BOOK LANGUAGE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE— ESL STRATEGIES FOR INDIGENOUS LEARNERS

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REPORT OF RESEARCH COMMISSIONED BY
THE QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

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July 2009[1]

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More Information about QCT Research may be found on the QCT Website at: http://www.qct.edu.au/policy/research.html

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Executive summary

This study addresses the belated realisation that educators are unaware that many Indigenous Australian students speak very little Standard Australian English[2] outside classrooms. This important educational issue is prominent in communities and schools where creoles and related language varieties, including Indigenous Englishes, are spoken. It is likely that many teachers have not recognised the issue or been trained to respond to it with changes in their teaching. Many Indigenous parents mistakenly think that they and their children speak Standard Australian English. Parents have not been shown how Standard Australian English differs from their 'home' languages, including creoles and related language varieties. As a result, they cannot foresee or recognise the difficulties students might have in school. Many Indigenous learners simply do not speak English. Australian school learning and teaching practices all assume aptitude in Standard Australian English. Indigenous learners therefore are expected to learn English as a foreign language incidentally and without appropriate teaching. A small number of educators have recognised this and are employing and adapting principles and practices derived from the field of Teaching English as Second Language (TESL[3]).

It is difficult to evaluate how the use of TESL principles and practices is affecting student achievement in the long term, but there was sufficient anecdotal evidence to do two things: to collect advice from teachers who were trying the ideas out; and to collect existing documented and well justified examples of teaching practice which might be used to inspire other teachers to try TESL strategies in their own teaching of Indigenous students. As it turned out, finding sound examples was extremely difficult to do within the resources available for three reasons:

i. in the public domain there were no readily accessible case studies of the use of TESL strategies with Indigenous students, an observation confirmed by several key informants;
ii. examples presented in commonly used teaching resources were not likely to be interpreted appropriately by teachers in isolation from the theoretical frameworks they were being used to illuminate and exemplify;
iii. teachers and professional development staff were adamant that considerable theoretical understanding and explicit demonstration, coaching and mentoring in their own classrooms was necessary to bring about appropriate changes in practice.

Early in the study it became apparent that the relevance of ESL for Indigenous learners is being swamped by other discourses — cultural differences, behaviour management, morale, literacy, attendance, hearing disability, traditional language maintenance, socio-economic status, and NAPLAN[4] scores. There are ideas about Indigenous education in abundance, but few resources to support the use of ESL strategies are readily available. Because of the dearth of examples, the difficulty of teasing out ESL work, and the lack of faith among informants in the usefulness of examples, the study focused on the staff development designed to help educators to improve their language awareness and to adopt TESL principles and strategies in teaching and learning for Indigenous students. The participating teachers and principals came primarily from a broad selection of schools collaborating with the Far North Queensland Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (FNQ ISSU).

It is well known that action research approaches are especially relevant in bringing about changes in practice, particularly in cross-cultural settings. The study shows how the recent work on the theory and practice of action research can be used to develop stronger communities of practice working on the adaptation of the principles of Teaching English as a Second Language to assist Indigenous students. Using an action research perspective, the study interpreted information gathered from the literature and informants to outline an approach to monitor and consolidate changes in educational practice. This involves establishing 'public spheres'

[2] Referred to as 'book language' by teachers when speaking with students.
[3] We use ESL and TESL as abbreviations to align our use with the Queensland Schools Authority subject nomenclature. We are aware that TESOL or TEFL are sometimes preferred.
[4] See National Assessment Plan — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) federal and state websites for information and Masters (2009).

(analogous to 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998)) ranging inside and outside of the system, school and classroom levels of educational practice. Ways of monitoring change in the relevant aspects of practice are described using information gathered in the study to facilitate reflection and action.

The study confirmed that the ESL educational needs of Australian Indigenous students are not adequately recognised or met. Teachers who have improved their language awareness and adopted ESL strategies reported major changes in the engagement of their Indigenous students, and improvement in their use of Standard Australian English. However, they warned that language learning takes time and that students will need support in other areas too. Incidentally, ESL strategies were also working well with non-Indigenous students. There is urgent need therefore to improve the TESL skills, understandings and values of teachers and to provide proper support to them, theoretically, practically, and organisationally. This must be done in pre-service teacher education (at least 0.125 EFTSL of instruction plus curriculum integration within the first three years). For existing teachers, extended professional development is by far the most important thing to focus on. Stronger relationships between the ISSUs and initial teacher education and continuing professional development are important. Further study at Master of Education level should be integrated with short term professional development. It follows that there are staff development and resource development needs for both universities and teachers — ESL consciousness and Indigenous language awareness needs to permeate right through the KLAs, the curriculum in teacher education, and educational research practice. There is a need for universities to establish more contact with accomplished Indigenous teachers who speak and know the linguistics of Indigenous languages, creoles, and related varieties. Opportunities for speakers of Indigenous languages to improve their knowledge of teaching and learning English as a foreign language are also needed urgently.

It is regrettable that we have to report that fairly recent graduates have commented on persistent and sometimes very hateful racism among teacher education students with whom they attended university. This issue is recognised in the universities, but more needs to be done about it. It may be that greater wisdom about Indigenous languages will help, but an important concern is not to make racism worse. There is continuing need for teachers to learn more about Indigenous Australia and about appropriate strategies for teaching Indigenous students. The Queensland College of Teachers is in a very strong position to bring together teachers, employers, parent and Indigenous representation, teacher educators and educational researchers and government to negotiate into life significant improvements in the skills, understandings and values of pre-service and experienced teachers to assist Indigenous Australian students to receive and appropriate education for life, employment and the forging of robust personal and collective identities.

Indigenous students and Standard Australian English

Indigenous Australian children and adolescents are achieving poorly in Australian schools and perform well below non-Indigenous students[5]. Several factors appear to contribute to low achievement, but a barely recognised influence outside the language and literacy research communities is Indigenous students' lack of facility with Standard Australian English. As participants in this study argue, many Indigenous students in Queensland speak very little Standard Australian English outside their interactions with teachers. This is a significant impediment to Indigenous learners in any school setting, and lack of support for them is longstanding (Batten, Frigo, Hughes and McNamara, 1998; Lawrence, 1994); Luke, Land, Christie, Kolatsis and Noblett, 2002).

A considerable proportion of the Australian population regard 'closing the gap' in all indicators of Indigenous well-being as a national priority. On February 13, 2008 the Australian Prime Minister promised to halve gaps in education, employment and infant mortality within a decade, and ensure all four-year-olds in remote communities had access to early childhood education within five years. He also vowed to close the 17 year life expectancy gap within a generation. The Prime Minister's commitment was challenged by Indigenous leader, Professor Michael Dodson, who argued that the gap should be closed completely. The question in each case is how.

Despite the fact that some non-Indigenous Australians know that Indigenous Australians spoke about 250 languages and 700 dialects before white colonisation (Jonas, Langton and AIATSIS Staff, 1994), very few Australians are aware of the complexity of the language situation now. Only a small number of Australian educators might know that there are about ten bilingual schools (Calma, 2008) teaching an Indigenous language as part of the curriculum, often reflecting the community goal of sustaining the language but more often justified as easing students into the learning of English and the full repertoire of Western schooling. A handful of educators would be aware that an unknown but large proportion of Indigenous students are only using Standard Australian English (SAE) in the classroom. At home, at play, and at school outside the classroom students may be speaking and hearing, often in quick succession, some traditional languages, varieties of creole and Aboriginal English dialects. In many northern Queensland schools, students speak a common language, but do not share a language with the teacher or the learning resources provided. Standard Australian English, the language of the classroom, can be a serious barrier to learning for students who are in the process of acquiring it.

There are many complex and interacting causes of the underachievement of Indigenous students, but the FNQ ISSU professional development activities studied here focus on an important one. The program arose because of resurgent system awareness that a vast number of Indigenous Australian students are speaking at least one Indigenous language and no English when they are not in classrooms. The languages used, orally only, by students in schoolyards, at home and in recreation may range from traditional languages, through clearly identifiable creoles, to several dialects, sometimes termed 'Aboriginal Englishes' which are similar to each other but locally specific. Students may use any or all of these, together, or separately, or intermittently with subconscious code-switching. Standard Australian English is almost never used. So, in schools, students are usually learning English as a second or third language. Regrettably, many are failing to achieve sufficient English proficiency to gain access to the curriculum. Teachers are poorly prepared to solve the problem which is caused by unjustified assumptions made by system curriculum makers, not by the children themselves, or their families.

In summary, this means that:

i. Indigenous students can be adept at using more than one language;
ii. Indigenous students are rarely using Standard Australian English;
iii. Indigenous students are learning the English of the classroom (or 'book language') as a (second, third …) language;
iv. teachers are often unaware of the profound differences between home languages and Standard Australian English;

[5] National Assessment Plan — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and Masters (2009).

v. teachers have had very little or no training in how to teach English as a Second Language; and
vi. the particular needs of Indigenous learners when learning Standard Australian English and the rest of the curriculum, are not known to teachers.

Indigenous languages in Queensland have a complex history marked by rapid change. According to FNQ ISSU:

> The Indigenous language situation in Queensland has changed dramatically in a relatively short amount of time — and the situation is still changing. Before English invasion and colonisation, all Indigenous peoples in Queensland spoke traditional languages. Whilst all languages are in a constant state of change, extreme factors have caused extreme changes in the context of Indigenous languages in Queensland. Historical events including — but not limited to — the removal of Indigenous groups from their traditional lands, relocation of members of different language groups into large missions and settlements, and forbidding the use of traditional languages have caused widespread language shift away from traditional languages and over to new language varieties.
>
> In much of Queensland, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities are using language varieties that have been caused by language contact. Through invasion and colonisation, English was brought into contact with traditional languages: in the sheep and cattle industries, during the rushes for gold and other metals, in seafaring and in agricultural labour. Contact linguistic varieties have elements derived from the colonial language of English, as well as from influences of traditional languages. As long as these language contact varieties remain a secondary language for speakers linguists call them pidgins. Once they are acquired as first languages, they are termed creoles.
>
> As a result of language contact and language shift, the situation around the language varieties used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland nowadays is very complex. Only in a few areas are Indigenous children growing up speaking a traditional language (i.e. Wik [Mungkan], Thayorre, Kalaw Kawaw Ya), as their first language. Children in other areas may know much, some, a few words or the name of their traditional language, all depending on their individual family history. Work on maintenance and/or revival of traditional languages is occurring at many sites throughout Queensland.
>
> Currently, most Indigenous students in Queensland speak a home language sounding slightly or a lot like English:
>
> • Torres Strait Islander students often speak Torres Strait Creole (known by some as Yumpla Tok, Broken, however there are many other informal names too);
>
> • Aboriginal students often speak a Creole — Kriol, Torres Strait Creole or other unnamed creoles — or one of the varieties termed 'Aboriginal English' (which speakers may call 'Lingo', 'Black Talk', 'Murri' or name according to their place(s) e.g. 'Yarrie' for Yarrabah Talk).
>
> These language varieties have been caused by historical circumstances involving languages in contact. When they become the first language of an entire speech community linguists call them creoles. These 'new languages' can be placed along a continuum according to whether they have more influence from traditional languages or from Standard Australian English (FNQ ISSU http://www.languageperspectives.org.au/, 2009).

All of these language varieties are still changing. Students have acquired more than one language because of constant exposure to them in their family or community environments and are likely to have developed considerable fluency in them through constant, meaningful and purposeful usage. Accordingly, when they come to the classroom they are thinking in their home language, and when talking with classmates, they use the home language they share with

them. Because of the changing nature of the language, continuing teacher development is the only solution to the problem Indigenous learners will face in the foreseeable future.

Australian creoles employ vocabulary which is mostly of English origin. This can be very deceptive, making them sound like English when they are vastly different in every way. Their features, pronunciation (phonology), meanings (semantics), word formations and endings (morphology), phrase and sentence structures (syntax), and socio-cultural usages (pragmatics and genre) have been influenced by traditional Indigenous languages. Creoles may sound a little like English because an occasional word seems recognisable, but creole words seldom mean the same as their English counterparts. It is not surprising that teachers are finding that teaching strategies used for students learning English as a second or foreign language are very helpful. Adapted forms of ESL strategies will be necessary for Australian Indigenous learners who speak creoles and related varieties because of their linguistic structures and lexical overlap with Standard Australian English.

The nature of creoles and related varieties is misunderstood and they are often stigmatised. To the naïve or unperceptive listener, Australian creoles can sound like 'bad English', a destructively misleading judgment when made by educators. The fact that a creole is another language, not an inept rendition of English, has major pedagogical implications. In schools, everything is expressed in (Standard Australian) English, and Australian Indigenous students do not have the code to comprehend it. This means they are excluded from the learning activities of the classroom. Without very explicit and informed teaching about English as a language they fall further and further behind and become marginalised and demoralised. This is an educational disaster for Indigenous students because their language learning difficulties and needs are often not recognised, and are typically misinterpreted. Education systems and teacher education have been far from pro-active in preparing pre-service and in-service teachers to recognise that the heavy reliance of teaching and curriculum on Standard Australian English presents significant access problems for Indigenous students.

As we will show when we present the evidence from teachers, even those experienced, capable and committed, find the fact of students' home languages a surprise, and the usefulness of ideas from the TESL field, a revelation. Below are two examples which help to show why the study of this issue is relevant to teachers, system policies, leadership and administration, and curriculum:

> I think it was during NAIDOC Week — some mothers came into demonstrate weaving and I couldn't understand them. I thought 'Wow! They are speaking a completely different language and from there I thought 'Omigosh!' and that turned the light on for me [urban schoolteacher, five years' experience]. Teacher A.
>
> The minute I heard [the TESL ideas] I knew that so many of my questions I have been seeking answers for all my 30 year teaching career were answered. I had been in [a school] with 30 per cent Indigenous students and we weren't catering for their learning needs. No matter where I went it was the same story. The answer was that they are ESL learners. This is why they are missing out [regional centre school, senior teacher]. Teacher B.

These comments from teachers summarise two immediate educational needs — the need for greater awareness of the language background of Indigenous students, and the need for teachers to develop and maintain the skills, understandings and values for teaching English as a Second Language to Indigenous learners.

Imagination of the case and invention of the study

A priority in 'the imagination of the case' in this study (Kemmis, 1980) was to locate teachers with recent, well-regarded and relevant pre-service education or professional development. Another priority was to ensure that a range of language situations was encountered and that these were reasonably accessible to the researchers, preferably not merely through telephone or the internet. Where and by whom was the latest and best ESL for Indigenous education being practised? The sponsors of the study, the Queensland College of Teachers, wanted a research project to determine how to prepare teachers with the skills required for teaching

students when English is not their first language, particularly Indigenous students, in relation to pre-service teacher education and teacher professional development (Queensland College of Teachers, 2009, http://www.qct.edu.au/policy/plan.html).

After initial enquiries with recent researchers in the region and consultation with the Queensland College of Teachers it was agreed that collaboration with the Cairns based Far North Queensland Indigenous Schooling Support Unit would provide the richest case material. Classroom teachers, learning support teachers, principals and other participants were identified in consultation with ISSU staff.[6]

The primary criterion offered by the project team for selecting teacher participants was that they had worked on ESL with the ISSU staff and brought about changes in their practice as a result of that experience. We wanted some 'before and after' thinking by the participants and expected that teachers would have at least five years of experience or thereabouts. We also sought a range of schools by location and number and language backgrounds of Indigenous students.

Key informants were adamant that the focus on ESL for teachers of Indigenous learners was not lost. One stated:

> The crucial recognition that English is a second (or third …) language for so many Indigenous kids is always buried by other discourses — cultural differences, behaviour management, morale, literacy, attendance, hearing disability, traditional language maintenance, socio-economic status, corporate monitoring in the form of NAPLAN testing.… These are all important, but they are smothering attention to changing the teaching of Standard Australian English which is fundamental to addressing all of them.

The 'invention of the study' observed the typical canons of naturalistic case study variously espoused by Kemmis (1980), Stake (1978; 1995) and MacDonald and Walker (1975). Accordingly, the study was conducted by analysis of the literature, document and other material analysis, consultation with other educators working in the field including teachers involved in professional development of other teachers, and interviews with teachers and principals, in some cases by telephone. Interviews were conducted primarily by the first author. It was our intention and certainly the teachers' preference that they were not identified. In cases where identification was inevitable, by virtue of position for example, consent was sought from the relevant participants during the production of the report. These participants also assisted in the validation of the study. They were given copies of substantial drafts of the report which included the sections which directly concerned them. They were asked to suggest any changes to the text which would improve the fairness, relevance and accuracy of the report (Kemmis and Robottom, 1986). Several changes were made in response to the feedback to ensure the report met these criteria.

The eventual audience for the research was judged to be diverse. It was expected to include the sponsors, the Board of the Queensland College of Teachers, teachers, ESL specialists and speakers, unions, parents, teacher educators, educational researchers, students and system and school leaders. Not all parts of the report will be interesting or useful to each stakeholder, but we hope that there is stimulus for everyone somewhere in it.

Indigenous teachers reflect on school and language

We begin the presentation of information gathered in the study with accounts of the relationships between language and schooling from two Indigenous teachers who had successfully negotiated their own educational experience. The first teacher emphasised that she was successful in school because her Indigenous father was insistent that she used Standard Australian English. Even so, the transition to literacy presented some significant hurdles:

[6] The researchers are grateful to Mr Leigh Schelks and Ms Denise Angelo of FNQ ISSU for their contribution and for helping to identify study participants. Thanks are also due to the principals, teachers and others who kindly set aside time to participate in the study. Mr Max Lenoy also provided helpful guidance in the early stages of the project.

> As far as a recognised name for the way I grew up talking, there just wasn't one. There just wasn't a name for the way we spoke, because it was a huge shame factor, I guess. And it was forbidden at home. We were always corrected, 'Don't say that!' My dad always corrected us as little kids. He was very strict. In fact, if there was any kind of name for the way we spoke it would be 'Speak properly'! I think my dad could have used the term 'lingo' about Aboriginal people's language varieties, traditional or Creole, because he wanted us to learn 'proper English'.
>
> I was probably at uni before I really realised fully that I spoke another way and I didn't speak Standard Australian English. My dad had corrected us constantly when we were young so I sort of knew there was a "right" and a "wrong" way of talking from an early age. I also knew that my grandma, whose appearance was much, much darker than us, almost purple, spoke heaps differently than us. I guess I didn't see that the way I spoke was closely connected to her speech, just "lighter". At high school, I was told that I wrote the way I spoke — which was rather unhelpful, because I didn't know any other way nor was I taught it….
>
> I always knew that I was different from non-Indigenous students. I knew that I had to work harder and study more to get the same results, but I didn't know why. My non-Indigenous friends could just listen and understand whereas I'd have to write everything down and then rewrite it 'my way' so that I could understand it properly and then remember it. (I'm actually famous for writing everything down: It was my coping mechanism then but it's a habit that's stuck with me to this very day! It comes in handy sometimes — meeting minutes etc).
>
> I think I should have had an upfront explanation of the language situation and the language difficulties I was experiencing. I used to think I was silly because the amount of study I had to do was full on. My biggest problem was getting meaning from English. I'd have to take away what I'd written down and then make sense of it. Only then could I understand it and learn it. Back then I would have said that I had to put it in littler words so I could understand it. Without translating it into my language I'd only get bits of the picture, not the full picture. I don't feel silly nowadays. I learnt how to cope with learning in another language because I learnt another language: I'm quite fluent in Standard Australian English now. However, I feel strongly that Indigenous students should be given awareness of their language situation so they can understand why they experience difficulties if their home language is significantly different from Standard Australian English.
>
> Standard Australian English has a set way of doing and saying things, but Indigenous languages have an equally correct and fixed way of doing and saying things — but they're different to the English way. All the Aboriginal and Islander creoles have their own grammatical rules and structures. There are differences between them all but there are similarities too. I think of it as a 'common theme': They are different in the same ways. They all lack endings, doing the past with 'bin', show plurals with extra quantifier words, have one word for 'he', 'she' or 'it', like 'e', 'im', 'em' etc. The grammar and endings are the areas in which the creoles differ from English, so they're the areas where creole speakers experience difficulties in English. All the Indigenous creoles have these same areas of difference: It's like they've all got the same slots — all their slots line up… but what goes into the slots is particular to each creole. Anyway, the important point, I think, is that all the creoles have their own structure, not English structure. Teacher C.

The second teacher, Juanita Sellwood, is a university lecturer who collaborated with Denise Angelo from the FNQ ISSU in the production of a pre-service course in Teaching English as a Second Language for Indigenous Students. She now teaches the course in Bachelor and Master of Education programs and has said this about her school experience:

> When I got to school, that was quite a confusing time because I didn't know that I was brought up speaking a language that was different, because I could

> communicate with the kids in the neighbourhood. Although I heard Torres Strait Creole called 'Broken' or 'Broken English' or 'Island Talk' I don't think I considered it as a completely separate language. My Mum didn't state it that clearly, because she'd never been given that information about her language herself at school.
>
> So, when I got to school there's this different way of saying things, and I found I was learning and speaking to kids in some aspects of the language. So that's when it became a bit of a struggle and a bit confusing. When I started to learn Standard Australian English, I got through the process because I was a good talker. I found the written English hard to understand and hard to produce and my English marks reflected this. You'd think that someone would have noticed it.
>
> The really interesting thing about my case — and I don't know if it's the case for a lot of Torres Strait Island kids brought up on the mainland — is that I got through all of my twelve years of schooling without anyone acknowledging that I had a different language. People knew I was a Torres Strait Islander culturally, but nobody even remotely acknowledged that I might have a different language. Actually, not even my parents twigged onto that either. I suppose the awareness wasn't there….
>
> I didn't have any awareness of language difference until I got to uni — that's when I started to twig. I'd come through a special entry program, what was then called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Program. It was a special entry program for Indigenous people to try and boost the number of Indigenous people in universities. We had to go to these special writing courses and study skills courses because basically we didn't have enough English. We were all the same, all needing this extra help and so I started to think 'Oh, ok, there's a whole bunch of us that's like this.' When I was going through school, there was only me and someone else, just two or three of us, so there wasn't a whole mob to compare myself to. So here we were in a class at university, all doing these special writing skills because we didn't have the writing skills like all the other fellas who were coming into uni with normal entry. So I learnt the university discourses very well which, as you would know, is why I became very successful here. But this was the first time that someone sat me down and told me that is the way you have got to write something, and explain the structures, so that I could follow the rules. No-one had explained any rules to me prior to that. So I think that's probably why I became successful at uni, but it also awakened awareness about language and learning that I didn't have beforehand (Juanita Sellwood, extracts from interview, 2008).

The crucial point to take from these interviews with successful language learners is not that they crashed through anyway. Their language backgrounds were unrecognised or were ignored completely and they missed out on assistance because they studied in schools which were unaware of their needs. We need to ask ourselves what happened to all the other Indigenous students who did not have the support to work their way through total immersion in a language they were not taught explicitly to understand. One Indigenous teacher gave a sense of how Indigenous students can react in classrooms:

> Some of them don't talk at all. They can't learn unless they have a go…. I need to teach the children to simply follow directions because sometimes listening is a problem because it doesn't sound right. They are not tuned to that sound so they become like deaf. I have an advantage because I can talk to them in Torres Strait, but school instructions in Standard Australian English they cannot understand. Teacher D.

ESL support for schools teaching Indigenous students

The Far North Queensland Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (FNQ ISSU) has counterparts in other regions, Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane. Each provides support for the schooling of Indigenous students in its region. FNQ ISSU also manages numerous programs, including

- Transition Support Unit for students coming from the Cape and Torres Strait into secondary boarding schools;
- Crossing Cultures for educators to understand Australian history from an Indigenous perspective;
- RATEP (Remote Area Teacher Education Program) which organises and supports Indigenous people studying to be teachers at sites around the State.

The ESL work carried out by FNQ ISSU has had a statewide focus because of the *'Bandscales* program', funded under *Partners for Success*. Workshops have been held in Thursday Island, Mt Isa, Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Maryborough, Cherbourg and Brisbane. These workshops not only provide training in the *Bandscales*, but inform participants about the Indigenous language situation and demonstrate how to include ESL learners in classroom learning through appropriate planning, analysing and teaching language and related teaching matters.

The work around providing training in the use of the *Bandscales* very quickly expanded into training in many aspects of ESL teaching and linguistic understandings. So workshops on the structure of English (Making English Work) and Standard Australian English Phonology (The Sound of English) were developed. Professional development activities currently offered include:

- Workshops (four day) on ESL Essentials for teachers of indigenous ESL students (known informally as 'Bandscales[7] workshops' but always included much more than Bandscales as the titles suggest)

- Adopt-a-School program — placement of an appropriately trained teacher of ESL for Indigenous students in a school one day a week for a term to model with teaching a co-planned unit with an ESL perspective, including Indigenous Bandscale assessments, conducting demonstration lessons in individual classrooms, providing after school training sessions ...

- Participating in the Education Queensland Induction program to provide an ESL perspective for teachers appointed to remote schools as part of the Remote Area Incentive Scheme [RAIS] conferences

- Assisting FNQ schools with ESL ILSS applications and assessments and holding support meetings each term.

Another major focus for ESL work carried out by FNQ ISSU ESL staff has been the Understand Children's Languages Project (UCLAP) which has provided workshops throughout the State to Early Childhood professionals with Indigenous children aged 3.5 to 4.5 years old. Participants were provided with current understandings about Indigenous children's language backgrounds and guidance about how best to support them. Some of this information has been included in the on-line Early Childhood Education curriculum offered by James Cook University.

The FNQ ISSU was also influential in two major Queensland educational initiatives (i) the development and 2008-9 trial implementation of the Queensland Schools Authority OP-Eligible *English for ESL Learners* with Indigenous student cohorts (work programs written by ISSU ESL Project Officer Nina Carter); and (ii) the *Curriculum Guidelines for English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners*. Until 2008 there had been no syllabus products or curriculum guidance available for teachers and their ESL learners.

It is too early to evaluate the OP-Eligible subject but initial impressions are favourable. A Torres Strait Islander Teacher Aide working with students provided this feedback to FNQ ISSU:

> I think it's really important for the pen-pushers in Brisbane to understand what a revelation and eye-opener this subject has been to the Indigenous kids here at [school name]. It's helped them to really think about the way they speak and the

[7] Bandscales are the diagnostic scales used for assessing ESL students in speaking, listening, reading and writing (Education Queensland 2002, 2008; McKay, Hudson and Newton (Sapuppo), 1994).

> differences that their language has to Standard Australian English, and because they have analysed and talked about the differences, they are now better able to convert the way they speak to 'book' language or Standard Australian English! I can see a huge difference in all of the kids' written work especially in draft form. They have also gained a lot of confidence in themselves because they have a better understanding of how the English language works and what teachers in other subjects expect of them!!! … My involvement in the ESL subject has been nothing but a positive experience!

The impact of the FNQ ISSU in the region led James Cook University to employ Denise Angelo, ISSU ESL Project Officer, with staff member Juanita Sellwood, to rewrite a new compulsory core subject starting in 2010 in the pre-service teacher education course — *Teaching English as a Second Language for Indigenous Learners*. A similarly named subject had been offered by JCU as an elective over many years and this current version was first offered in 2008 as an elective to pre-service students on-campus and to practising teachers externally. A sample of student feedback from official JCU quality assurance processes reads:

> Great help in developing my understanding about Indigenous barriers when learning in the classroom. The Discussion Board was helpful.
>
> The best aspects of this subject are that it recognises the importance of acknowledging the language difficulties that Indigenous students face and provides teaching strategies that help to overcome these difficulties.
>
> Doing the Language Analysis Grid was very interesting because I had never looked so closely at pronouns, verbs etc within a sentence. Doing this subject has made me more aware of how I put words into a sentence structure.
>
> I strongly believe this subject would be better as an internal core subject in order to better develop student understanding and engagement with content covered.
>
> Developing an awareness that many Indigenous students struggle with Standard Australian English in the classrooms. The grammar component was interesting and worthwhile.
>
> This was my first external subject and I really enjoyed it and I think it should be a core subject for all education students.
>
> The whole subject in general learning about creole, SAE, home language and grammar. All these topics I found very interesting because of my cultural background and enthusiasm to learn more about language.
>
> Great learning experience. I now am more aware of the difficulties that ESL students may experience in classrooms.

The feedback suggests that students regarded favourably the decision by the University to offer the subject as part of the compulsory core in pre-service teacher education.

The most interesting aspect of the FNQ ISSU activity is its work in professional development for teachers. It is here that we come to understand the needs of teachers, issues for Indigenous students and the need to complement teaching and learning repertoires with pedagogy from the field of second language learning.

Blind spots — Indigenous languages and cultures

There are countless policy references to the need to recognise and respect Indigenous Australian cultures and languages. There is also widespread acknowledgement in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian community that learning Standard Australian English is the key to unlock the store of Western cultural capital necessary for full Indigenous participation in Australian life, and for Indigenous people to proclaim their right to difference in the Australian community. Despite this shared acceptance, many Indigenous languages in common use in Australia today are not recognised. Because the languages are not recognised, there is spurious belief among educators that Indigenous students speak English as their first language, but not very well. Indigenous students then receive no tuition which acknowledges that they are actually learning English as a foreign language. It follows that strategies for the

teaching and learning of English as another language are often ignored in the preparation and continuing professional development of Australian teachers.

Some Indigenous languages have been recognised, even supported intemittently, and they tend to be traditional languages. This is very inconsistent across time and throughout Australian states and territories. Education systems seemed trapped by the bureaucratic tendency to uniformity, and unable to prevent lapses into assimilationism or deficit thinking when difference is on the agenda. In Queensland, for example, bilingual schooling was tried in the 1980s at Aurukun and Hopevale, but soon lapsed. Community members went to Yirrkala in the Northern Territory to see how Indigenous people there had protected bilingual schooling. The visit might not have helped much. The Northern Territory had established about 25 bilingual schools in the 1970s, but not in all schools that wanted it or in all schools where children spoke a traditional language or Kriol. Despite hope from communities that language maintenance might be recognised as a goal, the justification which was accepted by government was that first language teaching would help students to achieve Standard Australian English literacy more quickly than immersion approaches. This was consistent with research findings (Simpson and Wigglesworth, 2008). So bilingual schooling was not based on respect for language but on aspirations for curriculum standardisation via the acceleration of English language learning. Students were expected to change to match system demands rather than the other way round — deficit thinking which persists.

When there is the slightest excuse, and despite evidence to the contrary, when the performance indicators are down, NT bilingual schooling still becomes a scapegoat. So when NAPLAN scores are down, bilingual educators are expected to forget the 'both ways' curricula they have developed for more than 30 years, and teach in English to non-English speaking kids in Northern Territory schools. This is at variance with the research consensus that bilingual education works better in developing Indigenous students' understanding of English (Simpson and Wigglesworth, 2008; Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training, 2005; Rolstadt, Mahoney and Glass, 2005) and is bewildering for non-Indigenous and Indigenous teachers alike:

> I have been told that I am not allowed to use the children's language anymore. We have been told we are not to use our students' first language, only English. Well, I already know that the children won't understand what I'm saying, they will laugh at me, and they may even misbehave because they'll be bored and won't know what the lessons are about. So perhaps I will cheat and use some *Yolngu matha* — what will happen then? Will I have my mouth washed out with soap like in the mission times? Or will I have to stand on one leg outside the classroom? Or perhaps I will lose my job? (Yunupingu, 2008, see also Appendix A).

Linguists were stunned too. David Wilkins summarised concern:

> It is clear that the decision by the NT Minister for Education and training to have the first four hours of instruction in all NT schools will have a severe impact on the curriculum of NT bilingual education programs in remote areas. Not only will the decision impact negatively on the survival of Indigenous languages and culture, but will also impact negatively on the acquisition of standard Australian English language and literacy (Wilkins, 2008, p. 6).

Even high status Indigenous languages are under attack through practical expressions of the ideology of performativity (Keenoy, 2004), the post-modern face of economic rationalism (Watkins, 1992a, 1992b, Pusey, 1991). The main point, however, is that the language backgrounds of so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who speak numerous other languages, including creoles and related varieties, are ignored almost everywhere. Worse still, creoles and related varieties, the lifeblood proclaiming and distinguishing many modern Indigenous people's identity, are dismissed as 'Bad English'. Perhaps predictably, lack of attention to Indigenous students' language backgrounds becomes more likely as the proportion of Indigenous students in each classroom diminishes.

The staff at FNQ ISSU were not alone in recognising the problem. Resources for teachers developed in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, *Making the Jump* (Berry and

Hudson, 1997) and *Walking Talking Texts* (Murray, 1995), were known, but not widely used in Education Queensland outside the sphere of influence of the FNQ ISSU.[8] Despite their educational potential and relevance, those resources were sometimes dismissed because of their association with bilingual education where the students' first language(s) are traditional, that is, with 'community schools'. Participants said other teachers were in denial, 'We don't have kids like that in our school'.

Language does not figure highly in the public debate at all. This extract from an opinion piece by Indigenous Professor of Law, Larissa Behrendt illustrates the point:

> Aboriginal educationalist Chris Sarra has, based on his experience at Cherbourg State School, identified what he sees as being the key elements that lead to success in educational outcomes for Aboriginal students:
>
> 1. Changing the culture of the school
> 2. Expecting improved attendance, improved student behaviour and improved academic performance
> 3. Focusing on role models
> 4. Valuing and utilising Indigenous staff within the school
> 5. Developing of whole-of-school Aboriginal studies programs
> 6. Generating a sense of solidarity through which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can feel a sense of worth about their identities.
>
> Sarra's list of factors echo those of other educators who work with Indigenous students. They show the need for the school to create an environment in which Indigenous children feel safe and welcomed, a need to develop a relationship between the school and the community, to have properly trained teachers, adequate educational infrastructure, curriculum that engages Indigenous students and the need to build self-esteem in students by expecting them to do well, providing them with positive role models and engaging them in exercises that assist in building self-confidence.
>
> Implicit in this is the important role that Indigenous teachers can play in the life of the school and the creation of an environment in which Aboriginal children feel welcomed and the curriculum is developed and delivered in a manner that engages them with learning (Behrendt, 2009; see also Sarra, 2003; 2008).

Sarra himself summarises his view:

> The magic bullets are: embracing a positive indigenous student identity; indigenous leadership in schools and communities; high expectations for teacher-student relationships; and innovative, flexible and receptive staffing and school modelling (Sarra, 2009).

These are all important and highly relevant advocacies. But like the raft of policies driving Indigenous education, the elephant in the room is the lack of recognition of the fact that English is a foreign language for vast numbers of Indigenous learners. It follows that there is a dearth of ideas about TESL strategies for Indigenous students and few resources to explore them. As awareness develops there is growing demand for services from the FNQ ISSU from teachers, principals, schools and occasionally staff from the ISSU network. Requests vary widely, because people are not sure what they want or need, or what might be available. Variations on the key activities above are common. The general approach to participants in the study was to ask about the way their experience of the ESL teachings of the FNQ ISSU had affected their educational practices.

[8] We are aware that the Queensland Catholic Education Office has sponsored workshops using these resources, but we are unaware of scale or impact because the project scale was confined to Education Queensland.

Relevance of TESL for teachers of Indigenous students

To investigate how the ESL strategies taught to some Queensland teachers were being realised in practice, unstructured interviews were conducted with classroom teachers, learning support teachers and principals. The question used to initiate each interview was how educators' contact with the activities of the FNQ ISSU had changed individual teaching practices in the case of teachers, and school practices in the case of principals. Follow up questions were generally for focus and detail, but if not mentioned, reference was made to any inferences which might be drawn for the pre-service and further education of teachers, especially some good teaching ideas others might follow. The outcomes, from the combination of document analysis, interview data from educators and other stakeholders, and researcher observations clustered around several themes which emerged largely unsolicited from the participants. The themes were:

Commitment of educators — including the staff of FNQ ISSU and the teachers who had self-selected to participate in the rigorous training and follow-up in professional development conducted by the ISSU.

Emergence of language awareness and its impact — including introspection by teachers and principals, transient recognition in policy, funding and systemic practice.

Changing teaching practices— including moments of enlightenment, resolution of puzzles about pedagogy of long duration, continuities with existing practice, experimentation, and recognition that the ideas were very helpful but that progress would continue to be slow.

Impediments to change — including resistance among colleagues, lack of material resources for the change effort, lack of knowledge of teachers or system administrators, contextual features consuming labour (preparing for NAPLAN), energy sapping environments.

Professional development approach — including participation, discipline and recognition of legitimate knowledge authority; *Bandscales*, *Walking Talking Texts*, and *Making the Jump*

Teacher skills, understandings and values — including teacher pre-service education, employer provided professional development expectations and limitations, role of universities in further study and university research trends.

Teachers talk about TESL strategies — this was not a theme in the same sense as the others but provides examples of the ways in which teachers responded to questions about good teaching ideas.

Commitment of educators

The professional educators in studies like this are almost invariably distinguished by their talent, commitment, curiosity and nerve for innovation and participants in this study were no exception. They were reflective, keen to improve, and because systems are often intransigent, they were also cheerfully and unremittingly persistent. It is unfair and inappropriate to expect them also to carry the burden of system responsibility for the professional development of their peers. Nevertheless some of them take it on. A highly respected teacher talked about her discovery that ESL strategies addressed a long felt need in her pedagogy:

> I pulled together 17 teachers that I know from Mareeba, Malanda and Atherton in the Christmas holidays and I said to them, 'This is where it is at'. I am so passionate about this because my questions have been answered. I put together a book for each of them about *Walking Talking Texts* [Murray, 1995] and phonological awareness and in-serviced them for half a day — just a group of interested teachers came over and they could see it straight away too. So then they wanted to know more about it. So I went on trialling it and was helping teachers, often out of my own time, and thinking about it and swapping notes. And from there it grew. I was just a classroom teacher. Because I was a senior teacher, I just took on the role for the lower grades. Teacher B.

Indigenous teachers were usually confronted by responsibilities beyond those of their non-Indigenous colleagues:

> The community members did not know in the past that they were not speaking Standard Australian English. I did lots of workshops to show that what they were saying was different to Standard Australian English. A lot of parents out there still believe that their children speak Standard Australian English. They wouldn't believe me when I said that they were speaking differently to [non-Indigenous] people downtown. So, I had to write down what they were saying on one side of a page and show them on the other side how a person downtown would say it. Then they could actually see there is different grammar and sounds and patterns that we are using, but that was with groups years ago. The general community now still thinks the children are speaking Standard Australian English, and they are wrong. We are calling what we speak a creole now but they are still not aware what the differences are between that and Standard Australian English. I will have to do another lot of workshops… Teacher E.

Emergence of language awareness and its impact

Language awareness is not usually a sudden moment of enlightenment. From the first glimmer of recognition, there were often surprises in store for participants. This teacher has taught at both ends of Queensland:

> We had a bilingual teacher using *Walking Talking Texts* introduce a text orally talk about it, and then she did that lesson in Torres Strait Creole. It was amazing to see the changed dynamics in the classroom, who was sitting up close, who was being attentive, who was putting their hands up. All these Indigenous students had their eyes lighting up, and big smiles thinking, 'Oh wow. You are talking in my language!' And who was rolling around at the back and mucking around and playing with things? The non-Indigenous kids! Because they were isolated from the learning. Teacher F.

That was an instructive comparison. She went on to show how good questioning reveals another aspect of second language learning:

> A lot of our older kids are very good at reading — on the surface. But when you start digging in and asking questions they come unstuck. They don't have the understanding. They have the phonic skills, the word recognition skills, visual skills, and the decoding skills all down very well and will read to you at Level 30. But if you ask, 'Why did that happen? Where did he go next? What would you do if that happened?' they can't answer. They don't show that inferential thinking, that critical thinking … It's not that they don't know the information but they do have trouble getting the English words out to explain the situation. The bilingual teachers here tell me that the students are actually thinking about things well in their first language. I also notice this when the students begin to write — creole forms and grammar come out, even though they read well. Again, our bilingual teachers tell me that when the kids move from reading to writing they think in their first language again. Teacher F.

Coming to understand how bilingual students move back and forth between their first and second languages is a developmental process for the teacher. The next account of emerging awareness came from a teacher of more than 30 years experience all over the State. She began in Cairns — 'a mightily confusing experience'. Then she taught in several schools in Brisbane where in 'an upper middle class white school' she 'cut her teeth on good literacy practices and Reading Recovery'. She has spent several years now in an Indigenous community school and said:

> Initially I was just thrown in at the deep end and tried to apply what I knew about literacy to language learning and we were articulating the fact that we were having to teach the English language. However the translating of what I know about literacy to language learning was not very well done for my six months

> here. I just struggled along until I had a week at another school with Fran Murray who wrote *Walking Talking Texts* and had some in-depth conversations with her. Then after that I did a number of workshops with Denise Angelo who made the learning for me very explicit about the types of work I would need to be doing and how I would need to be listening carefully to students and recording their language varieties and then to devise some learning experiences from that. Teacher G.

This comment is important — good literacy teaching practices are not the same as good ESL teaching for Indigenous students. Another very experienced teacher made a similar point:

> I was 'early childhood' trained so I think I got by with Indigenous kids because of that. I had seven or eight Indigenous kids in my classroom for many years but I did not understand why it was so hard to help them. No-one told me it was a language difficulty from a pedagogical point of view, so I didn't teach language did I?
>
> All Standard Australian English language learning for Indigenous kids has to be strongly and repeatedly contextualised. Indigenous students don't necessarily know how to learn because the ways English is used for learning are not used by them in their own language outside of the school. So we have to enculturate them into that and be very patient and very explicit. Explicit teaching and knowledge of language is the key to so much of this. Teacher H.

Another teacher talked about arriving in a classroom with absolutely no ESL preparation, but had been given professional development that seemingly missed the point:

> I was faced with a whole class of students for which English was not their first language. They spoke Aboriginal English, so it made it extremely difficult. Every year you were taught that the kids were learning English as a Second Language but no one taught you how to teach them. It was really frustrating having to sit through that same PD each year; then last year we did the ESL Indigenous Bandscales workshop and learned some teaching strategies. They were fantastic, absolutely amazing because they show you that next step, not only that kids speak a different language but what the development of that language looks like and the development of Standard Australian English and how to go about teaching it. It has made a huge difference you know — you can feel a bit better and you can see why things were working and not working in your classroom.

The knowledge from Bandscales workshop training readily transferred across KLAs:

> It also fits in really well across the curriculum. I know I had a lot of success with maths the year before last, around shape for example. The ideas and language from Bandscales work really well across the other KLAs. For example you start talking about boxes not about prisms because that is a technical language and the maths grammar gets thrown in there if you are not careful and it is all too complex. It stops you on all your KLAs and makes you rethink how you will go about teaching it. Teacher I.

According to this teacher, the useful feature of the Bandscales workshops is the structure they give to English, making the next pedagogical steps clear for each of the KLAs, including maths.

Several teachers made brief reference to the role of their ESL training in teaching mathematics and it was obvious how similar teaching strategies would apply. ISSU has compiled several resources for teachers' professional development in the role of language in mathematics. The thrust of these is described briefly and without detailed teacher case studies in the project report for the DEST Literacy and Numeracy in the Middle Years Cluster Project. The Far North Queensland Cluster Schools focus was on *The Language of Maths*. The report explained:

> The imperative need to explicitly focus on language has become increasingly evident throughout the project with anecdotal evidence reporting that students

> demonstrated that they may have the requisite knowledge and skills, but language can be a barrier to communicating knowledge (Davidson, 2005, p. 8).

This may seem a curious claim given the emphasis placed on Standard Australian English in Australian mathematics teaching, but the role of language in mathematical cognition can be quite puzzling. For example, Butterworth, Reeve, Reynolds and Lloyd (2008) observed that knowledge of Western mathematical concepts among young non-English speaking Indigenous students is not different from urban non-Indigenous students. Nevertheless, it is true that facility with Standard Australian English is assumed in Australian mathematics curricula. It follows that students whose first language is not English need very careful teaching in language in the mathematics classroom. For example, teachers need to be economical and precise in wording instructions, explaining and demonstrating concepts, and in sequencing questions.

The Language of Maths project highlighted the need for teachers to identify and explicitly teach language in relation to:

> Mathematical content knowledge (eg 'average', 'multiply', 'compare', 'more', 'less')
> Topic language (eg 'round trip', 'leg of a journey')
> Grammar in which this language is connected and embedded (eg If…. then…. because)
> The language of the task (eg design a 'table', present your 'data' in 'columns')
> Procedural language (eg 'present', 'explain', 'describe', 'calculate') etc. (p. 15).

One of the influential teachers in *The Language of Maths Project* who was also interviewed in this project emphasised the detail of changes required in teachers' classroom practice in order to meet this need. She illustrated with two examples:

> If you ask, 'What does 6 plus 8 equal? By the time you get to the end of it, all they remember is 'equal'. So you say 6 [pause], 8 [pause], how much together? They have in their mind the number concept first. Little things like that help. They need to be taught to teachers.
>
> Another similar example… you should say [holding up a cup] 'This cup … what colour is it?' If you say, 'What colour is this cup?' they will have forgotten what you asked! Only teachers who are ESL savvy know this…. We need a pool of people to sit down and write some examples of how to teach this way ... Teacher E.

Many of the changes suggested were quite simple but numerous. However, teachers did not seem able to change their practice when these things were pointed out to them. FNQ ISSU staff decided to use a more comprehensive approach to change, involving demonstration, coaching, observing and mentoring — the so-called 'adopt-a-school' approach. This teacher endorsed the adopt-a-school approach to assisting teachers to change their practices in the required detail (See also Frigo, 1999; Frigo and Simpson, 2001). The resources proposed by *The Language of Maths Project* are not yet developed — the participants were swamped by their daily work.

An important role was played by the FNQ ISSU in raising consciousness of whole schools about Indigenous children's language. ISSU argued that the Indigenous Bandscales (Education Queensland, 2000) should be used to make access to ELS-ILSS funding more equitable and rational, based on evidence about needs. Schools are eligible for over $3000 per student from the Commonwealth to support English as a Second Language — Indigenous Language Speaking Students (ESL-ILSS) who meet certain criteria:

> **Eligibility Defined**
>
> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their first year of formal schooling have been assessed as having a language barrier which prevents them from being able to participate in the classroom in Standard Australian English.
>
> Funding is available for enrolled Indigenous students who satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- speak an Indigenous language (i.e. have a home language other than Standard Australian English being a traditional language or creole)
- assessed using Indigenous Bandscales as having "Pre-level 2" or below in speaking ability
- commenced formal schooling for the first time – commenced Year 1, and
- have not previously attracted an ESL-ILSS payment.

There were four main effects: First, there were adequate resources to identify Indigenous students who speak language varieties other than Standard Australian English and to assess them on the Indigenous Bandscales, which may be a time consuming process. Second, there were opportunities to identify language learning needs of Indigenous students. Third, and for the very first time for most teachers, teaching strategies based on the literature of TESL could be linked to students' language needs for accessing the classroom curriculum. Fourth, the sheer scale of the lack of English among Indigenous students became apparent. As use of Indigenous Bandscales spread, the stunning inadequacy of current Federal, State and school-based enrolment and assessment procedures became apparent. In one urban high school, the standard method of optionally asking parents what language was spoken at home revealed *two* students. Nina Carter, then of FNQ ISSU, gave a series of language awareness lessons, which a research assistant Carla LaMonica, also then of FNQ ISSU, followed up with interviews of Indigenous students. These were transcribed and assessed on the Indigenous Bandscales. This project showed that *78* students in Year Eight at this high school did not speak Standard Australian English as their first language. Many students had not had their first language(s) recognised in a school setting before or had not been made aware that the significant differences in their 'home language' made it a separate language variety.

Sudden language awareness was sometimes a collective phenomenon, but more often, individual teachers were surprised by their own individual students whose speech they had recorded for a 'Bandscales workshop'[9]

On hearing a recording of a child in her class, one teacher said:

> Oh my god! I did not realise until now that as I listen to these children I translate for myself in my head. I am not hearing what is coming out of that child's mouth. Teacher J.

Another ISSU staff member said about Bandscale training:

> Oral recording forces teachers to 'tune in' — teachers love it because they can see what letters the children are leaving out for example instead of hearing what they want to hear. They are forced to understand children individually.
>
> All the teachers who have been trained in using Bandscales ask 'Why isn't ESL mandatory in teacher training?' When we had new teachers come to us we found that Bandscaling would have made it seem less daunting. Once they do the training, no one has found they can't use them in their own teaching— and they ask if they can use them with non-Indigenous kids. Teacher C.

Enthusiasms about Bandscales were moderated in some teachers' minds by the realities they confront. A lower grades teacher commented:

> Our job is to get ESL-ILSS kids from Pre- Levels usually up to Level Two or beyond. That is what the ESL-ILSS money is provided for but children have to be at Level Five to be competent in a classroom, to be able to learn in English. Many of them stay at Level Two and it can take quite a few years to get to Level 5. We have got quite a few kids in the upper school who are only at Level One or Two and they are trying to operate in all the KLAs in English. They can't even speak English and they get turned off and that is why they stay home.

[9] This is a misleading colloquial name for a four day workshop conducted by ISSU more correctly called English as a Second Language Essentials — for teachers of Indigenous students.

> Identifying these kids well is a big problem. ILSS is good at first year but we have a lot of kids that move around, older kids with serious education problems, and finding out what their ESL issues are is very difficult. When they arrive at a school their information is not necessarily accurate on our system so you could accurately say 'these are all our ESL students'. The parents' skills are not that good often and there are six pages of paper work to fill out. There is one little part that asks 'Does you child speak English at home?' It is an important piece of information, but it is optional. The NAPLAN stats do not even recognise that they are ESL students. The data on our SIMS system is not correct. That I find very scary. Teacher F.

Changing teaching practices

Comments from teachers exposed to the potential of ESL teaching strategies reveal moments of enlightenment. Recall the comments from teachers we cited earlier. Teachers described the resolution of puzzles about pedagogy of long duration or continuities with existing practice. A sense of frustration, even failure, made teachers willing to try out new strategies. This was often coupled with recognition that the ideas were very helpful but that progress would continue to be slow. In many cases the urging was that progress should be slow, to make sure that students did build on previous learning. Failing to do this had already put students behind. For them closing the gap was a matter of redeeming what might have been:

> I found students were falling behind in everything and I hadn't recognised that they weren't speaking Standard Australian English. It was a huge problem because there were huge gaps in learning. You would be teaching paragraphing to do with the genre you were teaching at the time to do with the KLA you were doing at the time but the students were stumped on basic content words and understanding. I approached another teacher who was doing *Walking Talking Texts* and she helped me out by giving me a few sheets of paper and I and just started doing those 43 actions. I thought 'I could fit everything in this, it just seemed right' and then Denise Angelo came to the school. She and other ladies would come in weekly and demonstrate *Walking Talking Texts* and I would show them what I was doing so there was a clear understanding.
>
> Then when I got stuck I thought 'Hang on, I've taken too many steps!' So I went back and had to work with students who didn't speak Standard Australian English and work with them more closely as well as doing *Walking Talking Texts*, filling out that field knowledge I suppose before entering into anything involving grammatical structures or anything like that — building up their language to begin with. Teacher A.
>
> ———
>
> I started at a city school with a large Indigenous, Vietnamese, Samoan, and Tongan population. I was lucky to get the job but it was a struggle and I assumed the kids were having learning difficulties — because I was white. They seriously don't. They bring a wealth of knowledge to the classroom. You have to go out and find out because you are not provided with it at university or in professional development. You are out the front going blah blah blah blah blah and they are only picking up every sixth word. And you have behaviour problems, especially with those boys, because they are not being communicated with. And they fight because they can't communicate with each other. The same thing happens here…
>
> I did *Walking Talking Texts* at Yarrabah and PD about it after school. It was the first time I learned about ESL, my third year of teaching. I found *Walking Talking Texts* was very hard because 'this is what you have to do'. It was a new environment then you have this moment and everything you have been trying to do works. I feel that I cover everything now. You don't have sudden changes. It is slowly, slowly and building a relationship with those kids. Teacher K.

Impediments to change

Among Queensland teachers there are persistent and precedented commitments to individualism and privatism (Lortie, 1975; McTaggart, 1989). Learning support teachers comment on it in particular, referring to the ways in which lack of consistency in approach confuses Indigenous learners. Fundamental to the philosophy of *Walking, Talking Texts* is maintaining reasonably consistent learning contexts to allow learners to focus on language, but still some teachers persist with their own ideas. This does not express itself in confrontation, but rather as energy sapping lament. Among those committed to Indigenous student well-being, too much work is wasted on the politics of keeping the peace when leadership fails, as the following example shows. A leading lower school teacher discovered a delightful introduction to phonological awareness specifically designed for local Indigenous children (Tynan, 2003):

> A teacher I really respected had written *Binyi Wuku* [Djabuguy for 'eating words', that is 'mouth work'], which was a little bit like *Jolly Phonics*. I was leading the lower grades and asked the teachers what they would like to do and they said they wanted to go on with *Jolly Phonics* so I revamped it because it had a couple of elements missing in it and made it correlate to *Binyi Wuku*. It didn't have a rhyme so we wrote a rhyme. It didn't show what your mouth was doing or letter formations and which direction to go. So I rewrote the whole shebang and presented it to the teachers on top of what they already knew and that worked quite well. The teachers adapted their teaching, and I put a dictionary together and all that kind of thing. It all became clearer. Teacher B.

So, the problem is solved, but only through considerable extra work by a teacher whose time might better have been spent on more productive tasks. Innovation and leadership make for hard work, and time-consuming diversions to counter resistance. However, situations like this suggest the need for whole school commitment, even cross-school arrangements, especially where students rotated among a small number of schools. This was a proposal suggested by several teachers, but there was reasonable caution about slavish uniformity, strict adherence to *Walking Talking Texts* for everything for example.

Changing teaching is harder than it seems, as a generation of research on educational change shows (Fullan, 1982, 1989, 1993). The cornerstone of ESL teaching for Indigenous students of all ages is a substantial increase in oral interaction. One teacher who had adopted the FNQ ISSU ideas recognised the risks associated with one key change, the move to more oral classroom communication by students:

> It is the precision of oral teaching that is important, I think young teachers find it quite intimidating to give the children a lot of oral space to do the interaction. I fear that all the time they want to put a pencil in kids' hands and get them sitting down at a desk and writing. But they can't write unless they have manipulated the language orally and played around with it and matched it to pictures and matched an oral response to visual contexts and all of that. There should be a lot of that before there is any written work at all. That free rein for the students makes people feel very uncomfortable because we are dealing with behaviour problems as well. It has to be very structured, visually structured and structured with the language you are going to use with the visual scaffolding.
>
> Unless we can get around 'getting the kids down to work' as a behaviour management strategy we are going to have problems with children developing the features of Standard Australian English in their language development. Teacher G.

There are other exigencies of classroom life that militate against change. Teachers feel put upon, and changing one's mind can be a difficult option. When you already feel overwhelmed, surmounting the hump of any change, even one which promises relief, is difficult to contemplate. A learning support teacher put it this way:

> It is important for teachers to have that paradigm shift. If they are not aware of the language need and the students' creole and that we have an ESL situation it is just so difficult. You can be told that 'you are just devaluing the school because we don't have children like that here'. If they strongly feel that way it is

> going to be hard for any change to happen. So, awareness is crucial. It takes a paradigm shift for people to realise we are dealing with difference not deficit. That is easy to say but is much more difficult to take on board to have in your actual practice and heart of teaching, your philosophy of teaching. The kids are different and even if they are 'almost mainstream' it does not take away their Aboriginal identity or their use of language.
>
> There is huge pressure from the syllabus — there is too much to cover — it is too big. You can use *Walking Talking Texts* to study literacy in the genres but the KLAs put so much pressure on teachers that they don't then get the basics done as well as we need to. The bottom line is that 'We've got to do this now — stop doing that' so the in-depth learning that could and should be happening very often is lost. A lot of children, especially the ones I work with need time and practice and even over-learning sometimes, and they are not necessarily Indigenous, but they often are.
>
> The pressure in writing from Year Four up especially is to get your head around all of those genre frameworks and the features of grammar for each one. For Standard Australian English speakers alone that is too much — too much for our little possums that are still getting their heads around spelling, then sentence structure, then putting sentences together to form paragraphs within a particular framework. Writing is the culmination of everything the child has learned about literacy so far — they have to produce it in their heads and put it out. Because the curriculum is so crowded we don't have enough time to do it orally well enough first. We need to do that with everything – ownership of the genre, than move into the writing but we rush it because there is too much pressure. Teacher H.

So, teachers are caught between two opposing forces — the educational imperative to proceed slowly to ensure that students master concepts before moving on, and the bureaucratic imperative to close the achievement gap more quickly. This is an important issue. Part of the problem for Indigenous students is extrinsic pressure to meet benchmarks of one kind or another such as promotion to the next year level, keeping up with the 'steering group', maintaining contact with an age cohort, training for the test and so on. These pressures may be subtle but for all low achievers they tend to inflate the representation of performance. Real understanding is overstated, and students are expected to build their learning on increasingly inadequate foundations. As these teachers urged, students must be allowed to go slowly enough to achieve mastery. Closing the gap is a fine aspiration, but there is grave danger that forcing the pace may drive students and their teachers to accept surface learning.

Other impediments to change revolved around anxieties about the way materials were perceived. The *Walking Talking Texts* approach was argued by several teachers to be applicable across a wide range of student year levels. However, movement of the ideas and resources into the upper levels of schools seemed to be problematic. In one school the solution was to move ISSU trained lower grade teachers into the upper school. Nevertheless, two prejudices were apparent. First, *Walking Talking Texts* was associated with 'community schools' and 'bilingual education'. In the minds of some teachers, parents and students the association apparently created problems about the status of the resources and any school that used them. Second, and associated with the first prejudice, was the belief that the students were not really ESL learners, despite the fact that teachers could not understand what the students or their parents were saying. This was worse than blindness because it had the odour of intention that ignorance has about it. Some people seem oblivious to the need for Indigenous students to learn because it means abandoning the racist belief that Indigenous students are too stupid, too unmotivated or too poorly behaved to learn.

When teachers are open-minded, all is not lost according, according to one remote school senior teacher:

> I heard a young man say something that made my heart sink. He said 'A lot of folks say "*This Walking Talking Texts* will work for the baby classes; but it won't work for the big kids"'. Well, here in this school I am now seeing that very young man teaching Year Six and making it work for the big kids. I am seeing it work

> for his classroom for the higher functioning students, those that have a facility for learning language, and also those ten and eleven year olds that are quite intellectually challenged. They are really going to need the basics and those children are included in the *Walking Talking Texts* process which provides the bank of strategies we use to teach language. The inclusivity of those strategies is very apparent, from higher functioning kids to kids that are struggling. Teacher G.

System requirements are not making life any easier or stimulating for teachers and principals who are working with Indigenous students. Some principals did not mind Queensland schools being exposed by the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test data. They thought it might provide leverage for more resources for needy schools, perhaps even for all Queensland schools: 'You should just take it as it comes'. However, preparing for NAPLAN was foremost in the minds of some principals and teachers. Where numbers of Indigenous students were significant, the attention was greater. One principal said 'a couple of days' could be required to 'train students in the discourses of the tests'. However, another observer said:

> Many schools are spending much more than a couple of days on test preparation — and much of it is misguided, such as lots of practice of narrative writing, or timetabled NAPLAN lessons.

Waste of teaching time aside, teachers who are striving to help struggling students are not more motivated by an expensive testing regime showing them what they already know only too well.

Professional development approach

For most teachers, principals and schools the usual entrée to ISSU professional development is participation in a four day workshop — ESL Essentials [formerly Bandscales workshops] for teachers of Indigenous students. This is one of the cornerstones of FNQ ISSU ESL work — introducing features of ESL for teachers of Indigenous students. ISSU states the purpose of the workshop as —

> identifying language learners through awareness of students' language situation
>
> providing appropriate classroom teaching responses for learners acquiring the language of the classroom
>
> growing teacher capacity to explain the structures of the English language
>
> assessing students' language acquisition with Bandscales to inform classroom teaching practices

ISSU states that *schools will most benefit by sending participants who can contribute to:*

> school sustainability: maintaining expertise within the school/ community
>
> language leadership: willingness to understand students' language issues and work with other staff in this area.

Conscious that even comprehensive workshops such as this have minimal impact on practice, ISSU has developed a refined follow-up approach when assisting teachers to change their practices. Called 'adopt a school' it is valued by participants because its 'demonstration, coaching, observing and mentoring' commitments carry teachers over the hurdles of change. It is labour intensive, even with eager teachers, and suggests the scale of the task for system wide improvement. Nevertheless, teachers see its discipline as essential to change.

The teachers often refer favourably to the resources introduced in the workshops and subsequent activity, particularly the Northern Territory *Walking Talking Texts* (Murray, 1995), the *Indigenous Bandscales*, and the Western Australian *Making the Jump* (Berry and Hudson, 1997). It is critical that the importance of these resources is not over-played, despite some hyperbole occasionally among participants. Neither ISSU staff nor the teachers really saw these

resources as much more than scaffolding devices from which to learn how to improve their own teaching. *Walking Talking Texts* is valued as an approach to learn from and as a check to make sure you have not gone too fast or omitted something. However, useful as they all are, each resource should be regarded as an hypothesis to be worked through in practice with rigorous reflection on the way teaching is affecting students' language use. Participants commented enthusiastically on their work with ISSU:

> By Year Four you are no longer learning to read but reading to learn. But even in Year Seven some of our Indigenous kids are struggling. So, if you start with a picture, and give them the chance to form some oral questions and to look for the main idea and so on it really helps them. That is why *Walking Talking Texts* is so good — I really pushed it when I first came then Denise Angelo and I did the adopt-a-school mentoring, modelling, coaching role — it is just the best way of doing things. Teacher H.

> We started with Denise Angelo after a big multi-literacy thing about five years ago. Because we were aware of the Indigenous issues — she did about six or seven whole school PDs in our meetings on Monday 3-4 — workshops on creoles, language backgrounds of kids, and the way they talk. It had an ok effect, but there is this readiness thing isn't there. However, it eventually became a very structured language awareness program at least a workshop annually…. Primarily Indigenous, with weekly PD for the TAs. I had done Bandscaling with Denise and all the home work, workshop, then back to school to record kids language, hugely time-consuming particularly the oral one.
>
> Then Nina Carter came in one day a week for a term last year [adopt-a-school], and because of all the background we had done and because of her wonderful expertise she did more in the school in the term more than one person would be expected to do in a year. She worked with the Year Eights and with a couple of Year Eight classes and modelled some excellent strategies; and the teachers have changed their teaching program. She took over my weekly PD with the teacher aides and worked with all of last year Year Eight classes. It was language awareness, language the kids bring to school and giving them the language to talk about that. The TAs do that now with the Ss in their groups. Nina worked with all the Year Eights and collected a writing and a speaking sample and showed us the analysis. Our Indigenous and Pacifica numbers have increased but we teachers have not really increased what we are doing in the classroom to cater for that. It really stopped us in our tracks. Teacher L.

> I worked on ESL ILSS for two years but now I am a classroom teacher and using *Walking Talking Texts* for the first time. I am now fixed on a specific language focus where I am drawing language learning out of what we a reading. Before I would be doing a topic and relating activities to that topic. Now I am working from the one language base and pulling the knowledge out. It is making sense for them in a content sense and a language sense. I like it because you can pull language out of the text. Before I used *Walking Talking Texts* I was not being very specific about the language I was using I was assuming they would be able to write what I wanted them to write. Now I have more structure — this is what you are going to write, this is how you write and these are the kinds of words you use. Being more explicit about grammar, but vocabulary as well. They have to have the grammar framework to put it all together. Teacher M.

An Indigenous teacher was very cautious about some teachers' interpretations of *Walking Talking Texts*. She added:

> When used properly *Walking Talking Texts* worked really well but when it wasn't I didn't see a lot of outcomes for students. People who had their head around it did it well but those who were new did not do it justice. Fran Murray [author of *Walking Talking Texts*] came to the school and talked about the program and

> the theory but people really need to see it modelled. You can listen and talk but you need to see it and try it daily to see how it works. We had adopt a school here because you need to see it modelled for a week or more not a one-off demonstration. Done well it could be a good approach to all your KLAs. The *FELIKS* approach *Making the Jump* is good and also useful and with *Walking Talking Texts* it gives a better idea. It has that code-switching stairway which is really important. The teachers can get their head around the fact that the students are speaking a different way and need to be specifically taught. Teacher E.

> *Walking Talking Texts* has helped me to focus more and I worry less about what I haven't done. It is much better than whole literacy — you know they are going to pick it up because they have done it five or six times in the year in different ways. You can go back and more clearly see what they have improved on. I wasn't tracking it before — I just used to do my assessment at the end. Even my spelling lists come from the text so they have meaning. Teacher K.

Teachers were comfortable with *Walking Talking Texts* because it was very helpful, and adaptable. However, there was insistence that careful interpretation was needed across the KLAs. The one teacher who was quite critical of the applicability of the ideas of *Walking Talking Texts* had not done any training with author Fran Murray or the staff of FNQ ISSU. The criticism showed serious misunderstanding of that teaching resource and of *Bandscales* and demonstrated the importance of well-informed and continuing professional development. The teacher was active in a school where both resources were well understood and skilfully used, but had misunderstood the teachings of FNQ ISSU. Professional development is seldom achieved by osmosis.

Teacher skills, understandings and values

Needless to say, many participants expressed frustration that they had commenced teaching careers knowing very little about the needs of Indigenous students. This is an issue of focus and emphasis. Some informants acquired significant understanding about Indigenous culture, languages and the low achievement of Indigenous students. They had also been told of the many causes of low achievement. They said their major frustration stemmed from the fact that they had not been given any useful strategies. ESL was something student teachers recognised as a term, but learned nothing about. This was universally regarded as a serious omission. Teachers would invariably be teaching Indigenous students at some time in their careers. Many participants thought that what they had learned about ESL in the latter parts of their careers embarrassed them when they reflected on their lack of knowledge earlier on. Interviews had a confessional tone to them at times. They thought pre-service teacher education should at the very least help them with the basics of the theory and practice of ESL for Indigenous students. Further opportunities for study and professional development were also fundamental. One teacher said wistfully 'Things can change so quickly'.

Several mentioned that racism was a problem which prevented some of their fellow teacher education students from learning anything useful about Indigenous education. One teacher, a cheerful young woman, was thoughtful and measured in what she said, but enthusiastic about her work. She spoke about her teacher education and moving straight into an Indigenous community school, five years ago:

> I was completely unprepared to enter the workforce, with ESL especially. I never saw myself in Indigenous education, I was 'dobbed in' to apply by a faculty member at uni because I was looking for a job. She might have heard me speaking up!
>
> I was astounded by the level of racism among the students in my teacher education program. I said at the time I was really glad I was not an Aboriginal kid in a school in Australia because of the level of racism. Some of the things that came out were just horrific. It is quite hard to believe that people think that way these days. I was dumbfounded by quite a few things and I think that was how I ended up getting a nomination. I did no ESL stuff and I think a subject like

> that should end up being a core course with the number of Indigenous students in schools.
>
> An Aboriginal elder spoke to us in cultural studies and she gave quite a good talk but she said in her conversation 'You whitefellas you don't understand'. It wasn't meant to be antagonistic, just meaning that you wouldn't know what they have been through. Students got on the back foot and said:
>
> 'She is the one who is racist because she is writing us all off.'
>
> That led on to an amazing number of racist comments. One of them said the university lecturer was a 'boong banging bitch'. That student later left, but his laughing supporters continued. A huge amount of SOSE [Studies of Society and Environment] at Y4-5 is about Indigenous people and white contact. How can they teach that if they are so racist? Teacher I.

Racism[10] is a genuine problem among some student teachers and is all too familiar to education faculty members. Universities have codes of conduct which forbid its expression, but malevolence is easily masked and its practices can be selective and subtle. The main pedagogical dilemma is the one identified by the teacher above— how to engage it without making things worse. Naming it consistently is important and the establishment of a culture of disapproval vital, but regrettably racism is not unknown in the education professions.

Participants in the study echoed several familiar complaints about the adequacy of teacher education. They usually reflected an inevitable tension in the curriculum about the balance between theory and practice as the students understood them. However, some suggestions made might add features to teacher education which would help Indigenous students. The first cluster of comments refers to younger teachers' own knowledge of the English language and how it works. This is not just a grumpy reaction by more experienced teachers to the whole language approach, but a felt need among the younger teacher themselves:

> They come out from uni unfortunately without enough to walk through that classroom door and teach; and they know that. That is why they say if only we could have come and spent more time in the schools. You can teach the theory and the skills together and maybe you should have more expert exponents of practice going into your uni a bit more. They must be taught oral language and phonological awareness; they must. They have to see it. It does not matter where you are, you will find a kid that you have to go back to the beginning with. And you have to know how to go back and unfortunately they do not know just how to go back. It has definitely been my experience that these problems exist right through primary school. They just do not know how to do it. Teacher B.
>
> ———
>
> I find these teachers have not had the formal grammar in school. They don't know how our language works and they can't spell either. Many of them don't know the patterns of sounds and how we represent them in our language. They are not familiar with the nuances of English language so really we are almost asking them to learn that in the schools before they can teach it. Teacher H.
>
> ———
>
> English is the hardest language to learn and so to learn it you need to know the grammatical rules. When I went to school we had the whole language approach, and not much grammar in depth, but older teachers, they thrive on grammar. They are the experts … The younger ones did not have it drilled into them. Teacher C.
>
> ———
>
> We believe we were not taught grammar properly at school ourselves and therefore don't feel confident to teach grammar properly ourselves and we need retraining in how to teach grammar correctly. I have it a very basic level, but I couldn't go in and teach Year Seven adjectival clauses or past participles. I just

[10] Sadly, racism can also be coupled with sexism, as it is here.

> don't have enough knowledge of grammar to be able to teach those things. Teacher F.

This cannot be construed as a plea to return to 'the good old days' of rigid grammar teaching and the associated nomenclature. However, nomenclature aside, the general point is that teaching English as an additional language does require teachers to have a more robust knowledge of grammar, if only to recognise how words go together to express meaning. Being able to label adjectival clauses or past participles may not seem to be important, but knowing their features and what they do in the English language seems vital. Being able to name language features assists teachers to find out how to teach them, as they could look them up in a ESL reference work or *Google* them.

Other participants were concerned about who got to interpret what should be taught from the field of teaching and learning English as a second language. Did they understand the field in ways which would be helpful to Indigenous learners? That is, would conventional TESL be appropriate?

> I think we need to go right back to what people are learning in the universities. You have got people teaching ESL who are not ESL people and who do not speak the language or know the differences between the languages either. I would like to see people from the community who speak the language come in to the uni teachers for a few weeks and show them the differences. Until they hear it themselves they don't really know the difference…. We have got a shortage of people who know ESL to teach the teachers — we need to make the pool bigger. In the north here you could count those who are savvy ESL way on ten fingers… And there are some people who might be ESL but they don't know this stuff. That is why you need Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together. When Denise and I have been working together she would come up with an idea and I would say that is not the way I would look at it and together we work out how to do it. So you actually need ESL savvy people who know the languages to work with someone. Teacher E.

> In the first two days of a four day Bandscales workshop in Brisbane almost half the workshop participants were ESL specialists in schools whose backgrounds were in overseas languages. They found it the hardest to appreciate the Indigenous ESL situation. The found it hardest to accept that the creole or non-standard variety of English would justify a full ESL approach. They are so ingrained in the idea of two very separate languages, that is, totally linguistically separate. They understand kids who are traditional language speakers learning English — that's ESL so that it is no problem for them. But they just struggle with the idea for Creoles and Aboriginal Englishes. It was a surprise and a challenge to get over the hurdle of justifying why these kids still benefit from ESL strategies even though some of their vocabulary and some of their structures are like English.
>
> Varieties of creole closer to English are more stigmatised. In the Torres Strait where kids are clearly speaking a creole it is easier for teachers to accept that it demands different teaching approaches. Whereas teaching in Cherbourg or Logan or Brisbane or Ipswich kids' language sounds a bit more 'Englishy'. It is much more complex near Brisbane because the population of kids is smaller, their needs more hidden and practice more embedded — in secondary and primary schools. The teachers moan and say, 'Why are we doing more for those Indigenous kids anyway…? Teacher J.

One Indigenous teacher was critical of the induction programs conducted by Education Queensland for teachers appointed for the first time to Indigenous community schools:

> They hold those induction conferences in cities! I would like them held on communities. A teacher here went back to Brisbane on Day One with culture shock… after seeing all the Aboriginal Teacher Aides at the school! They need to bring them here not to flash hotels in the city. They need to rub shoulders

with the community, to talk with people and be exposed to what our community is like. They can hear the language but participate in events like volley ball on the beach and dinners so they can see our etiquette. They can live in a hotel but should come here each day. Some students have never seen Aborigines until they get in the classroom and it is a big culture shock. They need at least a week just to understand the ESL stuff we do just so we can talk about it. Teacher E.

Teachers talk about TESL strategies

Despite some close questioning about ways in which their teaching had changed as they understood more about the use of ESL strategies, teachers usually deferred to the authority of *Walking Talking Texts* and, on one or two occasions, *Making the Jump.* The examples from basic mathematics cited above were an exception. We include here some examples of what teachers said to provide readers with a sense of the content of changes the teachers were talking about.

Creating opportunities to show SAE features and grammar — I tried to choose for *Walking Talking Texts* books which would show SAE features; then I would have the opportunities to teach those structures. I also began to make transition activities, games with photos and to bring out language features that I wanted to hear. I would just use those as an exit strategy before lunch or between a writing activity and a carpet activity or something like that. I was generating little games to model and practice those features. The kids would say 'He walking' so I would take a photo of a kid walking and we would write 'He is walking' and we would practise that. I would also have sentence writing activities where I would have a photo or get a child to perform a role play or an action and we would write a sentence about it. It was drawing out something every day that I thought the children needed to hear and see and speak. I never go into anything without visual scaffolding, and kinaesthetic things like dough, magnetic letters, or cards I have cut up. We are really working in visual and kinaesthetic more all the time and those prompts are just vital. I find if I make the mistake of going to the oral/aural interaction straight away I might as well pack up and go home. It is a lot of work and thinking, 'What do I really want these kids to hear and understand?' and I work to put the scaffolding in around that. They need a lot of oral work before anything else. Teacher F.

Ensuring readiness and reaping rewards — I am a Learning Support Teacher now but when I was a classroom teacher I used a fairly consistent pattern of starting on a unit with language at the beginning which was low on vocabulary, low on the actual standard of SAE and low on the patterns we were aiming for. Over six weeks with *Walking Talking Texts* strategies you would see this blossoming of the language and the vocabulary, the intonation, the understanding of how words worked, the parts of speech — even though they were not dealt with as parts of speech. They could manipulate those and change tenses and change, genders, plural and singular nouns, all of those things. You would see a blossoming of understanding and usage at the end of the unit and you could test that, see that there was a growth in language. But then as soon as you started a new context, set of features and vocabulary, of course the practice level was lower. However, there was always that little bit of acquisition that would slot into the language practice. I have been talking lately with some Year Five kids I taught in Year Two and who don't speak in SAE. But, as soon as we start on something formally they bring that out.

It takes a little practice to shift like that but they did it as if it were second nature. There is the beginning of deliberate code switching there, and an awareness that we need to use a particular code when

we are dealing with a particular thing at school. But if I am just talking with them I still hear their Aboriginal English going on. They just bring the SAE out for formality's sake. Teacher F.

Validating home languages in the classroom — There are parts in the *Walking Talking Texts* band of strategies where you do compare book language with how they would just say it in their home language. In the *Making the Jump* manual you would say 'How would you say that if you were talking to your aunty? How would you say it if we were going to write it down in a book here at school?' There are opportunities to do that but I am not sure how often that is happening in other classrooms. Any creole use is always accepted for what it is 'Yes that is great' and then scaffold it in SAE as well — never saying that's right and this is wrong. Always accepting and adding SAE. I can't speak for others but I know I am doing it all the time, and there may be some formalisation of that when we actually write it down. 'This is what you would read in a book; this is how we might talk about it.' Teacher F.

If only we were all bilingual — We adopted *Walking Talking Texts* and did the workshops, including use of the Bandscales. We also use *Making the Jump* as a resource. They give a really good focus and structure for school language. I do have an awareness that the distinction that 'This is my language' is important and I do use my own [Indigenous] language in class to get the point across to the children. That helps with language awareness too. We do a lot of singing in SAE and in the children's own language so they can make the distinction between home language and school language. It is also a good self-esteem building strategy. Teacher D.

Kids figure it out — I just knew we were not catering for these children, especially not in oral language. We realised that we were not understanding that they were ESL learners. But even if you understood that, what do you do?

Then we found out about *Walking Talking Texts*, and then you know to thoroughly rehearse the oral SAE language and the children have a chance to use it. Grammar is always developed in context. The children then started rehearsing SAE by themselves! So when they were asked to use it they could give it back to you in that 'book talk'. They were using English back to me through the book. They could locate the spelling in the dictionaries we put together, find things in the room, and say 'Naah, that's not right!' and go and find it. That really stood out — the fact that they were exposed to SAE multiple times.

Before that we had not really realised that they were not speaking SAE at all, even though their home language was 'light' sometimes. You just never heard them in the classroom. The kids who have it all were easy to extend. This was much better for the 'have-nots'. They just got better and better with practice. Teacher B.

Using the ideas with older students — I am working for ten weeks at a remote school with all adolescent Indigenous kids. Some know three or four home languages. Literacy is low because they are ESL but they are in adult bodies. However, I just go straight in using *Walking Talking Texts*, but with a piece of text, not a picture book, maybe something like a net page, any kind of text I want them to know and which can have a good assessment item at the end of it. We still do the *Walking Talking Texts* things, oral beginnings, dictionaries and so on. I only get to Step 19 which is the literacy side of it and it is the KLAs and the teachers are pretty good at that. They can do that in parallel with what I am doing, but the literacy side of that I am flat out doing in ten weeks. They always need follow up and direction, encouragement and want to see some things again. They would love you to be there for their planning.

A small minority of teachers of older students don't like it. They usually try to do what they normally do plus *Walking Talking Texts*, trying to double up because they can't let go. It means they don't do a good job of *Walking Talking Texts*. That is the one they let go so I have to work really hard with those types of people. I see change in them when it comes to planning. If they try to plan their old way it doesn't work. If I work with a small group of teachers they are rocketing through, but the reluctant ones are slow because they have chosen books which won't work because usually the sentences are too short. If I get them to use books with more complex sentences then they see it. Teacher B.

ESL principles work — if you work at it — Every teaching resource we get about ESL is very basic and for a much lower level. I looked everywhere but there is not much that you can just pick up and use with high school students. However, I see more of a place for *Walking Talking Texts* ideas than I did when I was teaching at the high school. That place is that *Walking Talking Texts* provides a very general and useful framework — that you start by familiarising language orally; you use a text and do an in-depth language study of the text, you use the text as a model of English and before you go anywhere with reading or writing you develop an oral knowledge of that body of language for any topic you are going to be studying. Only then can you take the step into the reading and writing and then once you have done that you can start looking at your other content and your KLAs. Then you do your assessment. What I like is that four phase model that WTT provides. That approach for any language teaching in a mainstream environment is the crux of it. I know it will work with Year 10 evolutionary biology, for example. What I am saying is that teachers don't know how to do that. The powerful aspect of 'adopt-a-school' is that people using *Walking Talking Texts* and who know it and its rationale well can get in and show teachers some strategies on how to do that. That collaboration is really essential, especially with older students. Teacher J.

Context is important, not only for meaning — When the Prep and Year One teachers wanted more phonological awareness information about all of the kids it became obvious that the current approach was inadequate. The usual screener or analysis by the speech language pathologist were both done completely out of context. You take the child out and you do things with them and they tell you how many words, first sound, last sound, whether this rhymes — that is all about words as objects, not about context and meaning …. So I tweaked the screener to give it more context … using *Walking Talking Texts* or a good text the kids might be interested in. At that school, all kids, not just Indigenous kids were not understanding letter-sound correspondences. My thrust was to connect visual to auditory to tactile (touching mouth) to kinaesthetic — if we combined them we might have a better chance of the kids grasping those sounds and using them and the symbols that go with them. One of the problems for the Indigenous kids was that some of the SAE phonemes don't exist in their home talk. Most vowel sounds don't occur either. So they have to learn them. This is the idea of Gill Tynan's *Binyi Wuku* … A few schools have used Jolly Phonics but it is English has a very English flavour to it and doesn't bring in the tactile. It also fails to ask 'Is it a noisy or a quiet sound?' This is very important for Indigenous kids because they cannot easily hear the 'b' and 'p' and 'f' and 'v' distinctions which do not occur in their home languages. Teacher G.

As indicated earlier, this is not a theme in the same sense as the others, but some clear understandings from the teachers' involvement with TESL ideas developed with the FNQ ISSU staff emerge. Notable is the teachers' deference to the authority of *Walking Talking Texts* when asked about good ideas from their own teaching. However, *Walking Talking Texts* does provide a shared way of talking about how a teacher might go about using TESL ideas with Indigenous

students, including adolescent students. Some key teaching points from the professional development offered by the FNQ ISSU are evident:

- Awareness that students are learning English as a foreign language
- Emphasis on extensive oral work building from the one text
- Use of the chosen text to provide context for development of vocabulary and knowledge of grammar and the way it is used to achieve meaning
- Explicit teaching of phonology and grammar in the context of an appealing text — no mindless recitation approach to phonics
- Following the *Walking Talking Text*s strategies in logical sequence
- Use of the chosen text and context and the knowledge built up around it to branch out to other texts — keeping them in context too as the scope broadens.

Many other resources are used and are slowly replacing *Walking Talking Texts* in FNQ ISSU activities. Obviously it is not necessary to follow the system literally, but these teachers seemed not yet wholly confident enough in their own understandings to try ideas independently.

Discussion

The themes used give us a structure to make sense of what is happening as innovative practice is generated around ideas which have been known for many years. The theme, *commitment of educators*, emerged as it often does in studies of this kind. It reveals here the relentless quest of certain teachers to improve their skills and understandings and to review their values. The fact that commitment is shown here emerging in contact with advocates from outside schools reflects more than the quality of advocacy. It also reflects the difficulties the keenest teachers have in order to change roles and the paucity of opportunities afforded them through further study to be leaders and advocates for their own profession.

Two themes converged in the *emergence of language awareness and its impact* in *changing teaching practices.* They illustrate significant transformations of consciousness among the participating teachers. One could justify dismay that such enlightenment among teachers has been so long in coming. The promotion of strategies from the TESL literatures has been a feature of the literature for the last 30 years (Kaldor and Malcolm, 1979, 1991; Batten, Frigo, Hughes and McNamara, 1998; Lawrence, 1994; Luke, Land, Christie, Kolatsis and Noblett, 2002). One cannot blame the teachers in this study for the limited recognition by education systems. This should be seen as a commentary on the efforts of teacher education and education departments which for the last twenty years at least have made social justice the core of their rhetoric. How can teachers have been deprived of access to these understandings so vital to the educational experience of Indigenous students?

The *impediments to change* noted by participants range from the lack of skills, understandings and values of teachers to lack of system awareness and support. Failings were evident among all those involved in the practice of education from Prime Ministers and Education Ministers down. The policies of Education Queensland present an example of fine ideas perverted by operational practices which contradict them (Taylor, 2005). Lack of material resources for the change effort has just been the tip of the iceberg.

The *professional development approach* adopted by ISSU recognised two particular needs: (i) ensuring that teachers, support staff and principals had access to informative and new resources which addressed issues they were confronting in their teaching; and (ii) working with whole schools wherever possible to ensure the development of local communities of practice. The legitimacy and the utility of the Indigenous Bandscales workshops were probably guaranteed by their pedigree, but their link to ESL-ILSS funding helped to spread their influence and persuasion. *Walking Talking Texts* and *Making the Jump* were well-tried resources long before they were taken up in Queensland. Their association with Indigenous community schools was not an impediment to the participating teachers, but they raised questions about the extension of their use beyond the already converted and about the uptake of ESL principles to higher levels of schooling.

Teachers talk about TESL strategies somewhat reluctantly in the interviews but often mentioned the resources they were using, usually *Walking Talking Texts* and *Making the Jump*. There

were some problems with this. They often deferred to that external authority when asked for more detail about their teaching. This is a common response, and is misleading in three senses. It overstates the value of the resources, making them seem like they are the instruments of change and enlightenment. It also undersells myriad other resources teachers were taught to use in their professional development. Most misleading is the devaluation of the professional development experience itself. The teaching resources are not innovations; they are resources to be used after teachers have learned how to change their practices. As we have suggested from the outset and now confirm, extended professional development is far and away the most important thing to focus on. It is absolutely crucial to understand that teaching resources are not the solution to the problem we have observed. In fact, resources are a minor aspect of the problem. The vital contribution FNQ ISSU has made is the insistence on professional development. Teachers will not change their practices if they are given resources. They need continuing exposure to expertise for professional development. Resources might help as scaffolding, but the first and most important problem for systems to solve is how to improve professional development for teachers.

Also at issue is the scaling up of the practices of ISSU to engage pre-service and in-service teachers. Already foreshadowed by participant comments and the supporting narrative is concern about how we can extrapolate from participants' experience to other teachers. The ISSU approach responds to the principle of voluntarism illustrated by teachers who opt into the change process. However, other teachers appeared to think that the ESL strategies were uninspiring, despite being aware of the same language and achievement issues for their Indigenous students. They pressed on with practices which other more informed teachers had found inadequate. What are the approaches which will help more resistant teachers and other educators to make their own current practice problematic?

Participants made frequent reference to the theme, *teacher skills, understandings and values,* and raised important issues for teacher pre-service and in-service education, employer provided professional development and the role of universities in further study by educators at all levels. System support for further study by teachers has been patchy at best, and rewards for successful study sparse. Trends in university research funding may well threaten postgraduate research in education. One could ask in worsening conditions just how educators might improve access to the knowledge which has so sporadically been made available to teachers in the last 30 years. Each of these present possibilities and constraints, and presuppose expectations and likely frustrations of the intended clientele.

The key propositions which led to the study were borne out by the evidence. A significant number of Indigenous learners spoke little or no Standard Australian English. Indeed, teachers and other educators were generally taken by surprise by the number. Teachers reported that they were poorly equipped by their initial pre-service teacher education and by much of the subsequent professional development they received. They could neither recognise nor adapt their teaching. The professional development offered by the FNQ ISSU was obviously an exception. Because of the links between JCU and FNQ ISSU, it seems feasible to assume that the Bachelor of Education and Master of Education subjects now offered may provide a resource to assist teachers. However, given the intensity of the 'adopt-a-school' approach it is likely that more needs to be done to bring about informed and robust changes in teachers' practice.

The subject of this study, FNQ ISSU professional development in TESL teaching, was marked by its strong advocacy. There is obviously a role for advocacy in educational systems. Inspired teachers can be advocates, but the need for advocacy is really a symptom of a non-rational system (House, 1974; House and Lapan, 1975). Educational systems are loosely coupled (Weick, 1976) so it is usually only through strong advocacy that even centrally valued reforms gain purchase. The policy rhetoric of respect for Indigenous students' languages cannot be expressed in practice without advocates. Rhetoric can drag reality along with it. However, reliance on advocacy is risky. Advocacy is often poorly informed, and dangerous. The content of the FNQ ISSU advocacy was sound, and it is a genuine concern that it took this level of advocacy to gain traction — especially when appropriate resources for assessment were developed in Queensland specifically for Indigenous students. Good materials for teacher development have been available from the Northern Territory and Western Australia for some time and are probably due for renewal in the light of evaluation and experience.

There is a tendency in education systems to believe that professional development can be made systematic by giving the responsibility for improving colleagues to exemplary or 'lighthouse teachers'. Credibility and efficiency are touted as the rationale. To a small degree FNQ ISSU did apply this principle, but only with appropriate further training for the teachers concerned. This was wise practice — lighthouse teachers are often not typically good advocates or staff developers . They like to move on, and find burdensome those who are not persuaded quickly of the virtue of the particular reform. They see their role as teachers, not teacher educators, not principals, not reformers, and certainly not 'tall poppies' (McTaggart, 1989; Lortie, 1975). The heavy lifting of advocacy is also wearisome, and the work of developing colleagues is not what good teachers signed up for so some kind of institutionalisation is necessary to protect the best practitioners from distraction and exhaustion.

There are dangers also in extrapolating from the experience of self-selected teachers. Extrapolation from exemplary, or indeed any other cases is obviously not unusual, and the ways in which it occurs have been discussed for years (Stake, 1995, 1978; Stake and Trumbull, 1982). Some might say the truths provided us by these teachers only apply in this case, not elsewhere. However, the same criticism might be levelled at any generalisation from other kinds of research. Will it work here? Listening to good teachers embodies similar risks to 'best practice' ideology. But there is a difference. 'Best practice' always involves unidentified and helpful conditions which may not exist elsewhere. We can never be sure that good practice really will be reproduced, emulated, or successfully re-interpreted elsewhere, but we can start with what good teachers tell us. The important point arising from this and every case (and generalisation) is that local interpretation is always essential. What must be done is to make sure that the local educators know how to inform and discipline what they do in their own practice, over time, and as conditions change.

A strength of this project was that teachers, principals and schools had all opted into the association with FNQ ISSU, and then into the study itself by invitation. Participants obviously had an inkling that learning more about ESL for Indigenous learners could provide a solution to a problem they had encountered in their educational practice. Voluntarism is an important principle in the formation of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and the 'public spheres' constitutive of participatory action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000, 2005), but system and school leadership will be necessary in the next phases of ESL activity. It is one thing to present ESL strategies as a solution to a problem already recognised, and quite another to make current practices problematic. FNQ ISSU has been successful in using *Bandscales* data to alert teachers, but the conversion of language awareness into changes into deeply ingrained practices — skills, understandings and values — requires more comprehensive action than can be expected of small professional development units.

The failure to identify Indigenous language learners is striking. It is very clear that many parents have not acquired the necessary linguistic information and/or recognition from their schooling in order to be able to identify their own and their children's language backgrounds on enrolment forms (to optional questions). Two issues which were raised by teachers were lack of access to reliable information when students changed schools, and lack of similarity in school curricula. These were suggested as particular problems for Indigenous learners. If that is so, it is appropriately addressed by improving language awareness. It is true that the information available to schools when all students enrol or transfer can be important for pedagogical purposes. Better information management for all students seems to be needed.

There are good arguments for the development of Indigenous language awareness and appropriate ESL strategies in pre-service education. This may sound simple, and at least some teacher education programs in Australia devote about one-eighth of one year's full time tuition to it. It may already be available as an option, but should be made mandatory. However, sequestering ESL in one subject is an inadequate response. It is also important that curriculum specialists in teacher education across the KLAS and primary and secondary levels of schooling integrate appropriate awareness and strategies in their requirements for students. This might create some staff development tasks for universities.

There are also issues about who should teach Indigenous language awareness and the strategies that follow. One thoughtful informant suggested grounds for wariness about handing

the task over to conventional ESL specialists. Their identification with overseas languages, high achieving students, high status immigrants and the exotica of survival among refugees may make them blind to the nature of the Indigenous language situation and the obstacles Indigenous students are exposed to in learning Standard Australian English. However, their expertise is valuable and effort must be made to ensure collaboration among them, teachers of Indigenous students, and Indigenous teachers and their communities. It is also important that Indigenous teachers receive suitable training in Teaching English as a Second Language. It is not sufficient that Indigenous teachers are bilingual. That is immensely helpful in the situations described in this study, but Indigenous teachers will benefit from specialised assistance too. Being able to understand and speak a language is not the same as being able to teach it.

Pre-service teacher education should also ensure that Indigenous history, the colonisation of Australia, and the nature of Indigeneity today are well understood by future teachers. This may be taught well in some existing programs, but what to do about it was apparently not pointed out to the teachers we spoke to. Their understanding of Indigenous Australia was variable, and their values appropriate. However, they said they lacked skills and felt that the understandings and values of colleagues left a bit to be desired.

Racism exists among teacher education students and in the schools in which they undertake practicums. This is a very difficult pedagogical issue, and we know that it can be worsened by efforts to engage it in the teacher education curriculum. Explicit teaching about language by high status Indigenous teachers and leaders might be a concrete way to augment existing practices. More time in schools with known populations of Indigenous students is sound practice, but only if students are prepared well with the skills, understandings and values which will assist them to benefit from the experience.

The Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) has a role in influencing pre-service education, but its influence on the nature of professional development for practising teachers is less direct and therefore less potent, despite its responsibility for continuing registration of teachers. The current QCT *minimum* specification for professional development of 30 hours per annum is welcome in principle, but remains a long way short of addressing the kinds of needs identified. For comparison, it takes about 100 hours to complete one university subject (course, or unit — one eighth of a full-time student annual load, 13 weeks at eight hours per week). The wide freedom suggested by the QCT minimum suggests that focusing effort in professional development will be accomplished only by encouragement and enticement by Education Queensland. Other employers were not considered in this study.

This does not mean that Education Queensland or other employers should attempt all of this kind of professional development themselves. The ISSU network clearly has a role to play. As universities improve their offerings to promote language awareness and ESL strategies for teachers in pre-service or postgraduate levels, some assistance should be given to teachers to extend their knowledge beyond that offered in the EQ workshop programs (which many teachers find very difficult to attend and community schools principals find it difficult to release teachers for). Postgraduate study is now easily accessed and with a modest investment, perhaps across several universities, world class on-line education with audio, video, interactivity and print can be delivered to schools and lounge rooms. This could easily be coupled with face to face activity in concert with the ISSUs, even on a whole school basis, which would be desirable.

The Queensland College of Teachers is well situated to influence practice through implementation of Professional Standards and its accreditation responsibilities. Its stipulative authority can make it a powerful agent. However, it can also play an influential role as broker because of its stakeholder base. It is the role of broker which has the potential to galvanise thinking about the continuing professional development of teachers.

Lurking behind all of these considerations are the material conditions of educational work. These are manifest at different levels and range from teacher salaries and conditions to the broad framing devices such as curriculum specification and outcome measures. The change of federal government has raised the hopes of some that the social justice agenda will achieve greater standing. 'Closing the gap' is one promise which nurtures these hopes. In education, NAPLAN is the educational measurement plan which defines the gap to be closed. The hope

that resources might follow the promise to close the gap is now dashed by the Global Financial Crisis. So, there is a real risk of plenty of measurement coupled with an empty promise of resources to address exposed inequities — exactly how 'blaming the victim' begins (Ryan, 1971).

This is not just bad luck. It is inherent in modern conceptions of governmentality where government systems (not only governments) are steeped in the ideologies of performativity and economic rationalism. These systems are not just ideas. They have a potency driven by the World Bank and its sibling institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the approval of which governments consistently seek (Cole, 1991). Governments of all shades find it hard to extricate themselves from the dominance of economic values and performance models (Keenoy, 2004; Watkins, 1992a, 1992b, Pusey, 1991). The discourses of education begin to conform to the requirements of the business discourses which increasingly colonised the educational world (for examples see Swales, 2004; Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002; Fairclough, 1993; Williams, Cutler, Williams and Haslam, 1987). This affects the values, processes and content of educational practice. The particular form this takes in financial crises was described for the 1980s by United States scholar Michael Apple:

> The United States and British economies are in the midst of one of the most powerful structural crises they have experienced since the depression. In order to solve it on terms acceptable to dominant interests, as many aspects of the society as possible need to be pressured into conforming with the requirements of international competition, reindustrialisation, and (in the words of the National Commission on Excellence in Education in the United States) 'rearmament'. The gains made by women and men in employment, health and safety, welfare programmes, affirmative action, legal rights, and education must be rescinded since 'they are too expensive' both economically and ideologically ….
>
> Social democratic schooling is being rolled back, along with other parts of the welfare state, because it costs too much in a context of fiscal restraint (i.e. where state resources are targeted to non-education priorities such as economic development, tax concessions and bailing out private investors) and because 'people must be convinced that their belief that person rights must come first is simply wrong or outmoded given current realities' (Apple, 1989, p. 4).

Seddon (1991) and McTaggart (1992) commented on similar trends in Australia 20 years ago. In 2009, during an even worse economic crisis, perhaps one should not hold out too much hope for the redistribution of federal funds to support Indigenous education. Even when governments were flush, resources to respond to the facts quite evident in this study were insufficient to the task. For example, staff turnover is still a major disadvantage for Indigenous community schools. Current policies aim at a minimum of two years in one location, a duration which hardly addresses the need. And one dimensional interventions such as the creation of 'dry communities' in the middle of 2008 made conditions worse for teachers:

> Since the community went dry there are big issues with violence and the kids bring the violence to school. A lot of the kids who want to learn are certainly benefiting but the reality is that there are bucket loads of alcohol in this community. There are hundreds of ways to smuggle it in. Many parents were leaving the community and kids weren't being supervised and juvenile crime sky-rocketed last year after July 1. You won't see that statistic from government because it shows the trial was not going well. There is an increase in drugs, dope and Yandi smoking and the reality is it is easier to smuggle in a forty ounce bottle of rum than it is to smuggle in a carton of beer or UDLs. People have gone onto spirits more. Student suspension rates have increased by a factor of three or more. Things are worse for the school since the community supposedly went dry. Teacher N.

Note the impact here is that relatively advantaged students, 'kids who want to learn', are the ones who benefit. For the more disadvantaged students life and schooling is decidedly worse. Getting resources through institutions to the most disadvantaged is always difficult.

Despite adverse financial circumstances, there is work to do to address this pressing problem. Universities might have dropped the ball on this issue, but institutionalisation of the education of teachers in language awareness and ESL strategies does fall within their charter. Increasing the number of people with the appropriate academic credentials in universities has some virtues. It links the teaching of this work with further research for greater understanding and legitimation of good ESL practices Indigenous students. The decline in university staffing, research and expertise in any field is almost invariably attributable to declining student numbers. As employers move to tailor professional development to perceived system needs, the role of links between research and practice can be eroded by system imperatives. This has happened here to some degree. There may be a way of developing the relationship between EQ and universities by more closely linking EQ provided professional development with university credentialing and the university research effort.

It should be noted that despite the production of a range of workshop materials by FNQ ISSU in the last five years, very little has been published to make them available, establish their currency, and create their reputation. In fact, the situation is similar to Northern Territory and Western Australian. The resources *Walking Talking Texts* and *Making the Jump* which, despite their influence now, were also a long time coming and have not really generated a literature about their use. They are not commercially published. Nevertheless, they exist, and have been influential. What has not followed is research and development to create reputation and resources for the next generation. This is not the fault of people working in the field — what has been done is remarkable. As an Indigenous teacher explained, they do not have time to do all of the things which should be done. The stalled development of the 'Snail Planner' (Davidson, 2005) and other ESL mathematics resources is a case in point. As one participant said, 'Sixty hours a week is not enough!' What are the rewards for staff who work like that in education systems?

There ought to be strong conjunction between the activities of this case and the theory and practice of participatory action research. Some teachers called what was happening action research and they were right, but in a partial sense only. Participants were not familiar with the 'conceptual furniture' afforded by extensive knowledge of action research. The next phase of development in this area should be explicit about its relationship with theory and action research because it will help participants to write more comfortably and conceptually about their work. There is a fear that the ideas of language awareness and ESL strategies for Indigenous students might be swamped by yet another discourse if that strategy was applied. That is a groundless fear because action research is about changing educational practices — there is no content free form of action research. The current danger is that the FNQ ISSU ESL initiatives and *Making the Jump* and *Walking Talking Texts* are carried by local or non-commercial publications or face to face interaction. This is not the way research and development activities secure a future for themselves these days.

In the following pages some fundamentals of participatory action research are included with a view to providing a well-informed approach to further staff development (adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000, 2005). To complement them, immediately after the Findings presented below, Principles for ESL for Indigenous Students are included. These summarise a theory of TESL practice appropriate for Indigenous learners. The complementarity of the two concluding statements is that one develops the language **of** practice (the educational practice of ESL), the other develops the language **about** a practice (the practice of changing and educational practice (Kemmis, 2009).

Findings

1. There is an extensive literature arguing and demonstrating that ESL educational needs of Australian Indigenous students are not adequately recognised or met.

2. The gap in the provision of appropriate educational services is likely to get worse as the language situation diversifies. The only way this can be addressed is by improving the ESL skills, understandings and values of teachers, and providing proper support to them, theoretically, practically, organisationally and quickly.

3. There is strong support from teachers and principals for more training in ESL with an Indigenous focus in pre-service teacher education (at least 0.125 EFTSL of instruction plus integration across the curriculum), coupled with more and rigorous help for teachers currently in practice. Extended professional development is by far the most important thing to focus on. It is absolutely crucial to understand that teaching resources are not the solution to the problem we have observed.

4. Teachers, schools and systems can seriously underestimate the numbers of students who use Standard Australian English only in the classroom and who therefore must be regarded as ESL learners. Enrolment practices are not accurately identifying users of creoles.

5. Focus on the ESL issue for Indigenous learners is distorted by other discourses — cultural differences, behaviour management, morale, literacy, attendance, hearing disability, traditional language maintenance, socio-economic status, and NAPLAN scores.

6. Teachers who have adopted ESL strategies report major changes in students, but expect that it will be some time before an impact on NAPLAN testing results will occur. Language learning takes time. *Indigenous Bandscales* will show more development, but this may be perceived as extra work when State and Federal systems show superficial interest in ESL learners' progress.

7. Stronger relationships between the ISSUs and initial teacher education and continuing professional development are important.

8. ESL approaches with an Indigenous focus are also working well with non-Indigenous students. The strategies are improving teaching everywhere not least because some teachers themselves are not well-versed in grammar.

9. ESL with an Indigenous focus has been used mostly in lower primary — with the exception of senior English for ESL learners syllabus — but will be essential for significant numbers of students well into secondary schooling. There is some hesitation about changing upper schools but informants say that where it has been tried it has worked well.

10. There is resistance to the 'paradigm shift' (or making the jump to language awareness) to recognise the central role of language issues in schools and among students in teacher education.

11. More recent graduates have commented on persistent and sometimes very hateful racism among teacher education students with whom they attended university. This issue is recognised in the universities, but more needs to be done about it. A way of approaching this could be to establish more contact with accomplished Indigenous teachers who speak and know the linguistics of Indigenous languages, creoles, and related varieties. An important concern is not to make racism worse.

12. There are staff development and resource development needs for both universities and teachers — ESL consciousness and Indigenous language awareness needs to permeate the KLAs and across the curriculum in teacher education. This is a substantial task of extended duration, but starting is urgent.

13. Learning how to make ESL provision for Indigenous learners in pre-service teaching is prone to some of the weaknesses above as universities strive to cram mandated content especially into recently shortened courses which meet accreditation requirements. Pre-service courses are too short. Perhaps regrettably, this means ESL teaching specific to Indigenous needs should be mandated.

14. Especially if pre-service courses nationwide are to remain their current inadequate length, continuing registration to teach requirements should include appropriate ESL study (for example, at least 0.125 EFTSL unit within the first three years of registration).

15. ESL expertise is in short supply in universities and specialist university teaching for ESL tends to reside in a specialist subject. That is, ESL across the university teacher education curriculum is patchy as it is across government school curriculum statements and syllabuses.

16. Realistic opportunities for Indigenous teachers to develop specialist expertise in applied linguistics and teaching ESL are even more scarce than they are for non-Indigenous teachers.

17. Real TESL expertise, including the theoretical and research bases for practical strategies makes a genuine difference, even on standardised corporate testing results despite their overall inappropriateness.

18. The Queensland College of Teachers is in a very strong position to bring together teachers, employers, parent and Indigenous representation, teacher educators and educational researchers and government to sponsor significant improvements in the skills, understandings and values of pre-service and experienced teachers which will assist Indigenous Australian students to receive and appropriate education for life, employment and the forging of robust personal and collective identities.

ESL principles for Indigenous students

The following principles imply the acquisition of new skills, understandings and values for all participants in the practice of education. They are presented here to emphasise the central finding of the study — the widespread failure to recognise the value of ESL strategies for Indigenous learners. The emphasis must not be taken to mean that ESL strategies should be taught to pre-service or continuing teachers at the expense of other studies of Indigenous Australian history and culture and the impacts of Western colonisation. It demands a serious focus on teaching skills, understandings and values with direct application in classrooms.

This can be achieved and sustained through thoughtful, considerate and informed dialogue in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) committed to the principles of participation described for public spheres (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000, 2005). These communities of practice must not be distracted by the relatively easy task of cultural awareness, but must recognise that access to learning in and about all Australian curricula and school settings requires proficiency in Standard Australian English. Special training is needed to ensure that Indigenous students are guaranteed that access.

All educators — teachers, teacher-aides, principals, curriculum consultants, curriculum developers, teacher educators, educational researchers, system administrators, relevant ministers and governments must —

- recognise and value the importance to the Australian nation of Australian Indigenous cultures, identities, and languages, including all languages in use among Indigenous people today.

- recognise that almost all Indigenous learners will not be proficient in Standard Australian English and are entitled to teaching strategies based upon sound knowledge of English as a Second Language for Indigenous learners.

- recognise that all teachers of Indigenous students must learn and practice teaching strategies informed by the field of English as a Second Language for Indigenous learners.

- affirm the right of Indigenous communities and Indigenous parents to participate in decisions about the education of Indigenous young people, and to be informed enough to assist in making those decisions.

- understand and valorise the language landscape in the communities, families and support networks of Indigenous students — the relevant Indigenous languages, creoles and related varieties — and at the same time recognise that students must acquire proficiency in Standard Australian English by appropriate means to have access to school curricula (if not taught in students' first language) and mainstream services.

- understand the central role language socialisation plays in the development of literacies and numeracies — literacy is a set of social functions, practices and forms, not a hierarchy of skills based on units of written language.

- understand and heed how children acquire two or more languages in bilingual and multilingual environments.

- value and act to establish and nurture ties between the school staff and the Indigenous students' community — especially in multilingual settings — actively employing the language skills of Indigenous teachers and bilingual community members.

Next steps for the Queensland College of Teachers

It is recommended that the Queensland College of Teachers ensure that pre-service teacher education programs[11] provide all student teachers with the skills, understandings and values necessary to develop language awareness and teaching strategies appropriate for Indigenous learners, recognising that students' home languages typically do not include Standard Australian English. Program outcomes should be consistent with the *ESL Principles for Indigenous Students* above and should specifically include the following:

1. Understanding Indigenous language situations throughout Queensland — including the traditional languages, creoles and other varieties and their histories.
2. Recognising that at some time in teachers' careers Indigenous students will be in their classes.
3. Valuing the languages used by students when they are not conversing with teachers.
4. Recognising that many Indigenous students may appear to be using English when in fact they are using creoles or other language varieties, which mean that they are learning English as a foreign language.
5. Using appropriate strategies (for example, those described in the *Indigenous Bandscales*) to identify the language needs of Indigenous students so that ESL derived teaching strategies can be developed for them.
6. Using in practical teaching situations ESL teaching skills designed for Indigenous students derived from current and appropriate literature (for example *Making the Jump* or *Walking Talking Texts*).
7. Using ESL teaching skills designed for Indigenous students in all KLAs.
8. Using inclusive teaching practices for all students, not just Indigenous students.
9. Shunning deficit discourse which attributes any failure to learn to the student rather than the adequacy of educational provision.

The teacher education curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices must reflect these intended outcomes. In particular, it is necessary for teacher education faculty members to respond to these imperatives across the curriculum. Academic staff who do not have ESL backgrounds should consult with colleagues who have high level credentials to ensure that ESL principles are integrated, stated and observed through the teacher education curriculum. It is not sufficient that study of ESL for Indigenous students is limited to one subject or unit. In practical terms, for early childhood, primary and middle schooling courses of four year duration, the amount of specialised instruction focusing on ESL for Indigenous learners should be a

[11] The term 'program' refers to organised sequences of study such as Bachelor of Education, Master of Teaching, Diploma of Education and the like which lead to teacher registration.

minimum of one eighth of a full time year of study, plus clear evidence of integration across the teacher education curriculum.

The task of specification for one year postgraduate courses is difficult because almost all content is trivialised by short duration. It is clear that some Indigenous students confront language difficulties right into secondary schooling so Points 1-8 and the ESL Principles also need to be covered for secondary teachers. Equally important for them is acquiring the taste for further professional development.

Student teachers will more readily recognise the need for ESL strategies if they can spend time in schools with Indigenous students who are being taught by teachers using sound ESL strategies. Any current emphasis in teacher education programs on cultural awareness needs to be augmented with language awareness and Indigenous staff and visitors should be selected and advised that language is a key interest of the teacher education program. Collaboration among staff, visitors and any staff with ESL expertise is essential to ensure that ESL issues are not submerged by other discourses. Student teachers must be aware of the educational implications of Indigenous students' traditional languages, creoles and other language varieties in order to use appropriate teaching strategies.

As part of the accreditation process the QCT should ensure that the provision for ESL for Indigenous students in the pre-service teacher education program also creates a platform for masters level study and short term professional development relevant to continuing registration. Current requirements of teachers for continuing professional development are weak in duration and content. Opportunities and encouragement for teachers to undertake further study seem even weaker. These are so weak that there is little incentive for teacher education faculties to do collaborative research and develop programs tailored to teacher, system, student and community needs. The QCT should use its stakeholder base to launch a discussion aimed at improving opportunities and support (and later requirement) for teachers to participate in professional development of authentic theoretical and practical substance.

Next steps for teachers

Awareness of the relevance of ESL strategies for Indigenous students is growing. The *ESL principles for Indigenous students* summarise some new directions for teachers of Indigenous students and imply a number of significant changes in practice. What can teachers do themselves to develop their own skills, understandings and values — in order to improve their own professional practice? Keys to changing teaching practices to assist Indigenous learners appear below and are followed by a more comprehensive account of action research in the final section. These points summarise the way the teachers in this study changed their own practices together with their suggestions about how other teachers might change theirs.

Suppose one or two teachers are chatting in a staffroom about how things could be improved for the Indigenous students they are teaching. One has already taught in a school that does some interesting work with Indigenous parents, but both teachers want to work on their teaching, not start a community engagement program. The other teacher has noticed that the Indigenous parents who came to the school occasionally all spoke a language that was unintelligible, but sometimes sounded a bit like English. She realised their talk sounded like some of her students in the playground. So maybe the students' English could be an issue. What could they do together?

Actually, this dialogue means that the teachers have already started on a project — they should feel confident that changing teaching strategies will work — improving what they do can help the Indigenous students to learn. They should also realise that they have already made an important first step — they want to work together. So what advice is there from this project about the next steps to take?

1. Find out a bit more — does anyone in the school know what is happening to improve Indigenous education, using language as a starting point? Google? Library? System support services?

2. Discover who else might be interested — they know there is safety in numbers, teachers can learn from each other, and it is a bonus if the principal wants to be involved, to provide leadership, legitimation, resources, and to help pave the way with others. However, a small group of teachers can start and begin to make an impact.

3. Discuss the *ESL principles for Indigenous students* with colleagues who share your interest and concern. At this point participants can use these principles to stimulate thinking about changes in practice.

4. Find out more about the nature of the changes you might make, and their rationale. Two good places to start (for background at this stage) are the following references prepared for teachers and which provide very sound examples and advice about what to do are:

Berry, R. and Hudson, J. (1997). *Making the jump: A resource book for teachers of Aboriginal students*. Broome, Western Australia: Catholic Education Office, Kimberley Region.

Murray, F. (1995). *Walking talking texts: A program for teaching and learning English as a second language*. Darwin: Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training (for the Northern Territory Board of Studies).

A more comprehensive and current background account is:

Simpson, J. and Wigglesworth, G. (Eds.) (2008). *Children's language and multilingualism: Indigenous language use at home and school.* London: Continuum.

5. Find out more about your students — a very good way is to record the conversations of your students and listen carefully to the way they speak. You will learn more if you transcribe what they are saying. This is a very important strategy to show how teachers gloss over the actual language students are using. It has provided a moment of enlightenment for many teachers of Indigenous students. It is important to think about the framework within which all this fits. You need to read about *Bandscales*.

Education Queensland (2008). *Bandscales for ESL Learners*. Brisbane: Queensland Government.

6. By this stage you may feel like trying some things out in your practice. For example, you might try to get students to use more oral language in the classroom — applying the idea that 'if you can't say it, you can't write it'. Or you may simply change your own ways of questioning students, applying a well-known idea from ESL teaching explained by an Indigenous teacher this way:

   If you ask, 'What does 6 plus 8 equal? By the time you get to the end of it, all they remember is 'equal'. So you say 6 [pause], 8 [pause], how much together? They have in their mind the number concept first. Little things like that help. They need to be taught to teachers.

   Another similar example… you should say [holding up a cup] 'This cup … what colour is it?' If you say, 'What colour is this cup?' they will have forgotten what you asked! Only teachers who are ESL savvy know this….

   Another alternative might be to try a sequence of strategies from *Walking Talking Texts*, for example.

   Trying things out usually does no harm, and indeed can be an opportunity to learn. However, teachers who have tried a few strategies like this in this field later say that they did not really understand what they were doing, and needed more formal and expert training.

7. You will probably realise by now that there is much more to using ESL strategies for Indigenous students than incorporating a few 'tips for teachers' into your repertoire. As the references we have suggested indicate, and teachers who have used them confirm, there is a need to reconsider the whole rationale for language in the classroom and school and to be more systematic about changing teaching practices. You will need

help to bring about the necessary changes in skills, understandings and values, and in the situation which frames your classroom practices. Where can you get the expert help you need? That will depend a little on the system in which you work. There are three main kinds of stimulus and support — enrolling in a university unit based upon the resources mentioned; participating in a professional development workshop over a few days; and embarking on an 'adopt a school' program where an appropriately trained staff member from a support unit or university spends time in the school demonstrating, coaching, observing, mentoring and supporting teachers as they change their practices. Doing all of these is best, but whatever choice is made, it is important to recognise that extended help over time will be necessary.[12]

8. Remember that there is plenty to learn because the need is substantial. There is ample evidence that Indigenous students are missing out. Standard Australian English is the gateway to the entire curriculum — you can prise it open for Indigenous students in three ways (i) recognise that Standard Australian English is a foreign language for them, (ii) learn teaching strategies and their rationale derived from TESL and use them systematically in your teaching, and (iii) help your colleagues to work with you to access expertise to improve consistency across Indigenous students' learning experiences.

Next steps for education — participatory action research (PAR)

In this section we describe some features of participatory action research which would provide a framework and practical advice for the next steps in developing the ESL practices for Indigenous learners. They provide a theoretically informed basis for relationships which need to be developed among participants, institutions and other stakeholders. Some of these features exist in the work of FNQ ISSU, but there is a need to consolidate method and content now to address the next phases of change in more comprehensive ways. These will allow what is now essentially educators' knowledge of practice to stimulate others and to become public knowledge.

Participation in PAR

Participatory action research (PAR) is more than a research methodology (Carr, 2006). It brings people together to reflect and act on their own social and educational practices in disciplined ways to make them more coherent, just, rational, informed, satisfying and sustainable. This commitment means that PAR involves distinctive ideas about participation, about how to change educational practice, and about the research approaches which inform these activities as they proceed.

What brings people together? PAR involves groups of people working together on a 'thematic concern' (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988; Carr and Kemmis, 1986) arising in their practice. In the project described in the preceding pages, educators were concerned about the achievement of Indigenous students. With help and advice from FNQ ISSU, the concern focused on the needs of Indigenous students as learners of English as a Second Language. The educators (and in some cases parents) joined with ISSU staff to form 'groups' such as whole schools or more loosely structured networks of interest. This tendency is typical in PAR — Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) described 'public spheres' where people gather to develop shared understandings about issues they confront and how to address them. As in this case, it is not usually research per se that engages people, but working together, changing their practice in informed and responsible ways, developing concepts for discussing their work and collaborating differently with colleagues. The formation of public spheres creates the possibility that knowledge and action are nurtured together to have validity and legitimacy in the eyes of participants, and also among others. This defines the importance of participation in Participatory Action Research. What then is the nature of participation which characterises public spheres?

We now consider *Public spheres in practice* (Figure 1), and present in the left column the key features of public spheres and in the right column an analysis of the case presented with a view to moving into the next phase. Note that the statements are about futures; they are not intended

[12] Staff from the Indigenous Schooling Support Units (especially in Far North Queensland) have provided a wide range of such help for Education Queensland. Fran Murray from the Catholic Education Office in Darwin and author of *Walking Talking Texts* has also worked in Queensland.

as judgments about the work done by FNQ ISSU so far. They are suggestions about next steps, eventually to provide resources for an emergent community of practice informed by concepts from the PAR literature.

Figure 1: Public spheres in practice

Ten key features of public spheres	ESL for Indigenous learners
1. Actual networks of communication among participants: There is not just one public sphere. In reality there are many public spheres, constituted as actual networks of communication among actual participants.	Emergent networks exist even across state boundaries. Some networking occurs among teachers, though foci around the themes discussed here are not clear. Are they functioning as public spheres with a strong sense of communicative action? Levels of interaction are constrained by lack of time, lack of resources, and modest institutional recognition (though the material support of institutions is not a necessary requirement, it can help).
2. Self-constituted: voluntary and autonomous: That is, they are outside (often marginal or peripheral to) formal systems (like the formal administrative systems of the state) and systems of influence that mediate between civil society and the state. On another scale, they might be teachers, parents, environmentalists, university teacher educators, working together on community sustainability issues. Public spheres are constituted by people who want to explore a particular problem or issue — that is, around a particular *theme* for discussion. Thus, communicative spaces or networks organised as part of the communicative apparatus of the economic or administrative sub-systems of government or business would *not* normally qualify as public spheres.	There is a blurring between the institutionalisation of Indigenous education and the professional development available to people. A strong sense of voluntarism is evident and it is not clear what the views of other teachers are, aside from cautions from the teachers interviewed that others have not and perhaps will not accomplish the 'paradigm shift' to 'language awareness'. Other issues relating to inclusivity concern staff and whole schools (primary and secondary) not yet participating and who remain unaware, have not volunteered, or are declining the opportunity to participate.

3. Come into existence because of legitimation deficits: That is, public spheres are created because potential participants share a view that there are doubts, concerns, problems or unresolved issues about the legitimacy of laws, policies, practices, plans or perspectives.	The proto networks are clearly in existence because educators (and some parents, perhaps even an informed public) have been conscious of the lower performance of Indigenous students. A key task is creating awareness of the issues so that other educators recognise that the ideas which drive practices describes here make their own practice problematic — creating legitimation deficits in their minds too.
4. Constituted for communicative action and public discourse: This includes not only face-to-face communication but also communications between participants who are unknown to one another or anonymous from the perspective of any one individual. Public discourse has a similar orientation to communicative action: it aims towards mutual understanding and unforced consensus about what to do. Thus, communicative spaces organised for essentially instrumental or functional purposes — to command, to influence, to exercise control over things – would *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres.	Some of this terminology is difficult (but readily explained in the references given). The main point is that the participants in the study have been committed to work out ways of improving their teaching. Nevertheless, there are two dangers, being swept up in advocacy (doing things because a whole school insists — forced consensus) and failing to develop a collective sense about what would be worth trying together, and what a collective agrees is a reasonable thing for an individual to do. These commitments are still ahead for many schools.
5. Inclusive and permeable: To the extent that communication between participants is *exclusive*, doubt arises about whether it is in fact a 'public' sphere. Public spheres are attempts to create communicative spaces that include not only the parties most obviously interested in and affected by decisions, but also people and groups peripheral or marginal to (or routinely excluded from) discussion in relation to the topics around which they form. Thus, essentially private or privileged groups, organisations and communicative networks do *not* qualify as public spheres.	It is not clear how inclusive and permeable the activities of participants are in their school settings. Schools may confront high staff turnover, and this creates an enormous task to bring newcomers into the shared understandings, which must be renegotiated annually so that a new and shared consensus can emerge. The danger is that as less willing schools and participants are drawn into the picture, naming (and participant practices which invite it) such as 'insiders', 'outsiders, 'the originals' or 'the ESL lot', cause people to be isolated and insulated from ideas and critique.
6. Communicate in ordinary language: As part of their inclusive character, public spheres tend to involve communication in *ordinary language*. Public spheres frequently seek to break down the barriers and hierarchies formed by the use of specialist discourses and the modes of address characteristic of bureaucracies that presume a ranking of the importance of speakers and what they say in terms of their positional authority (or lack of it). Public spheres also tend to have only the weakest of distinctions between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (they have relatively permeable boundaries), and between people who are relatively disinterested and those whose (self-) interests are significantly affected by the topics under discussion. Thus, the communicative apparatuses of many government and business organisations, and organisations that rely for their operations on the specialist expertise of some participants do *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres.	The FNQ ISSU has been careful not to import the complexities of linguistics and particular Indigenous languages into discussion with educators. There has been deference to the expertise of certain people (and authoritative texts), but this seemed consistent with the willingness to learn. There are perennial tensions about academic language and teacher language and they were manifest in this study too. This is not a simple dichotomy, and it may be a serious distraction. The ease with which bureaucratic discourse slips into people's lives is one issue, another is that some people are not talking about NAPLAN, for example. What passes as 'PD' is still another. Schools have called in 'specialist expertise' to their students' advantage, but we can ask whether teachers now have the skills, understandings and values to create conditions to learn from each other and to help other teachers learn from their experience — to question inadequate practice for example.

7. Presuppose communicative freedom: In public spheres, participants are free to occupy (or not occupy) the particular discursive roles of speaker, listener and observer, and they are free to withdraw from the communicative space of the discussion. Participation and non-participation are voluntary. Thus, communicative spaces and networks generally characterised by obligations or duties to lead, follow, direct, obey, remain silent or remain outside the group could *not* be characterised as public spheres.	The shared membership of participants in the proto public sphere of those interested in ESL for Indigenous learners and schools and other organisational units makes this a tricky principle to consider. Of course, people live through these ambiguities daily. Nevertheless it was recognised that there was some space where reputation and status in the school (or FNQ ISSU) or elsewhere could be set aside to talk about teaching or listen and learn about English for Indigenous students in informed and reasonable ways. Despite whole school *involvement*, the nature of individual *participation* was a choice. Expansion of activities will require a stronger educative and leadership stance than has been necessary so far.
8. Generate communicative power: Public spheres create the possibility that communication networks constituted for public discourse will generate *communicative power* – that is, that the positions and viewpoints developed through discussion will command the respect of participants (not by virtue of obligation, but by intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding and unforced consensus about what to do – in other words, by the force of argument alone). Communication in public spheres thus creates *legitimacy* in the strongest sense – the shared belief among participants that they can and do freely and authentically consent to the decisions, positions or viewpoints arrived at through their own participation in public discourse. Thus, systems of command or influence, where decisions are formed on the basis of obedience or self-interests would *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres.	Keeping the points mentioned immediately above in mind, it is worth recognising that schools and systems, groups and networks all generate their own discourses and cultures. These not only dictate 'what goes without saying' but valorise or devalue ways in which things can be said, or the people who might say them. The conditions for reflection on practice must be created with commitment to the idea of the public sphere, and these conditions must for example nurture bad news as well as good — this might include for example, the frightful failure of ESL strategies, in a situation. It is difficult to know how well this was accomplished, but the conditions for legitimacy can be most difficult when an innovation is in its proselytical phase. Only when the theme of the public sphere is settling and its record of achievements begins can the principles for achieving legitimacy be worked out as a social practice.
9. Indirect impact on social systems: Public spheres do not affect social systems (like government and administration) directly; their impact on systems is more *indirect*, and mediated through systems of *influence* (like voluntary groups and associations in civil society). Thus, the media and political parties would *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres.	Already we see ESL for Indigenous Learners exerting direct and indirect effects. Influence on the Queensland College of Teachers is already a direct effect, leading to the current study. Indirect effects are mostly via a growing reputation — schools are seeking out Bandscales training, for example. It is important that both kinds of influence are kept in balance. Reputation is more difficult to maintain when emphasis shifts towards making current practices problematic and away from being a solution to deeply felt problems. An institutional practice such as QCT stipulation that more and appropriate ESL training should occur in pre-service teacher education can undermine efforts if informal communications among networks are not consistent with the initial rationale for the stipulation.

10. Often associated with social movements: Public spheres frequently arise in practice through (or in relation to) the communication networks associated with *social movements* – that is, where voluntary groupings of participants arise in response to a legitimation-deficit, or a shared sense that there is a social problem has arisen and needs to be addressed. It is nevertheless the case that the public spheres created by some organisations (like Amnesty International, perhaps) can be long-standing and well-organised, and that they can involve notions of (paid) membership and shared objectives. On the other hand, many organisations (like political parties and interest-groups) do not ordinarily qualify as public spheres for reasons already outlined in relation to other items on this list, as well as because they are part of the *social order* rather than social movements.	There are undoubtedly experienced networks of educators and others concerned about Indigenous education. An important but tricky task is to maintain links with that general movement but not be swamped by its diversity or its contrary and competing arguments and advocacies (such as 'It is all about more Indigenous teachers', 'school morale', 'positive identity'). The difficulty is how to sustain an 'ESL for Indigenous learners movement', juggle some apparently necessary institutionalisation — including university competition for Master of Education students, and develop a sustainable set of relationships with complementary groups of the larger movement. This calls for balance among the research role ('the extension of the critical theorems'), the educational role ('the organisation of enlightenment'), and the advocacy and changing practice roles ('the conduct of the political struggle') for which the public sphere is constituted (McTaggart and Curro, in press; Habermas, 1974, 1996).

Research perspectives in PAR

Participatory action research is fundamentally a 'practice changing practice' (Kemmis, 2009 forthcoming, 2008, October). Its research perspective is different from other kinds of research for that reason. All conventional kinds of research can be described using two dimensions:

i. the *individual-social* dimension: does the research focus on individuals or groups of people?

ii. the *objective-subjective* dimension: does the research focus on the behaviour of the participants(s) or on their own interpretations, emotions and intentions?

This allows for four kinds of research: individual-objective, individual-subjective, social-objective, and the social-subjective. We can immediately see that thinking about educational practice might involve any or all of these things. A practice is made and remade daily based up upon many observations. Consider these examples:

1. A particular child spends a third of his time looking out the window (*individual-objective*).
2. His teacher asked him why he was not paying attention and he says 'Watchin' my brother out there' (*individual-subjective*).
3. The teacher counts the number of children working quietly at five minute intervals and notes that it decreases as the food smells waft in (*social-objective*).
4. The teacher asks them why they are stopping work and they reply 'We all think it is boring here' (*social-subjective*), incidentally showing that they feel something different from being hungry.
5. If the teacher wants to improve his teaching he needs a way to think about all four of these aspects of practice together, and not just to figure out what is going on, but to develop a plan to change what he is doing. It is in this fifth space, considering together the individual, social, objective and subjective realms in order to act differently, that the fifth approach to research to change practice — action research — is conceived.

We can show the different perspectives in more detail to illustrate the ways in which a teacher might take a research stance in a classroom. Suppose a teacher arrives in a classroom in a Torres Strait school where there are many Indigenous young people whose first language is not English. She notices most students speak a little English, but finds them quite voluble in their own language. She knows some Indigenous history, is enthusiastic about reconciliation and is committed to ensuring that she does not repeat the ethnocentric sins of the past. She knows there are Indigenous teachers in the school, but wants to make a start so that she does not

place a burden on her colleagues or community members without trying ideas she has picked up during her teacher education course and her induction to the school and community.

She organises her Grade Three by putting students in their own language groups to help each other to develop a short talk to the class in English about a favourite activity they participated in recently, in school or in the community. The work will extend for about 45 minutes per day for a few days, allowing time for one or two small group presentations and preparation each day. The students turn out to be bit restless and she does some monitoring to see what is happening. She could try five different things, each of which illustrates a different perspective on her educational practice. We will give these perspectives formal names as we go, and explain in more detail shortly. This is what she does:

1. *The individual-objective perspective*: She chooses one boy who seems to be a ring leader and counts the disruptions he causes during several sessions during the day, including the favourite activity session. It becomes clear that his disruptions occur most when he is expected to listen, and quite rarely when he is in a group of two or three students. What has she learned from this perspective? There is some relationship between certain activities and disruptions. By focusing on one student, and counting an aspect of behaviour the she has taken here is the *individual-objective* perspective. Two basic options are open (i) look for more patterns in the behaviour of other students (the *social-objective* perspective), or (ii) interview the boy to find out what he is thinking about in different sessions, making sure not to put words in his mouth (the *individual-subjective* perspective),

2. *The individual-subjective perspective*: She decides not to interview the boy herself but gets some help from someone whom he respects and who speaks his first language. This would almost certainly reveal more about his interpretation of what is happening, his feelings and intentions and the underlying circumstances for his behaviour.

3. *The social-objective perspective*: If she elected to take this point of view she would be looking at the patterns of behaviour of several, perhaps all, children during different sessions to see if there were some general strategies she might use overall to improve students behaviour — increasing her direct supervision of groups, making instructions clearer and so on. Note that this strategy takes no heed of the intentions of the students or the meanings shaping the ways they are acting in the classroom.

4. *The social-subjective perspective*: Using this point of view she would interview students or conduct focus groups so that she could understand how students were constructing the culture of the classroom — discovering in their terms the views they shared about what is happening to them and how they are acting as a group in response. Views such as 'We are bored Miss'; 'We only like it when we are allowed to talk in our own language…' 'We enjoy it when we work in groups except when we are in the same group as …., or doing things <u>he</u> likes'. These are credible examples, but it is through the subjective approaches (2. and 4.) that students can surprise the teacher. In these two approaches it is the meanings students make of the situation which are discovered. In the objective approaches (1. and 3.) it is the teacher's interpretations which come into play — ignoring the views of the students and the intentions which frame their behaviour.

5. *The socially critical perspective*: Here she would try to understand the history of relationships between students and teachers, between the school and community, and between the community's and parents aspirations for education and the practices which had been forged in the school in the past. A history of racism might, for example, provoke self-defeating behaviours which are collectively seen by students' older siblings as 'solidarity', 'resistance' or 'brotherhood'. This would give the teacher a pedagogical task which could extend beyond her individual capacities and invite school-wide re-examination of relationships with Indigenous parents or the community.

We now move from the example to revisit the same ideas about research perspectives using a more formal discourse. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000, 2005) provided a framework potentially

useful with examples like this — changing pedagogical practice to meet the needs and draw on the strengths of second language learners. 'Practice' can be viewed in several ways as:

1. the individual performances, events and effects which constitute practice as it is viewed from the "objective", external perspective of an outsider (how the practitioner's individual behaviour appears to an outside observer — *individual-objective*);

2. the intentions, meanings and values which constitute practice as it is viewed from the "subjective", internal perspective of individual practitioners themselves (the way individual practitioners' intentional actions appear to them as individual cognitive subjects — *individual-subjective*);

3. the wider social and material conditions and interactions which constitute practice as it is viewed from the "objective", external perspective of an outsider (how the patterns of social interaction among those involved in the practice appear to an outside observer — *social-objective*);

4. the language, discourses and traditions which constitute practice as it is viewed from the "subjective", internal social perspective of members of the participants' own discourse community who must represent (describe, interpret, evaluate) practices in order to talk about and develop them, as happens, for example, in the discourse communities of professions (how the language of practice appears to communities of practitioners as they represent their practices to themselves and others — *social-subjective*); and

5. the change and evolution of practice, taking into account all four of the aspects of practice just mentioned, which comes into view when it is understood as reflexively restructured and transformed over time, in its historical dimension.

The first four of these perspectives on practice lead to familiar research approaches and techniques (See Figure 2). Our interest is the fifth perspective which creates challenges by being more than a research approach — reconstitution of practice through informed human agency. The goal is the immediate and continuing betterment of practice rather than merely being informed about practice. Because changing practice is the focus, we must put ourselves into the workplace and consider what kinds of information we and others might need. We need to take into account not just what people might think about the current situation, but how they might respond if we begin to initiate changes. This requires an understanding of individual views and shared social understandings. Even objectively established facts such as the number of students who speak languages other than English in a class will involve different subjective reactions. The individual, social, objective and subjective perspectives in the situation must be taken into account, if we are to do something.

Figure 2: Views of practice and the research approaches they imply

Focus: **Perspective:**	**The individual**	**The social**	**Both: Reflexive-dialectical view of individual-social relations and connections**
Objective	(1) *Practice as individual behaviour:* Quantitative, correlational-experimental methods. Psychometric and observational techniques, tests, interaction schedules.	(2) *Practice as social and systems behaviour:* Quantitative, correlational-experimental methods. Observational techniques, sociometrics, systems analysis, social ecology.	
Subjective	(3) *Practice as intentional action:* Qualitative, interpretive methods. Clinical analysis, interview, questionnaire, diaries, journals, self-report, introspection	(4) *Practice as socially-structured, shaped by discourses and tradition:* Qualitative, interpretive, historical methods. Discourse analysis, document analysis.	
Both: Reflexive-dialectical view of subjective-objective relations and connections			(5) *Practice as socially- and historically-constituted, and as reconstituted by human agency and social action:* Critical methods. Dialectical analysis — reflexively combining multiple methods — participatory action research.

In one sense, the fifth perspective takes an 'aerial view' of the four other approaches, and instead of fragmenting into each of the four respective specialisations of 'method' it considers them together. Even though participants do not talk about their work in schools with FNQ ISSU in their interviews, there were elements of it in their work. They were thinking about their practice with a view to changing it; they refused to believe that Indigenous students could not learn; they understood that ethnocentrism underpinned such judgments; they observed students (including students' work) and talked with students about how they were getting on (sometimes deliberately following Indigenous ways of doing this (Grant, 2006)); and they wanted to overcome in their teaching the distortions in thinking and aberrations in practice caused by racism.

Alert readers might recognise that this study itself, a 'naturalistic case study', overlaps Perspectives 4 and 5, but does not fully qualify as Perspective 5. Despite its orientation to informing practice, it is not about the practice of the authors, but instead documents the views and practices of others.

Perspective 5 engages the kinds of questions each perspective addresses, but in a somewhat different way. It does not anticipate the distillation of a study of the situation (like this case study) but instead concentrates on changing participants' understandings, their practices, and the situation in which these are constituted. Each of these, understanding, practice and the situation have been formed in particular historical, material and political settings and it is theoretical insight from critical social science which helps to guide reflection and action.

Concepts of practice

The next step in thinking about participatory action research is to focus more directly on the nature of a social practice. There are many conceptualisations of the idea of a practice and the one we suggest here is intended to draw attention to the kinds of activities which change, and typically must change if a practice like education is to be changed.

The complexity of this discussion might come as a surprise to people who think of action research as an individual teacher trying to improve his or her own teaching — using the traditional plan, act, observe, reflect cycle to reformulate plans and action and proceeding through a series of cycles, becoming a spiral of changing practice, understanding and the situation in which the practice occurs. This is of course a very good thing to be doing, but it understates what is happening. Current teaching is both enabled and constrained by many

features which permeate classroom life. These features all help to constitute educational practice, but we are not always aware of them simply because teaching is a very complicated activity which requires us to think, act and make judgments almost by habit much of the time.

We can easily see how increasing language awareness and beginning to use TESL strategies brings several features into practice. For example, teachers have said that their own *understanding* of English grammar needs sharpening up. They need new *skills* to spend more time on students' oral use of Standard Australian English, and often have had to adjust their *values* in seeing the importance of creoles and other language varieties which had seemed to them to sound like 'bad English'. The teachers began changing the way *communication* occurred in their classrooms and with other teachers. Their actual work (or *production*) was changing and the *social organisation* which framed relationships with students and with other teachers needed to be changed to. School and community *culture* prefigures what counts as teaching, and the economy of the school, material and political, shapes just how much time is available to innovate and for teachers to talk with each other, for example. The external resource of 'adopt a school' helped the teachers immensely, but what happens when the external stimulus stops, and new teachers arrive? How do the *politics* of the school and system enable and constrain the movement of the most innovative teachers to different levels of the school? We have shown how the *language (discourses)* of the national Indigenous education debate swamp thinking about ESL for Indigenous students — how can the school engage its community with ESL ideas against this tide of public opinion? How is the legitimacy of teachers' work as a source of knowledge to be validated to other educators and in the public domain (or is public knowledge to come only from NAPLAN)? How can teachers, principals, teacher educators and others involved in professional development make use of the *power* (and legitimate authority) they have to influence the direction of Indigenous education in the direction they are urging?

These italicised concepts come from Kemmis and McTaggart (2000, 2005) and should provide ways of thinking about practice more comprehensively by providing a language to do that. This is necessary for educators who have a sophisticated *language **of** practice* (for example, curriculum, assessment, group work, home work, timetable, discipline, pupil-free day) but when taking a reflective or research stance to their work need to develop a *language **about** practice*. We have already begun to do that often during the study by referring to changes in the knowledge domain of practice as occurring in skills, understandings and values. As the preceding paragraph shows, a practice with the scope of education obviously involves more than teachers' knowledge because it embraces ideas like school culture, shared understandings about teaching in a particular school, the language and other media which represent the commonplaces of schools and systems, the politics of education and so on. For example, how can we describe the tensions between teachers who are advocates for ESL approaches and other teachers in the school who think that advocacy is just indulging the whims of a few outspoken parents without invoking the concept of politics?

These concepts of practice are summarised in Figure 3 *Change in the domain of practice*. The figure is a summary of ideas developed in some detail in Kemmis and McTaggart (2000, 2005) to show the extended idea of educational practice. We will explain the concepts in more detail as we proceed, but begin with the general architecture of the idea of practice. The discussion following the table will help to explain why that scope is important. In short, practices are more than complex. All of the aspects of practice interact with each other so it is very difficult to change one aspect, teacher skills for example, without considering other aspects at the same time. From a research perspective, this means that PAR must employ research methods which tap into information in a broad realm of educational activity. This might range from teachers observing each other teach (and perhaps using video as an aid to self-reflection and critique to understand just what is changing) right through to historical policy analysis which lets the teachers see how it is that they came to be in the situation they find themselves in. In turn, they would consider what policy changes (at the school level for example) might facilitate the changes in teaching they seek. The crucial message is that bringing about change requires attention to the manifoldness of practice. Small changes in one aspect may produce (or require) major changes elsewhere. The well known 'butterfly effect' of chaos theory is a helpful analogy (Gleick, 1988). However, it is important to understand that PAR is an approach which seeks to anticipate events so that deliberate change can be understood and understanding acted upon as change unfolds.

Figure 3: Change in the domains of practice

INDIVIDUAL (subjectivity)	***Knowledge***		
	Understandings	Skills	Values
	Social Practices		
	Communication	Production	Social Organisation
SOCIAL (structure, ideology)	***Social Structures***		
	Culture	Economy	Political life
	Social Media		
	Language (discourses)	Work	Power

Using Figure 3 we can describe more formally the ways in which social practices are constructed and contextualised. We can identify several domains of practice in the following way. We conceptualise the domains of practice at the individual level in terms of knowledge and social practices, and at the social level in terms of social structures and social media. As individuals embark on a change in practice (beginning at the top of Figure 3) their state of knowledge will change as they develop new *understandings* from their reading and dialogue with others. They will acquire new *skills*, and it is likely also that their *values* will change as they learn. Changes in their own social practices will be constituted through new ways of *communication* within the practice (with their students) and about the practice (with students, colleagues and others). Their practices of *production* (teaching, curriculum development, assessment) will change, as will patterns of *organisation* (relationships with students, parents and others). What is achieved will be a function of the social structures in place. The *culture* of the school, school system, classroom and staffroom will provide both opportunities and constraint for change, but will also be amenable to change itself, perhaps necessarily if changes are to be effected and embedded. The *economy* of the setting will respond similarly — how resources are distributed and how people spend their time and emotional energy will be key influences on what can be accomplished. Changes in political economy of information production and distribution (who gets to know what about whom) will exert an impact here too. In turn, these will engage current and possible forms of *political life*. Participants come to these structures as sedimented practices, but they are not fixed and can be changed to effect educational change. The social media of *language*, *economy* and *political life* (sayings, doings, relatings) are the ways in which changes in professional practice find expression. New ways of thinking and saying things about practice will be associated with changed ways of working. These in turn are linked with emerging forms of relationship that signify the possibility of more satisfying and sustainable forms of educational life.

This array of concepts is all rather complex when presented in this way, but if we take the perspective of a practitioner of any one of the education professions — teacher, principal, teacher educator, professional development adviser, monitoring changes in practice can be thought about first at the individual level. See Figure 4 *Monitoring changes in my own practice* and its expansion in Figures 5-8. Of course it is difficult to claim that one is doing educational research by oneself, all research depends on a community of enquirers who come to agree on subject matters, methods, discourses, and the way the discipline of the field is applied. Public spheres share some of these characteristics, but are also quite different because they are

established around the felt concerns of individuals so that each can learn to act different in their own contexts.

Doing research in action research

Figure 4 *Monitoring changes in my own practice* provides the architecture and first steps for enquiry into practice. It clearly suggests some quite common methods of collecting information — interviewing, anecdotal records, field notes, ecological behavioural description, document analysis, diaries, logs, item sampling cards, portfolios, sociograms, interaction schedules and checklists, audio-recording video-recording, photographs and slides, and tests of performance of various kinds (see Wadsworth, 1984; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). The common principle applies: using several different kinds of information, and different points of view, referred to as triangulation, strengthens the validity and legitimacy of the study. It can help if there is overlap between people using different techniques. That is, if participants are to be interviewed and worksites observed, at least some people should collect both kinds of information. However, it is important that participants are not overwhelmed by data collection. Often modest amounts accompanied by careful analysis and thought are most instructive. The most important commitment is not slavish replication of research techniques borrowed from other fields, but rather working with informed colleagues (including protagonists) sometimes to focus on the practice of changing with as much information as can be reasonably mustered for discussion.

It is important to think about personal change as Table 4 shows, but it is the relationships among ideas and people which are most important. Participants think through new information and interpretations such as the realisation that some current teaching strategies are no longer appropriate for students, and plan new approaches with people who are informed enough suggest what to try. The research only begins when the public sphere participants start to interact on matters of substance — by creating conversations about how to work differently together and in their own work contexts.

Figure 4: Monitoring changes in my own practice

INDIVIDUAL (subjectivity)	**Knowledge**		
	Understandings: What am I learning so far?	Skills: What extra things am I doing now?	Values: How is what I am valuing changing?
	Social Practices		
	Communication: How am I speaking about work with colleagues now?	Production: How am I working with my colleagues and others differently now?	Organisation: How am I relating to people now?
SOCIAL (structure, ideology)	**Social Structures**		
	Culture: How is what goes without saying affecting us?	Economy: How is use of time and other resources changing?	Political life: How are shifts in *real politik* affecting us and others?
	Social Media		
	Language: How are <u>we</u> speaking in and about work now?	Work: What are <u>we</u> doing differently now?	Power: How are <u>we</u> and others relating now?

Monitoring changes in TESL practice

Suppose we take the examples of practice we have described and suggest ways of monitoring what is going on. In other words, we will use Figure 4 but expand each cell with some further exploration of the content of each, and some thoughts about data. We will use the teachers' practice as the point of entry for illustration, but keep in mind that we might just as easily use the practice of anyone with an interest in the thematic concern — ESL for Indigenous learners. We will take each row of Figure 4 separately, and simplify it a little to focus attention on the content

rather than the theoretical concepts that create the structure of the table. The purpose of this task is to provide advice about the kinds of changes in practice someone conducting a participatory action research project should monitor. Its more general use is to provide some ideas about key things to keep in mind while changing a practice. The table asks what is happening at a particular moment in time — what has been happening up to now? If someone uses the table to monitor a PAR project, entries will be made periodically over time, and not necessarily every cell every time. This would be like a structured log or diary.

As we do this, you will see that we are monitoring changes in practices, the kind of changes which are being planned as a teacher tries out some ESL ideas in practice. The Figures require that the teacher is not working alone, so what we are doing is demonstrating how to conduct participatory action research, using a comprehensive idea of practice.

Features of ESL practice which teachers identified earlier will be in our minds as we go. They were:

- Awareness that students are learning English as a foreign language
- Emphasis on extensive oral work building from the one text
- Use of the chosen text to provide context for development of vocabulary and knowledge of grammar and the way it is used to achieve meaning
- Explicit teaching of phonology and grammar in the context of an appealing text — no mindless recitation approach to phonics
- Following the Walking Talking Text strategies in logical sequence
- Use of the chosen text and context and the knowledge built up around it to branch out to other texts — keeping them in context too as the scope broadens.

The subject matter in each of the Figures is based upon the interviews with teachers, principals and other educators. This is augmented by information from the literatures of TESL, innovation and participatory action research. To save space the abbreviations WTT, MTJ, and BS are used for *Walking Talking Texts*, *Making the Jump*, and *Indigenous Bandscales*. The entries in each cell are designed to suggest, not prescribe or exhaust ways of using, gathering and recording information as ESL ideas are tried out in practice. Note that to change patterns of information collection, use and distribution raises ethical and political issues. There is good reason to ensure that some principles of procedure are agreed among participants. An example is provided in Appendix C using Kemmis and McTaggart (1980, 1988). This example may require adaptation (including simplification) for use in different situations.

Let us now see how we think about changes in practice using the ideas of action research. As you work through Figures 5 to 8, it should be possible to imagine yourself as a teacher in a classroom working through the same concepts. Many of the changes described could be occurring simultaneously or in a different sequence, but while you are learning it makes sense to think about changes at the individual level first. However, it will soon become obvious that individual change may be enabled or constrained by the other domains. For example, a system dominated by discourses of testing, competition among schools, and use of these as an approach to accountability, will probably suggest individual strategies in the classroom need careful consideration with colleagues and parents to ensure informed support. Remember as you read to think about questions you might anticipate in your own situation as you bring about changes in your practice — as you conduct your own participatory action research project.

Figure 5: Changing knowledge

Knowledge		
Understandings: What am I learning so far? What have I learned from (i) WTT, MTJ, BS or other readings about Indigenous languages and ESL? (ii) using BS ideas to record and study some students' language? (iii) colleagues or others with expertise who have been trying ESL strategies? (iv) students now I think about them as ESL learners?	**Skills:** What extra things am I doing now? What new ideas about ESL have I tried out in practice? When I tried to do more oral work in SAE with students (i) how did I sustain class attention? (ii) how did I improve group work to give individuals more time to use SAE? (iii) what new activities did I use to emphasise distinctions between home language and SAE?	**Values:** How is what I am valuing changing? How am I ensuring that I treat SAE and home language(s) respectfully? Which aspects of my teaching do I now feel are engaging Indigenous students? How are the strategies from WTT making me feel about myself as a professional teacher? How am I developing ideas so I can stand up for Indigenous students when others say they are not learning?
Data Collection		
Note taking about readings; Audio-recording of student talk Diary notes, chats with students; Notes/minutes of meetings, formal and informal annotations of work programs.	Audio or video-recording of small segment of class activity; Notes provided by colleague/observer; Own reflective diary notes, sketches diagrams; Student feedback.	Reflective diary notes including comments from colleagues, parents and others; Student feedback, especially their views about what they believe they are learning, perhaps collected informally.

Figure 6: Changing social practices

Social Practices		
Communication: How am I speaking about work with colleagues now? How am I using concepts from ESL in our conversations? How am I describing (not judging) what students are learning (avoiding 'It went well', 'She went well')? How am I talking about WTT strategies/activities with colleagues? What am I comparing with colleagues about how students are changing? How am I/we informing school leaders of levels, of KLAs, — so they can help?	**Production:** How am I working with my colleagues and others differently now? How am I participating as we help each other (i) exchanging ESL ideas and resources? (ii) observing each other teach? (iii) sharing information about students' responsiveness? (iv) preparing information for parents? (v) seeking feedback from parents? (vi) involving parents with language knowledge? (vii) involving other teachers — explaining to them how and why ESL WTT works, and might work for them? **What are the students learning? How are student learning practices developing?**	**Organisation:** How am I relating to people now? What am I doing to initiate and sustain the sense of a collective project with colleagues, parents, and students? Have we organised time to meet, set agenda items about ESL, and are we milking more out of WTT? When will I do it? How are relationships with students developing — more about content and less about management? Are students relating more easily to you and to their work? How are they working better together?
Data Collection		
Reflective diary, notes of meetings; asking colleagues if they know what is going on… seeking consensus or issues — writing a paragraph for a meeting.	Staff room noticeboards — volunteering help, requesting help. Agenda/minutes for parent meetings. Agreeing to share interesting outcome from classroom/peer observation; Student assessment data.	Recording nature, severity, frequency of disruptive behaviour and the causal lead-up (using simple data table…). Estimate morale of your close collaborators — enthusiasm about ESL in the staffroom. Study conversations for richness of content.

Figure 7: Changing social structures

Social Structures		
Culture: How is 'what goes without saying' affecting us? How do the registers of culture — usual ways of talking, wielding of influence, distribution of effort — illustrate the promotion of achievement, justice and compassion for all students and teachers? How do the hidden message systems of the school undermine these? How does the school confront concepts like 'political correctness' used to dismiss and deny genuine issues of social justice? How is the balance between individual identity and collective work negotiated? Is teacher 'individualism' a smokescreen for refusal to participate in collective improvement? How can the school better create a learning culture for staff and students?	**Economy:** How is use of time and other resources changing? What is the nature of budget discussion? How is transparency about income and expenditure handled? What do people think balancing resources to support the most needy actually means? How does the school make this belief operational? How widely are teachers using ESL principles so that the focus is not unduly on Indigenous learners? How are teachers actually spending their time (including out of school preparation and other activities)? How might this be made more educational?	**Political life:** How are shifts in *real politik* affecting us and others? How can we negotiate around or engage practices of colleagues which impede improvements of ESL practice among other teachers? How can time devoted to system activities such as preparation for NAPLAN testing be adapted for more ESL focused teaching? How can reporting to parents be adapted to be more supportive of ESL strategies teachers (or better, the whole school)?
Data Collection		
Observation data (or recordings) from meetings or informal situations. Information about confusion of students caused by inconsistencies of approach (eg across year levels or subject areas) can be documented. Records of staff development of individual staff can be tabulated to show strengths and gaps.	Basic information such as reports to School Council. Individual logs of teachers' time management can readily be prepared if categories are agreed eg whole class, individual, small group, high achievers, low achievers… Document use of WTT with whole class.	Agreement about nature of problem documented. Records of negotiation meeting with staff prepared, especially agreements reached. Accurate documentation of time spent on 'system' activities to plan reductions — also for political help through Council. Review of possible improvements by interviews with key players, informal survey to follow.

Figure 8. Changing social media

Social Media		
Language: How are we speaking in and about work now? How are the principles of ESL talked about? How are system meta-languages and concepts encroaching on educational ideas? For example, testing = assessment; assessment = the only way to find out what kids know; accountability = held to account not giving an account; curriculum = KLAs rather than a teacher's plan for teaching; literacy = everything but learning SAE; NAPLAN results = school reputation; school self-evaluation = policy compliance checks.	**Work**: What are we doing differently now? What is the sense of shared theory and practice of our ESL work in classrooms, school and community? How is our work moving closer to ESL principles and our aspirations? Who are participants in the thematic concern and the public sphere we are creating? Other teachers, parents, principals, ESL researchers, teacher educators, system administrators? How are we avoiding the danger of slipping into a new orthodoxy? Or falling hostage to new discourses or fashions of Indigenous education?	**Power**: How are we and others relating now? How are students relating to each other, teachers, parents and learning activities now? How are teachers helping each other, questioning each other, willingly sharing ideas, successes and failures? How are teachers showing their knowledge and confidence in ESL theory and practice to parents, other teachers, teacher educators, other action researchers? How is the reputation of the school being strengthened — in the community, system, teacher education?
Data Collection		
Careful observation — noting how, when and in what context a particular term is used. Audio-recording of meeting discussions. Content of parent questions. School documentation — gilding the lily with images or 'bureaucratese'?	Notes of staff discussions. Possibly a confidential survey of staff (designed in consultation but conducted by an outsider) — then staff discussion about how to proceed.	Staff discussion or neutrally brokered workshop (invite trusted outsiders…). Survey of staff as in previous column. Focus groups with 'audiences' and especially parents. Indigenous teachers or aides should be primary contact with parents and community, but a neutral broker might assist.

Figures 5 to 8 embody the assumption that teachers are the focal players. A similar architecture could be used to analyse the changing practice of a district director with an interest in ESL for Indigenous students for example. The information in, and structure of, the Figures is intended as a prompt and resource, not a prescription of 'how to do it'.

Most often a collaborative group of teachers and other educational researchers will get things moving, but this is not always the way things start. Consider the likely composition of a group or network of people with an interest in ESL for Indigenous learners — a public sphere drawing together people with that as a thematic concern. The group would include teachers, principals, system administrators, ESL specialists in support units, ESL researchers and teachers in universities, linguists in universities and communities and so on. The questions for each individual apply to any engagement with the thematic concern. This is a collective task, needing a public sphere to bounce ideas around, and ultimately to create informed discipline around action, reflection and changing practice. Ideas are typically borrowed from other research approaches, but their methods, findings and theoretics must be reinterpreted in the light of competing perspectives. Public spheres are places for sharing data, information, values, points of view, intentions, outcomes (intended and unintended), knowledge and understanding in all their forms. Note again that public spheres are not public in the sense that everyone gets to know everyone's business, but public in the sense that they strive to overcome the constraints on open discussion which typify institutional life. Focusing on the 'lifeworld' rather than the 'system' is another way of putting it:

> We contend that, on the one side, participants understand themselves and their practices as formed by system structures and functions that shape and constrain their actions, and that their efforts to change their practices necessarily involve encountering and reconstructing the system aspect of their social world. On the other side, we contend, participants also understand themselves and their practices as formed through the life-world processes of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialisation- individuation, and that their efforts to change their practices necessarily involve changing the substance of these processes. In addition, we contend, participants understand that there are tensions and interconnections between these two aspects of their social world, each shaping and constraining the other, and they recognise that changing their practices necessarily involves taking into account the nature and substance of these tensions and interconnections. Participatory action research is a form of "insider research" in which participants move between two thought positions: on the one side, seeing themselves, their understandings, their practices, and the settings in which they practice from the perspective of insiders who see these things in an intimate, even "natural" way that may be subject to the partiality of view characteristic of the insider perspective; and, on the other side, seeing themselves, their understandings, their practices, and the setting from the perspective of an outsider (sometimes by adopting the perspective of an abstract, imagined outsider, and sometimes by trying to see things from the perspective of real individuals or role incumbents in and around the setting) who do not share the partiality of the inside view but who also do not have the benefit of "inside knowledge." Alternating between these perspectives gives the insider critical distance — the seed of the critical perspective that allows insiders to consider the possible as well as the actual in their social world (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000, p. 590).

Action research for staff development

This section on participatory action research provides the introduction educators need to feel confident about the rationale for their work. We show that participatory action research employs some features of other kinds of research but is distinctive because it focuses on practice and ways of changing it. We introduce the use of several new concepts in order to develop a language about practice so that teachers and other educators can see their practice in more complex ways. This is necessary because changing educational practice is complicated and monitoring all aspects of practice over time is necessary to ensure that the process of change is not derailed. It is difficult to bring about a change in teaching without a complementary change in school culture. Similarly it is difficult to change either teaching or school culture without some change in the language of the school and classroom. Following the questions in Figures 5 to 8 constitutes a ready guide to monitoring changes in practice. The guide has used questions developed from teacher interviews and the literatures of TESL and action research to ensure that it is grounded theoretically and practically.

As the Figures show, these ideas will most readily be learned by trying them out with colleagues, and as the study itself suggests, with people who have knowledge of action research and TESL for Indigenous students. The guide can be followed stepwise as it is learned initially but will quickly become a resource for more articulate conversations about what is happening as people work through changes in their educational practice. To move on to more robust theory and practice of ESL for Indigenous learners a key task is to help participants to build networks of action and reflection internal and external to the institutions they work in. The practical expressions of this can be found in the findings and discussion of this report. There are examples, testimony, references and a repertoire of ideas well-grounded in theory and practice.

Reflections on *Book Language* as a staff development resource

This paper reports a study of professional development conducted by the Far North Queensland Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (FNQ ISSU) for teachers who were seeking to improve their teaching of Australian Indigenous students. The professional development addressed an important need of many Indigenous learners which systems had been unresponsive to. The teachers had realised that large numbers of their Indigenous students only ever speak Standard

Australian English in the classroom, and when they did it was in conversations with teachers. That is, the teachers understood their Indigenous students were learning English as a Second Language (ESL). In response to that understanding, the teachers were learning how to improve their awareness of the different Indigenous languages used by students, and how to teach using strategies adapted from the field of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The report develops the rationale for the study and its research approach. The findings of the research are rich with the voices of teachers, and interpretations are presented which outline some directions and the context for further teacher development. The literature of participatory action research is used to inform those interpretations and to develop some practical strategies which teachers, teacher educators and others involved in professional development can employ to bring about changes in practice (Figures 5-8 especially). The study also provides an annotated bibliography of the important literature describing the use of TESL strategies in teaching. Teachers spoke especially highly of *Walking Talking Texts* (Murray, 1995), *Making the Jump* (Berry and Hudson, 1997) and *Indigenous Bandscales* (Education Queensland, 2000) and with help from FNQ ISSU used them in changing their teaching. The content of these resources is not reiterated here, but the combination of them with this report should provide the basis of a very strong professional development curriculum for educators.

In the latter sections of this report we have assumed that there is merit in the idea that Indigenous students could benefit from the adaptation and use of TESL strategies in their learning. We have also accepted that there are appropriate resources available for teachers to begin trying out TESL ideas in practice, provided this is done in the context of a well-informed professional development course or program. There were already elements of action research in the teachers' and professional development staff efforts to change, but insufficient support for them to establish fully fledged public spheres or even communities of practice. We have provided some detailed guidance about conducting action research for teachers and other educators, as well as a theoretically grounded rationale.

The strict focus on ESL strategies and not Indigenous education more generally has been made necessary because of the genuine danger that useful ideas will be swamped by the many other discourses being presented as ways of improving Indigenous education. Many of these discourses are useful because education is a practice characterised by contestation among ideas. The problem then becomes how some intellectual and practical discipline might be generated around changing educational practice. It is not enough to subject teachers to a gaggle of advocacies, even if many of them are well-grounded in theory, practice and the experience of other cases. The danger for education is that when the advocates move away, practice regresses to its previous state. There was at least one Queensland example of this found in the study.

Latest writing on participatory action research conceptualises it as a 'practice changing practice' and provides strong conceptual resources for talking about practice. These resources are helpful to educators who are typically well versed in the concepts **of** educational practice. They are less familiar with talking **about** practice and therefore about changing it, a point illustrated in the study. To address this shortfall, several concepts from action research are used as points of reference for progress in changing educational practice with strategies from TESL. Figures 5 to 8 should make it crystal clear that concepts for thinking about a practice stimulate some good questions to consider and to stimulate change. The Figures should also indicate that the concepts are accessible. One of the key findings of this study is that people need practical help in their schools to implement ideas from TESL. This will apply to ideas about changing practice using action research approaches too.

There is a reason that teachers talk about practice in restricted ways — basically implementing *Walking Talking Texts* for example. *Walking Talking Texts* provides a language of practice which has been legitimated because it is sound in theory and practice. If we want teachers to talk about changing practice in terms of their skills, understandings and values; communication practices, the nature of their day to day productive work, and the ways in which organisation prefigures the kinds of relationships they have with peers, students, parents and other educators, two things are vital. First, we must be sure that the language about practice is grounded in theory (itself a distillation of other practices), not plucking concepts out of the air. Second, we need to revitalise proper professional development to teach educators the language about the practice of education — the discourse which defines their professional work.

Improving the content of practice was the goal of the FNQ ISSU. A goal of this study has been outlining the nature of practice and how it is constituted to ensure robust change which is coherent, rational, just, satisfying and sustainable. These two major ideas for the study — improving the use of TESL strategies, and grounding change using the principles of participatory action, provide complementary tasks for professional development.

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Appendix A: Threat to bilingual education

Yalmay Yunupingu is a senior teacher at Yirrkala Community School, a bilingual school in the Northern Territory. Yirrkala School and its community have been leaders in promoting bilingual and bicultural education for a generation. Despite evidence that bilingual education promotes English literacy in the latter years of primary schooling (Simpson and Wigglesworth, 2008), the Northern Territory Education Minister Marion Scrymgour was spooked by recent NAPLAN results for the school and ordered that the first four hours of instruction in NT schools be conducted solely in English. There was no heed of other evidence or of the obvious point that it would be irrational and inconsistent to judge bilingual schools on one measure when it was part of the school's approved mission to teach Yolngu Matha and aspects of Indigenous culture along with the NT curriculum. Such is the panic inspired by simplistic use of performance indicators. Ms Yunupingu describes her reaction. Her words are a fine introduction to current good practice in bilingual, bicultural, 'both ways' education and her own Yolngu pedagogy. They also show the incoherence of reactions to NAPLAN. These are instructive for educators everywhere.

Yalmay's story

I am a qualified bilingual teacher, a Gunitjpirr miyalk. I speak several Yolngu matha languages and English fluently. I have thirty-two years teaching experience. I have taught mostly in primary school, early childhood and middle primary. This is how I teach in a day in an early childhood class. Imagine a group of 27 six year old Yolngu students, bright as buttons, very energetic and ready to learn!

We start with a morning ritual, where we count days of the week, months of the year, school times, and we do a Breath, Blow and Cough program. This last one helps children with Otitis Media, a middle ear problem. Then we do the Yolngu matha alphabet, where our students are learning their sounds and syllables, in the language they speak. Our culture is very much an oral one, so our students don't come to school with lots of understandings about books and literacy. My job is to help them understand what literacy is about, what it's for and why they should learn to read and write!

So we then do our handwriting, and reading a big book in Yolngu matha. We talk about the story, why the author wrote this story, and how we can learn from stories, how information is inside books in the ngapaki world. After this the children write their own story, independent writing. Then some independent readers, all written in *Dhuwaya* the language the students speak at Yirrkala. After tea, we do our oral English program. We use the *Walking Talking Texts* which is an English as a Second Language (ESL) Program. The students practice reading and talking the English language of the book, and we integrate other learning areas into the English program depending on the topic in the book. This helps the children develop English language skills. It's always great when you hear little Yolngu students using their new English language skills they learnt in their *Walking Talking Text* in the playground or the community.

Then it's time for the hardest learning area, for 6 year olds. Mathematics! I teach number, space and measurement. I use *Yolngu matha* in maths lessons to explain difficult concepts like addition, subtraction, and place value to the children. We do lots of counting, bundling straws and paddle pop sticks, using a place value matrix and so on. Our language is a good language to use with the children because they think in *Yolngu matha* and they respond to us very quickly because they can understand what I'm saying. This way they can understand how the Base 10 maths system works, in their own language, then as they get older they use more and more English in their learning.

I also teach two Yolngu subjects, gurrutu and djalkiri, from our own Garma Maths program, which was used to form part of the Indigenous languages and culture component of the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework. These are important subjects for Yolngu children as they teach them the proper ways of behaving in the classroom, raypirri (rules and discipline)

and how clans should work together. And there is all the Yolngu knowledge the children need to learn about their land and their connections to the land and environment.

From January 2009 what will my teaching look like?
I have been told that I am not allowed to use the children's language anymore. We have been told we are not to use our students' first language, only English. Well, I already know that the children won't understand what I'm saying, they will laugh at me, and they may even misbehave because they'll be bored and won't know what the lessons are about. So perhaps I will cheat and use some Yolngu matha – what will happen then? Will I have my mouth washed out with soap like in the mission times? Or will I have to stand on one leg outside the classroom? Or perhaps I will lose my job?

Well, I will of course use good ESL teaching strategies as I do in my English lessons already. But I know that the children will miss out on a lot of meaning and that makes me very upset. I am wondering why I studied all those years through Batchelor College (now BIITE), and why all the teaching experience I have in bilingual programs is being put down. What a strange role model I will be, a bilingual Yolngu teacher, using only one of my languages!

This is not what our vision statement for Yambirrpa Schools is about. Our Vision Statement has a clear both ways approach, where two languages, Yolngu matha and English, and two cultural views are in a careful balance. If either one overpowers the other, the educational system will fail, and cause our children to grow up unbalanced and unable to function well in the world. We are already struggling with a very high rate of youth suicide and substance abuse; and it needs to be said that many of our young people who have died tragically have been literate and numerate. It makes me angry to hear the Minister for Education saying that none of our graduates are literate – all my 6 daughters can read and write well in two languages, the two youngest girls graduated with their NTCE in 2005. How could they do that if they can't read or write? The decision to make English the only important language in our schools will only make the situation for our young people worse as they struggle to be proud Yolngu in a world that is making them feel that their culture is bad, unimportant and irrelevant in the contemporary world (Yunupingu, 2008).

Appendix B: Annotated bibliography

The references in this bibliography are selected with three general aims. Our first aim is to provide further information about some resources used in the production of the case study. Second, we offer some key sources about Indigenous languages in Australia, to show their diversity, and to demonstrate especially that creoles and other varieties are integral to Indigenous culture, identity and well-being. Some sources relate to remote schools, but the language issues described apply to most Indigenous students wherever they are. The third aim is provide access to the discussion about ESL and its context in Indigenous education. Note that ESL discussion is often swamped by other discourses and care needs to be taken not to be swept away by the complexities of discussion about other matters.

Reference	Notes
Murray, F. (1995). *Walking talking texts: A program for teaching and learning English as a second language.* Darwin: Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training for the Northern Territory Board of Studies	Very accessible, useful and theoretically informed sequence of teaching strategies establishing the framework to engage students in classroom practice for the teaching of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL). Focus on the deconstruction and reconstruction of linguistic skills and knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge and literate practices within the range of language learning contexts, purposes, skills, and curriculum-based knowledge areas needed to acquire (an additional) language for learning. Assessment strategies and tasks are embedded in the teaching-learning program which links to the developmental continuum of the Northern Territory ESL Outcomes.
Berry, R. and Hudson, J. (1997). *Making the Jump: A resource book for teachers of Aboriginal Students.* Broom, Western Australia: Catholic Education Office, Kimberley Region.	Useful for teachers teaching English to speakers of creoles and other varieties of language. Good theoretical base to help teachers understand the languages involved, the stages of language awareness, and a variety of practical classroom strategies for the teaching of Standard Australian English as a second dialect. Although the text was designed as a resource for the Kimberley region, it has application for any classroom where students speak an Aboriginal dialect different from Standard English. The processes and strategies in this resource can be adapted to all local situations.
Simpson, J. and Wigglesworth, G. (Eds.) (2008). *Children's language and multilingualism:* indigenous *language use at home and school.* London: Continuum.	Compelling evidence that one must fully understand the local linguistic, cultural, environmental and socio-economic landscape if one is to propose sensible policy measures relating to children in Indigenous communities, and that advantages accrue for the family, the local community and the broader community when children are given a strong foundation in their own language and culture.
Romaine, S. (Ed.). (1991). *Language in Australia*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.	Very useful background reference for educators wanting to understand the history, development and nature of Australian languages including Torres Strait Creole, Kriol and Aboriginal English. See Chapters in Books for more detail.
Healy, A. (Ed.). (2008). *Multiliteracies and diversity in education: New pedagogies for expanding landscape* South Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press.	The text is intended for courses in multi-literacies which are offered at either first or second year in schools of education or in schools of cultural and language studies. See Chapter 3 by Karen Martin: Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being, Ways of Doing — Recognises Aboriginal world views, respects Aboriginal knowledge systems and acknowledges stories of relatedness. See especially Chapter 5 by Karen Dooley for projects as contexts for students of English as an Additional Language to build and use diverse portfolios of literate practice.
Nakata, M. (2002). *Some thoughts on the literacy issues in indigenous contexts*. Melbourne: Language Australia.	Multi-literacies interface and relatedness to Aboriginal students and literacies and standard forms of English literacy. Intersection of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal worlds, knowledges and mulitliteracies in course of living, learning and being. Inclusive of Aboriginal students, families, teachers, schools. Focus on teachers to articulate and name what they bring to interface, how learning-teaching decisions are made and how they support the interface between multi-literacies and Indigenous learning settings.

Robinson, G., Eickelkamp, U., Goodnow J. and Katz, I. (Eds.). (2008). *Contexts of Child Development: Culture, Policy and Intervention*. Darwin, N.T.: Charles Darwin University Press.	This text provides insights and understandings of child development in relation to questions of cultural diversity, social disadvantage and state-supported interventions. Hence, many of the contributions focus on the outcomes of child development in Australian Aboriginal communities, including Ernabella and Docker River in the Western Desert, Darnley Island in north-east Queensland, the Tiwi Islands in the Northern Territory, Yakanarra in the Kimberley, and the Yorta Yorta in rural Victoria. While the editors consider that the contributions collectively point to complex patterns of intergenerational reproduction of disadvantage for which there is no single intervention point, they conclude that the challenge for educators, policy-makers, governments and communities alike is to find and follow the ways and means by which it is possible to support the outcomes of child development in order that the deleterious effects of multiple disadvantage might be undone.
Tynan, G. (2003). *Binyi: Wuku: Book of talking sounds and letters* (Ill. S. O'Driscoll and C. Stacey). Brisbane: Education Queensland. (Available from Kuranda State School)	*Binyi: Wuku* is Djabugay Language to describe people talking to one another ('eating words', that is 'mouth work'). This is an excellent classroom resource to assist Indigenous learners to discriminate sounds, especially those with mild to moderate hearing loss. It features a specific teaching sequence (p. 4), a RAP (spoken or sung) for auditory learners, visual letter-shape cues, tactile cues (descriptions of how the sounds are formed in the mouth) and kinaesthetic cues (how the letters are formed for correct handwriting).

Reference	Note that the resources below are from the field of linguistics and contain some specialised knowledge. In the main, most of the content provides accessible background of considerable interest to educators.
Kaldor, S. and Malcolm, I. (1991). Aboriginal English – an overview. In S. Romaine (Ed.), *Language in Australia* (pp. 67-83). Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.	Excellent introduction to the features of Aboriginal English, differences between Aboriginal English and creoles as well as the differences between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English. Good argument for using ESL strategies when teaching Indigenous students.
Eades, D. (1991). Communicative strategies in Aboriginal English. In S. Romaine (Ed.), *Language in Australia* (pp. 84-93). Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.	Eades claims it is not possible to understand language outside its social and cultural context and moves beyond definitions and descriptions of Aboriginal English towards interpretation and meanings made by some Aboriginal speakers of English. She identifies the key features of the socio-cultural context in which speakers use Aboriginal English, discusses indirectness in social interactions, question structures by speakers of Aboriginal English as well as Aboriginal communicative strategies in cross-cultural communication.
Harris, J. (1991). Kriol – the creation of a new language. In S. Romaine (Ed.), *Language in Australia* (pp. 195-212). Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.	Excellent outline of history of Kriol in four broad stages: the pre-European context, the rise of pidgin Englishes, the stabilisation of the pidgins and creolisation of the Pidgin.
Sandefur, J. (1991). *A sketch of the structure of Kriol.* In S. Romaine (Ed.), *Language in Australia*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.	Descriptive analysis of the phonemes of Kriol, as well as morphological, syntactic and lexical structure, with some attention to the variation between dialects.
Muhlhausler, P. (1991). Overview of the pidgin and creole language of Australia. In S. Romaine (Ed.), *Language in Australia* (159-173). Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.	Introductory picture of the pidgins and creoles spoken in Australia with useful inventory of pidgins and creoles followed by brief account of history of research into Australian pidgins and creoles.
Shnukal, A. (1991). Torres Strait Creole. In S. Romaine (Ed.), *Language in Australia* (180-193), *Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press*	Account of the history and structure (linguistic features) of Torres Strait Creole, including dialects (eastern and western), sociolinguistic and linguistic evidence used to refute argument that creole is 'corrupt or ungrammatical form of English' and rediscovery of TSC as a marker of identity, ethnicity and separateness from white Australians.
Frigo, T. (June 1999). *Resources and Teaching Strategies to Support Aboriginal Children's Numeracy Learning: A review of the literature*. Sydney: Office of the Board of Studies — New South Wales.	An understanding of 'mathematical English' is crucial if students are to successfully learning about, understand and use Western mathematical concepts. This paper explains how language plays a central role in mathematics classrooms with resources and teaching strategies to support Aboriginal children's numeracy learning with annotated bibliography.
Frigo, T. and Simpson, L. (2001). *Aboriginal Numeracy Research Project. Research into the numeracy development of Aboriginal students: Implications for the NSW K-10 Mathematics Syllabus*. Sydney: Office of the Board of Studies — New South Wales.	Key issues critical to numeracy skill development of Aboriginal students grouped under the following headings to provide a basis for the recommendations for syllabus review: supporting a learner-centred curriculum; scope and sequence of learning outcomes; school, home and community partnerships; linguistic matters; equity issues; teaching strategies; an inclusive curriculum; assessment; and implementation and evaluation. Also contains an annotated bibliography similar to Frigo (1999), but with additional reports and materials, both published and unpublished.

Reference	Notes
	The articles in this section were selected from the *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* to ensure their accessibility, relevance and topicality.
David, M. M. (2003). Report on the Demographics and Language Groups of Thursday Island State School students at the State ESL (English as a Second Language) Conference, Brisbane, December, 2001. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 31, 71-72.	This report deals with the linguistic background of the students, the teaching of languages other than English and the urgent need for appropriate professional development in English as a Second Language or English as a Foreign Language insights and methodologies.
Shnukal, A. (2003). Report on the Torres Strait Creole Project, Thursday Island State High School. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 31, 51-69.	An analysis of some formal language differences between written Standard Australian English and spoken Torres Strait Creole (the language of most of the students) as a basis for workshop writers to develop material in a form suitable for teachers. Looked at objectively, most of the students' errors in written English occur as a result of transference from their first language, or in areas of grammatical complexity which pose problems for all English as a Second Language learners. Certain common spelling errors seem also to be a result of transference from the creole. The report fulfilled its main aim of raising awareness of language issues and providing information and rationale for various language and literacy programs now operating in the region (Shopen and Hickey, 2003).
Zeegers, M., Muir, W. and Lin, Z. (2003). The Primacy of the Mother Tongue: Aboriginal Literacy and Non-standard English. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 32, 51-60.	Discusses the stigmatising of Indigenous Australian languages and rejects the way deficit thinking undermines their recognition. Links Indigenous language with modern forms of Indigeneity and argues for improvements to teacher education through better understanding of the complexity of Indigenous languages and the development of teaching strategies derived from ESL approaches.
Shepherd, S. (2003). Answering Teachers' Questions — the ESL (English as a Second Language) Conference, Badu Island, 15-18 May 2000. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education,* 31, 73-75.	Investigation of English Language Acquisition at Thursday Island State High School using a question-and-answer session dealing with questions: What is English as a Second Language teaching? What is an English as a Second Language learner? What is an English as a Second Language school? Why is student use of English not improving in my school? Can we have learning support teachers? Why shouldn't the children's home language be banned from the school so that the students will learn English more quickly? Why can't the children understand more about what they read? Why, if the local creole is so much like English, do we need special programs in English?
Shopen, G. and Hickey, R. (2003). Meeting Teachers' Needs: Reaching Literacy Through Grammar in Indigenous Schools, *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 31, 25-33.	Many teachers and teaching assistants report that they lack an understanding of Standard Australian English grammar and that this hinders their work with Indigenous students who are learning English as a second language. This paper reports on the success of an accredited professional development strategy in Far North Queensland. This strategy is not based on out-of-context grammar lessons but promotes the idea that grammar is best learnt in communicative and collaborative classrooms which value fun and visual performance. The grammar activities are also embedded in current strategies for the teaching of literacy. This kind of professional development can reinvigorate teachers' practices in order to increase literacy outcomes in Indigenous schools.

Garrett, L. (2003). Teaching Grammar in an English as a Foreign Language Context (EFL). *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 31, 35-39.	Written by a teacher from Poruma, a remote island in the Torres Strait, this paper discusses best practice in explicitly instructing islander students in Standard Australian English grammar.
Chigeza, P. (2008). Language Negotiations Indigenous Students Navigate When Learning Science. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 37, 91-97.	Would a Creole Science empower Indigenous students learning school science to develop the capacity to successfully negotiate the language systems? Shows the importance of Standard Australian English in the teaching of abstract science concepts such as energy and force.
Warren, E., Cooper, T. and Baturo, A. (2004). Indigenous Students and Mathematics: Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Teacher Aides. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education,* 33, 37-46.	Conducted in remote Indigenous communities in Queensland, this research reports the views of young and new graduated white teachers on mathematics learning of Indigenous students and how these perceptions differ from white students.
Tan, K. A (2000). Professional Development Course in Australian Indigenous ESL Teaching. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education,* 28, (1), 1-7.	Systematic program of professional teacher development for teachers in rural schools (Northern Territory), a unified ESL program across rural schools in Schools South designed to improve job satisfaction and for formal certification of teaching competency in Indigenous ESL teaching.
Shnukal, A. (2002). Some Language-related Observations for Teachers in Torres Strait and Cape York Peninsula Schools. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education,* 30 (1), 8-24.	The fact that so many Islanders have succeeded against the odds is a testament to the individual and group efforts of teachers and students, but made so much harder by the latter's need to master a second, third or fourth language. This paper attempted to show that some student difficulties are language based but that misunderstandings based on language differences can be viewed as opportunities for mutual and respectful learning by students, teachers, education workers and parents.
Nakata, M., Nakata, V. and Chin, M. (2008). Approaches to the Academic Preparation and Support of Australian Indigenous Students for Tertiary Studies. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 37, 137-145.	An approach to Indigenous academic skills support that equips Indigenous students with tools for managing their engagements with the content of Western disciplines. A case is made for more focussed research around Indigenous students' approaches to processing intellectual content while developing their own Indigenous standpoints.
Thwaite, A. (2007). Inclusive and empowering discourse in an early childhood literacy classroom with Indigenous students. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education,* 36, 21-31.	Analysis of the classroom discourse and strategies of an early childhood teacher of a class with a high percentage of Indigenous students. Part of project, "Teaching Indigenous Students with Conductive Hearing Loss in Remote and Urban Schools of Western Australia".
Clarke, M. (2000). Direction and Support for New non-Aboriginal Teachers in Remote Aboriginal Community Schools in the Northern Territory. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 28 (2), 1-8.	Useful advice for teachers wanting to go to remote schools. Informative also for others wanting to understand the formidable obstacles facing students.
Biermann, S. and Townsend-Cross, M. (2008). Indigenous Pedagogy as a Force for Change, *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 37, 146-154.	Exploration of some of the practical aspects of Indigenous pedagogy in a tertiary setting by way of a student-teacher dialogue and also discussion of the wider implications of a theoretical articulation from the perspective of researchers and academics. The paper intersects the discourses on transformative pedagogy and Indigenous education in Australia, an unexplored concept which, properly articulated and implemented, could have great benefits for all learners. It is time to discuss Indigenous pedagogy as a teaching methodology based on Indigenous values and philosophies.

Sefa Dei, G. (2008). Indigenous Knowledge Studies and the Next Generation: Pedagogical possibilities for anti-colonial education. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 37, 5-13.	This paper raises issues pertaining to collective responsibilities in nurturing the next generation of Indigenous scholars. It highlights aspects of current theorising of Indigeneity, namely, the search for "epistemological equity" through reclamation of identity knowledge and politics of embodiment; and discusses how knowledge about our own existence, realities and identities can help produce a form of knowing legitimate in its own right and able to contest other ways of knowing. The paper concludes with some pedagogical possibilities of anti-colonial education using the Indigenous framework.
Osborne, B. (2003). Preparing Preservice Teachers' Minds, Hearts and Actions for Service in Remote Indigenous Contexts. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 31, 17-24.	This paper draws together four 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.
Nakata, M. (2003). Some Thoughts on Literacy Issues in Indigenous Contexts. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 31, 7-15.	Critical examination of some of the nation's policies on Indigenous education priorities and how they have framed our approaches to formal schooling issues over the past decade.

WEB SITES	
URL Address	**Notes**
http://www.learningplace.com.au/defaulteqa.asp?orgid=89&suborgid=578	**Far North Queensland Indigenous Schooling Support Unit** is the key reference point for this study. The website provides a wide range of information about ESL and other support activities for Indigenous Schooling. Some activities are described in the study.
http://www.fatsil.org.au/	**The Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages** is a non-profit organisation. FATSIL is the national peak body for community based indigenous language programs in Australia. The organisation was established in 1991 in response to the Australian Language and Literacy Policy, to promote the maintenance, retrieval and revival of indigenous languages, through the support of community based language programs.
http://www.futureofeducation.com/video/what-about-the-test	**The Future of Education: Charting the course of education and learning in a networked world.** Discussion forum for community devoted to providing a social networking opportunity for those who care about education to share their voices and ideas with others. It's a place for thoughtful discussion on an important topic.
http://www.linguistics.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/ACLA/	**The Aboriginal Child Language Acquisition Project** involves case studies of three Aboriginal communities designed to address the following questions research questions: 1. What kind of language input do indigenous Australian Aboriginal children receive from traditional indigenous languages, Kriol and varieties of English, and from code-switching involving these languages as used by adults and older children? 2. What effect does this have on the children's language acquisition and how the input is reflected in their productive output? 3. What are the processes of language shift, maintenance and change which may be hypothesised to result from this multilingual environment, as evidenced by the children's input and output and the degree to which this reflects transmission of the target languages, the loss of traditional languages, or the emergence of new mixed languages?
http://www.acer.edu.au/research_projects/IndigenousLanguage.html	**Australian Council for Educational Research — Research Projects**: **Evaluation of Literacy Approaches (ELA) for ESL Indigenous Students Project 2005-8** The Evaluation of Literacy Approaches (ELA) for ESL Indigenous Students Project is a three-year study, 2005 – 2008, on the efficacy and sustainability of literacy approaches used by the Northern Territory Department of Employment Education and Training (DEET) to inform policy development and to improve outcomes for ESL Indigenous students in the Northern Territory. The literacy approaches involved are the main literacy approaches used in the NT, including Accelerated Literacy, First Steps, and Walking Talking Texts. **Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study for Indigenous Students** This study began in 2000 as extension of the mainstream Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study. The study aimed to: • identify and follow development of Indigenous students' English literacy and numeracy skills in the primary years of schooling; • measure growth in English literacy and numeracy skills over time; and • investigate the background variables which may influence the development of the child's English literacy and numeracy skills during the first year of school. More than 700 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from 23 schools across all States and Territories have participated in the study. The first three years of the study were reported in Research Monograph No 57.

http://www.whatworks.edu.au/first1.htm	**What Works:** This website is part of a national effort to improve outcomes for Indigenous students — a first priority for all Australian educators and trainers. It provides some information about that effort and, more importantly, provides advice and information about how improvement can be achieved and examples of contemporary cases where this has occurred. It is designed to help teachers and administrators working in education and training take action.

Appendix C: Principles of procedure for action research

Action researchers must pay attention to the ethical principles guiding their work. Their actions are usually embedded in an existing social organisation and the failure to work within the general procedures of that organisation may not only jeopardise the process of improvement but existing valuable work. Principles of procedure accordingly go beyond the usual concerns for confidentiality and respect for persons who are the subjects of enquiry and define in addition, appropriate ways of working with other participants in the social organisation. The principles outlined below reflect the commitment implicit in the methods of action research to participation and collaborative work, and negotiation within, and ultimately beyond, existing social and political circumstances.

Establish working rules for the collaborating group:

- *Minute keeping*
- *Joint decision-making*
- *Open and equal participation in discussion (protect interests of 'underdogs')*
- *Mutually binding agreements*
- *'Fair share' of the work taken by all in the group*

Observe protocol: *Take care to ensure that the relevant persons, committees and authorities have been consulted, informed and that the necessary permission and approval has been obtained.*

Involve participants: *Encourage others who have a stake in the improvement you envisage to shape the form of the work.*

Negotiate with those affected: *Not everyone will want to be involved; your work should take account of the responsibilities and wishes of others.*

Report progress: *Keep the work visible and remain open to suggestions so that unforeseen and unseen ramifications can be taken account of; colleagues must have the opportunity to lodge a protest.*

Obtain explicit authorisation before you observe: *For the purposes of recording the activities of professional colleagues or others (the observation of your own students fall outside this imperative provided that your aim is the improvement of teaching and learning).*

Obtain explicit authorisation before you examine files, correspondence or other documentation: *Take copies only if specific authority to do this is obtained.*

Negotiate descriptions of people's work: *Always allow those described to challenge your accounts on the grounds of fairness, relevance and accuracy.*

Negotiate accounts of others' points of view (for example in accounts of communications): *Always allow those involved in interviews, meetings and written exchanges to require amendments which enhance fairness, relevance and accuracy.*

Obtain explicit authorisation before using quotations: *Verbatim transcripts, attributed observations, excerpts of audio and video recordings, judgments, conclusions or recommendations in reports (written or to meetings).*

Negotiate reports for various levels of release: *Remember that different audiences demand different kinds of reports; what is appropriate for an informal verbal report to a faculty meeting may not be appropriate for a staff meeting, a report to council, a journal article, a newspaper, a newsletter to parents; be conservative if you cannot control distribution.*

Accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality: *Also make it clear that any others with access to evidence or copies of reports also have responsibilities for maintaining confidentiality.*

Retain the right to report your work: *provided that those involved are satisfied with the fairness, accuracy and relevance which pertain to them, and that the accounts do not unnecessarily expose or embarrass those involved, then accounts should not be subject to veto or be sheltered by prohibitions of confidentiality.*

Make your principles of procedure binding and known: *All of the people involved in your action research project must agree to the principles before the work begins; others must be aware of their rights in the process* (from Kemmis and McTaggart 1988, pp. 106-108, slightly revised from Kemmis and McTaggart 1980).

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