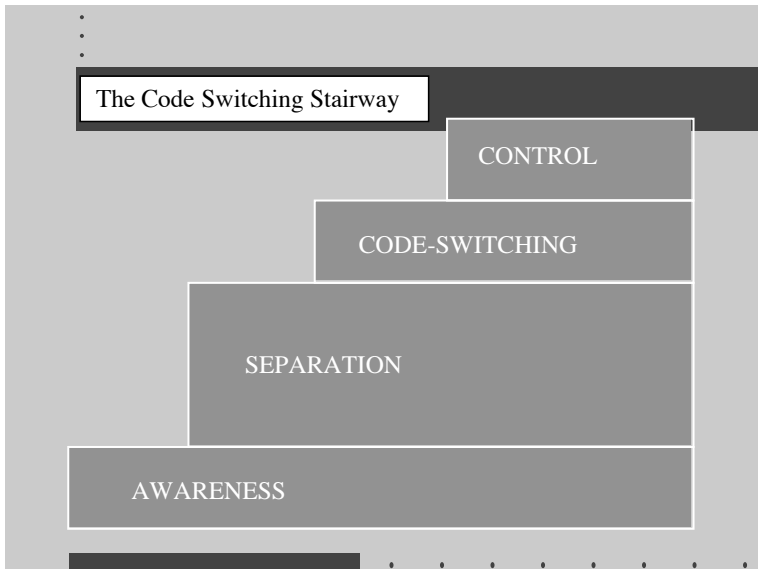
Figure 2
The Code-switching Stairway

By focusing on code-switching skills (the ability to "switch" between two or more languages or dialects according to purpose and audience) the FELIKS approach draws attention to the separation of languages and the need for mastery of both. The first step is to ensure that students are encouraged not to feel ashamed of their home language. In the early years of schooling, it is important for students learning SAE as a second dialect to discover that the language of school is different from that of their home. The term used for this is language awareness**.** This is the first step of the Code-switching Stairway.

Students are then supported in becoming aware of the need to learn a different language or dialect. The focus is not on teaching Kriol or Aboriginal English but on using the home language as a jumping-off point for teaching Standard Australian English (Berry & Hudson 1997).

Origins of the Project

In 1998, the CEO in Broome began the Kimberley Literacy Project, funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) through its English as a Second Language ILSS Program). Over the ensuing years the project grew to have a strong and diverse focus on early childhood education in Kimberley Catholic schools. Part of the focus on early childhood education highlighted the need for locally appropriate and culturally sensitive resources. In discussions with classroom teachers, ATAs and CEO Broome staff, a suggestion was put forward to investigate the possibility of producing a locally relevant CD-ROM which could be used in schools to support the acquisition of SAE for Aboriginal students. With recent experience in producing the *Learning Walmajarri* CD-ROM, the decision was made to pursue the possibility of making a SAE CD-ROM and a Project Officer was appointed to facilitate the project.

Although the primary motivation was to develop a resource for students in the Kimberley region, the explicit teaching points behind the activities will in fact apply to all young students for whom SAE is a second language or dialect.

This new and innovative resource fills a gap in teacher resources as other multimedia CDs that teach English are not designed for the Aboriginal student.

Description of the Package

Overview

The Adventures of Eli the Dragonfly is an interactive multimedia program designed specifically to support the literacy programs of junior primary students in Kimberley schools. It has been designed for students of early childhood and lower primary ages who come from a home where Aboriginal English or Kriol is spoken.

The *Eli* program has been deliberately designed to include characters, icons and colours unique to the Kimberley region. These aspects along with the themes chosen will be culturally relevant to the children for whom it has been developed, and should also be attractive and interesting to all children Australia-wide.

Following on from the FELIKS approach, the project aims to increase the students' awareness of SAE and focuses specifically on some of the features of SAE that have been recognised in *Making The Jump* as "areas of difficulty" for Aboriginal students.

The interactive games and video segments have all been designed with "language awareness" and "areas of difficulty" in mind. And although the primary motivation has been to develop a resource for students in the Kimberley region, the explicit teaching points behind these activities would in fact apply to all young Australian students for whom SAE is a second language or dialect.

Themes

Eli the Dragonfly has five themes or areas for students to explore. These theme areas have been chosen carefully so they are culturally sensitive to Aboriginal children and give the target audience the opportunity to enrich their SAE vocabulary. These five themes are:
1. At school
2. The city
3. The clinic
4. Swimming
5. At the rodeo

Each theme will contain "Concentration" and "Find It" activities, which introduce the children to specific vocabulary for that theme. The vocabulary for each theme has been deliberately chosen to incorporate sounds, blends and structures that are recognised as

difficult for Aboriginal students. Within each theme there will also be some theme-specific games and a language awareness video.

Language Awareness

Eli the Dragonfly teaches language awareness through video segments. Within each theme in *Eli,* there is a video icon that the student will be able to click on at will. Once they have done this they will be able to play, fast forward, rewind and replay a video sequence that aims to increase their language awareness. These videos range in content from puppetry (focusing on particularly difficult language structures) to interviews (where *Eli* acts as the interviewer quizzing Aboriginal role models who have a strong command of SAE).

The FELIKS Approach in *Eli*

The features that receive focus in this project have been based on the FELIKS approach, which teaches Standard Australian English as a second dialect. FELIKS encourages the use of code-switching between SAE and the home language. FELIKS points out that students need to be able to "jump" between the two languages, and so provides a "jumping-off point" in the home language from which teachers can introduce the various teaching points. The video segments and other activities in this program will present teachers with many jumping-off points for literacy sessions in their classrooms.

Another important aspect of the FELIKS approach is the identification of English features that have proved difficult for Aboriginal students. The areas of difficulty identified in chapter 6 of *Making The Jump: A Resource Book for Teachers of Aboriginal Students* have been incorporated into the *Eli* teaching resource. The designers attempted to tie in as many activities as possible that will encourage the students, in an exciting manner, to tackle these areas of difficulty.

Every class will consist of students with a different linguistic history. Many factors influence the rate at which a student will separate the languages and attain confidence in SAE. The classroom teacher will need to take into consideration the amount of interaction each student has with speakers of SAE, the differing home-language backgrounds as well as the child's school-attendance history.

As a teacher gets to know a class it will soon become apparent where a student is experiencing difficulty with the structures or

functions of SAE. An effective way of pinpointing these areas of difficulty is to conduct an "error analysis" or as Berry and Hudson advocate (1997, pp. 61–64), a focused listening activity. One way to do this is to spend time concentrating on the informal language exchanges happening in the classroom. The teacher will then need to ascertain which areas are best suited to work on at an individual level and which would be better in a group.

The Package

Ideally, the CD-ROM should be used as part of an integrated early childhood curriculum. A teacher's booklet is part of the package and includes a section with starting points, ideas and ways in which teachers can extend the potential for learning from this resource. An *Eli the Dragonfly* puppet is also included in the package as a reminder for teachers to plan for concrete and creative experiences.

Methodology

There were three distinct phases to the project: consultation; design and production: and implementation.

Consultation

Teachers, ATAs and CEO Broome consultants were involved in the consultation process to identify activities appropriate and interesting to students of early childhood and lower primary ages. Students from across the Kimberley Catholic schools were canvassed on topics, places and activities of interest.

English interactive CD-ROMs, currently in use in schools, were viewed to establish what students were familiar with and to get to know the current market.

A linguist was consulted during this phase of the project and continued to be involved throughout the compiling and drafting phase.

The project officer facilitated a brainstorming session with staff from Kimberley schools during an Early Childhood Conference hosted by the Education Department of Western Australia (EDWA) in October 2000.

Consultation continued throughout the project. As various parts of the CD-ROM were produced, drafts and samples were examined by teachers and students.

Design and Production

The project officer collated ideas and materials gathered from the initial consultation phase and this was used to draft an outline of the content of the CD-ROM. Initial contact was made with various multimedia companies and a company was chosen to produce the CD-ROM.

Teachers' notes were drafted at this stage and a process of review entered into with a number of selected teachers and CEO Broome consultants.

A workshop, with the project officer, a linguist, artists and consultants from the CEO Broome, was conducted in order to produce the design of the program in the form of a storyboard. The project officer worked with the multimedia company to create the detailed storyboard for production. Once this was complete, visual and audio materials were collected and compiled for production. Students and adults from across the Kimberley were auditioned and chosen for the visual and audio material required for production. At all stages of design and production every attempt was made to use local students, families and businesses.

Implementation

Following the collection of materials, the design and final production of the resource, a launch for *The Adventures of Eli the Dragonfly* in May 2002, at CEO, Perth, and a Kimberley based launch, Kimberley Catholic schools will receive copies of the package and will be supported in the implementation of the package with professional development offered by the Kimberley literacy consultants at CEO, Broome. *The Adventures of Eli the Dragonfly* will be available for sale from CEO, Broome.

Conclusion

This new and exciting resource is the first of its kind. There is presently no other multimedia resource specifically designed to teach English to Aboriginal students. Together with existing resources, such as the FELIKS materials and CECWA's ongoing commitment to Aboriginal education, *The Adventures of Eli the Dragonfly* provides educators with a comprehensive toolkit for facilitating the learning of Standard Australian English for Aboriginal students.

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Chapter 11

Teacher and Tutor Complementation during an In-class Tutorial Program for Indigenous Students in a Primary School

Andrew John Malloch

This paper explores collaborative working relationships between teachers (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and Indigenous tutors at Garbutt State School, a primary school in Townsville, North Queensland. The Indigenous students at the school receive tutorial assistance in normal school hours under a Commonwealth Government-funded program called ATAS (Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme).

Ethnographic techniques were utilised to investigate this phenomenon. Interviews with ten informants at the school, classroom observation, informal observation and informal conversations during numerous visits to the school were used to illuminate the extent of complementation—the combining of teacher and tutor roles,—to provide a complete tutoring program.

Findings of the research highlight the school's success in delivering a tutoring program that maximises cooperative work practices between teachers and tutors. The research also shows the importance of recognising Indigenous elders as legitimate educators inside the school system. A post-structuralist framework proved useful to reconceptualise teacher and tutor relations. Tutors were found to occupy powerful and influential positions when addressing Indigenous students' educational needs, especially in individual and small-group circumstances.

The in-class tutoring program emerged as a justifiable and preferred alternative to the previously existing after-school homework centre, also funded under ATAS.

Statement of the Problem

At the beginning of 1998 Garbutt State School was given permission to trial the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS) funded by

DETYA (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs) as an in-class tutorial intervention program. The scheme aims to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students. ATAS guidelines stipulate that tuition must take place outside normal lesson hours for the purpose of providing extra tuition over and above what is normally offered by the education institution. ATAS tuition is often provided through homework centres that operate after the school day has finished. This was the case at Garbutt State School prior to 1998. The granting of a trial of in-class tutoring was therefore outside the guidelines as they were currently implemented. ATAS funds pay for the employment of tutors who may work on an individual or small-group basis with Indigenous students.

Central to the program at Garbutt State School is that the school purposely employs local Aboriginal and Islander people in tutor positions. How do both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers at Garbutt State School successfully collaborate with their tutors? Questions such as this warrant an exploration of this school's unique tutorial program in its quest for improved educational outcomes for its Indigenous students. This paper will therefore investigate the working relationships of teachers and tutors for the purpose of illuminating the collaborative experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous adults working at the school.

Literature Review

The following literature review examines the acceptance of and resistance to the employment of Indigenous educators in schools and how, over time, different approaches and attitudes have shaped the roles of Indigenous education workers.

Historical Perspectives

Many of the first Indigenous adults gained positions in schools (Courtney, 1984) during the 1970s and early 1980s as *teacher aides*. Other terms in use besides teacher aide are assistant teacher, classroom assistant, home school liaison officer, Aboriginal education worker (AEW), Aboriginal education assistant (AEA) or tutor. The title Indigenous education worker (IEW) will primarily be used as it encompasses the many terms already in use. The paucity of recent research into the significance of IEWs has required reviewing earlier literature that reflects the accession of Indigenous adults to such

positions. However, more recently there has been greater emphasis on literacy achievement since this is seen as essential for Indigenous participation in education (National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Final Report, 1994).

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP), launched in 1989, embodies four main areas which include Aboriginal involvement in decision making, equality of access, increasing rates of participation and the achievement of equitable and appropriate educational outcomes. Under the AEP the Commonwealth provides funds for implementing education-related tutorial assistance for the schooling sector. Specifically, the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS) provides the funds for this purpose through DETYA (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs) in accordance with the goals of the AEP. While this scheme is relatively new, tutorial-style assistance, in particular on an individual and small-group basis, has been available to Indigenous students for some time.

Some of the first Indigenous teacher aides in the 1970s began positions feeling nervous and intimidated, often as a result of their negative experiences with white-dominated institutions (Mackay 1974). Other teacher aides had limited schooling and felt that schools were places of cultural estrangement (Munns 1998). However, the benefit of such teacher aides soon became apparent. Aides perform a crucial role in informing teachers of student problems when parents, sometimes with little or no Standard Australian English, are uncomfortable approaching teachers about such matters (Brennan, 1979). And for students, aides become a language bridge to the teacher when English is a second language (Joseph 1977). Aides also gain new insights into the school system and pass this information to parents, lessening suspicion of schools (Madsen 1978).

Resistance

Despite the apparent value that teacher aides bring to the school, considerable resistance exists amongst some teachers to collaboration with IEWs. Heslop provides an example of a teacher's belief in non-Indigenous authority:

> I can't see how some Aborigine who isn't a trained teacher or some other professional can select me, direct me or even sack me ... they don't have any experience in making important decisions

> ... I reckon if Aborigines take over the school, learning standards will go down and teacher morale will be affected.
>
> (Heslop 1998, p. 276)

Other teachers felt that the extra effort required to incorporate IEWs into lessons was a nuisance, and used them for cutting and pasting instead (Dyer 1974). Alternatively, IEWs have indicated that teachers in remote areas limit their interaction with the community and may never make friends with Aboriginal adults (Brennan 1979). Cameron (1973) found that using teacher aides well increased work standards, reduced language barriers, virtually eliminated truancy and also led to aides undertaking voluntary training courses to improve skills.

Significance of Indigenous Education Workers

Other examples in the literature of IEW utilisation are supervision of individuals or small groups, offering expertise in parental and cultural matters, providing input to curriculum resources, conducting orientation for new staff and improving the security and confidence of students (Valadian & Randell 1980; More 1978). Training is provided for many IEWs. However, specific training is also needed for teachers working with IEWs to improve attitudes and practices (Valadian & Randell 1980).

Homework Centres and Outside-School-Hours Tutoring

Small-group or individual tutoring can be provided to Indigenous students under ATAS at after-school homework centres, often co-located at existing schools. Tuition is provided by Indigenous or non-Indigenous people in positions entitled "tutor". A similar, earlier form of tutorial assistance under the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme provided supplementary tuition for secondary students requesting remedial tuition (Rendall 1983). Tutors were not necessarily Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and were currently full-time, part-time or casual teachers from primary and secondary schools or student teachers. Tutors did not receive any formal induction or in-service training and very few tutors had expertise in remedial teaching.

Under such a scheme, McDonald (1984) believes that tutors need to spend time with their students outside tutoring hours. Once a rapport is established, the tutor will be more successful in effecting increased participation and academic competence from the student. A

similar view is held by Munns (1998), who states that relationships on a pedagogical level and personal level are critical to productive teacher and student relationships. However, both homework centres and tutorials outside of class hours isolate tutors from schools. Much time and effort must be spent in additional and unpaid work if tutors are to liaise closely with teachers and build such rapport with students.

Homework centres also rely on student motivation to attend. The National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Final Report (1994) stated there were a number of requests for in-class tutors "to assist those students who were most 'at risk' of leaving school—the ones who were also least likely to attend Homework Centres" (p. 122). Since not all tutors at homework centres or as part of the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme were Indigenous, and in addition they were not necessarily sufficiently or appropriately trained, problems might be exacerbated for students "at risk". Strong support was expressed for AEWs in the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Final Report:

> Like Indigenous teachers, AEWs provide positive role models for all students, and there was almost universal praise for the important and positive benefits that their employment brings to the educational experiences of Indigenous students. Their employment "inside" the system serves as a constant reminder that education needs to accommodate the cultures and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
>
> (1994, p. 50)

Conclusion

The literature reveals much about the utilisation of IEWs in schools including their influence and effort to achieve improved school and community relations, productive teacher and student relations, increased presence and participation of Indigenous peoples in schools (encompassing students, staff and parents) and Indigenous input to curriculum issues. Various examples have highlighted obstacles encountered by IEWs, including poor attitudes and a rigid school system often maintained by the dominant culture. However, other examples have highlighted the positive influence of IEWs.

Certainly there is a general call for improvements to teacher training, new school orientation and in-service programs, to accommodate Indigenous perspectives and the mechanics of teacher

and IEW collegiality. How to achieve this collegialityis worthy of spotlighting, and research must uncover best practice in teacher and IEW complementation. Dyer provides a worthy summary of the problem:

> I am concerned that although the potential value of such resource personnel in our schools could be limitless, we appear not, in fact, to be scratching even the surface of such potential in many of these schools.

<div align="right">(1974, p. 19)</div>

Exploring Complementation

Garbutt State School is a unique site for an exploration of complementation between teachers and tutors. The roles undertaken by teachers and tutors, when combined, can offer a unique teaching program for Indigenous students at Garbutt State School. This lies at the heart of complementation. The high number of Indigenous tutors (around eleven) employed at the school means that all other school staff, in particular the teaching staff, would interact with them at some point every day, since the tutoring program is offered during normal class time. Consequently, research on Garbutt State School's ATAS intervention tutoring program will explore:

- teacher and tutor collegiality
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration
- the involvement of Indigenous adults in primary education and
- how teacher and tutor complementation implements the aims of the AEP.

Methodology

The research at Garbutt State School utilised ethnographic techniques in order to explore teacher and tutor complementation. The majority of data was collected by interviewing ten informants at the school and the interviews were supplemented by formal classroom observation, informal observation and informal conversations during numerous visits to the school.

Two classes were the main sites for research. One class was taught by an Indigenous female teacher (classroom A) and another class was taught by a non-Indigenous female teacher of Anglo-European descent (classroom B). The Indigenous teacher in classroom A worked with two tutors, one male of Torres Strait Island descent and one male of

Aboriginal descent. The teacher from classroom B worked with one Aboriginal female tutor who provided assistance to Indigenous students from the same class. At the time of beginning interviews, classroom B had one vacancy for a tutor. This position was filled when I was near the completion of interviews. Therefore, this tutor was not an informant in the research. Teachers in these classrooms were respected members of staff and they had been working with tutors as part of the school's in-class tutoring program since it began in 1998. Additionally, prior to their employment at Garbutt State School in Townsville both teachers had experience working with Indigenous teacher aides at other schools in Queensland.

Besides these more formal sessions with informants, many casual conversations and observations took place over numerous visits to the school prior to, during and after the interview period. Specifically, particular attention was paid to the extent that teachers and tutors were catering for individual differences amongst the students, making the lesson relevant for the students, or praising and encouraging the students. I was not evaluating the teachers and tutors on the quality of their teaching, but I was recording observable instances where both informants appeared to be undertaking a team approach or working towards common goals.

Ethnographic Techniques

Rather than studying teachers and tutors, an ethnographic approach fosters learning from the informants (Spradley 1979) and provides opportunities to discover the insiders' views of education provision to Indigenous students in the form of tutorial assistance. I also made a conscious effort to stand aside from my own cultural background when interviewing Indigenous informants. I hoped to illuminate the collaborative experiences of teachers and tutors without prejudging their attitudes, values and methods or comparing their beliefs to my own philosophical or practical position. Spradley states that ethnography is a vehicle to achieve this, since it offers the chance to:

> set aside our socially inherited ethnocentrism, if only for a brief period, and to apprehend the world from the viewpoint of other human beings who live by different meaning systems.
>
> (1979, p. v)

Analysis of Interview Transcripts and Observation Notes

The most salient comments made by informants concerning teacher and tutor complementation were identified in the interview transcripts. Excerpts of the interview texts showing this aspect and any additional rich points, discrepancies, commonalities and major themes in the data were included in the results. These excerpts were then analysed with the intention of usefully and accurately portraying the cultural scene as much as possible from the informant's perspective. At times the excerpts received additional treatment from a poststructuralist perspective.

Theoretical Framework

Poststructualism seeks to examine cultural conceptions of superiority and inferiority through language and to reconstruct such relations so that differences can be made visible and identity reworked in alternative ways (Davies 1996).

IEWs have often been termed *teacher aides*. This term has connotations of inferiority when paired with the term "teacher" and implies power relations similar to master/apprentice, qualified/unqualified, boss/worker and so forth. Such binary pairs are evident in hegemonic society. Davies (1994, p. 8) states "Poststructuralism has begun to disrupt and deconstruct the binarisms through which we structure our knowledge of ourselves and the social world." Binary thought can be applied to the teacher/tutor dualism in an examination of the ascendant and normative first term and the second term which deviates from the norm.

In reviewing the interview texts, poststructural deconstruction will be useful at times when the research data presents opportunities to examine emerging binaries. In such a case the following method of analysis suggested by Lather (1991, p. 13, drawing on Grosz 1989, p. xv), will be employed:
- identify the binaries, the oppositions that structure an argument
- reverse/displace the dependant term from its negative position to a place that locates it as the very condition of the positive term and
- create a more fluid and less coercive conceptual organisation of terms which transcends binary logic by simultaneously being both and neither of the binary terms.

(cited in Davies 1994, p. 3)

It is hoped new perspectives on teacher and tutor complementation will be visible after this theory's application. A conceptual viewing of the classroom in such a manner may deepen the collaborative experience and subvert traditions in educational hierarchical structures.

Finally, complementation requires deconstructing the traditional binary view if new opportunities to establish a more productive working partnership are to be realised. This study will explore the extent to which such deconstruction has occurred as part of the complementation.

Findings

Part One: Substantiating

Issues concerning the operation of the homework centre at Garbutt State School arose on several occasions during interviews with informants. Since the current in-class tutoring program replaced the homework centre, it is only logical that informants would make comparisons between these two different modes of tutorial provision. Additionally, teachers at Garbutt State School purposely sought an alternative to the homework centre and therefore their comments are reflective of opinions concerning the effectiveness of the current program over the past program.

In-class Tutoring Replaces the After-school Homework Centre

Angela and Noel are Indigenous adults from the Garbutt community who were employed at the homework centre when it first began, although not as tutors.[17] They are, however, both employed as tutors in the current in-class tutoring program. Angela and Noel support Garbutt State School's decision to pilot an in-class tutoring program in replacement of the homework centre. Angela said:

> We decided to opt for this in-school tutoring because we found the ones that needed the tutoring never-ever turned up, and the ones that, you know, didn't really need it, they were there all the time.

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[17] Angela's and Noel's level of education precluded their employment as tutors at the homework centre. Their role was to serve afternoon tea to the students before tutoring began.

At Garbutt's homework centre there were few, if any, Indigenous tutors. When asked if there were Indigenous tutors at Garbutt's homework centre, Evelyn, an Indigenous teacher aide at the school since 1975, said:

> None. None that I can remember. I can't remember one Murri, one [Islander] ... They had the ones, like Noel and Angela and them that were the, oh whatever you call them, just looked after the things you know, in the afternoon, helped and gave out the afternoon tea and things like tha   dn't actually have any Murri tutors.

In-class Tutoring Allows More Indigenous Adults 'inside' the System

Informants' comments reveal the exclusion of Indigenous people from tutoring positions at the homework centre due to their lack of formal qualifications. While the homework centre was located at the school, its operation after school hours supported an emerging binary of inside/outside. Implicated in the binary's second term is that unless one is academically qualified, or undertaking formal qualifications, employment as a tutor is precluded and instead, serving afternoon tea was the only role available to Indigenous adults such as Angela and Noel. In this sense they still remained outside the system, as was the homework centre, although neither was exclusively on the outside. Rather, their existence on the periphery of the school was enough to influence education decision-making, in that ultimately the homework centre was replaced and people such as Angela and Noel could legitimately obtain employment as tutors, "inside" the school.

The change to in-class tutoring was fundamental to the emerging recognition of Indigenous people as legitimate educators in a school system which otherwise relegated black educators to the periphery and did not recognise their cultural and community standing as elders (this aspect will be expanded later). Even though the homework centre sought to address inequities in literacy and numeracy achievement amongst Indigenous students, the educational needs of Indigenous students were still being addressed by the dominant (white) culture.

A deeper issue is that Indigenous students' required attendance at the homework centre established another criterion on which they passed or failed. White students can legitimately leave school at the final bell, but Indigenous students not present at the homework centre are automatically transgressive, and they are relegated to the negative end of the inside/outside binary. This binary view does not account for

an Indigenous child's preference to choose alternative pursuits after school.

Community Elders as Educators

A number of informants spoke about the importance of Indigenous adults from the community taking roles as tutors at Garbutt State School. Tutors also know the children's parents and other relatives, and the issues that affect Indigenous people. Henry, a tutor at the school, said:

> Well I think that's where an advantage is being an Indigenous person myself, knowing contemporary issues and traditional issues affecting our culture and knowing maybe some of the parents' families, or a grandparent, uncle, aunt, or whatever, cousin, you know what's happening inside that family, what's going on at the time and why maybe this particular child that you're working with is having some problems.

The role as an elder in the community extends into the school system for those Indigenous adults employed as tutors. In the past, many Indigenous adults felt alienated by schools and their structures. Tutoring provides not only an opportunity for Indigenous adults to participate in the school and make decisions, but also a window for other Indigenous community members to express themselves through the tutor. This is certainly helped by the familiarity each member of the Indigenous community has with each other. As Henry mentioned:

> We're a society, Indigenous societies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, we operate on a kinship structure, so it's not going to be just mother and father having interactions ... it's going to be grandparents, uncles, from their extended family, involved as well.

In a sense, members of the Indigenous community at Garbutt who support the in-class tutoring program may transcend their position traditionally on the "outside" and instead they may have an opportunity to encounter the local school from the "inside", via the tutors. As tutors increase in confidence and participate further in decision making, they may continue to develop a significant voice at the school.

Teacher Aide Time and Learning Support

Before in-class tutoring began, options for Indigenous students experiencing difficulties in numeracy and literacy may have been assistance via the learning support program that may include

individual time with the learning support teacher or a teacher aide, outside of normal class activities. Non-Indigenous people largely staff these positions. Marcia, the coordinator of the tutoring program at the school, said:

> The feeling was with the learning support that Aboriginal kids that we work with don't want to do the work for us. They just dig their heels in and they just refuse ... The fact that the tutors are part of their culture, showing them understanding ... The kids, they see somebody who's the same colour.

From a poststructuralist perspective, homework centres and learning support constitute Indigenous people in positions on the periphery. When informants commented on in-class tutoring providing opportunities for Indigenous adults to enter the school as tutors, commonalities surfaced in regards to language use. Many informants spoke about the idea that *seeing* one's culture in the school environment is directly related to one feeling *valued*. In-class tutoring positions tutors not only inside the school, but also inside the classroom, a space also occupied by the teacher. Subsequently teachers and tutors have the opportunity to operate in a reciprocal capacity. Part Two will examine this aspect, specifically teacher and tutor complementation, in further detail.

Part Two: Operating

Part Two exposes the mechanics of teacher and tutor interaction from the time lessons are prepared through to the debriefing of completed lessons. The roles of these educators are explored with particular attention to language use and models of delivering tutoring. The existence of complementation in these instances is also highlighted.

Teacher and Tutor Complementation

The operation of the homework centre after normal school hours meant there was little or no contact between tutors and class teachers. While a learning support teacher may consult with a class teacher, the teacher and staff involved with learning support operate in separate environments. The isolation between both parties may have limited teacher and tutor complementation. The following analysis will explore evidence of complementation between teachers and tutors during the in-class tutoring program.

Lesson Preparation and Debriefing

Tutors are paid at an hourly rate and they typically begin work at 9 a.m. and finish work at 1 p.m. Therefore it would seem that teachers and tutors have little opportunity to collectively prepare for lessons and debrief or offer feedback after lessons. However, teachers and tutors seize opportunities to prepare and debrief whenever possible.

In classroom A, while students are working on a set task, Sally, an Indigenous teacher at the school, uses any spare minutes to explain concepts or processes that are readily understood by the tutor. If Sally feels more time is required to provide explanation or direction, she will use a different approach:

> Sometimes I'll run through an example on the board for the children and that way the tutors can watch my examples on the board and learn how I want the children to do it and then they're fine, you know, but I'll always cover myself that way. I don't assume that they know.

Debriefing after lessons typically involves short discussions where tutors provide verbal feedback on student performance. Tutors may also offer feedback during lessons if there is an opportunity to do so. Tutors also keep daily notes in order to complete a formal report, usually submitted to the teacher fortnightly.

Sally admits tutors attend to student needs when she would be stretched to do so alone; however, she does not relinquish all responsibility for students' learning to the tutors:

> Sometimes I do overlook various things because when you've got three sets of eyes in the classroom, [students] don't tend to get away with much ... [Groupwork] enables me then to get around to the different areas and just see how they're going ... Even though my tutors report back I think I need to see first hand as well.

Binary thought can be applied to the teacher/tutor dualism from the examples above. A teacher may appear in a powerful position compared to a tutor when judged by criteria such as qualifications, experience, salary level, job security, hours worked and setting the lesson agenda. However, tutors can occupy powerful positions on other criteria. Tutors' work with students at the individual and group level places them in a unique position simultaneously on par with a teacher's role and different to it. Their assistance to students during lessons places them in a role akin to that of the teacher, but the proximity of tutors to observing students' academic progress and behaviour provides access to knowledge and therefore power

unavailable on such a level to the teacher. The teacher becomes reliant on the tutor to provide feedback and reports which can in turn influence the teacher's future lesson planning.

The operation of tutoring in regards to lesson preparation and debriefing in classroom B holds some interesting similarities to classroom A. Rebecca, a non-Indigenous teacher and Cathy, an Indigenous tutor, also seize any available moments to confer on aspects of the lesson or the students. Rebecca explains:

> Usually Cathy and I will talk prior to the lesson. We'll have a discussion about what I want her to do. Usually it's very brief ... We try and catch a few minutes at the end of whatever lesson ... whether it's, you know, a lunchtime if it backs onto a lunchbreak or just before we move onto something new I'll ask Cathy how [her students] went and whether there were any problems so, you know, we can adjust the lesson to suit that.

The pre-lesson discussion mentioned above involves Cathy receiving direction from Rebecca. Cathy also attends to the teacher's explanation of new work before assisting students, ensuring a consistent approach from both teacher and tutor. Cathy elaborates:

> A lot of the sitting in class watching is a lot for my benefit too because I can work out how Rebecca would like the setting out done and what kind of language to use.

Rebecca explains the dual advantage of working with a tutor who is also Indigenous:

> It frees me a little bit from having to really understand sometimes where the [Indigenous] students are coming from. I still need to do that but I guess they've got someone they can relate to ... In terms of my teaching, it's really good to have someone to discuss if I'm doing something a certain way and it doesn't seem to be getting through, then I've got someone to sort of say, "Is there another way that [you] could try to approach this that might make more sense?"

Cathy reciprocates by commenting on the benefits of working with Rebecca, as a qualified teacher:

> If I don't understand something, I go and ... ask [Rebecca] to explain it to me. So then I can explain it to the kids I'm working with and then if I know what I'm talking about then maybe I could change it around, but still use the same concept, but in different ways to work with that kid.

The above interview texts reveal marked differences in the roles of teacher and tutor. Cultural familiarity between the Indigenous students

and Cathy provides an immediate advantage to beginning tutoring with individual students. This creates an entry point where the tutor can initially address the student's educational needs while the teacher provides technical assistance, in the form of knowledge of teaching processes and the curriculum, to the tutor.

Language

Interviews revealed Indigenous informants sometimes spoke to Indigenous students in ways other than in Standard Australian English. Alternative language use was utilised to provide instruction or explanation when SAE proved inadequate for students to understand new work. Noel, a Torres Strait Islander, indicates this is the case when he tutors students who are also from the Torres Strait:

> When I'm working with the teacher in class that's what I do, I help the kids in the class, I show them exactly the way the teacher shows them. When we [Noel and his students] go outside I show them exactly the same thing, but I put it in whichever way it's easier for them to understand ... If I'm working with a Torres Strait Islander I'll talk Broken English to them and they'll understand better ... even in class, 'cause that's the only way they'll understand.

Rebecca accepts tutors using alternative language and believes understanding the concept being taught is a primary concern:

> I don't really have a problem with tutors using Creole or Broken English ... Whatever is going to help the kids understand something, that's where you start and then after that you can teach them Standard Australian English I guess. That understanding will come better if they already understand the concept, then understanding it in English is not that huge a step.

Tutors are able to converse with Indigenous students at a level unattainable by non-Indigenous teachers. The formality of school as a learning institution requiring communication in the language of the dominant culture may be encapsulated in the binary Standard Australian English/non-Standard Australian English.

At Garbutt State School, the widespread use of Creoles, Broken English, Aboriginal English and home languages, and the acknowledgment by Rebecca that alternative language use is a legitimate tool to aid in learning, raise the status of languages other than English to a position of prominence when educating Indigenous students.

Models of Delivering Tutoring

Observations in the classrooms revealed four different circumstances where an individual student may receive tutoring:

- in the class, with a small group (usually no more than five students)
- in the class, individually with the tutor
- outside the class, with a small group
- outside the class, individually with the tutor

Additionally, classroom A utilised a method of delivering tutoring not evident in classroom B. Classroom A divided students into four groups, streamed by ability, which rotated between four separate activities at twenty-minute intervals. The two tutors were responsible for managing one activity each while the teacher managed the two remaining activities, or focused on one activity while giving occasional attention to an activity involving independent work, or moved between all activities to monitor both students and tutors. Sally expresses the benefits of this approach:

> I find that group work's good because each of us have got a small number of students that we're working with and you're able to get around that group a lot easier than you would around the whole class. I find the better use of the tutors' time for me is to have them working within the class with me because that way, they're doing the same work, it's not like me giving them a separate program.

Classroom B utilises the tutor in the class with Indigenous students (individually or in small groups) or out of the class with Indigenous students (also individually or in small groups). The decision to choose one option over the other is based on the type of lesson at the time. Rebecca elaborates:

> It really depends on what we're doing at the time; there are certain times during maths lessons that I think it's good for them [tutors] to be in the class and other times it's better if they work somewhere separately with their student or with a group of students.

Teacher to student ratios are significantly lowered during the operation of the in-class tutoring program. The individual attention Indigenous students gain from tutors also benefits non-Indigenous students who can therefore participate within a smaller group supervised by the teacher.

Overall, a model can be developed showing the general operation of tutoring based on informants' examples so far. An integral part of the model is language and the stages where there are interchanges between SAE and non-SAE:

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Teacher prepares the lesson and confers with the tutor(s). │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Teacher introduces new work or concept to the class, using SAE, │
│        terminology and language specific to the concept.          │
│                  Tutor(s) and students listen.                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Tutor reinforces new concept in terms understood by the student │
│    (using SAE, non-SAE or a combination of both) and provides     │
│                 examples in real-life contexts.                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Student understands the concept and begins to understand (or fully│
│          understands) the SAE used for the concept.               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│            Teacher reinforces the concept using SAE.              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Teacher and tutor(s) debrief and adjust next lesson if necessary.│
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                         Cycle repeats.                            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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The emergence of such a model from the research data indicates teachers and tutors have collaboratively developed a system of management in a localised setting over the course of the three-year in-class tutoring pilot program. It appears that this year, the third year of the in-class tutoring, the level of satisfaction with the program is at it highest so far. Cathy explains:

> I think that the first year was the pilot year, then from there everyone learned. Then the second year was better ... then by the third year everyone was in a real good working environment.

Part Three: Interpreting

The in-class tutoring program, which utilises both IEWs and ATAS funding, also successfully implements the aims of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP).

The AEP's first aim, *involvement of Aboriginal people in educational decision making*, is largely satisfied by the influx of Indigenous adults to the school via employment as tutors. This also provides the local Indigenous community with a voice, assisted by strong kinship ties with the tutors.

The second aim, *equality of access to educational services*, is met by local tutors, who are also parents, relatives and elders of Indigenous students at the school. Tutors not only actively participate in the school environment but also gain significant insights into the operation of the school and encourage student attendance and application to their studies. Prior to in-class tutoring, school personnel were predominantly from non-Indigenous backgrounds and as the literature suggests, schools can be an alienating place for Indigenous people.

The third aim, *equity of educational participation*, is improved through the provision of tutoring in class time, whereas the previous homework centre could not assist absent students. Indigenous students are receiving educational assistance through tutoring over and above the assistance a teacher would normally provide in isolation. Tutors provide relevant learning contexts and cultural familiarity for the Indigenous students, in addition to encouraging participation in the class.

Although the research did not extend to covering outcomes, the fourth aim, *equitable and appropriate educational outcomes*, is relevant for the terms "equitable" and "appropriate". The presence of

tutors can improve equity and deliver appropriate education for Indigenous students. Tutors maintain and use Indigenous languages, including Torres Strait Islander Creole and Aboriginal English, provide cultural identity and leadership for the students and, most of all, deliver individual attention and understanding to the educational needs of their students in a manner appropriate to the students' background yet inclusive of State education curriculum. The following comment from Henry possibly embodies much that the in-class tutoring has to offer as a viable alternative to homework centres, as an opportunity to offer immediate responses to students' educational needs and as an example of teacher and tutor collaboration:

> Tutoring is compulsory. You're there when the teacher is giving them work and when they're actually doing the work, so you can help them on the spot ... A child who didn't want to work during school hours, why are they going to all of a sudden work one hour after school or two hours after school in the homework centre? ... That's the positive to it is, is you're there when things are happening ... Plus you have the teacher there, on hand if you do have problems or you need help as well, to get something across.

Recommendations

To address issues arising from this research, I recommend that stakeholders adopt the following:

DETYA

- Continue funding Garbutt State School's in-class tutoring on a more permanent basis.
- Formally recognise that funding in-class tutoring programs is a legitimate alternative to funding homework centres.
- Continue monitoring and developing the Garbutt in-class tutoring model and actively promote its adoption in other appropriate schools.

Garbutt State School

- Extend professional development for all staff at the school to maximise the effectiveness of tutors across all classrooms and for teachers and tutors to examine best practice together.

- Continue professional development for tutors in behaviour management. Liaise with Education Queensland and the union on this initiative.
- Examine class rolls to provide documented evidence of attendance levels improving after the introduction of in-class tutoring.
- Undertake a mentor role for schools wishing to trial a similar in-class tutoring program.

Further Research

- Undertake further research on Garbutt State School's in-class tutoring program as it develops and evolves into the future. Undertake research on programs in other schools which may also use this model.
- Expose pre-service teachers to Garbutt State School's cross-cultural teaching environment.

Conclusion

The movement from the after-school homework program to the in-class tutoring program during normal school hours was the beginning of a major change for Garbutt State School. The in-class tutoring program allowed teachers to work with Indigenous tutors in such a manner as to change classroom practice.

Garbutt State School's deliberate recruitment of Indigenous adults from the local community recognised the contribution these elders could make inside the school system. This change at the school also permitted access to a number of opportunities on a scale not previously possible. Specifically, the school had the chance to extend practice in:
- teacher and tutor collegiality
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration
- the involvement of Indigenous adults in Primary education
- implementing the aims of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.

Complementation between teachers and tutors permeated each major component in the delivery of lessons to Indigenous students. Typically, teachers and tutors began collaboration with pre-lesson preparation, continued through lesson delivery and ended with post-lesson reflection. Teachers and tutors also recognised alternative

language use other than Standard Australian English, provided appropriate contexts for student learning, recognised social and cultural issues outside the school that may affect student learning and fostered a consistent approach to behaviour management. Additionally, informants believed that in-class tutoring addressed Indigenous students' learning difficulties better than the pre-existing learning support program.

A post-structural viewing of the classroom reconceptualises teacher and tutor roles. Tutors often occupied powerful positions in the classroom, where their ability to influence learning amongst Indigenous students went beyond what the teacher may have been capable of alone. The teacher's recognition of this case showed that traditional factors determining status, such as formal qualifications and salary levels, became irrelevant.

The ATAS funds spent to deliver the in-class tutoring program over the last three years have addressed the needs of Indigenous students and Indigenous adults, inside and outside the school, as well as implementing the aims of the AEP. The program is regarded as much more effective than the previous homework centre. The in-class tutoring has also continued to evolve, establishing a skill base amongst tutors and influencing classroom practice amongst teachers. Effective models of managing the in-class tutoring have been evidenced in the classrooms that formed the focus of this investigation.

Productive working partnerships under the in-class tutoring program, procured through teacher and tutor complementation, can continue to advance the education of Indigenous students.

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Chapter 12

Leading and Choosing to Make a Difference for Indigenous Students in One of the Largest Secondary Schools in Queensland

An Administrator's Story

Louise Wilkinson

This paper reports on the progress made on enrolment, retention, participation and achievement of Indigenous students in a very large urban secondary school in Queensland from 1994–2002. Within the context of the school community, this paper presents some data on the levels of progress in Indigenous student outcomes made by the school over time; juxtaposes the results of two studies conducted in the school by researchers at the School of Indigenous Australian Studies (SIAS), James Cook University, and explains what the school has done since; and discusses a new research project currently in progress by me, as practitioner researcher, including a literature review on the achievement of Indigenous student outcomes. Finally, this paper comments on the challenges of being a non-Indigenous administrator leading a program for Indigenous education.

School Community Context

Located in a rapid growth area on the western outskirts of the city of Townsville, in a sister city called Thuringowa, Kirwan State High School (Kirwan SHS) is one of fourteen State and private secondary schools in the district. The two cities have a combined population of 130,000 and form the second-largest metropolis in Queensland. The Townsville Chamber of Commerce and Industry website (2002) promotes Townsville and Thuringowa as one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia, with a Gross Domestic Product growth rate of twice the national average. It states, "Townsville is also a home to the largest contingent of defence personnel in Australia, with some

6000–7000 Airforce and Army serving members and their families based here."

Kirwan SHS opened in 1979 with a small cohort of Year 8 students only. In 2002 it had just under 2000 students. Since 1997 it has been one of the largest, if not the largest, of the 1294 State government schools in Queensland. Disproportionate to the growth of the general student population has been the growth of the Indigenous student population. In July 1994, 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were listed as enrolled in the school's July census, while as of May 2002? there were 207 Indigenous students at the school. The representation of Indigenous students at the school is higher than that of the Indigenous population rates in the surrounding suburbs, indicating students are coming from areas other than the immediate geographic location (SIAS 2001, p. 2).

In February 1995 I was appointed to Kirwan SHS as one of the administration team which is made up of three deputy principals and the current principal, who has been there for fifteen years. The school's mission is to "provide educational excellence for tomorrow's citizens" and it prides itself on achieving excellence in academic performance, music and the arts, sport, care (which will be explained later) and information technology. Over the years the school has produced a sizeable array of achievements at a local, State and national level in all of these areas. It has developed a highly innovative school-based intranet with a ratio of approximately 1:5 computers per student.

Currently there are 118 teaching and fifty-six non-teaching staff. Of these, one teacher and seven non-teaching staff are Indigenous. The school has five year-levels, from years 8 to 12, and its curriculum offers over sixty subjects in the senior school and over thirty in the junior school ranging from those with tertiary score eligibility to vocational to school-based subjects.

The school has a variety of specialist support staff, including five year coordinators, a head of department student services, two guidance officers, a chaplain, a behavioural management teacher, a school-based police officer and nurse and a community education counsellor (CEC). There is a huge array of co- and extra-curricular activities. The school's instrumental music program has over 200 students. The annual Kirwan SHS musical has a cast the size of *Ben Hur* and is a very successful community event. The school runs Duke

of Edinburgh and Youth Action programs and it has its own cadet unit. There is a large special education unit, a special needs centre, a Year 8 centre, and last year with the support of the principal the Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness (ASSPA) committee and Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) jointly funded the refurbishment of a space to create a room for Indigenous parent/workers.

Kirwan SHS is situated on 13.72 hectares with three playing fields, a small rainforest area and its own 25-metre heated swimming pool, built by the school's P&C Association in 1997. The school tuckshop's average net annual income for the last five years has been approximately $120,000.00. In 2001, it netted $140,000.00. The total running cost for the school last year, including all staff wages and utilities, was just over $13.5 million.

Indigenous Education Profile

I have been the program manager for Indigenous Education at Kirwan SHS since my appointment to the school. I must state that, from the outset, all the work I have done would have been impossible without the unconditional support of my principal. He has allowed me a high degree of autonomy and has actively encouraged me to "do what it takes" to achieve the best educational outcomes for Indigenous students. Not every leader of a major program in a school is afforded this level of support.

From its introduction to Queensland State schools, I have managed the IESIP budget at Kirwan SHS. This has steadily increased proportionate to the school's Indigenous student enrolment growth and in 2002 is $50,100.00. (See Appendix 1 for the school's 2002 IESIP goals.) I am the school's representative on the ASSPA committee, which meets monthly, and I also provide advice and support for the homework centre (ATAS) program which runs in the school's library twice weekly from 3.00.–5.00 p.m. This year the ASSPA budget is around $24,000.00. (See Appendix 2 for the 2002 ASSPA committee Activity Plan.)

I oversee the work of and regularly meet with the CEC and the three staff employed as assistant community liaison officers (ACLOs). In 2001, I worked with the support of our school-based police officer to acquire the services of a part-time, school-based, Indigenous police liaison officer (PLO). While each deputy has specific student year

levels to manage, I am the main contact person in the administration for all Indigenous students and parents. I support and advise a teacher who works with Indigenous students in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program (AITAP). The students in this group mainly participate in activities organised at a district level as part of the AITAP Challenge. Kirwan SHS has entered a team in the AITAP State Challenge every year since 1996. In 1999, the school won the State Challenge.

Kirwan SHS has run the senior subject, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (ATSI Studies) since 2000; I work with the humanities' head of department to lead, support and advise the three teachers teaching this subject. In 2002, due to the increasing enrolment numbers in the subject, I created two class strands of ATSI Studies in Year 11: one for students who required a tertiary entrance score and one for students who did not. There is one ATSI Studies class in Year 12. Of the fifty-eight students studying the subject in Years 11 and 12, fifty-three are Indigenous. Some curriculum subject areas such as English, humanities, visual arts, home economics and music have explicit Indigenous perspectives in their work programs; however, this is not the case for all subject areas across the school, nor is an inclusion of Indigenous perspectives outside specific units of work incorporated as part of everyday lesson practice.

The school continues to address this shortfall and the recent Education Queensland (EQ) systemic imperative, "Productive Pedagogies", has created opportunities to put consideration and incorporation of Indigenous and other non-dominant cultural perspectives squarely on the teaching agenda through one of its four dimensions, namely "Recognition of Difference". This area was proven to be the least addressed area in Queensland classrooms, according to the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (EQ 2001). The school embarked on a whole-school program of professional development throughout 2002 to ensure this dimension is implemented, along with the other three, in program design and teaching practice.

In 2000 and 2001, I used IESIP funding to send a total of three teachers and two ACLOs to attend FELIKS (Fostering English Language in Kimberley Schools) linguistics training seminars. While this certainly raised those individuals' awareness and skills in working with Indigenous students, no across-school benefit has been able to be

measured as yet. I am planning to send another teacher and more of my ACLOs to the next available workshop to get a critical mass of staff trained in this area. In early June 2001, with joint sponsorship from ASSPA and IESIP, two teachers, an ACLO, a parent and I went across to Palm Island to attend the Cross-Cultural Pedagogy Conference hosted by Bwgcolman Community School. This provided us with a great opportunity to network and to meet the "who's who" of Indigenous affairs and cross-fertilise ideas. I re-established contact with a North Queensland Indigenous elder, Mr Ernie Grant. He visited Kirwan SHS in April 2002 and met with our ATSI Studies teachers to discuss ideas and his philosophy on the teaching of the subject. Two teachers and two ACLOs and I represented Kirwan SHS at the second national Australian Indigenous Education Conference, as we continue our quest for knowledge and ideas on how to make school better for Indigenous students. Recently, I have been in contact with the principal of the Indigenous Education and Training Alliance (IETA), an Education Queensland body based in Cairns, to negotiate a visit from him with a view to establishing an ongoing relationship to support our school in staff professional development.

Each year since I have been at the school, we have recognised and celebrated NAIDOC week in some way. Many of our students have marched in the Townsville NAIDOC march. In 2000 and 2001 we held in-school week-long daily activities for NAIDOC week. Last year we held our school's NAIDOC celebrations outside the official dates to allow for greater participation of outside groups. This year, for the first time, we held whole-school activities to mark Reconciliation Week. NAIDOC week is organised in conjunction with ASSPA through one of the ACLOs and the latter was organised by me. Local indigenous dance, singing and art groups were invited to perform at our 2002 NAIDOC Week celebrations, which were again held outside the official dates.

At various times for the past three years, visiting Indigenous Australian and international dancers, performers and motivational speakers such as Sean Choolburra, Eddie Quansah, Dion Drummond and speakers from "Success with Attitude" have also performed at the school.

This year, I have supported a group of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Cook Islander girls who self-initiated an Indigenous dance troupe. As the school time-tabler for 2002, I was able to allocate

them class time to practise and rehearse their dances, and some funding was provided from ASSPA to create costumes. They have performed at various school events held inside the school, like celebration parades and Reconciliation Week. Next term they hope to dance outside the school at some community events like the Townsville Cultural Fest and NAIDOC celebrations.

In 2000, ASSPA commissioned a local Indigenous artist to paint a very large mural on the exterior wall of one of the biggest buildings in the school, the multi-purpose shelter. The mural was designed by the artist who enlisted volunteer Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to help paint it. The same artist is currently working on another mural on the wall of the Indigenous parent/workers' room. A framed miniature of the huge mural hangs in the public foyer of the administration block.

Other Indigenous icons such as ceremonial weapons, artefacts and a painting are displayed in the Year 8 centre, the library and the administration block. Currently ASSPA is sponsoring the development of the ASSPA committee's logo, based on the large mural, to adorn stationery, shirts and other items that will be used to promote the ASSPA committee in the community.

In 1998 and again in 2001, Kirwan SHS sponsored two studies by the School of Indigenous Australian Studies at James Cook University, and in 2002 I commenced a research project of my own for a Masters of Indigenous Australian Studies in the same faculty. The findings, recommendations, and follow-up actions of the SIAS studies, and a discussion of my work in progress, are presented later in this paper.

Indigenous Education Progress

Copious documents written by academics, educationalists and researchers provide indisputable evidence that across Australia there continue to be gaps between the educational outcomes for all students and Indigenous students. In a document produced by Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, "Community Matters" (2001) it says:

> Schools are usually aware that, compared with non-Indigenous students, Indigenous students have lower rates of attendance, retention and academic achievement. What schools are often not aware of is that these outcomes can reflect the degree of connectedness that students feel with school (p.39).

While this may have once been the case for many schools, including Kirwan SHS, I do not believe this is true for us any more. One of the platforms of our school is "Care". Connectedness is fundamental for all students to achieve to their potential, and deliberate strategies are in place in the school for this very end. The previous descriptions of the school's Indigenous education profile are testament to this, and ssignificant progress in a number of areas is being made at Kirwan SHS as we work towards creating the conditions to help Indigenous students achieve successful educational outcomes. Admittedly there are still gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student outcomes; however, I argue these gaps are significantly smaller than those experienced in other schools in Queensland.

1. Enrolment and Retention

As previously stated, Kirwan High's Indigenous student population has grown considerably in the last seven years. Table 1 shows the trends of enrolment and retention since 1994.

Table 1

Kirwan SHS Indigenous Student Retention and Enrolment Numbers 1994–2002

	Jul-94	Jul-95	Jul-96	Jul-97	Jul-98	Feb-99	Jul-99	Feb-00	Jul-00	Feb-01	Jul-01	Feb-02
Year 8	13	19	23	26	23	38	37	37	33	48	45	51
Year 9	15	21	19	23	25	29	24	38	34	45	36	46
Year 10	13	19	18	15	25	30	23	30	27	42	30	47
Year 11	8	8	15	10	14	31	25	32	24	27	25	47
Year 12	11	6	16	15	21	15	15	28	29	33	29	35
Total	60	73	91	89	108	143	124	165	147	195	165	226

The figures in Table 1 are based on school records and the annual census conducted by EQ every February/July. EQ data shows our 2002 Indigenous student progression rate is 115% compared with the

State mean for all students of 73.6% (Corporate Data Warehouse, 2002).

The SIAS (2001) study identifies the school's Sports Excellence Program as a key factor in attracting and retaining Indigenous students. I also believe success breeds success and as more Indigenous students come and stay at the school, the increased visibility and representation of Indigenous culture, coupled with the school's support of this, must be creating welcoming and supportive conditions. The anecdotal feedback from my sample collection of student opinions for my mini-research project would confirm this idea.

2. Participation and Achievement

While I have not yet collated data about end-ofyear levels of achievement of Indigenous/non-Indigenous students over time, Table 2 shows the numbers and percentages of Indigenous students receiving annual school academic/sport awards over the last four years compared to non-Indigenous students.

Year	1998 ACAD/SPORT		1999 ACAD/SPORT		2000 ACAD/SPORT		2001 ACAD/SPORT	
8	8	N/A	14	6	14	3	18	N/A
9	6	N/A	4	2	11	1	10	N/A
10	17	N/A	6	0	7	8	15	N/A
11	4	N/A	10	8	5	1	9	N/A
12	5	N/A	5	1	12	8	13	N/A
Total	40	N/A	39	17	49	21	65	N/A

Total enrolment at July	108	124	147	165
% ATSI student ACAD awards	37%	31%	33%	39%
% Non-ATSI student ACAD awards	51%	48%	48%	47%

Table 2
Kirwan SHS Indigenous Student Academic/Sport Awards 1998–2001

These figures were gathered from in-school data. The gaps are obvious, but again, they are significantly less than experienced by other Queensland schools.

Another source of data showing progress in participation for Indigenous students is the school's rates of disciplinary absences in recent years. Table 3 shows a calculation of disciplinary absence numbers reduced to a school mean number compared with State and like school means.

Student Group	Year	School Mean	State Mean	Like Schools Mean
All Students	1998	.33	.26	.29
	1999	.21	.30	.29
	2000	.26	.33	.31
	2001	.20	.36	.34
Indigenous	1998	.89	.70	.83
	1999	.49	.84	.74
	2000	.45	.84	.65
	2001	.54	.95	.98
Non-Indigenous	1998	.30	.24	.27
	1999	.19	.28	.26
	2000	.24	.30	.29
	2001	.16	.33	.30
Data Source: Corporate Data Warehouse 2002				

Table 3
Disciplinary Absences for Kirwan SHS, All Queensland State Schools and Like Schools Expressed in Mean Scores 1998–2001

There are still those ubiquitous gaps, and Indigenous students' disciplinary absences are still higher than non-Indigenous students', but since 1999 Indigenous students' disciplinary absences at Kirwan SHS have been far fewer than those in like schools or across the State.

This year, our school's new registrar has worked closely with me advising those parents with students on Abstudy how to direct these benefits for payment of school charges. He attended the first few ASSPA meetings at the start of the year and explained to parents how they could structure their payments to the school. He also set up a system so that every Indigenous student who had not been able to pay for his or her school Internet account was supported by IESIP to do so. In this way every Indigenous student in the school has guaranteed

Internet access. I will be gathering data on their use of this service for my major study.

Results of SIAS Studies at Kirwan SHS and Actions Since

The following summary shows the areas studied in and recommendations made from an environmental scan conducted in October 1998, juxtaposed to a case study undertaken in October 2001 by SIAS.

In October 1998 the Indigenous student enrolment was 123. In 2001 in the same month, the student population was 165. Data for the 1998 study was collected under seven main headings and recommendations were made under each accordingly. The headings were: Characteristics of the Kirwan High School Community; School–Indigenous Community Interactions/Relationships; School Management, Administration and Organisation; Staff Cultural Awareness; Curriculum and Teaching; Racism; Quality Assurance Practices: Attendance, Truancy and Behaviour Management. In the 2001 study, data was gathered and comparisons were made with the previous study. It was noted that the 1998 recommendations were still relevant and additional issues were raised. These were: Retention to Year 12; Teacher Education; and Community Capacity Building. These relate to the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Body's (QIECB) key strategic issues (QIECB 2002) and provide a frame of reference for the school to conduct further research. There were nineteen recommendations made overall in the 1998 study and six further recommendations were added in the 2001 study. (For details, see Appendix 3.)

The descriptions of progress already made in this paper would show the school is beginning to address the issues raised and recommendations made since both studies were conducted. Certainly there is still a way to go to act on all of the recommendations, especially in the areas of Indigenous Community Capacity Building and Teacher Education.

Two areas, however, have significantly improved. One is the area of school management, administration and organisation. Since 1998, annual IESIP Action Plans are drawn up in consultation with, and with the approval of, Indigenous parents through the ASSPA committee. Since 2000 they have been expressly designed to complement ASSPA's Annual Activity Plan. The roles of the CEC and homework

centre (ATAS) staff are now clearly articulated on a number of occasions throughout the school year to all staff and parents within the school through staff meetings and memos, ASSPA meetings, and parent newsletters.

The number of other Indigenous support staff for Indigenous students, funded through the school's IESIP budget, has significantly increased. Unfortunately, the positions are not permanent: their continuation in the school is contingent on continuation of the funding. In consultation with existing Indigenous staff and the ASSPA president, and in conjunction with Education Queensland's position description, I redefined the role of the school's Indigenous workers, now known as Assistant Community Liaison Officers (ACLOs). Positions were advertised and interviews were held at the end of 2001. The selection panel was made up of the ASSPA president, a faculty member from SIAS and me. Initially three Indigenous staff were selected and employed but as the year has gone on, this has been increased to six casual workers. (Two are male, one of whom is non-Indigenous.) Starting term three, three ACLOs will work for a total of between twenty-five and thirty hours over a five-day week, providing mainly in-class support for teachers and Indigenous students, and two will work for a total of twelve to eighteen hours over a two- or three-day week, on administrative and co-curricular activities. (The sixth staff member worked 25 hours at the beginning of the year, but as he is an ARL footballer, his training commitments have currently reduced his capacity to be in the school.) Two of these workers are parents of students in the school. This is a significant point. I have gained their trust and respect and I refer to them often for advice and support when working with other members of the school's Indigenous community.

The other improvement has been in the area of school-Indigenous community interactions/relationships. For the last two years, the ASSPA committee was unable to attract parents who could give the time and commitment demanded by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) to manage ASSPA executive positions such as secretary and treasurer. This year, through the cooperation and ongoing support of the incumbent ASSPA president and the ACLOs, we have been able to increase the participation, willingness and attendance of parents at ASSPA meetings. The meetings are held at the school on the last Monday of the month. The meeting starts at 6.00

p.m. and finishes no later then 7.30 p.m. when we adjourn to a local Chinese restaurant to have a meal together. This has also allowed parents to bring their children along. (I usually provide some drinks and nibbles and a TV and video for the children while the adults meet.) Our biggest meeting to date had more than twenty-eight parents in attendance. Apart from the mandated requirements of DEST accountabilities for a meeting, we have encouraged inclusion. The main focus of the meetings is on topics of interest to Indigenous parents, including having speakers from DEST on their ASSPA requirements, Centrelink on Abstudy, students who have been on cultural camps and the teachers of ATSI Studies. A parent has commenced attending P&C meetings to inform them what ASSPA is doing and vice versa. This parent has also been nominated by ASSPA to the 2002 School Council.

Midway through term two in 2002, I commenced a project for one of the ACLOs to interview every leaving age Indigenous student, starting with Year 12, to ascertain their future goals and aspirations. She will help them to write their resumé and direct them to seek more information about the path they are choosing post-school. I have also been contacted by a local Indigenous project group, "Townsville Indigenous Developments for Excellence League" (TIDEL), and we are meeting in mid-July to formally establish a link with them to build on what we want to achieve in our school-based project.

Further Research in Indigenous Education at Kirwan SHS

Research Goal

At the beginning of this year I was persuaded to return to tertiary study after a break of nineteen years. Dr Sue McGinty encouraged and helped me to enrol in a research-based Masters of Indigenous Australian Studies at SIAS, James Cook University. I decided the topic and site for my research should come from my own workplace. As part of the course work, I started with a mini-project, which will be one part of what will be at least a two-year study of Indigenous student outcomes at Kirwan State High School and what has been and can actually be done in the school to improve them. This study will look at how a school leader can imbed Indigenous education policy into a school. I expect this work will increase my knowledge and understanding of Indigenous student educational issues and will help

me to continue to lead, inform and guide the improvement of practices in pedagogy for and service to Indigenous students in my school. Initially, my mini-project is attempting to provide some answers to the question: what is behind the continued and steady increase of enrolment, retention and achievement of Indigenous students in one of the largest secondary schools in Queensland?

Research Methods

While some researchers say "Novice researchers are understandably tempted to undertake backyard studies, but they soon become aware of the problems generated by their involvement in and commitment to their familiar territory" (Glesne & Peshkin 1992, p. 22),other researchers (McGinty n.d; McIntyre 1995, Guba & Lincoln 1994) argue for the value of practitioner-based academic inquiry. I sided with the latter position and heeded the words of Wadsworth in her work, "Do it Yourself Social Research" (1984 pp. 5–12), and chose to remain looking at my "backyard" with a modicum of caution and the guided wisdom of my lecturer. I am the researcher (albeit a neophyte) and one of the researched who want to make a difference in their chosen field.

I grappled with how to develop my "researcher self" and after reading and thinking about a number of theories, decided to conduct my research from a material feminist perspective (McGinty 1992) incorporating Deyhle, Hess and LeCompte's (1992) interpretation of May's covenantal moral standpoint, which is intertwined with a critical theory/constructivist research philosophy. In time, as I become more comfortable with the whole research genre, I expect I will be able to reflect and evaluate whether my behaviours are in fact aligned with these explanations!

I conducted a literature review of a number of documents that have been written about my interest area—Indigenous secondary student educational outcomes. Many I chose were written by Indigenous researchers. This review provided me with information that has helped me get as close an understanding as a non-Indigenous person could get of what an "Indigenous perspective" is. I realised what my ideology about Indigenous education used to be and how it has evolved. I also got a grasp on what research has already been done in the area, and some ideas about how to conduct my own research and

how, later, to apply the information gleaned in my school context. (See Appendix 4 for this literature review.)

My mini-project was conducted over approximately six weeks, using qualitative methods including gathering data from participation, observation, interviewing and document analysis (McMahon & Camilleri 1996). Initially, as part of EQ protocol, I sought the permission of the principal to conduct research within the school. My request was duly approved. I also sought the permission and support of Kirwan's Indigenous parents through the ASSPA committee. This request was duly accepted, too. I expected as much because my entry to "the field" had occurred eight years earlier. This sits well with the theories about the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

Data Collection, Links to Research Goal and Ethical Issues

I collected the documents for the literature review by externally using the James Cook University library service, accessing a variety of databases to find relevant topics as well as others from other sources I found surfing the net. My principal also loaned me a collection of recent conference papers on Indigenous Australian educational issues, and I had also started my own collection of publications, books and magazine and newspaper articles on related topics.

The earlier descriptions of my school community context and Indigenous education profile come mainly from my reflection on my work in the school over time—retrospective observations of my actions. I also based the descriptions on several other sources. These included searches through and selection of relevant pre-existing school-based records and data. Some of these records I had put together myself over the years as program manager of Indigenous Education, while other data had been generated on request by outside research providers like SIAS or had been produced for accountability purposes for EQ. All this information was easily accessible for me and I knew where to look or whom to ask if I did not. My search included collecting data on what governmental departments, research bodies and EQ consider as some of the recognised indicators of success: namely, enrolment, retention, achievement and participation.

Secondly, I conducted interviews using four key questions and follow-up probe questions, using a combination of focus groups of four to six people and individual interviews of Indigenous students. I

sought free and informed consent from the students just before the interviews and prior written parental permission by contact through a mail-out and at an ASSPA meeting to seek their approval to interview their children. I conducted the groups/interviews either in my office or out in the playground in class time, depending on when I could fit this into the course of my daily responsibilities and when and where I could locate the students. Each student was given a sheet with the four key questions on it, and the choice to fill it out or let me write what they said. Some students preferred to write their responses and then answered probe questions after that, whereas others were happy for me to ask the main question followed by probe questions with me recording a summary of their responses on their sheet.

I chose not to audio record their responses for this mini-project as I knew I would not have the time later to ollate and analyse any tapes as well as the notes I had collected. In the next part of my research, I plan to continue to interview as many of the Indigenous students as I can. I am aiming to interview them all. I will audiotape their responses. To date, while I have received twenty-five consent forms, I have only been able to speak with seventeen students, either in a focus group or individually. When speaking to the students I also asked them to go home and to ask their parents the same questions and to fill in the sheet I gave them. I have received three sheets back from parents so far.

At this point, I have not collated and thoroughly analysed the responses, although I have generalised what the sample of Indigenous students and parents have said, and used these impressions along with the data from the school-based records to contribute to this paper.

While the collection of documents has been straightforward and simple, I find the warnings by experienced researchers previously cited in this paper ringing true with the administration of the questionnaires to students. I have only been able to collect a small sample of student/parent responses in the time available and the conditions under which I did them are not ideal. I found I often gave precedence to my role as deputy principal over that of researcher and "crammed in" my interviews around my daily responsibilities. I am satisfied, however, that as my skills as a researcher develop and I persevere in gathering data beyond this initial activity, the necessary rigour and accountability demanded for good research will be achieved.

To some extent, this conflict of roles could also be seen as an ethical issue. I questioned my actions to see if I was suppressing or manipulating information to suit my interests (Cooper & McGinty n.d.) and I could not answer yes. In my work to date, I have allowed for anonymity, gained free and informed consent and been open, fair and honest. I am aware that even though I have developed authentic, positive personal and working relationships with staff, students and parents of the school, this very fact may influence what they tell me. Similarly as I dig deeper into this project I may uncover information that I did not expect or will find unpleasant, and as a practitioner researcher, I may not be able "to see the wood for the trees."

Finally, my very awareness of all of these factors, combined with advice from my colleagues about behaviours appropriate to upholding my ethical stance, should serve as a safeguard and provide integrity and validity to my research. While the work done to date seems to be confirming what I believed was happening in Indigenous education at Kirwan SHS, I want now to focus my study on how a school leader can realistically imbed policy into a school and lead the continued improvement of pedagogy and services offered to Indigenous students.

Leading and Choosing to Make a Difference

There are no doubt thousands of stories that can be told by school leaders, whether Australian or from around the world, about their quest to make a difference for all students in their schools. I would imagine these stories are very relevant and valid and it would make an excellent study to discover the commonalities, disparities, conclusions and advice to others who would want to become educational leaders. It follows with no exaggeration, then, to say in my case, there have been and still are many challenges associated with being a non-Indigenous female administrator leading a program of Indigenous education in one of the largest state secondary schools in Queensland. The one greatest challenge in my work has been establishing quality relationships with Indigenous people and trying to understand just what "an Indigenous perspective" really means. It takes a lot of time and commitment to live a belief that establishing quality relationships is one key to improving the human condition. Glasser (1997) argues that the success of any organisational unit, whether it be a marriage, a family, a classroom, a school, or an entire community, is directly

commensurate with the success of the relationships within that organisation. Add to this trying to understand a different cultural perspective and it is easy to see how hard it is to do. When I reflect on the student-related incidents and parent meetings I used to have in the first few years at Kirwan SHS, they were without good communication, filled with distrust and often some heated disagreements among me, Indigenous parents and other Indigenous parent factions. It is only now, after eight years, that I feel I can see real progress in my school.

It is not that I came into this position with a strong background in Indigenous education. In my own childhood, I cannot even recall Indigenous students being at my primary or high school in Northern NSW in the 1960s and 1970s. I had never really had any personal experiences with Indigenous people other than the handful of students in my classes in my beginning years as a teacher in Southeast and Central Queensland. It was not until 1990, when I moved to Townsville and began to work with Indigenous students and their parents, that I began to gain an understanding of the issues surrounding them. I am therefore no world expert on matters Indigenous. I have learned what I know through trial and error over the last twelve years. While many of the activities I have undertaken and many of the decisions I have made were strategically planned, based on research and derived from systemic requirements, others simply grew out of need. My principal often quotes the maxim, "The devil drives where needs must", and this, more than any glossy policy document that gathers dust on my office bookshelf, often informs a lot of what I do.

This paper shows the progress for Indigenous students in a very large, urban Queensland secondary school and provides some answers on what can be done. It is apparent that there is no easy solution. What has worked and is working at one school may not at another school. I argue strongly that it depends on the people initially and then on the support generated by and provided for them. I heard David McRae sum it up in a blinding flash of the obvious when I attended the Cross-Cultural Pedagogy Conference on Palm Island in 2001. He proposed that successful educational outcomes (for Indigenous students) could be achieved if there is a target, resources and a collective belief that success is inevitable. He said, "All you can do is start with where you are …" and then do what it takes. This is probably the best advice to

give anyone. Just what any given school leader needs to do as they try to imbed the objectives of Indigenous education policy into a school will vary from context to context. The best part of all is that you can make a difference—if you choose to!

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Appendix 1 (to Chapter 12)

Kirwan State High School—IESIP Strategies Plan 2002

Continue to work closely with the ASSPA (Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness) committee to improve the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by:

• Employing Indigenous people as Assistant Community Liaison Officers (ACLOs) to support and liaise between students and parents and staff at the school.
• Using a majority of the ACLO time to help students in class with reading, writing, speaking and mathematics.
• Encouraging students to finish school to Year 12.
• Encouraging students to get more involved in the life of the school.
• Contributing to the financial support needed for students whose families don't have enough money to enable them to fully participate in school activities.
• Persuading teachers to consider and include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in their lessons.
• Continuing support of the subject: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.
• Supporting and sponsoring all AITAP (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program) activities.
• Raising the profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in the school.
• Supporting the work of the Indigenous staff in the school.
• Encouraging parents to get more involved in the school.

Appendix 2

Kirwan High ASSPA—2002 Activity Plan

a. Encouraging parental involvement in educational activities/decision making

Activity	Time activity to be held
Regular ASSPA meetings and AGM including parent awareness of study skills and meeting teachers—catering.	Ongoing
Parents' information morning teas and homework centre coaching and information evenings—catering.	Ongoing
Regular monthly mailed newsletters to parents—photocopying, paper, etc.	Quarterly
Publish a special quarterly newsletter mailed to parents (a project of the ATSI Studies class)—printing, paper, etc.	Ongoing
Assistance for families in need to come to/from special ASSPA activities/workshops (taxis/transport).	Ongoing
Recognition of parent involvement (certificates, catering).	End of Year
Parent/child/teacher meetings to discuss progress—catering.	July
Printing of ASSPA letterhead paper as designed by Indigenous artist and to be used in all future correspondence with ASSPA—printing/paper.	July
Printing of special info booklet to promote ASSPA activities—printing.	August
Parent workshops on: 1. Computer use and how to help students with homework/assignments; 2. Info on QCS preparation for Seniors.	Semester 2
Parent workshop on motivating their student (Success with Attitude).	When available
Contribution to NAIDOC Week activities for parents—catering, guest speakers performers.	July/Aug

b. Improving students' access to education

Activity	Month activity to be held
Health and nutrition program for needy students—catering.	Ongoing
Attendance at career and further education open days, seminars, meetings—transport off campus.	Ongoing
Career and further education on campus talks—speaker fees.	Ongoing
Purchase of notice boards for CEC and library (to advertise upcoming events, work experience, guest speaker visits, homework centre info, etc.—school to contribute 50% to library notice board.	Term 1

c. Increasing student participation and attendance

Activity	Month activity to be held
Bursaries for high-achieving students continuing on to Yr 10 and Yr 12 (up to 4 @ $100 ea.).	Oct–Nov
Graduation and Awards Night (Yrs 10-12) sports awards and Awards Day (Yrs 8–9)—prizes, certificates, shield or trophy.	Oct–Nov
Assist homework centre to provide term and end-of-year achievement awards—prizes and certificates.	End of semester and as above
Contribution to Homework Centre—stationery/other consumables and catering.	Term 1

Activity	Month activity to be held
Self improvement workshop (Success with Attitude and ones organised by CEC)—cost of consultants, catering, paper, photocopying, etc.	Term 1/3
Contribution formation of school cultural dance troupe—grass skirts, make-up, cassette tapes for music, etc.	Ongoing

d. Improving student's educational outcomes

Activity	Month activity to be held
Maintenance of camera to record Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student activities and ASSPA events – purchase of film, processing, batteries, photo albums, maintenance.	Ongoing
Purchase of culturally appropriate resources – texts, videos, CD ROMs, cultural artifacts, contribution to ATSI Studies resources.	Ongoing
Development of learning and teaching materials to ensure an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective is included in work programs—resources, photocopying, catering for meetings.	Ongoing
Purchase of one digital video camera to allow ATSI Studies students greater access to technology for class work.	Semester 1
Purchase of two PCs for use by Indigenous staff/parents in the parent room.	Semester 1
Purchase of pedestal fan for parent room.	
Contribution to cultural dancer performances—Dion Drummond and NAIDOC week.	Semesters 1 and 2

e. Participating in educational excursions, school based sporting activities, cultural events

Activity	Month activity to be held
Contribution to cost of school representative on sporting excursions.	Ongoing
Contributions to cost of school academic, cultural and co-curricular excursions and camps.	Ongoing
Contribution to NAIDOC week activities—guest speaker fees, catering, purchasing of materials, etc.	August
Contribution to special school camps and year-level camps.	Semester 1/2

f. Administration items (e.g. postage, insurance, banking fees, audit costs) (Remember: ASSPA committees receiving over $10,000 must provide an audit report with the *End of Year Report*. Please ensure funds are allocated for this cost.)

- Postage for regular parent newsletter and information bulletins.
- Reprographics.
- Stationery.
- Auditor fees (if any).

Appendix 3

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education at Kirwan State High School

Below are summaries of two studies done by the School of Indigenous Australian Studies at JCU:

October 1998, Environmental Scan

Number of Indigenous students: 123

Data was gathered under seven main headings and recommendations were made in each accordingly:

1. Characteristics of the Kirwan High School Community

Recommendation:

- The school develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Indigenous education at Kirwan High.

2. School—Indigenous Community Interactions/Relationships

Recommendations:

- Maintain existing approaches for communicating between school/home.
- The school explore further opportunities for interacting with families outside the school premises.
- Identify ways in which to supplement this communication with staff other than a reliance on the current Indigenous staff.
- Examine its operations and interactions to identify existing barriers for parents.

- Examine ways to increase and legitimate participation and involvement of indigenous parents in decision-making forums other than ASSPA/ATAS.

3. School Management, Administration and Organisation

Recommendation:

- Record as policy the school's IESIP initiatives so as to be a source of future action and direction.

October 2001, Case Study

Number of Indigenous students: 165

Data was gathered and comparisons were made with the 1998 environmental scan in mind. It was noted that the 1988 recommendations were still relevant and additional issues were raised.

1. Retention to Year 12

Recommendation:

- Establish co-operative partnerships between school, staff, parents and other key stakeholders.

2. Teacher Education

Recommendations:

- Review existing in-service and other professional development programs.
- Enhance access to in-service and other professional development programs that focus on Indigenous education.
- Undertake a training needs analysis for the Indigenous education workers to identify their needs.

3. Community Capacity Building

Recommendations:

• Review current forums which facilitate school–community linkages.
• Promote models of best practice in relation to partnerships/community capacity building.

4. School Management, Administration and Organisation

Recommendations:

• Closely examine elements of its administrative operations/procedures to eliminate barriers to Indigenous student participation.
• Instigate a deliberate/coordinated strategy to inform students, staff, and parents of role of CEC. A similar strategy needs to occur for the Homework Centre/staff.
• Increase number of Indigenous employees, especially to attract Indigenous teachers.

5. Staff Cultural Awareness

Recommendations:

• Survey staff to measure the extent of their individual knowledge in Indigenous cultures and follow up accordingly to increase this where necessary.
• Implement professional development activities that improve capacity of all teachers to cater for Indigenous students in their classroom.
• Undertake cultural awareness training to gain, increase or review knowledge on Indigenous culture.

6. Curriculum and Teaching

Recommendations:

- Undertake a curriculum audit to:
- identify existing Indigenous perspectives.
- ascertain level of knowledge/ experiences of teachers for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives into subject areas.
- identify existing Indigenous resources and how they are used.
- identify curriculum areas where Indigenous perspectives should occur.

7. Racism

Recommendations:

- Examine existing aspects of structures, operations and practices that combat/allow racism.
- Increase the knowledge, understanding and skill of students and staff on the impact of racism.

8. Quality Assurance Practices: Attendance, Truancy and Behaviour Management

Recommendations:

- Provide to parents specific information regarding their responsibility in relation to their child's attendance including rules relating to post-compulsory school age.
- Ensure all Indigenous parents and students are familiar with the school rules in relation to exclusions and suspensions.
- Encourage debate on cultural/social factors which may impact on Indigenous student attendance.

Literature Review

Indigenous Australian Student Educational Outcomes

A study of a selection of the literature available on Indigenous Australian student educational outcomes reveals numerous theories about why they are as they are. It also sadly demonstrates that for the copious volumes written, and no doubt dollars spent to fund this writing, there is not necessarily a commensurate rate of actual improvement in the lot of the Indigenous Australian child at school.

Peter Buckskin, in his address to the Australian Principals Association's Professional Development Council (APAPDC) sponsored "Dare To Lead" forums that ran across Australia in 2000–2001, said, "Over the past thirty years, despite some public perceptions to the contrary, considerable progress has been made in the educational attainments of Indigenous Australians … However, while substantial advancements are now being made, significant inequality remains …" (Buckskin 2000, p. 1).

Virtually all of the literature cited also contains explicit examples of evidence showing the incontrovertible gaps between the achievements of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Australian schools. For instance, the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA 2000), shows that "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were found not to be achieving 'anywhere near' the educational outcomes of the rest of Australia" (Townsend 2002, p. 16). A systemic strategy generated by Education Queensland, "Partners For Success" (2000) uses data gathered from its internal branches and other governmental bodies on the significant gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Queensland in the areas of literacy, numeracy, subject choice, school completion, school disciplinary absences, secondary attendance, juvenile justice and workforce participation.

Why Are There Gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Student Outcomes?

In analysing why Indigenous people are recognised by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) as "the most educationally disadvantaged group in the community" (quoted in Buckskin 2000, p. 4–5) and what can be done about it, attributions have been made to factors, reasons and strategies inside and outside the school.

Tripcony (1999) believes there are "overarching issues … and specific (current) issues: (a) those extrinsic, and (b) those intrinsic, to schools and educational institutions" (p.1). She outlines issues of culture, identity and power as overarching factors. Current issues as reported through the popular media —such as Native Title, Reconciliation, the plight of remote Indigenous communities, Aboriginal deaths in custody, unemployment rates and poor health —are outside the control of educators. Teacher/staff attitudes towards Indigenous students, their families and communities, teacher expectations and curriculum relevance are, however, factors that schools can influence.

The notion of extrinsic and intrinsic factors is further explored by Purdie, Tripcony, Boulton-Lewis, Fanshawe and Gunstone (2000), who relate positive self-identity for Indigenous students to school outcomes. Their project for the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) was conducted across Australia and had two elements: firstly, a detailed literature review on self-identity and secondly, consultations with a national sample of Indigenous and non-Indigenous school and community people. These writers make nine recommendations for education in Australia. The recommendations include that school communities should work better with other community services including health and social services, and that schools should: clearly define the position of appointed Indigenous education workers, increase teacher awareness of Aboriginal language, implement Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum, increase teacher numbers, include vocational education subjects for Indigenous students, and promote positive images of Indigenous people.

Harslett (1998) focuses on characteristics of effective teachers of Aboriginal middle-school students as a contributor of improved

educational outcomes. He suggests improvement can be gained if schools practise explicit teacher induction and professional development, relationship-based teaching and consideration of middle schooling pedagogy and curriculum principles.

Another paper on teaching practice by Partington and Richer (1999) highlights barriers to effective teaching of Indigenous students. Their findings indicate four main barriers to success: "background" factors, the teacher's own value system, power relations within the school, and inadequate communication between the home and the school. The writers conclude that success could be achieved by a more cohesive and collaborative effort within the school which includes greater involvement of Indigenous parents and community members.

An analysis of the intrinsic factors for success or otherwise in a Queensland school was done in 1998 and again in 2001 when Kirwan State High School in Townsville engaged researchers from the School of Indigenous Australian Studies at James Cook University. They conducted an environmental scan and a case study, respectively. Data was gathered and seven recommendations were made in the initial work, followed by a further three new issues in the later work. These included improvements in school–community relationships and capacity building, teacher training, the curriculum and reducing racism.

Interestingly, one paper provides a flipside to the debate of extrinsic/intrinsic factors hindering Indigenous educational outcomes. Richer, Godfrey, Partington, Harslett and Harrison (1998) reveal, in their study of Indigenous student attitudes, that "…the majority of students have positive attitudes to school. They wish to remain at school until Year 12 and gain further education. They feel welcome at school and do not wish to absent themselves from school" (p. 6).

Where to from Here?

From the literature reviewed so far, it is clear there are many reasons for the success and/or failure of Indigenous students, with supporting evidence to prove this. The conclusions reached and recommendations put forward have common themes and are valid and appropriate, yet the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students remain. The following two papers could offer a possible explanation that is closer to the real cause for these gaps and simultaneously show the way towards a solution. Notably the authors are Indigenous. Stehbens,

Anderson and Herbert (1999) presented their paper at the combined conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education and New Zealand Association for Research in Education (AARE-NZARE). The paper focuses on the problems of non-attendance in and suspension and exclusion from the NSW schooling system. The authors point out that many of the schools studied had "micro controls", that the schools were hegemonic in their practices. In their conclusion they say:

> … schools have historically been gatekeepers in assimilating Indigenous children into the values and mores of the dominant mainstream … students are forced to act, behave and relate in ways which are governed by the educational system … (p.10).

The other paper is an edited extract from Dr Mandawuy Yunupingu's speech presented at the Australian Education Union conference in Melbourne, 2002.

> Professional groups like lawyers, scientists, environmentalists and artists are now realising what teachers involved in Aboriginal education have known for a long time. You have to negotiate big ideas at the level of philosophy if the social-justice possibilities of self-determination are going to be realised (p26).

Yunupingu reflects on his own education and his love of learning English:

> … But looking back now I can see that the teachers probably saw things differently to me. Many of their demands were quite incomprehensible. They weren't just teaching me "useful things", they had a theory, an ideology. I see now that it was a curriculum driven by the ideology of assimilation. I marvel at the ways we knew how to resist it … I see now that a lot of what motivated those white teachers was a view that it is only when Yolngu stop being Yolngu could we become Australians. This is not an acceptable view in most places in Australia now, but very sadly it is still happening.

<div align="right">(Yunupingu 2002, p.27)</div>

Does the real challenge for educators, then, especially school leaders, begin with what Yunupingu calls "ideology" as they manage the tension created by juggling the educational system, which is representative of the "dominant culture" of assimilation? What is good for all, and that of the local community, which is made up of a collection of dominant and non-dominant groups? Caine and Caine (1997) spell this out more simply in their study of a theory of learning:

> We were, and continue to be, absolutely certain that a fundamental issue hinges on the understanding that stakeholders have of how human beings learn. We feel that many … hold basic beliefs about learning that are far too limited; and the problems in and with education cannot be solved until these beliefs are changed
>
> (Caine and Caine 1997, p.9).

Just how can a principal (who is usually non-Indigenous) lead and create the conditions and opportunities for self-determination, equity and recognition of cultural diversity without believing in these things first, let alone operate in a politically governed, mainly non-Indigenous-dominated, system? This raises more questions than there are answers!

A way forward may come from Schwab and Sutherland (2001) when they propose "… building Indigenous learning communities as an avenue to address the limited engagement of Indigenous Australians with Education" (p. v). Their discussion paper outlines five program models and argues that these could bring the community into direct contact with the school and vice versa. They conclude by saying:

> … there is a perception that what goes on inside the school building is the responsibility of teachers and education departments. Boundaries, either real or imagined, must be dismantled. The wider community must be invited in, and the pool of skills and opportunities in schools must be made accessible to the wider community. The experience of many programs suggests that learning communities would grow where members come to the realisation that learning is a community activity as well as a community responsibility.
>
> (Schwab and Sutherland 2001, p. 19).

A similar idea comes from the work of Tripcony (1999; 2000) who discusses the notion of "partnerships" in her papers, "Overview of issues impacting on Indigenous students, families and communities" and "The most disadvantaged? Indigenous education needs". She points out that recent national and State directions for Indigenous education support the development of partnerships. While this notion has its own set of beliefs, if her presented definition of partnership, relevant in an education context, was extended for a moment, could it be likened to a marriage relationship? For a marriage to be sustainable, successful and enjoyable both parties need to see themselves as equal partners who bring some different and some similar constructs, based on experiences, knowledge, values and

beliefs. These are accepted unconditionally and are used to enrich the relationship "through sickness and in health".

Finally, inspiration for educators to find their own way to help improve the lot of the Indigenous student could be drawn from the introduction to the draft publication from APAPDC by David McRae (2001) on the impact of the processes and outcomes of the "Dare To Lead" forums for educators. McRae (2001, p. 3) says:

> It could have been the mix of people. Participants, from all sectors of Australian education, had an opportunity (in some cases for the first time) to listen to and chat with a number of distinguished Indigenous Australians who work within and outside education. The directness, passion and sheer integrity of their contributions were deeply moving. The messages were clear, reiterated and insistent. Chief among them—we can make a difference if we choose to.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AARE Australian Association for Research in Education
ACLO assistant community liaison officer
AEA Aboriginal education assistant
AEP (National) Aboriginal (and Torres Strait Islander) Education Policy
AEW Aboriginal education worker
AGPS Australian Government Publishing Service
AIATSIS Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AITAP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program
ANU Australian National University
APAPDC Australian Principals Association's Professional Development Council
ARL Australian Rugby League
ASCD Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
ASSPA Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (scheme)
ATA Aboriginal teaching assistant
ATAS Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme
CAE College of Advanced Education
CAEPR Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CATSIPRD Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation, Research and Development
CCB community capacity building
CEAC Catholic Education Aboriginal Committee
CEC community education counsellor
CECWA Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia
CEO Catholic Education Office
CDEP Community Development Employment Program
CHL conductive hearing loss
DATSIP Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy
DEET Department of Employment Education and Training
DEST Department of Education, Science and Training
DETYA Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
ECE early childhood education
EDWA Education Department of Western Australia
EQ Education Department of Queensland (Queensland Education)
ESL English as a second language
FCAATSI Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders
FELIKS Fostering English Language in Kimberley Schools
HECS Higher Education Contribution Scheme?
HERDSA Higher Education Research and Development something-or-other?
HREOC Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
ICT information communication technology
IECB Indigenous Education Consultative Body
IESIP Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme
IETA Indigenous Education and Training Alliance (an Education Queensland initiative)
IEW Indigenous education worker
JCU James Cook University
MACATSIE Ministerial Advisory Committee (Council) on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

MCEETYA Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NAEC National Aboriginal Education Committee
NAIDOC National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee
NARU Northern Australia Research Unit
NATSIEP National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
NGO non-governmental organisation
NIELNS National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
NSW New South Wales
NT Northern Territory
NZARE New Zealand Association for Research in Education
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA Program of International Student Assessment
PLO police liaison officer
QAITAD Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Teacher Aide
QIECB Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Body
QSRLS Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study
SAE Standard Australian English
SHS State high school
SIAS School of Indigenous Australian Studies
TAFE (college of) Tertiary and Further Education?
TIDEL Townsville Indigenous Developments for Excellence League
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WA Western Australia