

PREPARING PRESERVICE TEACHERS' MINDS, HEARTS *and* ACTIONS *for* TEACHING *in* REMOTE INDIGENOUS CONTEXTS

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Abstract

This paper examines some challenges we confront working with preservice teachers prior to serving in remote Indigenous communities. Some challenges include what preservice teachers bring to their studies - subjectivities, experiential understandings of teaching and notions of childhood/adolescence, culture and social justice, all of which involve minds, emotions and our notions of our places in society. Some challenges involve linking new notions of teaching to what they already know which may entail unlearning before relearning. Some challenges involve making sense of the theory/action dialectic - teasing out links between strongly held but unarticulated values, beliefs and actions that derive from them. Some challenges involve anticipating what it might be like to live and teach in a remote setting and preparing to work effectively across cultures. I then discuss how we might tackle them in the light of productive pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy (Osborne, 2001a, 2001b).

Introduction

This paper draws together four potentially important aspects of teacher education designed to prepare preservice teachers for remote Indigenous communities - productive pedagogies, equitable multiculturalism, school-wide reform, and culturally relevant pedagogy (Osborne, 1996, 2001a, 2001b). There is currently much interest in productive pedagogy (Ladwig et al., 1999; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995) and schoolwide reform (Crowther et al., 2001) but what does this mean for students from ethnic minority groups which have been and are being marginalised in Australian society? Kalantzis et al. (1990, pp. 239-247) identified three post-war phases of educational response to ethnic diversity - traditional/assimilationist (1940s-1960s); progressivist/cultural pluralist (1970s and 1980s); and post-progressivist/equitable multiculturalist (from late 1980s). They insightfully married policy and school responses to ethnic diversity to broader issues of teaching, learning and assessment, but my concern is how well preservice teacher education programs prepare students for equitable multiculturalist teaching. Specifically, in what ways can preservice education prepare teachers' hearts, minds and actions to deliver quality teaching to Indigenous students in remote communities? Once these three framings of teaching in the twenty-first century together with culturally relevant pedagogy have been briefly described and shown to be potentially interrelated, I examine some challenges confronted by teacher educators working with preservice teachers.

Productive pedagogies

Elsewhere (Osborne, 2001b; see also Ladwig et al., 1999) I have summarised the component parts of the four themes of productive pedagogies like this:

- **Intellectual quality:** higher order thinking, deep knowledge, deep understanding, substantive conversation, knowledge problematic and metalanguage;
- **Relevance:** knowledge integration, background knowledge, connectedness and problem-based curriculum;
- **Supportive classroom environment:** student control, social support, engagement, explicit criteria and self-regulation; and

- **Recognition of difference:** cultural knowledge, inclusivity, narrative, group identity and active citizenship.

While details of the component parts are important, even more important is the finding that across a range of Queensland schools, apart from some evidence of supportive classroom environments, there is little evidence of intellectual quality, relevance or recognition of difference. This creates a challenge not only for schools and teachers, but also for teacher educators, to raise the quality of teaching and hence student outcomes. As a result, many changes are being introduced, particularly to curriculum via Rich Tasks, New Basics and the new Key Learning Areas. My focus is on the implications of productive pedagogies and its curricular derivatives for all students, specifically including Indigenous students in remote parts of Queensland. In many, but not all, of these schools student outcomes are low, retention to Year 12 is low, dropout during the transition to high school is high, staff turnover is frequently high, and indeed "current approaches are failing both students and adults" (Education Queensland, 1999b, p. 1).

Equitable multiculturalism

In their study of eight very diverse multiethnic/multilingual schools, Kalantzis et al. (1990) examined post World War II changes to both pedagogy and dealing with increasing ethnic diversity in Australia. By drawing together both general trends in pedagogy (including curriculum, teaching strategies, and assessment) and general policies related to ethnic diversity, they provide one helpful framing of why, at least in part, intellectual quality is lower than it might have been. In terms of pedagogy they describe the first post-war assimilationist phase as a unified and elitist curriculum, taught largely by chalk and talk methods, and assessed by public examination. This phase used assimilationist policies to deal with ethnic diversity. In terms of pedagogy they describe the second phase as one of diversified curriculum, more individually student-centred teaching strategies and the abandonment of standardised forms of assessment. This second phase employed a pluralist multicultural approach to ethnic diversity. In terms of pedagogy they describe their third and final phase as one of less curriculum diversity, greater emphasis on social construction of knowledge and greater accountability for student outcomes. This phase calls for equitable multiculturalist approaches to ethnic diversity that provide social access combined with respect for and celebration of that diversity. Although there are objections to using the term multiculturalism in Indigenous contexts on grounds of original habitation of and relationships to the land, I use it because its key framings of the issues seem to apply.

These changes in pedagogy and policy related to ethnic diversity were fuelled by, among other things, changes in theorising teaching/learning/curriculum, critiques of schooling itself, and changes to our diverse ethnic mix.

These changes occurred within fluctuating economic circumstances, rapid globalisation and changing conceptualisations of social, relational and curricular justice (Connell, 1996). Equitable multiculturalism is yet to be widely implemented, despite the introduction of standardised testing nationally and in the states. How is equitable multiculturalism to be implemented when within remote and urban schools there are likely to be teachers still subscribing to traditional/assimilationist or progressivist/pluralist multiculturalist approaches?

School reform via school-wide pedagogy

For many years I had thought that the only way to change schools was via what I call the "strangler fig" model of reform where a teacher or group of teachers initiates change and other teachers are attracted to what they do and try it for themselves (Osborne, 1994; Osborne & Singh, 2001). This approach is slow, haphazard, very demanding on innovative teachers and unlikely to self-sustain once these teachers transfer. However the strangler fig model avoids the known shortcomings of top down professional development and conceptualises teachers as initial units of change.

This conceptualisation partly counters the damning research by Coleman et al. (1966) using a large sample of schools across the US, which found that schools made no difference to student outcomes and that the best predictor of outcomes was familial socio-economic status. While this research was roundly condemned as wrongly using mean scores across schools rather than identifying good and not so good teachers to discover the origins of the differences between them, most of the subsequent contrary evidence was built around how individual teachers make a difference (Good & Brophy, 1973; Good et al., 1975). What if the unit of change is conceptualised as the school and its community?

Recently I was introduced to the work of Crowther et al. (2001) that does just this. They provide evidence that 40% of the variation in student outcomes is a function of the school. Their Innovative Design for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS) model is holistic and involves extensive in situ professional development to align four key factors, with appropriate professional supports, to impact on student outcomes. The factors are termed strategic foundations; cohesive community; infrastructural design; and school-wide pedagogy. "Strategic foundations" includes an informed, explicit statement of the school vision derived from detailed analysis of a diagnostic inventory answered by school staff, community members and students. There is also a notion here of parallel leadership rather than top down leadership to not only unify people around the school vision but also to foster sustainability as over time school staff move out of and into the school. "Cohesive community" involves both the school staff and the community from which the students come supporting the school vision and sharing collective responsibility for

its outcomes. It also entails recognising and valuing the contributions of groups and individuals to the school culture. "Infrastructural design" involves the school's use of space, time and technologies as well as financial, physical and human resources to achieve the school vision. "School-wide pedagogy" is the ways of teaching that the teachers identify through reflection and reading as appropriate to their school context and its vision. The IDEAS teams from the University of Southern Queensland, supported by Education Queensland, work towards implementing this vision together in more than 150 Queensland schools. Because vision, parallel leadership, community partnership and the like are brought into alignment, student outcomes improve and the reform is sustainable.

Hence, I now see two possible school reform processes - the first, the strangler fig model which can apply in schools not initially engaged in a whole-school reform process and the second, like the IDEAS model, built around aligning staff and community vision and inputs with student outcomes. Graduates joining schools not engaged in school-wide reform can sow seeds of reform via the strangler fig reform process, once they are making their ways as competent teachers. Graduates joining schools engaged in school-wide reform can link into existing processes of parallel leadership, visioning and the like.

■ Culturally relevant pedagogy

The fourth framing of teaching, as it relates specifically to remote Indigenous contexts, is "culturally relevant pedagogy". Culturally relevant pedagogy is a term that emerged from my analysis of about a hundred ethnographic studies of teachers working in multi-ethnic urban and isolated cross-cultural contexts in North America, Australia and New Zealand. The term refers to building from students' daily lives/cultures in such a way as to foster ethnic pride, and academic and social success, while critiquing the way society is and using classroom teaching strategies with which ethnically marginalised students are comfortable (Osborne, 2001a, pp. 170-171; see also Ladson-Billings, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c & 1994). I drew nine signposts from this analysis - signposts that teachers and preservice teachers might engage with via praxis (Freire, 1972) to find what works best for them in their own school and community context. The signposts are listed below:

- **Signpost 1.** Some mainstream teachers can teach students from ethnically marginalised groups well.
- **Signpost 2.** Socio-historico-political realities beyond the school impact on the classroom and teachers need to be aware of them.
- **Signpost 3.** Teach content that is culturally relevant to students' prior experiences, that fosters their cultural identity and empowers them with knowledge and practices that enable them to operate successfully in

mainstream society. Culturally relevant approaches to curriculum involve analysing and critiquing the status quo as a collective enterprise to construct equitable and just social relations. This means accepting knowledge as socially constructed and open to challenge.

- **Signpost 4.** Culturally relevant pedagogy involves personal warmth towards, respect for, and demandingness of students.
- **Signpost 5.** Culturally relevant teaching involves spelling out the cultural assumptions upon which the classroom operates.
- **Signpost 6.** There are five components of culturally relevant classroom management:
 - 6.1 Using group work;
 - 6.2 Avoiding direct, overt management strategies and using indirect strategies;
 - 6.3 Avoiding excessive "spotlighting", behavioural or academic;
 - 6.4 Using an unhurried pace; and
 - 6.5 Matching school and home communication structures particularly in early grades.
- **Signpost 7.** Involve parents and families from ethnic groups we have marginalised.
- **Signpost 8.** Include students' first languages in school program and classroom.
- **Signpost 9.** Name and tackle racism (Osborne, 2001a, pp. 51-134 & pp. 163-195).

These signposts are compatible with the concept of Kalantzis et al. (1990) of equitable multiculturalism but extend downwards from their big picture analysis to identify what teachers might do in classrooms to achieve it. The signposts also support much of productive pedagogies although the final three signposts also extend productive pedagogies. At the same time, culturally relevant pedagogy falls short of it in some detailed components (intellectual quality, relevance, supportive classroom environment and recognition of difference) (see Table 1). Hence there is space to meld the three framings of pedagogy in preservice education preparing teachers to work in remote Indigenous communities and schools, in particular. They would also benefit from competence in English as a Second Language (ESL)/English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and critical literacy teaching, scaffolding literacy, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) expertise. However the challenge is complex not only because of what preservice teachers bring to both their academic program and the school-based practicum but also how they might envision and prepare for living and teaching in remote Indigenous communities. Whole school reform processes that will not be universally embraced by the schools to which our graduates will be appointed create a further challenge.

Remote Indigenous communities provide some complicating challenges. They are not only considerable distances from large coastal cities, access to them can be hampered by poor roads, costly and sometimes

infrequent flights and even routine isolation by flooding. The communities frequently comprise fewer than 1,000 people and mainstream communication, entertainment and amenities are limited. The teachers (plus nurses and police) are frequently a very small minority in a predominantly Indigenous community. Some or all of these challenges place varying strains on teachers, particularly those who have lived all their lives in cities.

Where to begin with these future directions in teacher education

If we take productive pedagogy as a sound starting point for improving the quality of future graduates, then, from a position of preparing them to work in remote Indigenous communities, there is a case for refining some aspects of it and extending beyond it. For example, while intellectual quality embraces higher order thinking and deep understanding, it is highly likely that warmth and respect, cornerstones of Signpost 4 from culturally relevant pedagogy, are essential preconditions for its practice (as shown in Table 1). Again, avoiding direct control (Signpost 6.2) and avoiding hurrying (Signpost 6.4) promote productive pedagogies' "self-regulation".

The first extension shown in Table 1 is merely a statement about the ethnicity of the teacher (Signpost 1), which is clearly outside the scope and intent of productive pedagogies. Some teachers, irrespective of their ethnicity, teach minority students well (see Ladson-Billings, 1994). Some teachers do not teach such students effectively (Malin, 1990; Osborne, 2001a). Since some non-Indigenous teachers can teach Indigenous students well, there is a place for preparing preservice teachers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to teach Indigenous students.

The second extension of productive pedagogies comes from culturally relevant pedagogy's Signpost 2 which argues that teachers need to take into account the wider socio-historico-political factors that impinge on their classrooms. This includes an understanding of the history of Australian race relations, land rights, colonial and welfare colonial policies, Indigenous heritages, rapid turnover of many non-Indigenous staff, previous silencing of Indigenous voices and undermining of Indigenous economic systems. These understandings provide not only a basis for curricular modification (countering its hegemony, Connell, 1993; Weiler, 1988) but also for understanding the need for community consultation or mutually educative dialogue (Kalantzis et al., 1990, p. 242) and adapting teaching strategies to meet the twin needs to achieve high outcomes and foster Indigenous pride. While many school students want to see Indigenous pride fostered, some are keen not to be included, preferring to integrate or assimilate in their own ways. I believe this option needs to remain open – trying to enforce bi-culturalism is as colonialising in intent as trying to force assimilation.

The third extension shown in Table 1 includes equitable multiculturalism's strategy of establishing "mutually educative dialogue" between teachers and their ethnically

diverse communities (Kalantzis et al., 1990, p. 242). This involves considerable community participation. Such an extension is also supported by culturally relevant pedagogy's Signpost 7 about family and community involvement in the schooling process. It is also the foundation of Education Queensland's *Partners for success* (1999b) and of *The National Indigenous English literacy and numeracy strategy 2000-2004* (DETYA, 2000) which aims to raise literacy and numeracy of Indigenous students to levels "comparable ... to other Australians".

The fourth extension to productive pedagogies, deriving solely from culturally relevant pedagogy, is naming and dealing with racism. Racism can be both personal and institutional, but in either case it is embodied in discourses. Accordingly, critical literacy approaches – consonant with countering the hegemony of the curriculum (Connell, 1993) – are helpful in identifying and tackling racism.

Kalantzis et al. (1990) provide two further extensions to productive pedagogies. The fifth one is linguistic/cultural incorporation (pp. 238-241), closely aligned to, but extending beyond, Signposts 6.5 and 8. The sixth is classroom assessment which "measure[s] linguistic skills; identif[ies] the attainment of cognitive objectives ... [identifies] levels of cultural literacy necessary for access and participation in the multicultural society" (Kalantzis et al., 1990, p. 248).

Equitably productive pedagogy for diversity

There are three major challenges deriving from this analysis of productive pedagogies and the above six extensions. The first is to assist preservice teachers to develop the knowledge and skills required to deliver equitably productive pedagogy for diversity. Implied are not only changes to preservice education programs, but also to school-based practical experiences.

The second is to assist preservice teachers to critically examine their own subjectivities so as to avoid ignoring or dismissing student subjectivities (Osborne, 2001a; Weiler, 1988). This examination discovers the discourses that we take for granted and so opens opportunities for relational justice (Connell, 1996; Gewirtz, 2001) to diverse student populations. This involves mind, emotions and actions. Therefore, the emotional aspects of who we are as individuals, of teaching, and reform cannot be emphasised too much (Denzin, 1984; Dinan-Thompson, 2001; Hargreaves, 1997).

The final challenge is more complex than merely extending the many skills involved in equitably productive pedagogy for diversity because it takes account of the type of schools for which we are preparing our graduates. Are all schools involved in the IDEAS project or indeed in some other version of school-wide reform? Clearly they are not. So at the very least, some schools are already embracing school-wide reform and some are not. Some schools will be well down the path to aligning their articulated vision, community

Table 1. Links between productive pedagogies and culturally relevant pedagogy.

PRODUCTIVE PEDAGOGIES	CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY
INTELLECTUAL QUALITY	
1. Higher order thinking, 2. Deep knowledge 3. Deep understanding	Not specifically dealt with. Compatible with Signpost 4's academic demand, but start with warmth and respect
4. Substantive conversation	Signpost 3: Analyse student experience in historically located context
5. Knowledge problematic	Signpost 3: Knowledge is socially constructed and open to challenge
6. Metalanguage	Not dealt with
RELEVANCE	
1. Knowledge integration	Not dealt with
2. Background knowledge 3. Connectedness 4. Problem-based curriculum	Signpost 3 and its extended version: use students' culture to help make meaning of the world; analyse student experience in historically located context; knowledge is socially constructed and open to challenge
SUPPORTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT	
1. Student control	Not dealt with
2. Social support	Signpost 6.1: Group work is highly desirable
3. Engagement	Implicit in all of Signpost 6 and academic demand of Signpost 4
4. Explicit criteria	Signpost 5: Spell out cultural assumptions of classroom
5. Self regulation	Signpost 6.2: Avoid direct control Signpost 6.4: Avoid hurrying
RECOGNITION OF DIFFERENCE	
1. Cultural knowledges 2. Inclusivity	Signpost 3 and its extended version: use students' culture to help make meaning of the world; analyse student experience in historically located context
3. Narrative	Signpost 6.5: Use home communication structures. Signpost 8: It is desirable to use student's home language
4. Group identity	Signpost 3 includes: Fostering cultural identities
5. Active citizenship	Not dealt with directly
	Signpost 1: Teacher does not have to come from same ethnic group as the students
	Signpost 2: Socio-historico-political factors from outside classrooms impact inside them
	Signpost 7: It is desirable to involve parents and families
	Signpost 9: Racism exists and should be tackled

partnership, infrastructure, school wide pedagogy and student outcomes. Others may be only just starting the process. Yet others may not be working on school-wide reform but are embracing Rich Tasks, New Basics and other professional development foci as established by staff needs.

Accordingly, at the very least then, our teacher education programs in Queensland should be identifying, describing and explaining the key initiatives that are being undertaken in a variety of schools. This approach would support what Education Queensland refers to as providing "distinctive schools" (1999a, p. 19) and "substantive educational differences in school approaches" (1999a, p. 23). Thus, graduating students could be systematically encouraged to seek out schools that focus on the approaches they personally support – as some already do with considerable success. Hence, rather than prepare one-size-fits-all graduates, there can be some systematic support for graduates who prefer certain types of school approaches and/or teaching in remote Indigenous communities. In particular, some students may apply to teach in Indigenous schools which are involved in school-wide reform, establishing community compacts, specialising in productive pedagogy, Rich Tasks and New Basics, or in trialing ESL/EFL approaches. However, as Hatton (1996) pointed out, some teacher educators and practical supervising teachers do not work well with Indigenous students, so although it is outside the scope of this paper it is important to note that teacher educators and supervising teachers may be under-prepared to assist new graduates to be effective in remote Indigenous communities.

While some preservice teachers seek to prepare for particular kinds of settings and apply to teach in them, this has been atypical and not systematically supported. There have been some small steps in this direction at James Cook University with the introduction of rural and remote practicums in 2000 and the expansion of internships introduced in 2001. Indeed, two of the 2001 Cairns graduates won appointments in Torres Strait where they undertook their final year practicums after studying electives related to teaching in Torres Strait. Another was appointed in 2003. Conversely, many undergraduates are not interested in preparing to teach in remote Indigenous communities but subsequently they are appointed to teach in them.

The challenge of what preservice teachers bring to their studies and practicums

The preservice cohort presents us with some complex challenges. These stem from a variety of sources. One is preservice teachers' subjectivities, namely their values and attitudes derived from but not restricted to their raced, gendered and classed backgrounds (Weiler, 1988). Another is their experiential understandings of teaching, gained through 12 years of being students, which has done and still does a poor job for Indigenous students in

terms of producing high academic outcomes and pride in their origins. These understandings are often consolidated during their practicums in schools where ethnic diversity or indigeneity is dealt with in ways that continue to fail to produce high academic outcomes and pride in their Indigenous origins.

Yet another challenge is the set of notions preservice teachers have and develop about culture, social, curricular and relational justice (Connell, 1996; Gewirtz, 2001), the importance of a theory/action dialectic, the role of subjectivities of others and self, childhood and adolescence (Gibson, 1998) across cultures in a globalising world, and the invisibility of whiteness. These are complex tasks for preservice teachers, often simultaneously working through their own identity formation, struggling with many hours of part-time work, and keen to minimise complexity in order to just graduate and earn a substantial income for the first time. An even more complex task for them is linking what they previously knew experientially about teaching to new notions of teaching (like the ones presented above) often when there are no models readily available to them of what the new looks like. One of our students explained that she felt like the child of a divorce – being exposed to new ideas at university, which were not practised in schools, and being asked to choose between the two.

Embracing these "new" notions of teaching and schooling is not just a matter of learning, it often entails unlearning at least some of our preservice teachers' prior notions. This involves making sense of, and applying the theory/action dialectic during practicals, when many supervising teachers reflect on what seems to work rather than theorise about who is advantaged or disadvantaged by their strategies, approaches, curriculum content selections and modes of assessment. It also entails teasing out relationships between intensely held but often unarticulated values, beliefs, emotions and actions derived from and informed by them.

Equally importantly, as teacher educators we need to examine our own subjectivities, as Weiler (1988) exhorted teachers to do, so as to avoid marginalising our students. This then brings into play issues of space and voice, knowledge and power for lecturers and the preservice teachers in our classes (Klein, 2001b). In doing so we avoid ensuring the sense of unreality Nakata (2001, p. 340) identified as a student and a preservice teacher when others spoke for his experience in ways he did not recognise, by circumventing cultural imperialism and countering powerlessness among the marginalised (Singh & Osborne, 2001). The above challenges apply to most preservice teachers, but are particularly acute for those who will teach in Indigenous communities.

In a nutshell, these preservice teachers have a complex set of challenges for their minds, their emotions and their actions if they are preparing to teach effectively in Indigenous contexts. And we have an equally complex task of engaging their minds, emotions and actions on campus and during their practicums to provide them

with skills, knowledge, commitments and attitudes they may not see as relevant prior to graduation. Besides, remoteness itself provides another set of challenges.

Living in a remote setting and the relevance of effective preparation for cross-cultural encounters

When it comes to teaching in remote communities there are other personal factors as distinct from those within the school, as important as they are, that impact on teachers and their success within the school. A key one is living in remote contexts. Some people enjoy or quickly adapt to isolation, the bush, fishing, four wheel driving and the like. But others find these kinds of activities difficult to enjoy and embrace. Many aspects of their previously taken for granted lifestyles are not available – night life, movies, shopping, restaurants – and can only be experienced occasionally during visits to, or workshops held in, regional cities. Often relationships with partners are severely tested or even disintegrate altogether and some find it difficult to cope with a loss of privacy, often taken for granted in urban settings (Osborne, 1988).

Students who decide early in their preservice program that they want to teach in remote Indigenous schools can be introduced while on campus to content, role plays, activities to articulate their subjectivities, and skills likely to be effective with Indigenous students. As Klein (2001a) points out, without specific reference to remote contexts, preservice teachers also need space to reconstruct their identities (p. 143), to examine knowledge and power in their teaching and learning relationships (p. 144), and to articulate the discursive practices that positioned them in particular ways as school learners (pp. 144-145).

Preservice teachers can also engage in school-based practical experiences working with Indigenous students alongside experienced, effective teachers of Indigenous students. Both the on-campus and school-based experiences provide scope for preparing the mind, emotions and actions for successful entry into teaching in remote Indigenous contexts. Praxis provides a mechanism for building effective relationships in the community (also a key component of the IDEAS project and Partners for Success) and in classrooms as well as improving student outcomes (academic, social and cultural).

Such teaching success may also offset some of the potential discomforts of remote living and encourage teachers to stay longer than is commonly the case. Indeed as many others before them, some teachers may really enjoy the challenges and positive experiences of teaching and living in a remote Indigenous community, particularly if we improve their preparation for it.

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About the author

After three years teaching in rural South Australia, Barry Osborne sailed by catamaran to Torres Strait during 1967 (the year of the referendum which gave the federal government responsibility for Indigenous affairs throughout Australia). He taught on Thursday Island from 1968 until 1972 and at Townsville State High School for the next three years before starting an academic career at Townsville College of Advanced Education and James Cook University. His PhD was on the teaching of Zuni students by both Zuni and Anglo teachers in New Mexico. From then nearly all his research has been conducted into the teaching of Torres Strait Islanders who face many of the same challenges that marginalised groups in Western countries face in their struggle for quality education. From his research in Torres Strait (where he trialed his emerging notions of good teaching as a volunteer in 1990) and others' research into teaching similarly marginalised groups in North America he published *Teaching, diversity and democracy* in 2001. His current research interests are teaching effectively in culturally diverse settings, school reform and e-learning/teaching with preservice teachers.