

**Difficult Knowledge and Uncomfortable Pedagogies:
student perceptions and experiences of teaching and
learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies**

Marcelle Townsend-Cross
(BA, SCU; MEd, UTS)

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
University of Technology Sydney

2018

Certificate of Original Authorship

I, Marcelle Townsend-Cross declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney. This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Acknowledgements

I owe my gratitude to the teachers and students who generously agreed to participate in my research. Their courageous and candid contributions provided rich and compelling insights that positively shaped my research in immeasurable ways. I am very grateful to Dr. Rick Flowers who expertly guided me through the research process with enthusiasm, mindfulness and patience. I am so very grateful and privileged to have been a recipient of the Jumbunna Postgraduate Research Scholarship.

Many people have inspired and encouraged me throughout my candidature – family, friends and colleagues - and I am humbled by your consistent and persistent belief in me, especially during the times when I didn't particularly believe in myself, thank you. Most importantly, I am eternally grateful for the unconditional love, support and encouragement of my husband Chris and the amazing humans who call us Mum and Dad, Nan and Pop and Aunty and Uncle. You, my family, have always been, and will always be, my inspiration.

Dedication

*This research is dedicated to the First Australian women and men who have,
through their wisdom and acumen since the imposition of colonisation,
blazed the scholarly trail that I now humbly tread.*

*In particular, I dedicate my work to the late Japanangka errol West,
an intellectual giant whose leadership, mentorship, love and friendship I was so
privileged to experience in my early teaching career and without which I would not
have had the confidence to undertake this research project.*

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Abstract

This research presents a grounded interrogation of students' perceptions and experiences of teaching and learning in two mandatory stand-alone Critical Indigenous Australian Studies subjects at an Australian university. The study proffers rare empirical insight into the student experience of teaching and learning about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege. It contributes to building a better understanding of the complexities, opportunities, challenges and risks of four specific pedagogical approaches: critical anticolonialism, critical race theory, critical whiteness and intersectional privilege studies. The research was conducted by way of a critical ethnographic process involving in-depth interviews with students and teachers, focus group discussions with students and classroom observations. The research design was built on critical social constructionist foundations informed by poststructural and critical hermeneutical theoretical perspectives.

The study produced two key findings. The first is that learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies is inherently affective. Affectivity plays a determinant role in the opportunities, challenges and risks of teaching about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege. This finding signposts the need to take into serious consideration the emotionally onerous task of teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies and the need for compassionate pedagogical approaches and strategies that can productively navigate and manage affectivity. The second key finding is that if Critical Indigenous Australian Studies is to inspire and motivate students to act for social justice and social change, teaching and learning must focus equally on both the 'know-what' and the 'know-how'. Knowing what the urgent matters are without the cultivation of practical skills to engage in social change action falls short of meeting teaching and learning objectives. A dedicated and substantive focus on cultivating practical social change skills such as discursive counter-narrative skills is a pedagogical pathway toward empowering, inspiring and motivating students to act for social change.

Chapter 1

Prologue

Introduction

This dissertation presents my grounded study of the student experience in two Critical Indigenous Australian Studies subjects at an Australian university. The central goal of the research is to build a better understanding of the complexities, opportunities, challenges and risks of teaching and learning about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege. Susan Page, a First Australian scholar researching ways to strengthen the capacity of Australian universities to develop curricula and teach Indigenous Australian Studies, points to the paucity of empirical knowledge about the student experience in Indigenous Australian Studies (Page 2014). What little scholarly literature there is rests on ‘particular assumptions about students...and their dispositions to learn about Indigenous people and issues’ (Nakata et al. 2014, p.9). This study seeks to shed empirical light on the subjective perceptions and experiences of students learning about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Beginning with an auto-ethnographic account of my positionality and the motivating drivers for undertaking the research, this introductory chapter details the rationale and the problematic that underpin my inquiry. I provide a brief introduction to the specific research context and introduce the central themes of the research by way of an overview of the thesis.

Positionality: locating myself in the research

Over the past eighteen years I have worked in higher education developing and delivering Indigenous Australian Studies subjects and degree courses for largely non-Indigenous student cohorts. My work has been motivated by my lived experience as a mixed heritage First Australian member of the ‘Stolen Generations’ (see Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1997). In 1964, at the age of 14 months, I was forcibly removed from my family and placed in a ‘closed adoption’ with a non-Indigenous family (see Higgins 2012 for an overview of the history of closed adoptions in Australia). I experienced a happy childhood. I was well loved by my Mum, Dad and two older brothers and I loved them dearly in return. Sadly, they have all since passed away. My parents were respected working class people, or in the Australian colloquialism, they were ‘typical Aussie battlers’. My Dad was a staunch trade unionist and instilled in me the ethics of a fair society and a strong sense of personal and social responsibility. A high priority for my parents was providing their children with a good education and while they couldn’t afford private schools, they made sure that we had the best education possible within their means.

My parents taught me from early age that I was adopted but they concealed my First Australian heritage from me, from my brothers, from our extended family and from society at large. As a mixed heritage person, my biological grandfathers’ Irish ancestors hailed from Galway, I have light brown skin and this enabled my parents to conceal my First Australian ancestry and raise me as a non-Indigenous person. I believe they made this choice out of a desire to ‘protect’ me. The socio-political environment in 1950’s, 1960’s and 1970’s Australia was one of deep-seated and overt structural racism. Prevailing ideologies held that First Australian peoples were

intellectually inferior and culturally deficit (Beresford & Partington 2003; McConaghy 2000; Parbury 1999). I believe it was these racist ideologies that my parents wanted to protect me from. My parents told me that my ancestry was not known and as I grew older I increasingly yearned to learn about my heritage and my biological family. In 1980, at the age of eighteen, I sought the assistance of a NSW-based 'reunion service', established as a result of the advocacy-driven legislative reforms 'that overturned the blanket of secrecy surrounding adoption' (Higgins 2012 n.p.), and was reunited with my biological mother and my extended family.

The reunion with my family marked the beginning of my cultural learning about my Biripi/Worimi culture and my family's history and current circumstances. This was a very confusing time for me because I could not understand how and why my extended family and our Biripi/Worimi communities experienced such entrenched socio-economic disparity. My confusion drove me to undertake an Indigenous Australian Studies Major in my undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Arts, Contemporary Music) where I came to better understand First Australian peoples' colonial experiences and socio-political position within, and relationship to, Australian society. My personal and academic learning journey at that time was a difficult one. I experienced grief, anger, resentment and frustration that I had been forcibly removed from my family and culture and that my family's experiences exemplified the impacts of a nation-wide historical pattern of social injustice that had been largely pretermitted in my formal schooling, in the media, in politics and in popular culture.

In time, these negative affects transformed into a fire in my belly to contribute to social change. The transformative experience of my learning in higher education

inspired my pursuit of social change through education and thus my career in designing and teaching Indigenous Australian Studies began. Throughout my teaching career delivering undergraduate and postgraduate Indigenous Australian Studies subjects, I have been concerned with teaching about the colonialist and racist systems, practices and ideologies that produce the socio-political injustices that First Australian peoples continue to experience. I have endeavoured to impress upon my students the gravity of the impacts of these injustices and the urgent need for us all to act for social change in our personal and professional lives. On many occasions, I have experienced, as Susan Page tactfully articulates, ‘frustration that fewer students than we would like are recruited to these aims’ (Page 2014, p.24). Presumably like many Indigenous Australian Studies teachers grappling with this problem, I have experienced self-doubt and persistently attempted to improve teaching and learning outcomes ‘through adjustments to the curriculum, reworking of assessment or adjusting teaching (or all three)’ (ibid).

My involvement in this teaching and learning project is, for me and likely many other First Australian teachers, grounded in what Martin Nakata describes as a ‘definitive commitment to Indigenous people first and foremost, not to the intellectual or academic issues alone’ (Nakata 2004, p.2; see also Hart 2003, p.15; Page 2014, p.24). This commitment is driven by the belief, a belief that also drives this research, that Critical Indigenous Australian Studies holds compelling possibilities for engendering social change (Nakata et al. 2012; Page 2014).

Rationale: justifying the research

My teaching experiences over the past eighteen years have taught me that liberal teaching and learning approaches to Indigenous Australian Studies - those that focus

on awareness-raising, on learning about First Australian peoples and the impacts of colonialism and racism - are insufficient to break through the entrenched and powerful ideologies that inform, produce and reproduce the structural iniquities and inequities that First Australian peoples contend with. I have come to see that critical approaches – I will elaborate on how I define ‘critical’ further on - with their focus on interrogating, analysing and challenging the structural conditions that justify iniquities and sustain inequities, are essential if Indigenous Australian Studies is to contribute to social change. In my ongoing endeavours to deploy critical pedagogical approaches in my classrooms, I have learned that these approaches present complex and unique opportunities, challenges and risks. I have grappled with disappointment when my students have either failed to grasp or refused to engage the complex and confronting concepts and analytical processes of critical inquiry and I have experienced elation when they have productively engaged in critical learning.

My research is driven by a deep desire to come to a more informed position about the complexities, opportunities, challenges and risks of critical pedagogical approaches. While the Indigenous Australian Studies scholarly literature is marked by recommendations for critical teaching and learning approaches, or in different terms, for a shift to Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, there is evidence to suggest that there is a significant gap between theory and practice (see Moreton-Robinson et al. 2012). Further, much of this scholarship is confined to theorising about and reflecting on teaching and learning from teacher perspectives with scant attention to the student experience. Following US-based adult education scholar Stephen Brookfield, Susan Page avers the ‘need for more specific evidence about how Indigenous Studies students learn’ (Page 2014, p.25).

Seeing our practice through learners' eyes helps us teach more responsively. Having a sense of what is happening to people as they grapple with the difficult, threatening, and exhilarating process of learning constitutes educators' primary information. Without this information, it is hard to teach well. It is obviously important to have a good grasp of methods, but it is just as important to gain some regular insight into what is happening to learners as those methods are put into practice. Without an appreciation of how people are experiencing learning, any methodological choices we make risk being ill informed, inappropriate, or harmful (Brookfield 1998, pp.199–200).

Developing insight into teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies 'through learners' eyes' is precisely what my research seeks to achieve (ibid.). While the focus of my investigation is the student perspective, it is not to say that teacher perspectives have been disregarded or undervalued. The perspectives and insights of Indigenous Australian Studies teachers – at the research site and in the scholarly literature – have been valued as important for informing the interpretation of, and theorising about, the data. The perspectives and insights that I have developed throughout my teaching experiences provide a reflective backdrop for analysis and theorising.

Problematic: research goals and objectives

My research seeks to explicate how students perceive and experience teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies. In particular, I investigate students' perceptions and experiences of learning about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege. The objective is to build a better understanding of the complexities, opportunities, challenges and risks of four specific critical pedagogical approaches: critical anticolonialism, critical race theory, critical whiteness and intersectional privilege studies.

Context: the research site

The research was carried out by conducting interviews with students and staff, focus groups with students and classroom observations in two Critical Indigenous Australian Studies subjects (henceforth referred to as ‘the Subjects’) in a School of Social Work at a large Australian university. In Chapter 7 I provide detailed description of the research site and outline the justifications for its relevance in my research, not least of which being the critical approaches to teaching about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege in the Subjects.

Overview: the thesis

This thesis presents my research in two main sections: ‘Section 1: Disciplinary, Theoretical and Epistemological Foundations’ and ‘Section 2: Emergent Themes’. In Section 1 I review the literature to locate my research in the scholarly field and identify relevant epistemological and theoretical perspectives to construct the foundational analytical framework upon which the research is grounded. In Section 2 I present and analyse the data to identify emergent themes. The concluding chapter coalesces my analysis of the data to draw a thematic set of conclusions. The following summary outlines the chapters in each section and overviews the central themes emergent from my inquiry.

Section 1: Disciplinary, Theoretical and Epistemological Foundations

In my review of the scholarly literature in the field of Indigenous Australian Studies in Chapter 2, I critically appraise liberal and critical approaches and identify an increasing chorus of scholars who appeal for a stronger commitment to critical approaches. Despite these appeals, I spotlight evidence to suggest that in practice there remains a prevalence of liberal approaches and that critical approaches are the

exception rather than the rule. This evidence is supported by a conspicuous paucity of empirical research about Critical Indigenous Australian Studies in practice and it is in this gap between theory and practice that I position my research. Drawing from both my review of the literature and from my own teaching and learning experiences I frame Critical Indigenous Australian Studies as operating at the complex intersection of ‘difficult knowledge’ (Britzman 1998) and ‘uncomfortable pedagogies’ (Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006; see also Leonardo & Porter 2010) and define my preferred approach to Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Theoretical and pedagogical tools pertinent for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies are explored in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 through a review of influential texts. In Chapter 3 I conduct a comparative critical analysis of the epistemological and analytical underpinnings of anticolonial and postcolonial theories to argue that critical anticolonialism proffers a compelling foundation upon which to construct a theoretical framework to guide pedagogical practice. Chapters 4 and 5 explore the literature to identify what is already known about the complexities, challenges, risks and opportunities of pedagogical approaches to teaching about racism, whiteness and privilege. I identify the tools of critical race theory, critical whiteness and intersectional privilege studies as germane for a Critical Indigenous Australian Studies pedagogical framework.

The research design - the ontological, epistemological, theoretical and methodological approaches to the research - is presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 justifies the poststructurally influenced critical social constructionist approach to the research. Following French philosopher Michel Foucault, I establish the value of poststructural theoretical insights for understanding the social structures

and relationships upon which individuals constitute their identities and subjectivities, or in different terms, for understanding the factors that influence how individuals come to know themselves in the world. Poststructuralism is instructive for interrogating the impacts of learner identity and subjectivity on teaching and learning because it illuminates the instability and ambiguity of identity and subjectivity. Poststructural and critical social constructionist assumptions hold that our perceptions are socially and historically shaped interpretations and as such, a critical hermeneutical approach to analysis of the data is justified.

In Chapter 7 I justify the critical ethnographic methodological approach, describe the data collection and analytic methods and processes and discuss the ethical considerations undertaken in my research. I provide detailed information about the research site, the Subjects and the student and staff participants. I describe the research methods, in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus groups and classroom observations, and detail the inductive and theory-driven analytic process.

Section 2: Emergent Themes

Section 2 presents and analyses the data in two parts, Part 1 – ‘Teaching and Learning in Theory and Practice: the teacher perspective’ and Part 2: ‘Subjective Perceptions: the student experience’. In Part 1 (Chapters 8, 9 and 10) I present five emergent themes generated from my analysis of the data from staff interviews and classroom observations: (1) ‘team teaching’; (2) ‘anticolonial pedagogy’; (3) ‘affective learning and compassionate pedagogy’; (4) ‘safe learning environments’; and (5) ‘focus on evidence, outcomes and systems’. Part 2 presents my analysis of the data from student interviews and focus group discussions across three chapters:

‘Chapter 11 Learning about Colonialism’; ‘Chapter 12 Learning about Race and Racism’ and ‘Chapter 13 Learning about Whiteness and Privilege’.

Analytical Synthesis: concluding chapter

In the concluding chapter I coalesce the themes and insights generated from my analysis of the data in Section 2 to draw two key findings. The first is that the diverse subjective identities of learners in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies produce a varied and unpredictable spectrum of affective responses that significantly impact teaching and learning. I identify three extreme characteristics of this spectrum, ‘critical affectivity’, ‘privileged affectivity’ and ‘debilitating affectivity’, to develop a typology that I term the ‘subjective affectivity spectrum’. I argue that subjective affectivity represents the genesis of the complexities, opportunities, challenges and risks of teaching and learning at the ‘affective intersection’ of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies. I posit that the implications of this key finding are that to navigate the complexities, capitalise on the opportunities, attend to the challenges and mitigate the risks of teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, subjective affectivity must be taken seriously and dealt with compassionately. Compassionate pedagogy means reorienting the pedagogical approach from that of contending with what is commonly referred to in the literature as ‘learner resistance’ (see for example Aveling 2002; Goodman 2011; Hollinsworth 2014; O’Dowd 2010; Phillips 2011), to that of working with and in support of students to critically interrogate, navigate and manage complex and powerful emotions (Garrett & Segall 2013).

The second key finding is the importance of teaching and learning that balances knowledge acquisition with practical skills development. Unless students are

supported to develop practical skills that enable them to operationalise their learning in practice, even the most critically engaged students can experience feelings of uncertainty, apprehension, inadequacy or even despondency. Acquiring critical knowledge about the exigent socio-political problems of colonial and racial domination without the development of practical skills to act in contestation is unlikely to result in productive social change action. I suggest that considering the powerful role discourse plays in the maintenance of colonial and racist oppression, discursive antiracist and anticolonial skills development, or in other words the cultivation of counter-narrative skills, is one pedagogical pathway toward empowering, inspiring and motivating students to act for social change.

Appendices

The two appendices that accompany the thesis provide relevant details about the topics and assessments in the Subjects. Appendix 1 ‘Topic Synopses: slides, readings and audio-visual materials’ provides details about each of the weekly topics in the Subjects. Appendix 2 ‘Assessments’ provides details of the undergraduate and postgraduate assessments in the Subjects.

Terminology

Terminology to collectively denote the culturally and linguistically diverse original peoples of Australia is varied and contested. While the terms ‘Aboriginal’, ‘Torres Strait Islander’ and ‘Indigenous’ are the most common terms used in Australian policy, academic and public discourse, the connotations of these exogenous terms sit uneasily with me and others because they represent the colonial ‘renaming of peoples, places and natural features all over Australia’ (Bunda et al. 2012, p.2). Nonetheless, these terms have been deployed strategically by First Australian

peoples across the now 229-year struggle against colonisation. Although First Australian peoples identify in terms of diverse and discrete regional groups (see Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 2014), the colonisers' essentialised notion, 'the Aborigines', has been utilised to assert sovereign rights and to bring about social change (see Attwood & Markus 1999; Bandler 1989; Hollinsworth 1998; Moreton-Robinson 2015).

The term 'indigenous' gained currency in the latter part of the 20th century, due to its deployment in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations 2008) to signify 'the living descendants of preinvasion [*sic*] inhabitants of lands now dominated by others' (Anaya 1996, p.3). In the Australian context, the term is commonly capitalised to operate as a shorthand proper noun to distinguish Australian indigenous peoples from indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world. For example, 'Indigenous Studies' refers to indigenous Australian Studies as distinct from studies of indigenous peoples in other global locations. The term has gained currency because it makes political inference to the fact that sovereignty has never been ceded by First Australian peoples, despite colonisation and the modern Australian nation's disregard of First Australian people's sovereign rights. Despite the currency of the term 'Indigenous' in Australian policy, academic and public discourse, the use of the term continues to be contested by some First Australian people. There is no consensus as to a preferred collective term to denote First Australian peoples.

My preferred term is 'First Australian' for referring to peoples, their territories and their cultural and intellectual property and I use this term throughout the dissertation. I prefer this term because it sidesteps the contestation between the terms 'Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander’ and ‘Indigenous’ but maintains the political inferences of the term ‘Indigenous’. I use the term non-Indigenous to refer to Australian people who are not of First Australian descent and the lower case terms ‘indigenous’ and ‘non-indigenous’ to refer to peoples globally.

Conclusion

The problematic and rationale for my research has been developed over eighteen years of teaching Indigenous Australian Studies in higher education, or stated differently, developed directly through pedagogical practice. The motivation for my teaching practice and for this research study is inspired by my lived experiences and my commitment to social change and social justice for First Australian families and communities. The depth of my commitment to Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, and therefore to this research, goes far beyond that of intellectual advancement and career progression. My commitment is deeply personal and political. It is driven by the urgent goal to contribute to the kind of anticolonial and antiracist social change needed to ameliorate the life-threatening social disparities that First Australians contend with and to contribute to the kind of politics necessary for achieving social justice through the recognition of First Australian sovereignty (see Moreton-Robinson 2006; 2004b; Nicoll 2004; Rigney 1998). I am compelled by the possibilities of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies to meet these social and political objectives.

Turning to my review of the literature, the following chapter explores the historical and current field of Indigenous Australian Studies and critically appraises the various pedagogical approaches presented in the scholarly literature. In doing so, I define and frame Critical Indigenous Australian Studies and position my research in the field.

SECTION 1
DISCIPLINARY, THEORETICAL
AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL
FOUNDATIONS

Chapter 2

Teaching Indigenous Australian Studies in Higher Education: a critical appraisal

Introduction

Beginning with an overview of the historical evolution of Indigenous Australian Studies in Higher Education, in this chapter I critically appraise the current field and establish that it is complex, diverse and contested in both theory and practice. I review the discipline specific literature to build a better understanding of various theoretical underpinnings and pedagogical approaches and proffer a definition of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies. I locate the specific context of my research, the Subjects, within the field as instances of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies and overview the specific approaches deployed in the Subjects to teach about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege. I conclude by theoretically framing Critical Indigenous Australian Studies as located at the intersection of ‘difficult knowledge’ (Britzman 1998) and ‘uncomfortable pedagogies’ (Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006; see also Leonardo & Porter 2010).

Historical Evolution

The development of Indigenous Australian Studies grew out of early colonial anthropological and ethnographic studies that positioned First Australian peoples as primitive curiosities that exemplified and evidenced scientific theories of racial and cultural hierarchies - theories that were deployed to justify the legal fiction ‘terra nullius’ (meaning ‘nobody’s land’) and the consequent colonial invasion of First Australian territories (see Foley & Anderson 2006). As First Australian scholar

Martin Nakata observed, these studies were ‘external’ to First Australian peoples’ aspirations and imperatives (Nakata 2004, p.2).

The early study of Indigenous societies had little interest in Indigenous peoples beyond how we, as living evidence of the human past, could contribute to knowledge of the evolution of human societies. The value of study was to capture knowledge of us and our ‘primitive social organisation’ before we were ‘lost’ or ‘transformed’ so the knowledge would not be lost to science (ibid. p. 3).

In 1964, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies was established and neither the Institute’s policies nor its’ anthropologically based practices engaged First Australian peoples as knowledgeable agents, but rather, as ethnographic objects (Hart 2003; Mackinlay & Bradley 2012; Ma Rhea & Russell 2012; Mooney & Craven 2005; Nakata 2004; Shaw 2006).

From the 1970’s the focus of Indigenous Australian Studies began to increasingly shift towards ‘revised histories’ and ‘sociological theories’ about the impacts of colonisation and racism (Nakata 2004, p.4). This new focus, the result of First Australian political activism, marked the beginning of the inclusion of First Australian ‘descriptions, insights and explanations of human experience’ (ibid. p.5). First Australian representative groups such as the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) and Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (AECG) bore out the eventual development of state and federal Aboriginal Education Policies (AEP) effected in all State and Territory governments by 1990. The long-term goals of these early policies focused on four target areas: involvement of First Australian peoples in educational decision-making; equity of access; equity of participation and equitable outcomes (Mooney & Craven 2005).

The report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, published in 1991, identified that First Australian disparity and over representation in the criminal justice system was a result of entrenched racism linked to a national lack of education about the history of colonialism and the ongoing impacts on First Australian peoples (Johnston 1991). In 1996 national and state Aboriginal Education Policies were revised to include the goal for Indigenous Australian Studies to become part of mainstream curricula as a way to combat racism and effect equitable social change (Beresford 2003; Burrige & Chodkiewicz 2012; El-Ayoubi 2008; Mooney et al. 2003; Page 2014). This goal remains a fundamental *raison d'être* for Indigenous Australian Studies in higher education today (Page 2014).

Contemporary Contexts: the prevalence of liberal approaches

Indigenous Australian Studies has developed into a diverse and complex multidisciplinary field and all thirty-nine Australian universities offer Indigenous Australian Studies across a diverse range of academic disciplines in undergraduate and postgraduate contexts (Australian Indigenous Studies Learning and Teaching Network 2014; Fredericks 2009; Ma Rhea & Russell 2012; Nakata et al. 2012; Page 2014; Universities Australia 2013). Offerings vary from elective and mandatory discipline specific stand-alone subjects, to major sequences in some instances or, in rare cases, degree courses, to the 'Indigenisation' of existing offerings and the embedding of Indigenous specific graduate attributes. While current Australian higher education policy now commits to the 'embedding of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into curriculum, teaching, and graduate attributes' (Australian Government Department of Education 2014), there is wide contestation as to whether Indigenisation or specialised curriculum is more efficacious and there is limited

research that supports a better understanding of this complex field (Carey 2008a; Hart et al. 2012; Hook 2012; Ma Rhea 2009; Ma Rhea & Russell 2012; Mackinlay & Barney 2012b; Moreton-Robinson et al. 2012; Nakata et al. 2014; Wimshurst et al. 2004). While important to the development of Indigenous Australian Studies, my research does not directly address this debate. Instead, I am interested in the efficacy of teaching and learning approaches, regardless of whether curriculum is embedded or delivered as discrete subjects.

As an interdisciplinary field, Indigenous Australian Studies curricula ranges from the anthropological study of pre- and post-contact First Australian peoples and cultures, to the historical study of dispossession and colonial oppression, to the sociological study of contemporary societies and issues, through to critical anticolonial socio-political critiques (Nakata et al. 2012). In many cases a major objective is the provision of professional knowledge and skills perceived to be needed by students - of whom non-Indigenous learners make up the majority - for working with and providing professional services for First Australian individuals, families and communities (Asmar 2011; Asmar & Page 2009a; Butler-McIlwraith 2006; Mackinlay & Bradley 2012; McGloin & Carlson 2013; Nakata et al. 2012; Page 2014). According to Australian education scholars Elizabeth Mackinlay and John Bradley,

Indigenous Australian Studies today is an interdisciplinary field which takes a critical and reflexive approach to actively deconstruct colonialism and the all-pervasiveness of whiteness in the construction of knowledge by and in relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Mackinlay & Bradley 2012, p.26).

Mackinlay & Bradley's claim tends to imply a level of consistency in critical approaches to teaching and learning. However my review of the literature suggests that the curricula and approaches employed across the Australian higher education sector are inconsistent and that there is a dearth of engagement in critical approaches (Kutay et al. 2012; Moreton-Robinson et al. 2012; Nakata et al. 2012).

By way of example, in their analysis of the single discipline area of pre-service teacher preparation, First Australian scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson with David Singh, Jessica Kolopenuk, and Adam Robinson found that there was 'no recognisable overarching approach to Indigenous content provision nationally' (Moreton-Robinson et al. 2012, p.24). Their study, commissioned by the Indigenous Education Policy branch of the Queensland Government, involved a 'desktop audit of all [Australian] universities' pre-service teacher training' (ibid. p.1) and included the development of a 'percentage distribution of specific content across courses' (ibid. p.18). Their findings indicated a disproportionate emphasis on history and 'social cultural profiling' content, or in other words content focused on learning about the cultural diversity, difference, historical experiences and needs of First Australian peoples. Accompanying this disproportionate content was an overwhelming 'paucity of approaches acknowledging 'race', racism and whiteness' (ibid. p.25), with only 2% of content focused on antiracism and 1% on whiteness (ibid. p.23).

While these findings are from a single discipline, the literature about approaches in other disciplines such as medicine, nursing, psychology and other allied health fields as well as in the broad field of human services suggests a similar situation. In these fields liberal approaches such as cultural awareness (and the variants of cultural

safety, cultural competence, cultural security), racism awareness and multicultural education are perhaps the most common approaches to Indigenous Australian Studies (see Downing et al. 2011; Durey 2010; Edwards & Taylor 2008; Fredericks 2008; Furlong & Wight 2011; Grote 2008; Young & Zubrzycki 2011). In many cases, these approaches tend to focus more or less entirely on learning about the cultural diversity and difference of First Australian peoples, or in Moreton-Robinson and her colleagues' terms, on socio-cultural profiling. That other disciplines suffer a corresponding dearth of critical approaches to that found in pre-service teacher education is strongly suggested by frequent entreaties in the literature for educators who deploy liberal approaches to adopt critical pedagogical tools from critical race, critical whiteness and intersectional privilege pedagogies (see for example Downing & Kowal 2011; Farrelly & Lumby 2009; Fredericks 2008; Grote 2008; Hollinsworth 2006; Kowal et al. 2013; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Nicotera & Kang 2009; Walter et al. 2011; Young & Zubrzycki 2011).

In these entreaties, it is convincingly argued that liberal approaches that predominantly focus on learning about First Australian peoples and learning about racism have a tendency to result in the pathologisation of First Australian peoples as the problem and do little to challenge colonial and racist systems of domination (Paradies 2005; Walter et al. 2011). As US race and whiteness scholar George Lipsitz notes, '[s]tudies of culture too far removed from studies of social structure leave us with inadequate explanations for understanding racism and inadequate remedies for combatting it' (Lipsitz 1995, p.371). Learning about the 'Other' reinforces the ideologies and obscures the forces that constitute colonialist and racist structures by essentialising cultures and cultural differences between groups and by

framing racism as intergroup misunderstandings (Aveling 2012b; Berman & Paradies 2010; Dei & Calliste 2000; Hollinsworth 2006; Kessarar 2006; Pease 2010). Moreton-Robinson is on point when she argues that the ‘reification of cultural difference’ in Indigenous Australian Studies (Moreton-Robinson 2015, p.xv) ‘foreclose[s] the possibility of theorizing how racialization works to produce Indigeneity through whiteness’ (ibid. p. xviii).

Patriarchal white nation-states and universities insist on producing cultural difference in order to manage the existence and claims of Indigenous people. In this way the production of knowledge about cultural specificity is complicit with state requirements for manageable forms of difference that are racially configured through whiteness. The relative paucity of intellectual interest in operationalizing race and whiteness as categories of analysis indicates that “culture” continues to be the epistemological a priori of our analyses (ibid.).

Commitment to ‘operationalizing race and whiteness as categories of analysis’ is crucial if there is any chance for Indigenous Australian Studies to achieve the goal of contributing to emancipatory social change.

Critical Indigenous Australian Studies

In light of the discussion thus far then, it might be more accurate to interpret Mackinlay and Bradley’s description of Indigenous Australian Studies, quoted above, as a description of ‘Critical Indigenous Australian Studies’. Their definition corresponds closely with First Australian scholars Aileen Moreton-Robinson & Maggie Walter’s interpretation that ‘perceive[s] the epistemological boundaries of Critical Indigenous Studies as marked by analyses of contemporary colonising power in its multiple forms in different contexts’ (Moreton-Robinson & Walter 2008, p.1). In chorus with these scholars, I define Critical Indigenous Australian Studies as:

- informed by anticolonial or decolonising knowledge asserted from First Australian standpoints;
- characterised by analyses of colonialism, racism whiteness and privilege; and
- focused on the goals of emancipatory social change.

My choice of the research site was influenced by the correspondence between my definition of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies and the theoretical and pedagogical framework and approaches in the Subjects.

The Subjects: theoretical and pedagogical framework

The fundamental basis of the theoretical and pedagogical framework of the Subjects' aims, objectives and curriculum content was anticolonial. In the first lecture of the semester, the teaching team affirmed and articulated their approach to teaching and learning in the PowerPoint presentation.

This subject is informed and inspired by Indigenous and anticolonial approaches to teaching and learning as individually embodied and understood by each of the teaching team' and founded on the following assumptions:

- contemporary Australia remains a neo-colonial experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and societies;
- de-colonisation is the only process that will enable equitable social justice outcomes for all people in Australia (see Appendix 1).

This assertion was substantiated both in my interviews with the teaching team and in my classroom observations where a consistent commitment to anticolonial pedagogical practice was discernible. Drawing from my review of the literature about anticolonial theory and practice (discussed in detail in the following chapter), the theoretical and pedagogical approaches in the Subjects might be more accurately described as critical anticolonialist. Critical anticolonialism deploys critical analytical and pedagogical tools such as those found in critical race, whiteness and

privilege theories (Carey 2008b; Dei 2010a; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Nakata et al. 2012; Phillips 2011; Williamson & Dalal 2007). These tools are deployed to support the fundamental objectives of anticolonialism: the authorisation of First Australian knowledges and standpoints to expose and contest colonial domination (Cesaire 2010; Dei 2006; Fanon 1963; Gandhi & Kumarappa 1953; Hart & Moore 2005; Nakata 2006; Nakata 2002). Critical anticolonialism labours to analytically dissect normative ideological representations, explanations and justifications for the reality of oppression to produce anticolonial knowledge that conceptualises, strategises and advocates the moral goals of equitable social change (Dei 2010a; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Nakata et al. 2012).

The authorisation of First Australian analyses and testimonies in the Subjects was supported by broader authoritative curriculum content presented in the PowerPoint presentations and the print and audio-visual learning materials. This evidence-based material provided facts and in-depth details to elucidate the strong links between historical events and contemporary realities and the urgency of conceptualising, strategising and identifying sites of resistance for the possibility of social change (see Appendix 1 and Table 10 in Chapter 10). The deployment of critical analytical and pedagogical tools of critical race, whiteness and privilege theories made the Subjects clearly correspondent to my definition of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies. The particular strategies deployed to teach about race, racism, whiteness and privilege in the Subjects are outlined below.

Teaching about race and racism

Race was conceptualised in the Subjects as an ideological and political construct upon which social groups are differentiated and categorised to explain, justify and

sustain normative colonial and racist systems of power and domination. Essentialised notions of race as a biological determinant of cultural, intellectual and moral capacity continue to be the basis upon which policy and public opinion about First Australian peoples is shaped (Hollinsworth 2006) and therefore learning critical and alternative notions of race is important. The ideology of race ‘both establishes and rationalises the order of difference as a law of nature’ (Goldberg in Hollinsworth 2006, p.25; see also Gunaratnam 2003, p.4) or in other words, it explains and justifies structural disparity as a consequence of First Australian peoples’ presumed racial, social and cultural deficits (Fejo-King & Briskman 2009; Maddison 2009; Moreton-Robinson 2009; Walter et al. 2011). Developing critical conceptualisations of race is an essential prerequisite for learning about racism.

Racism was framed around three main categories: ‘individual racism’, ‘institutional racism’ and ‘ideological racism’. Individual racism was defined as ‘individual pathology’ manifesting as abuse or aggression and perpetrated by defective individuals. Institutional racism was defined as ‘formal and informal, intended and unintended’ structural manifestations of racism across social institutions. Ideological racism was defined as the expression of ‘social myths about, and representations of certain groups’ manifesting as ‘assimilationist stances, casual racism and micro aggressions’. Crucially important was the way race and racism was exposed in the Subjects as socially constructed.

Supported by authoritative evidence, not least that presented in the documentary ‘Racism a History’ that traces the emergence of theories of race and the history of the application of those theories, racism was compellingly exposed as something much more than the commonly held assumption that racism is an inherent human

‘trait’ or a pathology of ‘bad’ individuals (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004, p.575; Cabrera 2014, p.49). Racism was demonstrated to be a complex, vigorous, political and ideological apparatus of power and domination that produces very real and very detrimental material, social and psychological effects. The social disparities experienced by First Australian peoples and their over-representation in the criminal justice and child protection systems was critically analysed as the result of centuries of structural racism that continues to be sustained and justified by normative ideologies. This evidence-based critical teaching aimed to inspire motivation for social change action.

Teaching about whiteness and privilege

Whiteness was conceptualised as a structure of power and domination that operates socially, institutionally and culturally to confer unearned advantages, or privilege, to white individuals and groups enabling ‘greater access to power, resources, and opportunities that are denied to others and usually gained at their expense’ (Goodman 2011, p.18). Privilege was framed as intersectional, the result of a complex system of intersecting social groupings based on race, gender, class, ability, sexuality, language and other arbitrary categorisations that produce and maintain unequal power. Students were encouraged to consider whiteness in subjective relational terms, or in other words psychologically, to unpack the concept of white privilege as it related to their own lives. Links between white privilege and structural mechanisms, processes and social relations of whiteness were made in classroom discussions and in required and recommended supporting material. For example, white subjectivity and white privilege were linked to the structural nature of whiteness by emphasising the material and symbolic consequences of whiteness such

as the power to control social institutions, access to housing, education, employment and the power to control representations that normalise whiteness. Emphasis on the linkages between psychological and social conceptualisations of whiteness is imperative because without these linkages, motivation to act for social change is unlikely to be inspired and the risks of reinscribing whiteness are heightened (Bailey 1998a; Blum 2008; Endres & Gould 2009; Lensmire et al. 2013; Leonardo 2004; Levine-Rasky 2000; Monahan 2014; Wise 2002).

In sum, the theoretical and pedagogical frameworks of anticolonialism, critical race, whiteness and privilege that underpinned the curriculum and teaching and learning approaches position the Subjects as instances of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Difficult Knowledge and Uncomfortable Pedagogies

Critical Indigenous Australian Studies operates at the intersection of ‘difficult knowledge’ and ‘uncomfortable pedagogies’. ‘Difficult knowledge’ is defined by educational psychoanalyst Deborah Britzman as the study of ‘the traumatic residuals of genocide, ethnic hatred, aggression, and forms of state-sanctioned – and hence legal – social violence’ (Britzman 1998, p.117). The term connotes, as Cypriot education scholar Michalinos Zembylas explains,

... both representations of social and historical traumas in curriculum and the learner’s encounters with them in pedagogy... difficult knowledge is difficult not only because of the traumatic content of knowledge, but also because the learner’s encounter with this content is deeply unsettling (Zembylas 2014, pp.392–393).

The difficult knowledge of anticolonial representations and analyses in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies not only unsettles students’ socially shaped

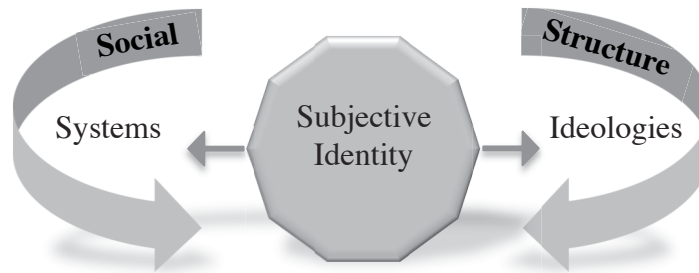
perceptions of First Australian peoples, colonial history and contemporary realities, it also unsettles their perceptions of their subjective identities in relation to First Australian peoples and their subject positioning in the current social order (O'Dowd 2010). In her analysis of the representation and reception of difficult knowledge in Indigenous Australian Studies, Australian social justice education scholar Cathryn McConaghy identified 'two significant dynamics' of subjectivity at play: 'the dynamics of self and other... and the dynamics of locating the self in relation to knowledge' (McConaghy 2003, p.18). For many Australians, perceptions of their subjective identities in relation to First Australian peoples are shaped by a national consciousness that pretermits the difficult knowledge of First Australian testimonies in favour of ideological stories of benevolence and salvation (McConaghy 2003; O'Dowd 2010). This pretermision amounts to a refusal to know that serves as a mechanism of self-defence against the implication of complicity in First Australian disparity and inequity. The authorisation of First Australian testimonies in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies impugns these normative myths and calls into question perceptions of Australia's national character and in turn, individuals' perceptions of their subjective identities.

Critical pedagogies that challenge racism, whiteness and privilege are 'uncomfortable pedagogies' (Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006, pp.10–12; see also Leonardo & Porter 2010) because they disrupt and destabilise the normative social structures, systems and ideologies that constitute our socio-cultural environment. Patterns of relationships and practices that exist in our socio-cultural environment inform and shape our subjective identities, that, in turn, inform and shape our socio-

cultural environment (Billett 2006; Foucault 1987; Pryor & Crossouard 2010).

Diagram 1 illustrates this process.

Diagram 1: Subjective identity and social structure



Uncomfortable pedagogies can be a process of, in Australian antiracism scholar and Indigenous Australian Studies educator Nado Aveling's words, 'hacking at the very roots of the ways in which students have conceptualized their 'identity' —that is, how they see themselves as human subjects' (Aveling 2006, pp.261–262; see also Curry-Stevens 2007). Critical contestation of our socio-cultural environment is, by association, critical contestation of our subjective identities, of who we construct ourselves to be.

Teaching and learning at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies is fraught with complexity and marked by difficulty and discomfort. It is the complexities, opportunities, challenges and risks at this intersection that my research aims to explicate.

Conclusion

Indigenous Australian Studies in higher education has evolved from early anthropological studies of 'primitive peoples' into a complex and diverse field.

While current literature advances Critical Indigenous Australian Studies that deploy anticolonial, critical race, whiteness and privilege approaches as best practice, there is evidence that critical approaches are not as commonly practiced as might be assumed or hoped for. In other words, it seems there is a significant gap between theory and practice. It is one thing to theoretically describe and discuss how to design and deliver Critical Indigenous Australian Studies; it is another to undertake empirical research of attempts to implement it. Nevertheless, there are examples of what can be interpreted as Critical Indigenous Australian Studies of which, I contend, the Subjects under study in this research are instances (see for example Aveling 2012a; Dudgeon & Fielder 2006; Hart & Moore 2005; Hollinsworth 2014; Hook 2012; Mackinlay & Barney 2012a; Nakata et al. 2012; Walter et al. 2011; Young & Zubrzycki 2011).

While I have argued that critical approaches are crucial if there is any hope for the possibilities of education that can contribute to decolonising social change, I take seriously the warning put forward by British-Australian critical scholar Sara Ahmed that a critical approach to teaching and learning does not ‘guarantee that it will have effects that are critical’ (Ahmed 2004, para.10). The risks of alienating students and entrenching or reinscribing colonial and racist ideologies and practices remain. Critical Indigenous Australian Studies is a coalition of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies that portends the probability of complex openings, roadblocks, dead-ends and ambiguities. Teaching and learning at this difficult and discomfiting intersection, as my findings identify, engender strong affective student responses that powerfully influence the complexities, opportunities, challenges and risks of this teaching project (see Chapter 14).

Prior to the presentation of my findings, in the following three chapters I conduct a review of the literature about four particular critical theoretical and pedagogical approaches analogous to my definition of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies: 1). anticolonialism; 2). critical race theory; 3). critical whiteness studies; and 4). intersectional privilege studies. The reviews explicitly endeavour to identify what is already known about the complexities, possibilities and dangers of these critical approaches. In the next chapter, 'Chapter 3 Teaching about Colonialism', I argue that critical anticolonialism is the most relevant and rigorous framework for guiding teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies. The argument is made by way of a comparative analysis of anticolonial and postcolonial theories.

Chapter 3

Framing Colonialism: anticolonialism and postcolonialism

Introduction

While First Australian people, myself included, have progressively contributed to the development of Indigenous Australian Studies as ‘subjects’, we continue to be ‘objects’ of study. As First Australian scholar Martin Nakata enjoins, ‘[w]hilst Indigenous Studies in the academy will always be study about us, we must shape it to ensure it is also study and inquiry for us’ (Nakata 2004, p.15). In the previous chapter I argued that critical theoretical and pedagogical approaches informed by First Australian anticolonial standpoints are crucial if Indigenous Australian Studies is to address the goals of social justice and social change. This chapter expands on my argument by way of a comparative analysis of the theoretical and political imperatives of anticolonialism with those of postcolonialism. My discussion establishes the capacity of anticolonialism to shape Indigenous Australian Studies as a project that benefits First Australian people. This is because anticolonialism is the study of colonial domination from the standpoint of the colonised, because it values First Australian epistemologies and axiologies as the bedrock upon which resistance can be strategised and deployed and because it is committed to the pursuit of social justice and social change.

There has been a resurgence of anticolonialism over the past few decades, particularly in the field of education. This resurgence is, in part, an indigenous response to the institutionalisation of postcolonialism as the preferred theory of colonisation in the Western academy (Dei 2008, p.11; Carey 2008a np.). Taking its

lead from anticolonial discourse, postcolonialism as a field has contributed valuable analytical insights and strategies to the study of colonisation. However it has also resulted in the appropriation of anticolonial resistance discourses, the universalising of colonialism and the undermining of the liberative power and potential of indigenous knowledges and values.

In the discussion that follows, I critique the field of the postcolonial as lacking the political conviction and strategic considerations necessary to effect social change. I suggest that the valuable analytical contributions of postcolonialism can be deployed under a guiding anticolonial framework to place the analyses of colonisation firmly back into the hands of the progenitors of studies of domination, the colonised. I conclude by describing and advocating for critical anticolonialism as a compelling framework for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Anticolonialism

Anticolonialism is a resistance discourse that developed in the twentieth century through opposition to, and critiques of, colonisation (Kempf 2009, p. 20). Leaders of independence struggles such as Mohandas Gandhi in India (Gandhi 1968; Gandhi & Kumarappa 1953), Aime Cesaire in Martinique (Cesaire 2010; Césaire & Pinkham 1972), Franz Fanon in France and Algeria (Fanon 1963; Fanon 1967), Albert Memmi in Tunisia (Memmi 1967), Julius Nyerere in Tanzania (Nyerere 1967; Nyerere 1971), Amilcar Cabral in Guinea (Cabral 1974), Che Guevara in Argentina (Guevara 1967), and Cornel West in America (West 1994), criticised colonialism and advocated for liberation. They decried social and political domination, racism and the repression of indigenous cultures, histories and knowledges and emphasised the power and agency of indigenous knowledges as foundational to political and moral

consciousness raising and the struggle for emancipation. If successful colonialism is that which represses, oppresses or destroys the epistemologies and axiologies of the colonised, then indigenous knowledges and values are the power-base of resistance (Cabral 1974; Cesaire 2010; Dei 2006; Fanon 1963; Gandhi & Kumarappa 1953).

Ghanaian anticolonial theorist and education scholar George Sefa Dei, based in Canada, is perhaps one of the most prolific writers and leading champions of anticolonial theory in contemporary education. He is notable in the more recent revitalisation of anticolonial theory for twenty-first century concerns in the context of education. He defines anticolonial thought as,

... an epistemology of the colonized informed by a particular politics to interpret oppressed and colonized peoples' experiences on their own terms and evoke intellectual understandings not forced through Eurocentric lenses (Dei 2009, p.253).

His critical re-theorisation of anticolonialism recognises that multiple forms of domination - classism, racism, sexism and so on - intersect with colonialism (Dei 2006; Dei & Ascharzadeh 2001). He therefore promotes an anticolonialism that imbricates 'critical race theory, critical antiracism, Black feminism, critical whiteness, and other liberatory discourses' to challenge the abuse of power (Dei 2010b, p.15) and to 'offer a social and political corrective' (Dei 2008, p.8). As a 'strategic approach to decolonisation' (Kempf 2009, p.15), anticolonialism seeks social change by challenging modern ideological justifications of domination from the epistemology and standpoint of the dominated (Dei 2010a; Dei 2006). Like Freirian pedagogy, anticolonial pedagogical approaches value the learner as knowledge producer and agent 'rather than as a spectator, victim or perpetrator' (Dei & Kempf 2006, p.310). Anticolonialism has a sharp focus on oppression and domination, a focus that is relevant to the colonised and coloniser alike (Dei 2009).

Following First Australian scholar Martin Nakata, anticolonial theoretical approaches for Indigenous Australian Studies need to be driven by ‘the politics of knowledge production, the politics of education’ and ‘the indigenous politics of self-determination’ (Nakata et al. 2012, pp.123–124). This radical synthesis of ‘scholarship, politics and activism’ (McLaughlin & Whatman 2011, p.371) entails decolonial knowledge production that asserts diverse endogenous First Australian standpoints, representations and analyses of domination and oppression (Hart & Moore 2005; Nakata et al. 2012; Nakata 2006; Nakata 2002). Anticolonial critiques need to be framed in terms of the complexities of the ‘interface’ of intertwined Western and First Australian knowledge systems (Nakata et al. 2012, p.133). If complexity is not accounted for, critiques of colonialism can become ‘simplistic oppositional’ analyses. In these cases Western knowledge systems and Indigenous knowledge systems can become positioned in binary, oppositional terms resulting in an uncritical dismissal of Western knowledge systems as ‘bad’ and the reification of Indigenous knowledge systems as ‘good’ (ibid. p.127). While anticolonial critiques are an important and relevant entry point for Indigenous Australian Studies, the end point needs to be more than the reification or fetishisation of First Australian knowledge systems as the singular solution to disparity and inequity (ibid.; Nakata 2006).

Critical anticolonial approaches call for the persistent disruption of ideologically based perceptions of the authority of Western epistemology by way of analysis of the racialised, classed and gendered nature of colonial domination and oppression (Carey 2008a; Hook 2012; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Nakata et al. 2012; Phillips 2011; Williamson & Dalal 2007). This involves bringing First Australian and

Western knowledge systems into communication and negotiation (Dei 2010c; Nakata 2006) where new knowledge and new understandings can be produced through the study of 'knowledge about knowledge' (Nakata et al. 2012, p.126). When First Australian teachers strategically deploy their knowledges and values to contest Western theories, ideologies and power structures and to conceptualise strategies for social change, they are operating from an anticolonial standpoint. Crucial to anticolonialism is the tenacious commitment to the persistent pursuit of radical social change and it is perhaps on this score, that anticolonial theorists level their most scathing critiques of the field of postcolonialism.

The Field of the Postcolonial

Postcolonialism can be described as a diverse range of conditions, ideas, theories and academic practices. Its origins lie both in early anticolonial analyses (see for instance Fanon 1963; Memmi 1967; Césaire & Pinkham 1972) and other diverse literary works produced by writers from British colonies and former British colonies. These critical and subversive literary works expressed, in English, colonised peoples' experiences of social, political and 'cultural exclusion and division under empire' and challenged colonial 'myths of power' (Boehmer 2005, p.3; see also Ashcroft et al. 2007, p.168). In the 1960's these works were repressively appropriated and inscribed as an extension of the imperial literary canon and labelled 'Commonwealth Literature' (Ashcroft et al. 2007, pp.44–47; Mishra & Hodge 1991, p.399; Sethi 2011, p.13; Young 2001, p.6).

According to Edward Said, early postcolonial writings are 'based on studies of domination and control done from the standpoint of either a completed political independence or an incomplete liberationist project' (Said 1995, p.351).

Foundational to the development of postcolonial theory is the colonial discourse analyses of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Said's seminal work, *Orientalism*, examined the way that dominant discourses operate to maintain cultural domination over the colonised and formerly colonised (Said 1995). His analysis 'demonstrate[d] that the knowledge, discourses and ideologies of colonialism are as powerful as the material effects of subjugation' (Hickling-Hudson et al. 2004, p.2; see also Crowley & Matthews 2006, p.272; Gordon 2010, p.3; McCarthy et al. 2003, p.461; Rizvi et al. 2006, p.250; Sethi 2011, p.14). The work of Bhabha (1994) and Spivak (2006) drew from poststructuralism, postmodernism and feminism to bring new complexities to the field.

Since the 1980's postcolonialism has developed into a complex and highly contested field of academic practice. In their guide, *Post-Colonial Studies: the key concepts*, Australian scholars Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffen identify two distinguishable styles that underpin the tensions of the field.

... the term was a potential site of disciplinary and interpretative contestation almost from the beginning, especially the implications involved in the signifying hyphen or its absence. The heavily post-structuralist influence of the major exponents of colonial discourse theory... led many critics, concerned to focus on the material effects of the historical condition of colonialism, as well as on its discursive power, to insist on the hyphen to distinguish post-colonial studies as a field from colonial discourse theory per se, which formed only one aspect of the many approaches and interests that the term 'post-colonial' sought to embrace and discuss. While this distinction in style still exists, the interweaving of the two approaches is considerable. 'Post-colonialism/postcolonialism' is now used in wide and diverse ways... While its use has tended to focus on the cultural production of such communities, it is becoming widely used in historical, political, sociological and economic analyses...to examine the processes and effects of, and reactions to,

European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to and including the neo-colonialism of the present day (Ashcroft et al. 2007, pp.168–9).

The distinction in style that Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin identify can be thought of as a difference between ‘postcolonialism’ and ‘post-colonialism’. Postcolonialism, concerned with ‘opposition’ and ‘transcendence’ of social, political and economic ‘residual edifices of colonialism’ (Gordon 2010, p.2), is in keeping with its anticolonial roots. For all intents and purposes, it can be argued that postcolonialism is anticolonialism refreshed and rebranded (Ashcroft et al. 2007). Post-colonialism, defined as ‘the intersection of Commonwealth literary studies and what is usually now referred to as ‘colonial discourse theory’ (Ashcroft et al. 2007, p.45), is concerned less with actively challenging the real-world social and political status quo and more with postmodern cultural issues of identity, individualism, hybridity and multiculturalism (Rizvi et al. 2006; Sethi 2011; Young 1998). The distinction is articulated by British scholar Graham Huggan, as ‘the discrepancy between cerebral cultural critique and a viable agenda for social change’ (Huggan 1993, p.130) and summed up by Australian scholars Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra as ‘distinguishing between oppositional postcolonialism and complicit postcolonialism’ (Hodge & Mishra 1991, p.xi).

In my readings of both positive and negative critiques, the blurring of the distinction between postcolonial and post-colonial approaches is apparent (Ashcroft et al. 2007). While some critics do clearly articulate the differences in style and make clear the style under discussion or deployment (see for example Gordon 2010) others do not (see for example Hart 2003). Adding to the confusion, there seems to be no consensus with regard to the use of nomenclature to distinguish between the two styles. Some writers use or omit the hyphen, as I have, while others distinguish

between postcolonial theory and postcolonial studies and yet others seem to use these terms interchangeably.

This situation can be seen to be due, at least in part, to a repressive circumscription of postcolonialism within the bounds of post-colonialism's theoretical frames; a circumscription achieved through 'the institutionalization of post-colonial studies in universities all over the world' (Sethi 2011, p.16). Sethi puts forward that in this way, post-colonialism,

... becomes the new agenda of a west that has not only sold its theory to the former colonies but also appropriated resistance so completely as to make it part of its own past and present (Sethi, 2011, p. 29).

The institutionalisation of post-colonial studies results in a proliferation of post-colonial scholarly literature that swamps postcolonial (and anticolonial) literature and gentrifies its theoretical development and deployment. So while what I will call 'the field of the postcolonial' (the field) - that is the contemporary interweave of postcolonialism and post-colonialism - is recognised as subversive in origin and nature, it is also viewed as a 'colonisation' of anticolonial and other anti-domination discourses (Angod 2006, p.164; Dei & Ascharzadeh 2001, p.307; Gandhi 1998, pp.3-4; Young 1998, p.4). In this way, therefore, the field is 'implicated in western hegemony' (Sethi 2011, p.16; see also Dirlik 1999, p.286; Loomba 2015, p.2; Rizvi et al. 2006, pp.249-50). Whilst recognising the positive contributions of the field such as highlighting the perils of essentialism, the complexities, divergences, multiplicities, ambiguities, continuities and discontinuities of the colonial encounter, I am troubled by its colonising and universalising capacities and like First Australian scholars Victor Hart and Aileen Moreton-Robinson, sceptical of its applicability in

the context of Indigenous Australian studies that seeks emancipatory social change (Hart 2003; Moreton-Robinson 2003).

The field of the postcolonial tends to universalise rather than contextualise colonialism, positioning colonialism as a monolithic historical and largely European antecedent to the troubles of the world today (Ahmed 2000; Angod 2006; Dei & Ascharzadeh 2001; Dirlik 1999; Loomba 2015). In the context of Indigenous Australian Studies this means that the distinct context of Australian colonialism is often ignored or passed over (Gordon 2010; Hodge & Mishra 1991; Moreton-Robinson 2003; Shohat 1992; Young 1998). First Australian peoples have not achieved independence or liberation and their 'position within the nation state is not one where colonising power relations have been discontinued' (Moreton-Robinson 2003, p.37; see also Hart 2003, p.14). For First Australians, the experience of colonialism is not one that is 'after', 'beyond' or 'new' as defined by some contemporary scholars in the field (see for example Downing & Kowal 2011; McCarthy et al. 2003; Said 1995; Shohat 1992; Tascon 2004) but a continuation of the original colonial process that began with the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. Hart clearly articulates this concern.

For many Aboriginal scholars and teachers, addressing the first wave of 'colonialism' is still an urgent imperative that requires attending to before we indulge a 'post' colonial era' (Hart 2003, pp.15–16; see also Hodge & Mishra 1991, p.xiii).

The universalising tendencies of the field can have the effect of reducing anti-domination discourse to a 'universal crisis of identity' (Gandhi 1998, p.3) where 'collective struggles [are] undermined, discouraged and disqualified from respectability' (Angod 2006, p.163; see also Dudgeon & Fielder 2006, p.401; Hart 2003, pp.15–16; Mishra & Hodge 1991, p.402; Shohat 1992, p.110). Here, the

histories, knowledges and values of the colonised are ignored as if ‘colonialism is the only history of these societies’ and as if the knowledges and values of the colonised have not influenced or informed colonial relationships or strategies of resistance (Loomba 2015, p.37). For Hart this ‘implies history no longer has an effect on the present and that history is only relevant for *understanding* the present, rather than in transforming it’ (Hart 2003, p.15 original emphasis). The field of the postcolonial tends to disregard the ‘epistemology of the colonized’ (Dei 2009, p.253; see also Smith 1999, p.24).

The sometimes-obsessive focus of the field on ‘the subject... blurs the relationship between the material and the ideological’ (Loomba 2015, p.104; see also Mishra & Hodge 1991, p.401), glossing over the structural and material effects of colonialism and consequently overlooking potential sites of resistance (Dei 2006; Shahjahan 2005; Sethi 2011). In the ‘prioritizing of text over context’ (Sethi, 2011, p. 29), the field of the postcolonial is seen as lacking the political wherewithal to resist and challenge domination and as lacking the desire to pursue radical social change (Angod 2006; Dei & Ascharzadeh 2001; Dirlik 1999; Hart 2003; Shohat 1992; Young 1998). Sethi puts forward that the most glaring failing of the field ‘has been its utter neglect of the people’ (Sethi 2011, p.25; see also Young 1998, p.7). The failure ‘to make an intervention in the real politics of people’ (Sethi 2011, p.38) is exemplified by Hart as,

... a celebratory cover-up of a dangerous period in Aboriginal peoples’ lives and especially a cover-up on the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ relating to the genocide of Aboriginal people past and present. The possibilities of developing a dialogical approach to teaching and learning becomes encapsulated and circumscribed by its loyalty to post colonialist theory, not to real world situations. The mystification of ‘old’ racism through a paradigm of postcolonial education theory may indeed

appease those who lazily sidestep the rigorous effort required in examining the complex colonial condition that surrounds them. But for Aboriginal people the condition remains colonial and violent despite protestations and invitations to us invaded peoples to become 'post-modern' or 'postcolonial' (Hart 2003, p.14).

In chorus with Hart, Moreton-Robinson asserts, '[t]here may well be spaces in Australia that could be described as postcolonial but these are not spaces inhabited by Indigenous people' (Moreton-Robinson 2003, p.30). She raises another important point about the way that the field of the postcolonial has,

... often overlooked...the particular situatedness of different migrants in relation to power and the legal context in which their hybridity has been and is manufactured... all British migrants are not positioned in the same way in relation to British imperialism because of their ethnicity [Irish, Scottish and English]. But in the Australian context whiteness confers certain privileges to those whose skin colour represents sameness. Irish, English and Scottish post-war migrants to Australia are differently positioned in relation to British imperialism than, say, Italian, Greek and Vietnamese migrants, and different conceptions of home, place and belonging are therefore produced. The elision of certain kinds of migration denies the way in which whiteness as a possession will mark migrants' differing implications in a colonizing relationship between themselves and Indigenous people (Moreton-Robinson 2003, p.29).

Here, Moreton-Robinson highlights how whiteness manipulates the construction of migrant identity to compound colonial domination over First Australian peoples. Whiteness is a powerful colonising apparatus and therefore the critical analysis of whiteness, as I will continue to argue in the following chapter, is an essential component of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies pedagogy (Moreton-Robinson 2004b).

A Guiding Anticolonial Framework

In Australia, from a First Australian perspective, the field of the postcolonial is relevant insofar as ‘all non-Indigenous people’ are ‘migrants and diasporic’ (Moreton-Robinson 2003, p.31). In this regard, as non-Indigenous Australians comprise 97.2% of the Australian population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016a) and as the majority of students in Indigenous Australian Studies in higher education are non-Indigenous (Asmar 2011; Butler-McIlwraith 2006; McGloin & Carlson 2013; Nakata et al. 2012; Page 2014), the analytical contributions of the field are highly relevant to not only the study of the nations’ colonial relationship with First Australian peoples but also for students to investigate their own subject positioning in the context of Australian colonialism. Therefore it would be unwise to discount postcolonial analyses in a wholesale rejection. As anticolonial scholars George Dei & Alireza Ascharzadeh instruct, valuable contributions of the field (and other fields) can be deployed within a ‘guiding’ anticolonial theoretical framework,

... to build upon insights from...spaces created by Marxist, feminist, postcolonialist and deconstructionist struggles, the anti-colonial discourse seeks to reclaim a new independent space strongly interconnected with and heavily interlocked to those other spaces (Dei & Ascharzadeh 2001, p.297).

Postcolonial analyses that bring into focus the complexities, divergences, multiplicities, ambiguities, continuities and discontinuities of colonial relationships are pertinent to the specific colonial context in Australia. For example, one of the major contributions of the field of the postcolonial relevant to Indigenous Australian Studies has been the promotion and deployment of colonial discourse analysis to reveal how the power of colonial discourse works to maintain colonial domination

(Dirlik 1999; Downing & Kowal 2011; Hickling-Hudson et al. 2004; McCarthy et al. 2003; Rizvi et al. 2006).

Importantly, as highlighted by Moreton-Robinson, ‘the utility of postcolonialism lies in its ability to reveal the operations of counter-hegemonic discourses’ (Moreton-Robinson 2003, p.28). While she rightly goes on to point out that this has been done largely ‘through a metaphor of migrancy’ that has said ‘very little about the effects, or the positionalities, multiplicities and specificities of Indigenous subjects’ (ibid.), this does not mean that colonial discourse theory has not been, or cannot be, shaped and deployed in ways that do speak to the unique contexts, complexities, standpoints and aspirations of diverse First Australian peoples (Said 1995). Analyses of historical and contemporary colonial discourse in policy, media and popular literature and the assertion of counter-discourses of resistance from First Australian standpoints have been constant, customary and fundamental teaching and learning strategies in my Indigenous Australian Studies classrooms, and clearly evident in the approaches and strategies deployed in the Subjects (see Appendix 1 and Chapter 8).

Critical Anticolonialism

Critical anticolonial frameworks attend to the shortcomings of postcolonial theory by valuing and centring First Australian knowledges in the analysis of domination and oppression and by deploying critical theoretical and pedagogical tools. Most relevant for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies are the tools of critical race, critical whiteness and intersectional privilege approaches. These approaches can facilitate analyses that identify the powerful links between the ideological conditions that sustain colonial and racist domination and the structural and material impacts of oppression. Specifically, critical race and whiteness analyses are particularly

productive for exposing colonial and racist ideological structures and intersectional privilege materialist analyses are effective in exposing the social, political, and economic outcomes. As well as facilitating ideological and materialist analyses, as analytical tools of the critical tradition, these approaches have a persistent strategic focus on the goals of emancipatory social change.

To my mind, the most compelling feature of a critical anticolonial framework is the focus on and deployment of First Australian epistemologies. The potential proffered by the insights that First Australian knowledges can and do bring to analyses of colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege is profound. First Australian scholars describe their knowledges as comprising what is at times termed ‘traditional’ or ‘heritage’ knowledge, as well as intimate embodied knowledge of the colonial encounter and the realities of the modern world. Heritage knowledges and their underpinning philosophies are described as ancient, complex, holistic, collective, contextual, contingent, relational and indivisibly embodied in people and places (see Hogan & Randall 2007; Janke 2009; Kunoth-Monks 2007; Langton 2003; Martin 2003; Moreton-Robinson 2000; Moreton-Robinson & Walter 2009; Nakata 2007b; Waltja-Tjutangku-Palyapayi 2001; Nakata & Hart in Williamson & Dalal 2007). Traditional First Australian knowledge systems, ‘dense with specific and specialised knowledge and expertise’ (Morrissey 2003, p.191), enabled First Australian people to thrive in an environment of eco-social sustainability prior to the imposition of colonisation (Milroy 2011). While colonialism has severely disrupted pre-colonial physical and social environments, traditional knowledges continue to inform First Australian lives in the modern world.

Countering the anthropological assumptions of First Australian knowledges as solely outdated 'knowledge about ceremony, kinship, creation and land' (Stewart 2002, p.15), First Australian scholars assert their depth of knowledge of the coloniser and the marginalising apparatus of colonialism such as material and intellectual cultural appropriation, racism, sexism, classism, assimilationism, meritocracy and other oppressive ideologies and practices (Butler-McIlwraith 2006; Dodson 2003; Kessariss 2006; Moreton-Robinson 2004a; Nakata et al. 2012). As Maori scholar Linda Smith observes, '[i]mperialism frames the indigenous experience. It is part of our story, our version of modernity' (Smith 1999, p.19). The authoritative knowledge and insight that First Australian people bring to scholarly analysis of whiteness, for example, is aptly captured by Moreton-Robinson.

... colonial experiences have meant Indigenous people have been among the nation's most conscientious students of whiteness and racialisation. Participant observation...was deployed to gain knowledge about white people. Indigenous knowledge of whiteness is more than a denial of dominant assumptions regarding the reality of race and the superiority of whites; such knowledge is not simply a reaction to what whites do and say. Our curiosity, compassion and knowledge of what constitutes humanity inform our consideration of a variety of white behaviours, histories, cultural practices and texts (Moreton-Robinson 2004a, p.85).

In critical anticolonial analyses, First Australian knowledges are 'strategically deployed as...dynamic' in relation to the modern Australian context to challenge oppressive colonial and racist systems of domination (Hart et al. 2012, p.718; see also Dei 2008, p.6; Rigney 2001, p.10).

Conclusion

Anticolonial frameworks are highly relevant to Indigenous Australian Studies because they criticise and contest all forms of domination from the standpoint of

colonised. Anticolonial theorists and educators value indigenous epistemologies as the power base for decolonising strategies (Dei & Ascharzadeh 2001) and anticolonial frameworks are congruous to the specific colonial context within which Indigenous Australian Studies in higher education is situated (Carey 2008a; Dudgeon & Fielder 2006). The explicit goal of radical social change, the focus on a range of critical emancipatory theories and the foregrounding and valuing of First Australian knowledges (Dei 2006; Dei 2010b) situates anticolonialism as a germane framework for developing pedagogical approaches and strategies that support First Australian rights and aspirations.

The field of the postcolonial has made positive and valuable theoretical contributions to the analysis of colonialism. Yet it has also tended to appropriate anticolonial counter-hegemonic discourse, universalise complex, diverse and divergent histories and experiences of colonisation and elide the responsibility to actively pursue radical and equitable social change. As Canadian anticolonial scholar Leila Angod asserts, the field of the postcolonial is ‘anticolonialism torn from the political context of race, class and nation in which it is embedded’ (Angod, 2006, p. 164). Rather than a wholesale dismissal of the field of the postcolonial, the valuable foundational concepts and analytical contributions of the field can be employed under a guiding anticolonial framework. Following Said, I acknowledge that the field of the postcolonial has been pivotal in the promotion, exposure, accessibility and analyses of colonised and minority discourses in the academy.

Across US and European campuses in the 1980s students and faculty alike worked assiduously to expand the academic focus of so-called core curricula to include writing by women, non-European artists and thinkers, subalterns...Anthropology, political science, literature, sociology, and above all history felt the effects of a

wide-ranging critique of sources, the introduction of theory, and the dislodgement of the Eurocentric perspective (Said 1995, p.352).

While the field forged an entryway for First Australian and other colonised peoples' analyses to infiltrate the Western academe, it is perhaps now time for anticolonialism, in the hands of First Australians, to take back the reins to shape and guide the way these discourses are operationalised in the Indigenous Australian Studies classroom.

As I have argued, critical approaches hold the most promise for rigorous teaching and learning that might translate into transformative education for social change. Critical anticolonialism then, or the deployment of critical theoretical and analytical tools under a guiding anticolonial framework, presents as a compelling framework for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies. The specific critical tools most relevant for this context are critical race, whiteness and intersectional privilege pedagogies. Therefore, in the following two chapters I describe and discuss these approaches and review the Indigenous Australian Studies discipline-specific literature as well as broader multi-discipline national and international literature to ascertain what is already known about the possibilities, risks and challenges of deploying these approaches in higher education contexts. The next chapter focuses specifically on antiracism, critical race and critical whiteness theories and pedagogies.

Chapter 4

Teaching about Racism and Whiteness: antiracism, critical race and whiteness

Introduction

Critical theoretical and pedagogical approaches are essential for designing Indigenous Australian Studies pedagogy that aims to cogently interrogate and contest colonial and racist social structures and to inspire commitment to social change action. As I proposed in the previous chapter, a critical anticolonial framework is highly conducive to developing Critical Indigenous Australian Studies pedagogy that is committed to engendering the kind of social change action that, first and foremost, addresses the imperatives and aspirations of First Australian families and communities. The authorisation of First Australian epistemologies and standpoints under a guiding anticolonial framework ensures that teaching and learning objectives, approaches and practices are authentically informed by First Australian knowledges and standpoints and thus accord with First Australian endeavours toward dismantling the colonial and racist structures that produce and sustain disparity, discrimination and injustice. To approach teaching and learning from a critical anticolonial framework is to deploy critical approaches and tools that specifically address First Australian imperatives and aspirations as conceptualised from First Australian epistemologies and standpoints.

A preeminent task of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies is supporting students to interrogate the ideological normalisation and maintenance of racialised social structures and racist practices so that connections can be made between structures, systems and ideologies and enduring inequity, disparity and discrimination. In this

chapter I overview and analyse approaches to antiracist pedagogy and identify the tools of critical race theory as particularly pertinent to this task and congruent to a critical anticolonial framework. The race-cognisant analytical approach of critical race theory is highly relevant for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies because it facilitates the excavation of Australian society's deep cultural and psychological investment in justifying, maintaining and reproducing racialised colonial structures. The main objective of this chapter is to build an understanding of the opportunities, challenges and risks of these critical tools.

The Study of Racism and Whiteness

The critical study of racism and whiteness has been pioneered by anticolonial, feminist, civil rights and other radical traditions (Delgado & Stefancic 2012; Pease 2010). Indigenous peoples, slaves and their descendants and ethnic minorities have, 'as a matter of their own survival', long studied racism and whiteness (Ignatiev 2002, p.51; see also Moreton-Robinson 2004a, p.85). From my review of the literature about the study of racism and whiteness I make two related observations. The first is that the insights proffered by this early scholarship contains the most critical and compelling basis for the interrogation of contemporary racism and whiteness. The second is that, in contemporary analyses produced in the academe, there is a concerning obfuscation of the genealogy of the study of racism and whiteness and a failure to heed the teachings it contains.

To illustrate my observations, I quote at some length, deservedly I believe, the writings of three celebrated critics: First Australian political activists Jack Patten and William Ferguson and African-American sociologist William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois. The first quote is an extract from 'Aborigines Claim Citizen

Rights! A Statement of the Case for the Aborigines Progressive Association’ prepared and presented by Jack Patten and William Ferguson as part of the 1938 ‘Day of Mourning and Protest’ rallies planned to mark the sesquicentennial of the arrival of the First British Fleet and colonisation in Australia (Attwood & Markus 1999, p.60).

The 26th of January, 1938, is not a day of rejoicing for Australia’s Aborigines; it is a day of mourning... 150 years of misery and degradation imposed upon the original native inhabitants by the white invaders of this country... You came here only recently, and you took our land away from us by force. You have almost exterminated our people, but there are enough of us remaining to expose the humbug of your claim, as white Australians, to be a civilised, progressive, kindly and humane nation. By your cruelty and callousness towards the Aborigines you stand condemned in the eyes of the civilized world... you dare not admit openly that your hope and wish is for our death! You hypocritically claim that you are trying to “protect” us; but your modern policy of “protection” (so-called) is killing us off just as surely as the pioneer policy of giving us poisoned damper and shooting us like dingoes... For 150 years the Aborigines... throughout Australia have been used as cheap labour... [the] “White Australia” policy has helped to create a senseless prejudice against us, making us social outcasts... The popular Press of Australia makes a joke of us... what a dirty trick, to push us down by laws, and then make fun of us! You kick us, and then laugh at our misfortunes... your slanders against our race are a moral lie... You, who originally conquered us by guns against our spears, now rely on superiority of numbers to support your false claims of moral and intellectual superiority (reproduced in Attwood & Markus 1999, pp.82–86).

The second quote by Du Bois is an extract from his essay ‘The Souls of White Folk’ originally published in 1920 in his book ‘Darkwater: voices from within the veil’.

Neither Roman nor Arab, Greek nor Egyptian, Persian nor Mongol ever took himself and his own perfectness with such disconcerting seriousness as the modern white man. We whose shame, humiliation, and deep insult his aggrandizement so often involved were never deceived... We have curled our lips in something like contempt as we have witnessed glib apology and weary explanation. Nothing of the sort

deceived us... How many of us today fully realize the current theory of colonial expansion, of the relation of Europe which is white, to the world which is black and brown and yellow? Bluntly put, that theory is this: It is the duty of white Europe to divide up the darker world and administer it for Europe's good. This Europe has largely done... Slowly but surely white culture is evolving the theory that 'darkies' are born beasts of burden for white folk... The scheme of Europe was no sudden invention, but a way out of long-pressing difficulties. It is plain to modern white civilization that the subjection of the white working classes cannot much longer be maintained... The day of the very rich is drawing to a close, so far as individual white nations are concerned. But there is a loophole. There is a chance for exploitation on an immense scale for inordinate profit, not simply to the very rich, but to the middle class and to the laborers. This chance lies in the exploitation of darker peoples (Du Bois 1986, pp.925, 927, 928).

These quotes illuminate the intimacy and precision of knowledge produced by the colonised and the subjugated about the nature and purpose of racism and whiteness. While the quotes were written in times and places where the promotion of whiteness as superior was overt and where racism was legally sanctioned and enshrined in policy, they pinpoint the early stages of the shift toward the furtive operationalisation of whiteness that characterises the repressive tolerance of contemporary race relations. What is striking about the insights in Patten and Ferguson's and Du Bois' polemics is precisely what I find to be missing in many contemporary analyses: clear analytic emphasis on the inextricable and incontrovertible links between racism, whiteness and colonialism. My interpretation of these insights is that whiteness is a power structure that is operationalised through the ideologies and practices of racism. As two parts of a whole, whiteness and racism form a key apparatus, if not *the* key apparatus, of colonialism.

First Australian scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson is notable in her critique of much Indigenous Australian Studies scholarship for failing to emphasise the links between

racism, whiteness and colonialism (see Moreton-Robinson 2015; Moreton-Robinson 2004b). She frames contemporary Australian colonialism as ‘patriarchal white sovereignty’ that is based on the ‘logics of possession’ and operationalised through racism.

For centuries, the logics of possession have treated the earth and its Indigenous peoples as something that is always predisposed to being possessed and exploited... At the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the shape-shifting nature of colonization persists in the present and will remain unfinished business for Indigenous peoples in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and Hawai’i. Racism is an important part of the way these nation-states operationalize their possessive logics to maintain ownership of our lands... the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty and the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty are inextricably linked, anchored, and regulated through race (Moreton-Robinson 2015, pp.192–193).

The links between racism, whiteness and colonialism identified by Moreton-Robinson, Patten and Ferguson and Du Bois represent crucial considerations for contemporary antiracism scholarship and pedagogy. Teaching about racism without teaching about whiteness is to teach only half of the story. Teaching about racism without teaching about whiteness and colonialism is to teach about the symptoms but not the causes. Yet, my reading of the scholarly literature exposes a concerning body of antiracism scholarship, what I’ve categorised as ‘liberal antiracism’, that de-links racism from whiteness and from colonialism.

Liberal Antiracism

Liberal antiracism education can be described as teaching and learning that aims to raise awareness about the existence and the impacts of racism. Some liberal approaches do acknowledge unequal social relationships of power based on race, however they tend to focus on the fact of racial inequality rather than the socio-

historical structural origins that give rise to racism. In other words they focus on the symptoms at the expense of focusing on the causes (i.e. colonialism, whiteness). Liberal models focus on learning about the racialised Other based on ‘socio-cultural profiling’, a common practice in Indigenous Australian Studies as found in the audit conducted by Aileen Moreton-Robinson and her colleagues, discussed in Chapter 2 (Moreton-Robinson et al. 2012, p.25). These approaches, as Sara Ahmed observes, tend to be based on the uncritical working assumption ‘that racism is caused by ignorance [about the racialised Other], and that anti-racism will come about through more knowledge’ (Ahmed, 2004, para. 38).

Commonly, this assumption is accompanied by a reliance on student self-reflection to make connections between this knowledge and conceptualising antiracism and antiracist practice. While a self-reflective process can be productive for the study of racism, it should not be at the expense of guided critical analysis. Too strong a focus on self-reflection implicitly suggests that racism is a problem of individuals rather than a problem of social structure (Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006; Todd 2011). It sends the message that the problem of racism is the ignorant, unreflective non-racialised individual, who can, simply through self-reflection, become antiracist (Ahmed 2004; Ahmed 2005; Hollinsworth 1992; Jeyasingham 2012; Pease 2010; Walter et al. 2011; Young & Zubrzycki 2011). The heavy focus on learning about the racialised Other and the reliance on self-reflection positions liberal antiracism as lacking the rigor to belie essentialised constructions of cultural differences and to prevent the reinscription and reproduction of oppressive power structures (Armstrong & Wildman 2008; Garrett & Segall 2013; Green & Sonn 2005;

Hollinsworth 2006; Jeyasingham 2012; Leonardo & Zembylas 2013; Nicoll 2004; Pease 2010; Sharma 2010; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006; Solomon et al. 2005).

There is no doubt that it is important to learn about First Australian peoples and their experiences of racism, however if this learning is not informed by First Australian knowledges and standpoints, the crucial analytical links between racism, whiteness and colonialism are likely to be obscured and overlooked. Teaching and learning from a critical anticolonial framework avoids these risks by shifting the focus from learning *about* First Australian peoples to learning *from* them. Rather than situating First Australian peoples as victims who suffer racism, anticolonialism situates First Australian peoples as experts who intimately know racism. Learning about racism from the standpoint of First Australian peoples and others with embodied expertise widens the analytic focus from analysis of First Australian cultural differences and the symptoms of racism, to analysis of contemporary social structures constituted by colonialism and whiteness to diagnose the cause, the source and the nature of racism.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory is well positioned as a pertinent critical antiracist approach for deployment under a guiding anticolonial framework for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies. It proffers analytic tools that not only labour to critically analyse race and racism structurally but also to authorise the standpoints and knowledges of the racialised and to inspire social change action. Originating in the 1970's and 1980's in the field of legal scholarship in the USA (Gillborn 2010), critical race theory was developed 'primarily, though not exclusively, by progressive intellectuals of color' in response to the circumvention of civil rights advances of the 1960's (West 1995, p.xi; see also Crenshaw et al. 1995, p.xiii; Delgado & Stefancic 2012,

p.4; Gillborn 2006a, p.14). Grounded on the acumen of critical legal studies and radical feminism, it is informed by,

... certain European philosophers and theorists, such as Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault and Jaques Derrida as well as from the American radical tradition exemplified by such figures as Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Black Power and Chicano movements of the sixties and early seventies (Delgado & Stefancic 2012, pp.4–5).

Critical race theory is described by UK critical race scholar David Gillborn as ‘not so much a theory as a perspective...a set of interrelated beliefs about the significance of race and racism and how they operate in contemporary western society’ (Gillborn 2006a, p.19). As a radical interdisciplinary theory, critical race theory does not conform to strictly determined theoretical frameworks but rallies around two congruent goals relevant for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies: to not only understand the dominating power of constructs of race and the effects of racism, but also to transform inequitable racialised social relations (Crenshaw et al. 1995; Delgado & Stefancic 2012). It links social structure and ideology to ordinary everyday racism and aspires to ‘color insight’ (Armstrong & Wildman 2008, p.649) or in different terms, ‘racial cognizance...the continuous and perpetual examination of the role of race in our lives’ (Reason & Evans 2007, p.73).

Critical race theorists consider race to be a powerful social construction that ‘society invents, manipulates or retires when convenient’ (Delgado & Stefancic 2012, pp.8–9; see also Crenshaw et al. 1995, p.xiii; Lipsitz 1995, pp.371–2). Constructed racial characterisations of ethnic groups vacillate over time to satisfy changing economic, social and political agendas. This process was most evident in Australia under the suite of federal government immigration policies, collectively dubbed ‘the White

Australia Policy', in effect for the first seventy years of the 20th century. During this time, government officials determined who was and who was not considered to be 'white' based on changing, inconsistent and at times random criteria (see Monsour 2006; Pugliese 2002). While under the White Australian Policy the manipulation of society through racialising constructions about First Australian peoples and other racialised groups to suit changing political and economic agendas was government mandated, these nebulous and unstable racialising practices continue through socio-political ideologies (Moran 2012; Moreton-Robinson 2003; Perera 1999).

The assumptions and perspectives of critical race theory are operationalised by way of three central analytical tools: 'storytelling and counter-storytelling', 'interest convergence' and 'critical white studies' (Gillborn 2006a, pp.24–26; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995, p.52; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011, pp.369–371). The process of storytelling and counter-storytelling corresponds closely to the anticolonial imperative to privilege the voices of the dominated. Critical race scholars Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic from the US describe storytelling and counter-storytelling as the 'unique voice of color thesis' where the racialised, who bring 'a presumed competence to speak about race and racism...communicate to their white counterparts matters that the whites are unlikely to know' (Delgado & Stefancic 2012, p.10). Pedagogically, the sharing of experiences and standpoints helps to bring the everyday world of racism into the abstract context of the classroom where conflicting standpoints can operate as useful points of departure to disturb the power of essentialist discourse and to emphasise the complex and mutable nature of racialisation (Delgado & Stefancic 2000; Gillborn 2006a; Housee 2008; Kessar 2006; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995; Wagner 2005).

Interest convergence is a concept that recognises the racially dominant will only aspire to racial equity when antiracism is understood to be in their best interests. It involves appealing to the non-racialised by outlining the costs of racism and the benefits of antiracism at the intersection of race and class (Delgado & Stefancic 2000; Gillborn 2010; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Paradies 2005). Perhaps the most relevant and compelling tool of critical race theory for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies is the critical study of whiteness (Aveling 2012a; Crowley & Matthews 2006; Moreton-Robinson 2004b; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Walter & Butler 2013).

Critical Whiteness Studies

Since the introduction of critical race theory to, and its positive reception by, the Western academe in Australia, the US, the UK, Canada and elsewhere, there has been increasing interest in the study of whiteness by white scholars and this has resulted in a framing of whiteness studies as a recent analytic innovation (Roediger 2007). While the take-up of whiteness studies by white scholars is welcome and necessary if whiteness as an oppressive structure is to be productively contested, the obfuscation of the genealogy of whiteness studies is concerning. These concerns have to do with the power of whiteness to re-centre, reinscribe and reproduce itself in the very process of its analytic deconstruction (Ahmed 2004; Klinenberg 2002; Roediger 2001). I return to these concerns later in this chapter.

Contemporary analyses of whiteness define whiteness as an articulation of racial advantage, identity formation and ideology. The late Welsh born and US based feminist and anti-racist scholar Ruth Frankenberg characterised whiteness as,

... a set of linked dimensions... First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage... Second, it is a “standpoint”, a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, “whiteness” refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed’(1993, p.1).

In contrast to the flagrant aggrandisement of white people and Western culture in the early 20th century, as described by Patten and Ferguson and Du Bois, quoted earlier, contemporary whiteness is produced and reproduced surreptitiously by way of what US media and communications scholar John Gabriel describes as,

... discursive techniques, including: *exnomination*, that is the power not to be named, *naturalization*, through which whiteness establishes itself as the norm by defining 'others' and not itself; and *universalization*, where whiteness alone can make sense of a problem and its understanding becomes *the* understanding (Gabriel 2002, p.13 original emphasis).

As an unmarked and normalised racial category expressed not by what it is but rather by what it is not (i.e. the racialised Other), whiteness is represented by diverse white identities at the intersections of gender, class and other social categorisations. As such, investment in whiteness is enacted, albeit unevenly and differently, by both white supremacists and ‘average, tolerant people, of lovers of diversity and of believers in justice’ alike (Leonardo 2004, p.143). In his detailed historical analysis of economic, social and political race relations in the US, African-American Professor of ‘Black Studies’, George Lipsitz, elucidated how ‘public policy and private prejudice work together to constitute a “possessive investment in whiteness”...’ (Lipsitz 2006, pp.vii–viii).

White subjects invest in whiteness both affectively and discursively (Leonardo & Zembylas 2013). Drawing on Foucault’s concepts of the technologies and apparatus of governmentality, US based South African critical psychology scholar Derek Hook

analysed affect as constituted by both psychology and by social forces for the purposes of power and control (Hook 2005). Put differently by Cypriot education scholar Michalinos Zembylas, affect is,

... individually experienced but historically situated... affects and emotions cannot be thought outside the complexities, reconfigurations and rearticulations of power, history and politics (Zembylas 2014, pp.397–398).

Whiteness is therefore understood to be ‘technology of affect’ in that it is constituted by and operationalised through affect.

... whiteness as a constellation of values and investments... must be approached as in part a function of affective modes of constitution and affirmation... aspects of ‘whiteness’ are best approached... as formations of affect (Hook 2005 n.p.).

Therefore, ‘emotions about non-white individuals’ and the well documented affective responses of white students to critical race and whiteness studies are, to a significant degree, ‘socially produced’ manifestations of affective investments in whiteness (Leonardo & Zembylas 2013, p.160). The impact of affect on teaching and learning is a central theme emergent from my data analysis (presented in Section 2) and one that underpins my key research findings (see Chapter 14).

Affective investments in whiteness are defended by discourses. Lipsitz notes that possessive investment in whiteness,

... fuel[s] a discourse that demonizes people of color for being victimized... while hiding the privileges of whiteness. It often attributes the economic advantages enjoyed by whites to their family values, faith, and foresight— rather than to the favoritism they enjoy through their possessive investment in whiteness (ibid. p. 18).

While Lipsitz writes about the US, his insights ring true in the Australian context. Public policy in Australia in relation to First Australian peoples continues to be

driven by whiteness ideology that denigrates First Australian peoples as culturally deficient and incapable. Australian scholar of political science, Sarah Maddison, perceptively captures the Australian policy environment.

In policy terms, Aboriginal people in Australia have rarely been seen as anything other than a 'problem to be solved'... There is an implicit suggestion in much contemporary policy and public debate that Aboriginal culture is in itself pathogenic, with the further implication that if Aboriginal people could just be more like white people their problems would be resolved (Maddison 2009, pp.1, 2).

Informed by policy and political discourse, private prejudice against First Australian peoples is no less palpable today than in times past. In my dealings with students in my classrooms and in my interviews with student participants for this research, as will be identified in later chapters, discourses of whiteness are invoked to disparage First Australian peoples as either culturally deficit (Fejo-King & Briskman 2009, p.109; Maddison 2009, p.2; Pettman in Hollinsworth 2006, p.51) or as failing to assimilate to 'Aussie values'. These values are embedded in a meritocratic ideology that characterises Australia, expressed vernacularly, as 'the land of a fair go', or in different terms, as a society of equal opportunity where hard work and prudence is seen to be the key that unlocks social mobility. Australian meritocratic ideals work as a discursive deflection from the fact of structural whiteness to explain and position First Australian peoples as responsible for the disparities and the discrimination they experience (Argy 2006; Henry et al. 1988).

As is acknowledged by many scholars of whiteness from Australia, the US, the UK, Canada and elsewhere, ideological race discourse defends and sustains investment in whiteness by explaining and justifying the oppression of racialised Others (see for example Brookfield 2014; Dei 2000b; Endres & Gould 2009; Frankenberg & Mani

1993; Gillborn 2006a; Hatchell 2004; Housee 2008; Jeyasingham 2012; Lipsitz 2006; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Pease 2010; Todd 2011; Walter et al. 2011). Discourses of whiteness 'are not monolithic, complete or uniform' but fluid and changeable (Sonn 2008, p.157). Whiteness discourses in Australia range from the meritocratic discourses described above, to white saviour discourses where the maintenance of whiteness is justified for the purposes of helping First Australian peoples to achieve equality (viz. assimilation), through to the reification and appropriation of the First Australian knowledges, values, cultural practices and technologies to benefit white society (Endres & Gould 2009; Green & Sonn 2005; Hollinsworth 2014). These discourses of whiteness are familiar in the narratives of students in my classrooms over the years and explicit in the narratives of some of the student participants in this study (see Chapters 11 and 12).

Ideological discourses 'mystify the process of racial accumulation through occlusion of history and forsaking structural analysis for a focus on the individual' (Leonardo 2004, p.141; see also Lipsitz 2006, p.18). In the context of modern neoliberal individualism where social life is defined,

... as the sum total of conscious and deliberate individual activities, then only individual manifestations of personal prejudice and hostility will be seen as racist. Systemic, collective, and coordinated behaviour disappears from sight. Collective exercises of group power relentlessly channelling rewards, resources, and opportunities from one group to another will not appear to be "racist" from this perspective because they rarely announce their intention to discriminate against individuals (Lipsitz 1995, p.381).

The ideology of individualism obscures the structural nature of racial power, of racialised advantage and disadvantage. Some of the student participants, when asked to define racism in their interviews, were unable to conceptualise it as more than the

discrete behaviour of deluded or depraved individuals despite having been exposed to structural analyses of racism in the Subjects (see Chapter 12). For others, individualism resulted in the conflation of identity (being white) with social structure (whiteness) (Endres & Gould 2009; Levine-Rasky 2000). This was particularly evident where student participants responded with affront to the analysis of whiteness in the Subjects (see Chapter 13).

It is the very categorisation of race as an authentic social marker for everyone *except whites* that both constitutes and masks whiteness as a structure of domination. Critical whiteness studies compels white subjects, as beneficiaries of racism, to interrogate their investment in the racialisation of others, but not themselves. This was a particularly confronting and destabilising process for the student participants in my research because it required them to contemplate themselves - for most, by their own admissions, for the very first time - as racialised subjects. The objective here is to expose whiteness as an unmarked racial category, a 'hidden referent' that normalises whiteness as the archetypal exemplar of the measure of humanity (Ahmed 2004, para.1). The unmarked nature of whiteness is predominantly conceived, as it was in the Subjects, as the 'invisibility' of whiteness (ibid.).

Invisibility

Invisibility, as described by US feminist and antiracism scholar Peggy McIntosh, is about how white subjects are 'taught not to see', 'carefully taught not to recognize' and 'meant to remain oblivious' to the advantages that structural whiteness affords them (McIntosh 2010, p.1). In other words, invisibility is used to describe the way that the discursive techniques of exnomination, naturalisation and universalisation obscure and pretermit acknowledgement and analysis of the role white subjects play

in maintaining whiteness as a structure of racial domination and oppression (Gabriel 2002; Green & Sonn 2005; Leonardo 2004; Moreton-Robinson 2004a). Invisibility is conceptualised by Jamaican social and political philosophy scholar, Charles W. Mills, as an ‘epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions... that precludes self-transparency and genuine understanding of social realities’ (Mills 1997, p.18). He explains that this epistemology of ignorance has been a necessary development that was ‘psychically required for conquest, colonization and enslavement’ and continues to be required to maintain global white supremacy (ibid. p. 19). He argues that the epistemology of ignorance explains why white subjects ‘experience genuine cognitive difficulties in recognizing certain behavior patterns as racist’ (ibid, p. 93). His argument was substantiated by my data in that some student participants defended their own or others’ habits of telling derogatory jokes or holding prejudiced views about First Australian peoples as ‘harmless’, perhaps ‘ignorant’, but not racist per se (see Chapter 12).

There is valid concern about potential risks of framing whiteness as invisible. Education scholar and critical theorist Zeus Leonardo and philosophy and race scholar Michael Monahan, both from the US, worry about the concept of invisibility and the risks it poses for re-centring whiteness and operating as a repressive alibi to dissimulate, protect and excuse white subjects from accountability (Leonardo 2004; Monahan 2014). I explore these concerns further in the following chapter.

Re-centring whiteness

As already noted, the preeminent risk of critical whiteness studies is the power of whiteness to re-centre and reproduce itself even in the process of its analytic deconstruction. US race scholar David Roediger expounds how the take-up of critical

whiteness studies by white scholars has worked to reinscribe the centring of white interests.

[T]he growth of the profile of studies of whiteness has itself reflected the privileges enjoyed by white scholars. Prominence accorded to such studies has skyrocketed as more and more white Americans began to produce research investigating the origins and reproduction of white identity. The novelty of critical studies of whiteness is, however, only alleged. To see such scholarship as novel presupposes the dismissal of a far longer and deeper tradition of the study of whites by people of colour...The casting of the study of whiteness as a project of white scholars thus represents both a continued placing of whites at the centre of everything and, as significantly, a continuing refusal to take the insights of people of colour into whiteness seriously (Roediger 2001, pp.74, 75; see also Klinenberg 2002, p.53).

Roediger's concerns point to the importance of a guiding anticolonial framework to centre and take seriously the insights of the colonised and racialised. In doing so, whiteness is decentred and its reproduction impeded.

The risks of reinscribing whiteness in critical whiteness pedagogy are perhaps most acute in the interrogation of the unearned advantages afforded white subjects, most commonly conceptualised as 'white privilege'. The study of white privilege focuses on the fact that white identity is 'imbued with privilege and power' (Endres & Gould 2009, p.425) and as a structure of power, whiteness produces material, social and political benefits for white subjects (Ahmed 2004; Armstrong & Wildman 2008; Brayboy 2006; Dei 2000b; Delgado & Stefancic 2012; Gillborn 2006a; Gillespie et al. 2002; Housee 2008; Kessar 2006; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995; Leonardo 2012; Lipsitz 2006; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2004a; Roediger 2001). As UK critical race scholar David Gillborn contends, white subjects 'do not all behave in identical ways and they do not all draw similar benefits – but they *do* all benefit to some degree, whether they like it or not' (Gillborn 2010, p.4,

original emphasis; see also Leonardo 2004, p.140; Lipsitz 1995, p.383; McIntosh 2010, p.4).

It is, perhaps, in the concept of white privilege, where the powerful and extensive influence that Black feminist theory has had on the development of critical whiteness studies is most evident. The study of whiteness as a system of structural advantage that confers unearned and unmarked advantages to white subjects corresponds directly to the feminist study of maleness as a system of structural advantage that confers unearned and unmarked advantages to male subjects (McIntosh 1988). So too, the common practice of deploying an intersectional framework to interrogate white privilege, as it was in the Subjects, is directly informed by Black feminism's development and deployment of intersectionality as an analytic framework to concurrently interrogate gender and race privilege (Collins 1986; Crenshaw 1989). Intersectionality excavates connections between race, class, gender, sexuality and other intersecting social locations to interrogate diverse manifestations of structural domination and oppression (Allen 2002; Banks et al. 2013; Case 2012; Cho et al. 2013; Ferber 2012; Hancock 2007; Jordan-Zachery 2007; McCall 2005; McIntosh 2012; Perlow 2014; Walby et al. 2012).

The study of white privilege is part of an extensive and expanding multidisciplinary theoretical and pedagogical field, variously referred to as 'white privilege studies', 'privilege studies' and 'intersectional privilege studies', that warrants a dedicated chapter to describe and discuss the complexities, challenges, risks and opportunities that have been identified by scholars who advocate white privilege pedagogy and those who contest it. I take up this discussion in the following chapter.

Conclusion

Anticolonial scholars George Dei and Mairi McDermott assert that ‘there is a need to retool anti-racism’ to resist the power of repressive ideological discursive mechanisms, to ‘challenge the epistemological gatekeepers who want us to confine anti-racism discourse to the trash bins of history’ and to centre the goal of transformative social change (Dei & McDermott 2014, p.1). Indeed, the quest to develop concepts, discourses and pedagogical strategies that centre the goal of social change, expose defamatory ideologies that pathologise and challenge the racist systems that oppress First Australian peoples, speaks to a fundamental problematic of my research. It is my conviction that Critical Indigenous Australian Studies must be guided by an anticolonial framework that is committed to the authority of First Australian philosophies, knowledges, standpoints and experiences. I agree with Dei when he says:

It is important to note the centrality of reading race through anti-colonial frameworks to offer counter-hegemonic readings that work to disrupt the production and dissemination of colonial knowledging very much endemic to civilizing narratives of what it means to be human (Dei 2014, pp.26–7).

As we have seen in this discussion, liberal pedagogical approaches to addressing race and racism often fall short of these goals. Approaches that focus on ‘learning about’ First Australian peoples and the impacts of racism do little to challenge racist structures and all too often reproduce hegemonic discourses. The tools of critical race theory have real potential to disrupt the systemic entrenchment of racial domination by illuminating how whiteness works as a hegemonic benchmark against which First Australian peoples are measured and problematised (Green & Sonn 2005; Moreton-Robinson 2006; Pease 2010) and by revealing the way that discourse

normalises and obscures whiteness from being ‘seen by the dominant white group as the problematic centre of racism’ (Green & Sonn 2005, p.479; see also Bonilla-Silva 2002, p.61; Brunsma et al. 2012, p.719; Cabrera 2014, pp.34–5; Endres & Gould 2009, p.419; Haggis 2004, p.50; Loftsdóttir 2012, paras.85–86; Nicoll 2004, para.8; Shaw 2006, p.866).

I agree with Moreton-Robinson when she asserts that:

As a regime of power that functions ideologically and discursively, whiteness has material effects on the racial formation of Australian society. Therefore whiteness matters as an area of study worthy of our investigation and critique in both Indigenous and Australian studies (Moreton-Robinson 2004b, p.146).

Whiteness studies have been found to be extremely conceptually and pedagogically useful for the Critical Indigenous Australian Studies classroom (Nicoll 2004, para.7), but remain nevertheless, fraught with risks, barriers and challenges. Whiteness studies can ‘become just another exercise of whiteness itself’ particularly if individualism and essentialism are conceptually privileged (Gillborn 2006a, p.26; see also Ahmed 2004, para.12; Endres & Gould 2009, p.426; Fee & Russell 2007, p.188; Green & Sonn 2005, p.487; Hartigan 2002, pp.59–60; Hollinsworth 2006, p.64; Jeyasingham 2012, p.676; Levine-Rasky 2000, p.288; Leonardo & Zembylas 2013, p.154; Nicoll 2004, para.34; Pease 2010, p.124).

As I have already suggested, it is perhaps in the study of the way whiteness confers power in the form of unearned and unnamed social, political and material advantages, conceptualised as white privilege, that the risks of re-centring, reinscribing and reproducing whiteness are most evident. In the next chapter I

explore the risks of white privilege pedagogy in the context of the broader literature about privilege studies and intersectionality.

Chapter 5

Teaching about Privilege: white privilege and intersectionality

Introduction

The study of the unearned advantages and conferred power that whiteness affords white subjects, or in more common terms, the study of white privilege, is a development of a long tradition of analyses of oppression and the oppressor led by scholars, activists and writers from oppressed groups. The study of whiteness, and therefore white privilege, was reintroduced to the academe as part of the project of critical race theory in the 1970's and 1980's. The publication of Peggy McIntosh's essay in 1988 has resulted in her work (see McIntosh 1988; 2010; 2012; 2015) becoming the most influential and most cited in privilege studies scholarship, to the extent that she is often inaccurately cited as the founder or originator of privilege studies generally, and white privilege studies specifically. Considering the extensive impact that her work has had on the development of white privilege scholarship and pedagogy, in this chapter I undertake a detailed interrogation of her work to elucidate the opportunities, challenges and risks inherent in her approaches and the approaches of others who draw from her work.

My interrogation emphasises the inadequacy of the study of white privilege as a stand-alone pedagogy because it analyses the symptoms of structural domination but often not the causes. In different terms, white privilege pedagogy exposes the effects but not the conditions and processes upon which structural domination (colonialism, whiteness, patriarchy) is produced and continues to be reproduced (Leonardo 2004). In this way, white privilege pedagogy presents acute risks, most notably the risk of

re-centring, reinscribing and reproducing whiteness. I consider the calls by some scholars to frame white privilege as white supremacy and highlight the significant potential for this concept to alienate students. I explore the possibilities and hazards of intersectional approaches to white privilege pedagogy and highlight the potential proffered by scaffolding to render both the study of white privilege and the study of structural whiteness less threatening and more accessible to students.

The Study of White Privilege

The roots of the study of social dominance and inequitable power relations, as I have continued to emphasise, can be traced back to 19th and 20th Century anticolonial, feminist, race and class scholars and activists and the study of privilege is no exception. For example, in his analysis of colonialism, Tunisian scholar Albert Memmi wrote,

... privilege is something relative. To different degrees every colonizer is privileged, at least comparatively so, ultimately to the detriment of the colonized. If the privileges of the masters of colonization are striking, the lesser privileges of the small colonizer, even the smallest are very numerous (Memmi 1967, para.11).

Despite these origins, the white US feminist and antiracism scholar Peggy McIntosh is most commonly cited as the pioneer in the study of white privilege. From a critical anticolonial standpoint, the lack of acknowledgment of and engagement with the historical foundations of the study of domination by many privilege studies scholars today is remiss and reminiscent of the appropriating tendencies of colonialism (Leonardo 2004). In emphasising this concern, my intention is far from attempting to diminish the importance of McIntosh's highly influential scholarship or to suggest she herself did not acknowledge earlier scholarship, she did. Her early and later work acknowledges the pioneering work of Black feminists (see for example McIntosh

1988; McIntosh 2012). My intention is to illustrate the power of whiteness to re-centre and reproduce itself, a theme introduced in the previous chapter and continued later in this chapter.

In 1988 McIntosh penned the working paper 'White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies' (McIntosh 1988) while working as a feminist scholar and researcher at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, where she continues to work today (Wellesley Centers for Women 2017a). Her working paper along with a shorter edited version titled 'White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack' (the 'Knapsack article) originally published in 'Peace and Freedom Magazine' in 1989 (McIntosh 2010), have achieved cult-like status in the contemporary study of privilege (Bailey 1998b; Banks et al. 2013; Blum 2008; Case 2015; Ferber & Herrera 2013; Goodman 2011; Lensmire et al. 2013; Leonardo 2004; Levine-Rasky 2000; Pease 2010; Reason et al. 2005). In an interview with 'The New Yorker' journalist Jordan Rothman, McIntosh attributes the popularity of her work to the way she provided 'clear examples drawn from personal experience' to conceptualise white privilege (Rothman 2014).

Following the publication of her articles, McIntosh founded the 'Gender, Race and Inclusive Curriculum project' where she continues to deliver workshops on teaching and learning about privilege (Wellesley Centers for Women 2017a). In a journal article providing instructions for conducting her teaching and learning activity based on the Knapsack article, she estimated that the 'activity and its accompanying directed reading have been used by over 40,000 individuals from various disciplines and professions' (McIntosh 2015, p.232). Certainly, I have used her articles in my

teaching as have other Indigenous Australian Studies and antiracism educators in Australia (see for example Aveling 2012a; Hollinsworth 2014). Considering the influence that McIntosh's essay has on contemporary scholarship, a close examination of her work is warranted.

The White Privilege Knapsack

As the title of McIntosh's original essay suggests, it was written as a result of her reflections on feminist notions of male privilege and how these correspond to race (McIntosh 1988, p.2). She used the metaphor of white privilege as an 'invisible weightless knapsack' filled with 'special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear and blank checks' (ibid.). She catalogued a set of privileges that she as a white person could 'count on' but that she believed her African-American colleagues could not (ibid. p. 4). Her catalogue consisted of 'forty-six ordinary and daily ways' that she personally experienced white privilege, a selection of twelve of which I have quoted in Table 1 below (ibid. p. 2). McIntosh emphasised that her list was a personal account and 'not intended to be generalizable' and urged readers to 'make their own lists from within their own life circumstances' (ibid. p. 2).

Due to what she referred to as the 'interlocking' nature of social hierarchies, she called for the examination of a much wider range of daily experiences of privilege based on categories such as 'ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation' (ibid. pp. 11-12). By way of example, she provided a short list of eight heterosexual privileges that she experienced (ibid. p. 12). She also called for the development of 'a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege' that distinguished between privileges that 'one

would want for everyone in a just society’ and those that ‘give license to be more ignorant, oblivious, arrogant and destructive’ (ibid. p. 8).

Table 1: McIntosh’s white privilege audit

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.	2. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.	3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be reasonably sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.	5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, fairly well assured that I will not be followed or harassed by store detectives.	6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely and positively represented.
7. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.	8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.	9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be fairly sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.	11. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.	12. I can swear, or dress in second- hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.

(McIntosh 1988, pp.4–7).

Knapsack pedagogy

As already noted, McIntosh published instructions for conducting teaching and learning activities around the Knapsack article in a scholarly journal (McIntosh 2015). In addition, her original essay and the Knapsack article are freely available for download (Wellesley Centers for Women 2017b) and are accompanied by facilitators notes that are summarised in Table 2 below (see McIntosh 1988; McIntosh 2010).

Table 2: Knapsack facilitator notes.

1. Teach about structural domination and oppression. In McIntosh’s words, ‘help participants or students to think about what it is to see society systemically, and structurally, rather than only in terms of individuals making individual choices’ (McIntosh 2010, p.6).
2. Explore the ‘myth of meritocracy’ and how it ‘survives so successfully, suppressing knowledge of systemic oppression and especially of its “up-side,” systemic privilege (ibid.).
3. Students read the Knapsack article.
4. Teachers share with the class examples of their own personal privilege audits.
5. Students conduct an audit of their experiences of unearned disadvantages followed by an audit of their experiences of unearned advantages and share these in small groups.
6. Whole class debrief/discussion.
7. In response to students questions about what action they can take in light of their learning, McIntosh recommends advising them to ‘use unearned advantage to weaken systems of unearned advantage’. She suggests having students ‘brainstorm about how to use unearned assets to share power; these may include time, money, energy, literacy, mobility, leisure, connections, spaces, housing, travel opportunities... paying attention, making associations, intervening, speaking up, asserting and deferring, being alert, taking initiative, doing ally and advocacy work, lobbying, campaigning, protesting, organizing, and recognizing and acting against both the external and internalized forms of oppression and privilege’ (ibid. p. 7)

(McIntosh 2010, pp.5–7).

In my view, McIntosh’s activity has four main strengths. The first is the scaffolded nature of the model. Scaffolding, as discussed later in this chapter and in the final chapter, is very important for effective teaching and learning about confronting critical concepts. The second strength is the links made between the concept of invisibility (discussed in the previous chapter) and the ideology of meritocracy. I agree with McIntosh that meritocracy is a key device in masking structural domination and oppression from the powerful and, as also noted in the previous chapter, relevant to the Australian context.

To redesign social systems, we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects. Most

talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist (McIntosh 1988, p.13).

As McIntosh rightly points out, acknowledging privilege is a key preliminary task in the complex process of ideological challenge and social change.

Thirdly, I find her definitions of privilege - ‘unearned advantage’, ‘unearned power conferred systemically’ and ‘conferred dominance’ that ‘can look like strength when it is, in fact, permission to escape or to dominate’ – accurate and instructive yet succinct and accessible (McIntosh 2010, p.3). Lastly, her recommendation to support students in brainstorming practical ways to ‘weaken systems of unearned advantage’ is sound. As I will go on to argue, providing opportunities for students to rehearse translating their learning into practice is a crucial element for productive Critical Indigenous Australian Studies pedagogy.

That said, my positive critique of McIntosh’s approach to the study of white privilege is exhausted at this point. I have found that there are factors that render the Knapsack article inappropriate for the specific context of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies and I find theoretical and methodological concerns raised by various scholars to be persuasive.

Knapsack risks

In relation to the suitability of McIntosh’s approach to the study of white privilege for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, McIntosh observed that in her experience ‘[m]ost white readers can relate to the examples I gave regarding my own unearned freedom of choice and comparative ease of mind and action’ (McIntosh 2015, p.238). However this was not my experience of deploying the Knapsack article to

students in my Indigenous Australian Studies classes. I found that far too often, white Australian students were either unable to relate to McIntosh's examples of white privilege or they did not take them seriously or they attempted to justify or explain them away. At worst, some students repudiated them. Of course some students did respond in productive ways but on the whole, I found the Knapsack article to be more of a burden than a benefit so I withdrew it from my reading list. On reflection, I put this situation down to two related factors.

The first is that McIntosh's process of auditing personal privilege relied on her knowledge of and interaction with her African-American colleagues. As there is significant divergence between the cultural and ethnic composition of the United States and Australia, the United States has a much larger non-white population, white people from the US are much more likely to know and interact with racialised Others (see U.S. Department of Commerce 2016; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016b). Secondly, as First Australian Peoples comprise only 2.8% of the population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016a), many non-Indigenous people are unlikely to know or interact with First Australian people. These two factors mean that white Australian people are much less likely to have the social comparison information necessary to effectively conceptualise the unearned advantages they experience as compared to those that First Australian and other racialised Australian peoples do not.

I have found that readings and audio-visual materials that feature First Australian peoples' analyses and testimonies of domination, oppression and resistance are much more productive than McIntosh's articles. First Australian analyses are informed by empirical knowledge of the nature of structural domination and the characteristics of

those who are afforded unearned advantages and conferred positions of dominance (Moreton-Robinson 2004a). First Australian peoples' testimonies of their experiences of discrimination, iniquity and inequity provide students with the social comparison information necessary for them to be able to identify their experiences of white privilege. First Australian analyses and testimonies expose students to the ways that First Australian peoples speak and act to challenge domination and how their non-Indigenous allies best support them. This exposure is important learning for non-colonised and non-racialised students because it provides real-world examples of social change processes and practices upon which students can use as a point of departure to conceptualise what they can do, how they can, in McIntosh's words, 'use unearned advantage to weaken systems of unearned advantage' (McIntosh 2010, p.7). Said differently, exposure to social change processes and practices guide students to translate their learning into practice, a crucial factor for productive Critical Indigenous Australian Studies as I argue in this and later chapters.

Education scholar and critical theorist Zeus Leonardo points out that analyses that centre the standpoint of the oppressed clarify rather than 'mystify' structural domination. He argues that analyses that take the standpoint of white subjects as the analytical point of departure, such as in McIntosh's analysis, obscure the processes of domination and oppression.

... it is not in the interest of racially dominated groups to mystify the process of their own dehumanization. Yet the case is ostensibly the opposite for whites, who consistently mystify the process of racial accumulation through occlusion of history and forsaking structural analysis for a focus on the individual (Leonardo 2004, p.141).

While McIntosh does acknowledge the fact of structural domination, her focus is on the symptoms - unearned advantage and disadvantage, conferred dominance and imposed oppression – at the expense of the causes (ibid. p. 138). She does not venture to analyse the processes that produced structural domination and her analysis of how it is sustained and reproduced is vague. Leonardo spotlights the ‘passive tone’ (ibid. p. 143) with which McIntosh describes the processes that rendered her ‘oblivious’ to white privilege, how she was ‘taught not to see’, ‘carefully taught not to recognize’ and ‘meant to remain oblivious’ to the advantages that structural whiteness affords her (McIntosh 2010, p.1). Leonardo points out that her analysis frames racism as,

... disembodied, omnipresent but belonging to no one. White racist teachings, life lessons, and values are depicted as actions done or passed on to a white subject, almost unbeknownst to him, rather than something in which he invests (Leonardo 2004, p.143).

This mystification of the processes of structural domination is the basis upon which Leonardo insists that ‘[e]ven when critical analysis takes white experience as its unit of analysis, this must be subjected to the rigors of the analytics of the oppressed’ (ibid. p. 141). Leonardo’s recommendation certainly conforms to the imperatives of a guiding anticolonial pedagogical framework. By way of example, he submits some of McIntosh’s examples of white privilege to analysis from his standpoint as a racialised man.

Whites can enter a business establishment and expect the “person in charge” to be white’ because of a long history of job discrimination. Whites are relatively free from racial harassment from police officers because racial profiling strategies train U.S. police officers that people of color are potential criminals. Finally, whites ‘can choose blemish cover or bandages in “flesh” color’ to match their skin because of

centuries of denigration of darker peoples and images associated with them, fetishism of the color line, and the cultivation of the politics of pigmentation. We can condense the list under a general theme: whites enjoy privileges largely because they have created a system of domination under which they can thrive as a group (ibid. p. 148).

The point here is that the ‘analytics of the oppressed’ proffer a depth of rigor and clarity to the study of both the effects *and the causes* of structural domination that is not found in McIntosh’s analyses.

In their analysis of white privilege pedagogy, members of a group of scholars in the US, the ‘Midwest Critical Whiteness Collective’ put forward that McIntosh’s Knapsack article and the way it ‘has been taken up in pedagogical contexts... teaches participants that the crucial action they need to take as white people is to confess their privilege rather than, for example, take antiracist action’ (Lensmire et al. 2013, p.411). They argue that whilst recognising the forces of racial stratification and the beneficial impact it has on the lives of white subjects is a worthy part of the antiracism pedagogical process, confessionals serve as non-productive dead-ends that elide progress toward social change efforts (Lensmire et al. 2013; see also Levine-Rasky 2000; Monahan 2014). Similarly, Sara Ahmed elucidates the ‘non-performativity’ of ‘declarations of whiteness’ (Ahmed 2004, para.11). Admissions of complicity with racism and whiteness and expressions of guilt and shame often stand as non-performative substitutes for antiracist action and work to maintain the posture of the white subject as indefectible. As she explains,

... the speech act itself can be taken as a sign of transcendence: if we say we are ashamed, if we say we were racist, then ‘this shows’ we are not racist now, we show that we mean well. The presumption that saying is doing – that being sorry means that we have overcome the very thing we are sorry about – hence works to support

racism in the present. Indeed, what is done in this speech act, if anything is done, is that the white subject is re-posed as the social ideal (ibid. para. 27).

When white privilege pedagogy treats confessionals and declarations as the destination, possibilities for antiracist action are closed off and whiteness is reproduced. As Tim Wise reasons, 'simple awareness of one's privileges does not necessarily lead to the desire to relinquish them' (Wise 2002, p.65). The effects of whiteness on white subjects need to be framed as individual investments in structural systems that were produced, and are maintained, for the purposes of domination, otherwise whiteness will be recentred and reproduced (Curry-Stevens 2007). Even then, the risks of reinscribing whiteness remain.

Consequently, the aforementioned collective of scholars (Lensmire et al. 2013) defer to Leonardo's conclusion that analysis of white privilege is inadequate without concurrent analysis of white supremacy because 'the conditions of white supremacy make white privilege possible' and because the concept of white supremacy is concerned 'less around...the state of being dominant, and more around the direct processes that secure domination' (Leonardo 2004, p.137). Charles W. Mills reaches a similar conclusion in his impressive historical analysis of global white supremacy where he insists that until the global processes of institutionalised racial domination is conceptualised as white supremacy, 'no serious theoretical appreciation of the significance of these phenomena [privilege] is possible' (Mills 1997, p.125; see also Allen 2001, p.485). I find Leonardo's and Mill's arguments persuasive however I am concerned about the polemic nature of the concept of white supremacy and the likelihood of alienating students. In his research in Indigenous Australian Studies subjects in Australian higher education, David Hollinsworth found that progressing 'from the passive notion of privilege to the active one of white supremacy can clarify

both the unearned privilege and our responsibility to name and combat it' (Hollinsworth 2014, p.2). He did find however, that white supremacy discourse generated 'even more determined resistance among some students' (ibid.). He recommends a pedagogy that gradually scaffolds the study of privilege in a progression toward white supremacy as the 'final cognitive task' to mitigate against alienating learners (ibid. p. 14; see also Curry-Stevens 2007, p. 49). I return to the theme of scaffolding teaching and learning about privilege later in this chapter.

As noted in the previous chapter, the risks of re-centring, reinscribing and reproducing whiteness are perhaps most acute in white privilege pedagogy. The discussion thus far in this chapter has elucidated how McIntoshian analysis and pedagogy re-centres and reproduces whiteness through a process of, in Leonardo's words,

... masking history, obfuscating agents of domination, and removing the actions that make it clear who is doing what to whom. Instead of emphasizing the process of appropriation, the discourse of privilege centers the discussion on the advantages that whites receive. It mistakes the symptoms for causes (Leonardo 2004, p.138).

This process dissimulates, protects and excuses white subjects from accountability whilst at the same time recentring whiteness. As McIntosh has for some time been positioned as the authority on white privilege scholarship, the obfuscating tendencies of her analytic process that reinscribe whiteness is evident in privilege studies scholarship generally (Leonardo 2004; Levine-Rasky 2000). A noteworthy example is the influential manuscript by US social justice educator Diane Goodman, 'Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups', now in its second edition (Goodman 2011).

As the title of the book suggests, it presents theories, approaches and strategies for teaching social justice to ‘people from privileged groups’ (ibid. p. 5). Goodman defines people from privileged groups as,

... people of European descent (whites)... males... heterosexuals... gender conforming biological males and females... upper-class people, middle-class people... temporarily able-bodied people... youth and middle adults... Christians... [and] native born people [i.e. people born in the United States] (ibid. p. 7).

She draws from ‘psychosocial and cognitive development theories’ (ibid. p. 34) to explain why learners from privilege groups resist social justice education and to inform her pedagogical approaches and strategies. Like McIntosh, Goodman acknowledges the fact of social structures that privilege and oppress, but does not undertake analysis of the conditions or processes upon which such structures were produced and are reproduced. However the process of reinscribing and reproducing whiteness is most (glaringly) evident in the way that she positions herself in relation to privilege.

While Goodman self-identifies as ‘a woman and a Jew... White, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class, U.S. born and in my middle adult years’ (ibid. p. 8), she nevertheless does not position herself as privileged. She states that throughout the book, ‘I refer to people from privileged groups with the less personal term ‘they’ since I am not part of the dominant group in all cases’ (ibid. p. 9). It is astonishing that Goodman finds it reasonable to discount her privileged locations despite her self-identified membership in seven of the nine categories of privilege that she herself acknowledges (ibid. p. 7), despite her acknowledgement that ‘social dynamics and institutional structures are based in hierarchies’ (ibid. p. 53) and despite her pedagogic recommendation that privilege studies students focus on their

privileged group membership ‘in order to explore the meaning of being part of a privileged group’ (ibid. p. 8). In distancing herself from privilege this way, Goodman cloaks her privileged-self from view and protects herself from accountability.

A feature of Goodman’s book is the use of an intersectional framework for the study of privilege. This framework is specifically relevant to her work because she addresses multiple forms of privilege. However intersectionality has also been identified as a key strategy in white privilege pedagogy because it enables students to be eased into analyses of whiteness.

Intersectional Privilege Pedagogy

The term ‘intersectionality’ was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to describe the development of analytical interventions of Black feminism over the course of the 20th century that criticised single-axis analyses of oppression. Black feminists such as Angela Davis (1981), bell hooks (1981; 1984) and Audre Lorde (1984) among others, identified and drew ‘attention to the interlocking nature of race, gender and class oppression’ (Collins 1986, p.19). They exposed how social, political and legal responses to single-axis analyses of patriarchy and racism result in a lose-lose situation for women of colour because the categories of ‘woman’ and ‘person of colour’ are treated as ‘mutually exclusive’ (Crenshaw 1991, p.8; see also Cho et al. 2013, p.787; Gopaldas 2012, p.90; Phoenix 2006, p.21). Extending the concept of intersectionality, Patricia Collins’ notion of the ‘matrix of domination’ describes how the power of each manifestation of oppression (gender, race, class etcetera) is determined by the intersections of established hierarchical social structures (Collins 2000, p. 18).

Intersectionality has since been developed into a ‘normative and empirical research paradigm’ as well as a field of studies that desegregates diverse and traditionally separate disciplines (Hancock 2007, p.249). Intersectional analyses investigate diversity within and between social groups as well as the interaction between individuals, social groups and institutions to identify structural inequity. Intersectional analysis is, in effect, an anti-essentialising project that, in emphasising diversity within as well as between social groupings, disrupts and problematises normalised and essentialised social categories (Cho et al. 2013; Crenshaw 1991; Ferber 2010; Gopaldas 2012; Hancock 2007; Jordan-Zachery 2007; McCall 2005; Walby et al. 2012). An intersectional approach to privilege studies pedagogy, according to US critical pedagogue Ricky Lee Allen, provides a framework for understanding privilege as a relational system by ‘tak[ing] much of the postmodern choice factor out of the oppressed-oppressor equation’ (Allen 2002, p.32).

As an anti-essentialising analytical approach, intersectionality is a productive framework for analysing the complexity of the impacts of structural domination and oppression on individuals and groups (Banks et al. 2013; Hollinsworth 2013; Perlow 2014). It is an analytical framework that broadens understandings of the relative nature of privilege and oppression and holds potential for generating the ‘moral outrage’ and ‘building the solidarity’ necessary to inspire the motivation to challenge structural domination and oppression (Allen 2002, p.41; see also Ferber 2012, p.74; Montgomery & Stewart 2012, p.163; Pease 2010, p.7). For example, researching racism with a group of white female members of an antiracism group in the US, psychology, gender and women’s studies scholar Kim Case reports that participants ‘explicitly credited their own gender oppression as a resource for a deeper

understanding of racism' (Case 2012, p.86). The deployment of an intersectional framework in the Subjects produced similar responses from some of the female student participants in my research (see Chapter 13).

Sociology scholars Abby Ferber and Andrea Herrera report that in their experiences of teaching privilege studies in a 'Women's and Ethnic Studies program' in the United States (Ferber & Herrera 2013, p.85), 'an intersectional approach decreases student resistance to examining white privilege' and reduces the likelihood of privileged students avoidance of analysing their privileged identities in favour of their oppressed identities (ibid. 2013, p.87; see also Case 2015, pp.269–70). They assert that criticism levelled against intersectionality, that 'it asks us to focus on everyone and everything', weakening focused studies on race, gender, class, heterosexual privilege and other axes, is unfounded. They argue that intersectionality affords a broader and more in-depth analysis of whiteness or whatever particular category of privilege might be the preferred focus.

Sometimes, intersectionality may be implemented to provide a wider perspective, while other times it encourages us to go deeper... an intersectional approach does not have to distract attention away from race, but can instead provide more profound insights into its operations (Ferber & Herrera 2013, p.97).

Reflecting on my own teaching experience as well as my research data, I agree with their assertions that an intersectional approach to the study of white privilege can mitigate resistance and deepen analyses. However, I have not found, nor does my data suggest, that intersectionality mitigates against white students preference for focusing on their oppressed rather than their privileged locations, as my analysis in later chapters illustrates.

In sum, considering the risks of the study of white privilege outlined thus far, as long as the conditions and processes of the production and reproduction of structural domination are addressed, intersectional privilege approaches have merit for the study of privilege generally, and for the specific study of colonial and racial privilege in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Scaffolding privilege

I noted earlier that Hollinsworth recommended scaffolding intersectional white privilege pedagogy toward analysis of the structure of global white supremacy (Hollinsworth 2014, p.2). In doing so he cited US social work and adult education scholar Ann Curry-Stevens who argued that analyses of global white supremacy, while ‘essential and theoretically integral to the process’, is necessarily ‘the final cognitive task for privileged learners, not the first’ (Curry-Stevens 2007, p.49). Her assertion is based on her PhD research where she found that ‘to start with this message [white supremacy] will likely engender such resistance and imperil the psyche to such an extent as to render the approach ineffective’ (ibid). As a result of her empirical research, conducted with twenty Canadian transformative educators in a range of adult education contexts, she produced a scaffolded model for working with privileged students. The model that she called the ‘Pedagogy for the Privileged’ is based on an intersectional framework and draws from theories of Freirian popular education, social justice, antiracism, whiteness studies and transformative learning (ibid. p. 34).

Her pedagogical model is based on a ‘universal construction of privilege’, an emergent theme from her research that ‘understand[s] all groups as containing

privilege' (ibid. p 37). In putting forward her model she acknowledged the risks and challenges of a universal conceptualisation of privilege and explained that her,

... decision to universalize privilege is not a privilege-complicit act of domination but rather a logical outcome of the rejection of hierarchies as well as the poststructural recognition of the pluralized sites of domination... however, we should note... that this pluralizing of privilege could inadvertently deflect attention from the critical forms of privilege that continue to be minimized in society... the desire to bring attention to, in this case, more forms of oppression serves to reduce the likelihood that we will pay sufficient attention to issues such as race that many would prefer to avoid. Pedagogical applications of the universal construction of privilege will necessitate sufficient focus on each form of domination and, in so doing, decrease learners' tendencies to avoid the gaze that interrogates privilege (ibid. p. 38).

Curry-Stevens' research findings 'identified the need for a specific pedagogy that focuses on both increasing awareness and stimulating action among the privileged' (ibid. p. 38) in an effort to 'transform those with more advantages into allies of those with fewer' to advocate for social change (ibid. p. 35). The power that people from privileged groups hold, employed through allyship in support of the oppressed, was seen as the key to effecting social change and equity for oppressed groups. In a more recent article reflecting on her research, Curry-Stevens problematised the notion of privileged allies.

I must hold out possibility, indeed likelihood, that my embrace of pedagogy for the privileged is a defense mechanism to define a role for a privileged white woman in anti-oppression practice. It likely says "make a role for me," and "see me as an ally"... but I now reject the space that positions me as an untroubled advocate, and embrace that I am likely a "dangerous ally" (Curry-Stevens 2010, p.69).

Recognising the dangers of conceptualising privileged allies as 'untroubled advocates' acknowledges that a pedagogy of the privileged 'risks reinscribing the

dominance of privileged students' (ibid. p 65). There is a genuine risk that this type of pedagogy, rather than producing authentic allies in support of oppressed groups, will instead produce a new wave of *privileged saviours* of the oppressed where 'privilege... exhibits itself as a sense that we as Westerners have the unique power to uplift, edify and strengthen' (Straubhaar 2015, p.384; see also Bell 2013). As will be identified in later chapters, some student participants in my research certainly did adopt a 'white saviour' posture in response to the Subjects' focus on allyship and therefore I find Curry-Stevens' framing of privileged allyship as 'dangerous' to be on point.

What I find most compelling about Curry-Stevens' theorising is the way that her model scaffolds teaching and learning and her rationale for such scaffolding. She argues that, on a psychological level, learners need to be affirmed as having been disadvantaged prior to being identified as advantaged. She found that sharing relative disadvantage enabled students to build empathy, compassion and solidarity as a learning group so that they were able to 'build empathy for themselves' before they were 'expected to generate it for others' (Curry-Stevens 2007, p.48; see also McIntosh 2012, p.199). This strategy has the capacity to circumvent privileged learners' outraged denial and defensive race to innocence commonly reported by researchers and educators (see for example Allen 2002; Case 2012; Ellsworth 1989; Goodman 2011; Mackinlay & Bradley 2012; Pease 2010). Curry-Stevens found that pedagogies that concentrate on ideological and political consciousness raising are unlikely to translate into social change action unless there is a dedicated focus on building skills, confidence and motivation, as well as providing activities for learners

to rehearse ‘new behaviours’ to take action (Curry-Stevens 2007, p.51). This was also a key theme emergent from my research (see Chapter 14).

While I am not convinced with regard to Curry-Steven’s concept of a ‘universal construction of privilege’, I agree with her that the notion of universal privilege has the potential to detract from a necessary focus on race, I find her theorising about scaffolding privilege studies pedagogy persuasive. In the final chapter I explore her scaffolded pedagogical model in detail and argue that it is highly relevant for adaptation to the study of colonial and racial privilege in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Conclusion

The study of white privilege has been shown to be a useful heuristic device in opening a discursive space for the racially dominant to critically explore their relationship to structural domination and oppression (Banks et al. 2013; Blum 2008; Leonardo 2004; Gillborn 2006b; Monahan 2014). However the risks of re-centring, reinscribing and reproducing whiteness are great. While intersectional approaches strengthen white privilege pedagogy through anti-essentialism and greater complexity, breadth and depth, intersectionality does not necessarily ameliorate these risks. To do so requires dedicated and substantive analysis of the conditions and processes that produced and continue to reproduce structural domination and oppression. I agree with those scholars who assert that white supremacy discourse proffers a more authentic conceptualisation of the global system of racial domination and that the study of white supremacy needs to accompany the study of white privilege so that both the symptoms and the causes of racial domination are addressed. By its very naming, however, white supremacy presents a polemic that

attracts fierce resistance and denial, alienating the very audience that must hear if radical social change is to become possible. Scaffolding intersectional privilege pedagogy presents an opportunity to render the study of white privilege a process that is a less threatening and more accessible progression from a psychological analysis of privilege through to a structural analysis of global white supremacy.

I agree with Sara Ahmed when she states that ‘whiteness studies is potentially dreadful and scholarship within the field is full of admissions of anxiety about what whiteness studies ‘could be’ if it was allowed to become invested in itself, and its own reproduction’ (Ahmed 2004, para.6). The risks presented by whiteness studies and white privilege pedagogy are indeed acute and fill me with dread. However as Charles W. Mills points out, risk ‘will accompany any attempt to devise terminology appropriate for a complex and multidimensional social reality’ (Mills 2009, p.275). I remain convinced that the study of whiteness is essential for productive Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Now that I have reviewed the literature about Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, anticolonialism and the analytical and pedagogical tools of critical race theory, critical whiteness studies and white privilege pedagogy, the next chapter turns to the ontological and epistemological foundations of the research design.

Chapter 6

Ontological and Epistemological perspectives

Introduction

In the previous four chapters I reviewed the Indigenous Australian Studies discipline specific literature as well as the literature about critical pedagogical tools relevant for teaching about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege under a guiding anticolonial framework. My review of the literature has identified the disciplinary and theoretical foundations that inform the research design. In this chapter I build on these foundations by identifying pertinent ontological and epistemological perspectives. In doing so, I illuminate the relevance of these perspectives to the specific goals of the research and to the imperatives of social change and social justice for First Australian families and communities.

The discussion that follows is organised around three themes: (1) Critical Social Constructionism; (2) Poststructural Insights; and (3) Critical Hermeneutics. The first theme expounds the relevance of a critical social constructionist epistemological perspective to both my subjective assumptions about the social world and to the goals of the research. The second theme explores ontological perspectives from poststructuralism about identity and subjectivity, concepts that are centrally significant to my research. These are key concepts because my research objective is to build an understanding of students' subjective perceptions and experiences of teaching and learning. Poststructuralism proffers insights that are highly relevant to interpreting the ways that the colonial and racist socio-cultural structure in Australian

society impacts identity formation and subjectivity and in turn, how students' identities and subjectivities impact teaching and learning.

The third theme details the pertinence of an interpretive analytical approach in light of the epistemological and ontological assumptions of critical social constructionism and poststructuralism. That is, if our ways of knowing the world are socially and historically formed interpretations, then as researcher I cannot objectively analyse the data, I can only interpret it. Therefore, a hermeneutical analytic approach is highly appropriate.

Critical Social Constructionism

I understand the nature of meaning-making to be social; meaning is embedded in culture and the social institutions borne from culture. 'Culture is...the source rather than the result of human thought and behaviours' (Crotty 1998, p.53). Culture establishes 'social patterns' (Foucault 1987, p.122) – the blueprints, rules and mechanisms of control – that regulate meaning-making. From this view, meaning-making is assumed to be 'culturally derived and historically situated' (Crotty 1998, p.67). We live in a world where meanings have already been culturally, historically and politically interpreted through the accumulated outcomes of human social action and interaction over time and these already-established cultural interpretations shape our subjective perceptions and interpretations of social reality (Crotty 1998; Roberge 2011).

These social constructionist assumptions are concerned with 'the collective generation and transmission of meaning' and are distinct from constructivist assumptions that are focused 'exclusively on the meaning-making activity of the individual mind' (Crotty 1998, p.58). This is not to assume that meaning-making is

not relative. On the contrary, people experience the socio-cultural environment in diverse ways and therefore derive meaning in diverse ways. Our diverse experiences of the already-interpreted socio-cultural world shape what we see and what we 'ignore', what we feel and don't feel and what we perceive as 'meaningful reality' (Crotty 1998, p.54). The implications here are that for some, colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege may be ignored, unfelt and meaningless. For others these socio-cultural patterns are seen, felt and meaningful. From my critical and political First Australian standpoint, I see, feel and understand colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege as socially determined and historically situated constructs that serve hegemonic interests, sustain systems of domination and result in oppression and inequity.

Taking a Foucauldian post-structuralist stance, I assume these social constructs to be constituted by 'relationships of power' upon which 'states of domination' are achieved, justified, maintained and practiced (Foucault 1987, p.114). Foucault clearly conceptualised 'relationships of power' and 'states of domination' as distinct, though related, social phenomena as he describes in the following quote. Relationships of power are ubiquitous and complex but they need not result in states of domination, although it is apparent that they often do.

The analyses I have been trying to make have to do essentially with the relationships of power. I understand by that something other than the states of domination. The relationships of power have an extremely wide extension in human relations. There is a whole network of relationships of power, which can operate between individuals, in the bosom of the family, in an educational relationship, in the political body, etc. This analysis of relations of power constitutes a very complex field; it sometimes meets what we can call facts or states of domination, in which the relations of power, instead of being variable and allowing different partners a

strategy which alters them, find themselves firmly set and congealed. When an individual or a social group manages to block a field of relations of power, to render them impassive and invariable and to prevent all reversibility of movement - by means of instruments which can be economic as well as political or military - we are facing what can be called a state of domination (Foucault 1987, p.114).

The distinction that Foucault makes between relationships of power and states of domination has implications for the possibilities of social change and for the conceptualisation of identity and subjectivity, concepts that are central to my data analysis.

Poststructural Insights

To effectively interpret students' perceptions and experiences of learning about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege, an understanding of the impacts of their identities and subjectivities on teaching and learning is essential. A central task in building this understanding is identifying social theories that provide a framework for understanding how identity and subjectivity are constituted. A key question has been whether these concepts are best theorised through psychological or sociological frames. Here, I explore humanist, structuralist, psychological and poststructural assumptions about the ways that identities and subjectivities are formed.

Identity and subjectivity - the ways in which we know ourselves in the world – have compelling implications for pedagogical design because constructs of the self and learning are mutually intrinsic. Learning is not only a process of knowledge and skills acquisition but also a process of identity formation and reformation. Astutely articulated by UK education scholars John Pryor and Barbara Crossouard, 'learning is a contextualised performance involving students engaging with prospective and current social identities, and therefore an ontological as well as an epistemological

accomplishment’ (Pryor & Crossouard 2010, p. 265). Learning is a process of negotiating new knowledge to continually construct and re-construct our identities and reappraise our values, beliefs, relationships, experiences, and positionalities in relation to both specific learning contexts and the broader socio-cultural environment (Millei & Petersen 2015; Olesen 2006; Pryor & Crossouard 2010).

For my research, it has been centrally important to identify productive ways to understand the identities and subjectivities of students. The significance of identity and subjectivity has been emphasised in findings from ongoing empirical research conducted in diverse education contexts in the UK and Australia over the past decade or so. Led by teaching and learning scholar Ruth Deakin Crick, the researchers have identified the ‘qualities and characteristics’ of effective learners and developed a theory of ‘learning power’. The rationale that underpins the productive empirical application of their theory is that the ‘complex mix of dispositions, lived experiences, social relations, values and attitudes... combine to influence how an individual engages with particular learning opportunities’ (Deakin Crick et al. 2012, pp.2257–2258; see also Deakin Crick & Goldspink 2014; Deakin Crick 2007; Deakin Crick et al. 2004; Deakin Crick 2003). The process of teaching and learning involves an intimate entanglement with the identities and subjectivities of learners. The process is reciprocal in that learning impacts the identities and subjectivities of learners and at the same time, identity and subjectivity impact learning.

In light of this, to enable a coherent analysis and discussion, it is important to explicate what the closely related concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘subjectivity’ are understood to signify. The concepts represent, as already noted, an individual’s understanding and interpretation of ‘self’. Theories about the origin, nature and

constituting processes of selfhood have long been the focus of philosophical debate from diverse theoretical perspectives and in diverse academic disciplines. The history of this debate has been helpfully traced in a ‘genealogy of subjectivity’ by Australian critical and cultural studies theorist Nick Mansfield (Mansfield 2000, p.5). His genealogy identifies what might be termed a complex field of theories that is characterised by inherent tensions between and within diverse theories. The first and perhaps most fundamental tension is between the assumptions of what can be categorised as two broad branches of the field: humanist and socio-cultural theories. Sketching the assumptions of these two broad branches is important because they inform not only my assumptions as researcher, but also popular assumptions that are likely to inform the research participants’ understandings of selfhood.

The humanist self

To attempt to understand the identities and subjectivities of students through a humanist lens would require a focus on analysing the psychologised individual self. Originating in the Enlightenment, humanist theories assume the self to be constituted by innate internal forces. Individuals are assumed to possess, from birth, a free and autonomous ‘self’ that is instinctively and independently developed as they interact with the world. These approaches ‘usually assume a consistent and universal model of what is and is not human...overriding the differences between various social, ethnic, cultural and gender identities’ (Mansfield 2000, p.182). Humanist theories continue to significantly influence the ways the self is understood, particularly in popular culture. The currency of humanist assumptions is entrenched by the neo-liberal ideology of individualism and exemplified by thousands of websites offering advice and guidance about strategies for achieving success, happiness and fulfillment

through ‘discovery’ and ‘realisation’ of ‘your true nature’ (Google search keywords: ‘discover yourself’, ‘true nature’).

The socio-cultural subject

Socio-cultural theories stand in opposition to humanist theories in the assumption that external social forces are the key constitutive factors in constructions of the self. This is reflected in the common preference for the terms ‘subject’ and ‘subjectivity’ (rather than the terms ‘self’ and ‘selfhood’) to communicate the assumption that the ‘self’ is not a ‘separate and isolated entity’ because individuals are,

... always already caught up in complex political, social and philosophical - that is, shared – concerns...the subject is always linked to something outside of it—an idea or principle or the society of other subjects... One is always subject to or of something (Mansfield 2000, p.3; see also Britzman 1995, p.235; Crotty 1998, p.55; Roberge 2011, p.7; Wetherell 2008, p.75).

Within socio-cultural theories of the self-as-subject, the debate revolves around the nature and intensity of the influences that differing social forces have in constituting identity and subjectivity. Therefore, a socio-cultural perspective would require a focus on established social arrangements, cultural practices and discourses rather than innate psychological forces.

The branch of socio-cultural theories is complex and divergent but can be distinguished, for ease of discussion, into two broad categories: structural and poststructural approaches. This is not to suggest that these categories are neatly distinct or without overlap, complexity or inconsistency, they are not. The purpose of this distinction is to explicate the fundamental assumptions about the self that inform the complex branch of socio-cultural theories. The essential difference between the two categories is that structural approaches assume the social world to be ‘stable and

predictable' and therefore the ways that social forces constitute the subject are foreseeable and calculable. Conversely, poststructural approaches view the social world, and the subject's relationship with it, as 'unstable and unpredictable. Hierarchical principles of meaning, truth, essence and identity are thus seen as unfixed, incomplete and contradictory' (Mansfield 2000, p.184). Structural approaches might be best explicated by way of an exploration of Freudian theories of the self-as-subject and poststructural approaches by way of an exploration of Foucauldian theories.

The structural subject

For the controversial though highly influential psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud, 'the specific set of familial and social relations...gender relations and sexual identifications' are key factors in the constitution of identity and subjectivity (Mansfield 2000, p.31). Freud's theory of the unconscious mind being as equally significant as the conscious mind in the constitution of the self is perhaps the most influential theory of the subject in modern times. Freudian approaches assume subjectivity to be 'quantifiable and knowable - in short, a real thing, with a fixed structure, operating in knowable and predictable patterns' (Mansfield 2000, p.9). Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan developed Freud's theories through the application of Saussurean linguistics that posited language as the producer of culture. Lacan identified language as the 'symbolic order... in which subjectivity is achieved... governed by patriarchal principles of hierarchy, meaning and order' (Mansfield, 185). Lacan's later work influenced the development of poststructuralist and postmodernist theories of the subject and the social world.

The poststructural subject

Poststructural theories did not reject the important structuralist insights into the constitutive social forces of family, gender, sexuality and language but rather, the assumption of knowable and stable social structures and therefore knowable identities and subjectivities. Poststructuralism assumes the social world and the subject's relationship to it to be changeable, precarious, inconsistent and unpredictable. The work of French philosopher Michel Foucault is perhaps the most influential in poststructural theories of the social world and the subject (see for example Foucault 1987; Foucault 1993). Foucault rejected 'a certain a priori theory of the subject' to identify the subject as a 'form', rather than a 'substance', that is constituted by 'relationships' with self and others (Foucault 1987, p.121). The 'form' of the relationship with self, modifies and changes in response to fluctuating relationships with others, that are always in Foucault's analyses, 'relationships of power' (Foucault 1987, p.123).

You do not have towards yourself the same kind of relationships when you constitute yourself as a political subject who goes and votes or speaks up in a meeting, and when you try to fulfill your desires in a sexual relationship. There are no doubt some relationships and some interferences between these different kinds of subject but we are not in the presence of the same kind of subject. In each case, we play, we establish with one's self some different form of relationship... There are relationships that one can find at different levels, under different forms: these relationships of power are changeable relations, i.e., they can modify themselves, they are not given once and for all (Foucault 1987, p.121; 123).

The process of self-constitution in response to fluctuating relationships of power is achieved by way of what Foucault described as 'techniques of the self' (Foucault 1993, p.203). Following Habermas, Foucault acknowledged three main ways or 'techniques' with which humans are made subjects: 'techniques of production,

techniques of signification and techniques of domination' (ibid.). In his initial analyses of the subject and subjectivity he assumed 'techniques of domination were the most important, without any exclusion of the rest' but later came to identify as equally important 'techniques or technology of the self' (ibid.). As he explained, technology of the self describes,

... techniques which permit individuals to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves and to attain a certain state... the technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself (ibid.).

These techniques of the self are not, in Foucault's theory, autonomous, but socially constituted. The subject knows and acts on itself based on already established socio-cultural 'patterns' that determine and delimit possibilities for subject formation and subjective action (Foucault 1987, p.122).

I am interested, in fact, in the way in which the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group (ibid.).

Social patterns - discourses, social arrangements and cultural practices - are established through normative, though unstable, relationships of power and therefore, techniques of the self represent possibilities both for self-regulated subordination to 'states of domination' as well as possibilities for resistance against them.

States of domination produce techniques of subjectivity that compel us to 'police and present ourselves in the correct way, as not insane, criminal, undisciplined, unkempt,

perverse or unpredictable... the subject is the primary workroom of power' (Mansfield 2000, p.10). Relations of power, however, are 'changeable, reversible and unstable' and therefore 'there is necessarily the possibility of resistance' (Foucault 1987, p.123). This possibility of resistance, what Foucault termed 'the practice of freedom' (Foucault 1987, p.114), is dependent on the subject's engagement in 'games of truth', or in different terms the 'ensemble of rules for the production of truth' (Foucault 1987, p.127).

[W]e could criticize politics - beginning for example with the effects of the state of domination of this undue politics - but we could only do this by playing a certain game of truth, showing what were the effects, showing that there were other rational possibilities, teaching people what they ignore about their own situation, on their conditions of work, on their exploitation (Foucault 1987, p.126).

Teaching about the 'undue politics' of colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies - teaching about the effects of colonial and racist states of domination, teaching about the rational possibility of social justice and teaching about what racialised systems of whiteness and privilege would have us ignore about our social world and our place in it as subjects - is precisely the kind of 'game of truth' that Foucault is referring to here.

Poststructural assumptions of the subject and the social world proffered important and relevant insights for the context and purpose of analysis in my research. Understanding identity and subjectivity as constituted in mutable and precarious relationships of power with others and as, therefore, 'permanently open to inconsistency, contradiction and unself-consciousness' (Mansfield 2000, p.6), enabled an analytical anticipation of complexity, ambiguity, discrepancy and contradiction. It alerted me to the fact that the identity and subjectivity of participants

cannot be known in certain or complete terms because the subject's relationship with self and with others is always in a process of formation and reformation (Foucault 1987; see also Billett 2006; Fenwick 2006; Yates & Hiles 2010). There are potentially limitless unique combinations of relationships of power and lived experiences that might in-form students' beliefs, values, attitudes and concepts of self in relation to colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege (Sets & Burke 2000). The possible ways that teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies might re-in-form students' relationships to self, First Australian peoples and others are also potentially limitless.

In light of these insights, the ways that students might engage and perceive teaching and learning and the ways that students might engage and respond as research participants can never be effectively foreseen or classified. However, the poststructural assumption that the subject's relationship with self and others is constituted and circumscribed by established socio-cultural patterns but that these relationships and patterns are never fixed, provided some stable direction for analysis. As has been well documented, established socio-cultural patterns of relationships of power between First Australian peoples and non-Indigenous peoples are characterised by colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege (see for example Beyond Blue 2015; Dunn 2003; Forrest & Dunn 2006; Green & Sonn 2005; Kessariss 2006; Koerner 2013; Mellor 2003; Moore 2012; Nelson 2013; Pedersen et al. 2006; Quayle & Sonn 2013; Walter et al. 2011). These characteristics are reinforced by institutionalised economic and political practices meaning that these relationships of power meet Foucault's criteria to be considered a 'state of domination' (Foucault 1987, p.114). These documented patterns of colonialist and racist relationships of

domination forewarned the likelihood that these patterns would be operationalised, at least by some participants, as techniques of the self in their (re)formation of identity and subjectivity both as students and as research participants.

Yet, at the same time, the changeable and unstable nature of relationships of power represent possibilities for the (re)formation of identities and subjectivities that stand in solidarity with First Australians in opposition to domination and oppression. Teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies exposes students to anticolonial and antiracist truth-games and posit possibilities for establishing new or modified patterns of relationships and forms of subjectivity that challenge and resist the state of domination in which First Australian people, and indeed many Australians, are embroiled. In other words, the ‘games of truth’ played in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies propose the possibility of subjective forms and relationships that can ‘practice freedom’ from domination. Poststructural assumptions of the instability of social relations brought to my research a much needed and most welcome sense of hope for the possibility of social change.

My reading of poststructural assumptions suggests that ‘identity’ and ‘subjectivity’ can be considered two sides of the same coin. There is some disagreement between various theorists as to whether identity should be considered as separate to subjectivity. For example, psychology scholar Margaret Wetherell conducted a poststructural critique of the ‘conventional ways in which “identity” and “subjectivity” are defined against each other’ as distinct and separate phenomena in psychology theory (Wetherell 2008, p.75). I agree with Wetherell that the distinction seems to be artificial in that,

... practices allocated to “subjectivity” such as self-reflexivity and the patterning of affect and emotion are absolutely integral to the very construction and definition of social categories and their cultural imagining... social identity cannot be taken for granted as any simple “outside” to subjectivity (Wetherell 2008, pp.77, 78).

From a poststructural perspective, identification practices, where individuals are located in already-established socially constructed groups such as race, gender, class, sexuality, ability and so on, are precisely the patterns upon which subjects interpret, form, reform and live out their relationships with self and others (Billett 2006; Mansfield 2000; Wetherell 2008). If identity and subjectivity are so entangled that they are not readily distinguishable, it seems productive to employ the term ‘subjective identity’ to signify this assumption of entanglement. Following this, when I discuss an individual’s ‘subjective perceptions’ or ‘subjective standpoint’, I am referring to perceptions or standpoints that are the product of a socially constituted ‘subjective identity’.

Critical Hermeneutics

The implications of the assumptions of the poststructurally-influenced critical social constructionist approach for my research are that not only are the research participants’ perceptions socially and historically shaped interpretations, but so too are my perceptions and interpretations of the research data. Therefore a critical hermeneutical approach to data collection and analysis was highly appropriate because a hermeneutic approach meant that the aim was to interpret, as opposed to objectively explain (Crouch & McKenzie 2006; Kinsella 2006). A hermeneutical approach facilitated acknowledgment that subjective perceptions are socially constituted and that all subjective perceptions are, in and of themselves, interpretations that are partial and often uncertain and inconsistent (Kinsella 2006;

Lucas 2012). In reporting how individual students perceived and reacted to the specific context of learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, I aimed to achieve an ‘empathic’ approach, ‘characterised by openness and receptivity’ (Crotty 1998, p.109). Australian philosophy scholar Michael Crotty describes an empathic approach to hermeneutical analysis as,

... seeking to see things from the author’s [research participant’s] perspective. We attempt to understand the author’s standpoint. It may not be our standpoint; yet we are curious to know how the author arrived at it and what forms its basis.... We are conversing. We have a kind of running conversation with the author in which our responses engage with what the author has to say... Here... our reading can become quite critical. It can be reading ‘against the grain’ (ibid.).

This reading against the grain is a critical hermeneutical interpretation. Critical hermeneutics, also termed ‘depth hermeneutics’, enabled a hermeneutic analysis through a critique of the ways that ideologies can distort and influence the interpretive frames from which people base their subjective perceptions (Roberge 2011, pp.16–17; see also Kinsella 2006, pp.16–17; Schwandt 2007, p.52). So while I laboured to interpret the data empathically, this was not at the expense of a critical interpretation of the data.

Conclusion

The decision to approach the research from a critical social constructionist position informed by poststructural and critical hermeneutical perspectives is directly shaped both by my subjective standpoint as well as the specific context and goals of my research. Poststructural perspectives enabled a compelling elucidation of how socio-cultural patterns of colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege are entrenched. They proffered sound theoretical foundations for understanding the ways that

subjective identity is shaped by socio-cultural forces and for investigating and analysing students' perceptions and experiences of teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies. The interpretive lens of critical hermeneutics facilitates an empathic, yet critical interpretation of the data.

In the following chapter I describe the methodological design of the research. I describe the research approach, the research context and research participants. I detail the data collection methods, the analytic process and discuss the ethical considerations undertaken in the research design.

Chapter 7

Methodological Approach

Introduction

The poststructurally-influenced critical social constructionist and hermeneutical posture that I take in undertaking my inquiry has informed my choice of methodological approach and research methods. In presenting the critical ethnographic approach to the research and describing the research methods in this chapter, I spotlight the ways that the interpretive frames of critical social constructionism, poststructuralism, and critical hermeneutics that underpin my research shape my data-collection and analytic process. I describe the specific context of the research and provide details about the research participants before outlining the data collection methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and focus groups. I describe the analytic process of generating inductive and theory-driven themes by way of a thematic coding process and conclude by sketching the ethical considerations that underpin the design of the research.

Critical Ethnography

The methodological approach to the research, critical ethnography, is aligned with critical social constructionism and critical hermeneutics in that it is concerned with interpretations that expose and challenge ‘contradictions and distortions’ (Anderson 1989, p.253; Schwandt 2007, p.51). Critical ethnographer D. Soyini Madison has described critical ethnography as ‘the doing or the performance of critical theory. It is critical theory in action’ (Madison 2005, p.15). Engaging critical ethnography required a dialectical reflexivity between my critical social constructionist and

poststructural assumptions, the participants' subjective perceptions and the structural and historical forces that inform colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege. It meant maintaining a balance between the 'phenomenological concern with human agency' and poststructural conceptions of social structure (Anderson 1989, pp.254–255)

Through reflexivity I kept in mind that while subjective identity is historically and socially inherited, it is also actively and 'continually constructed and reconstructed as it is lived or practiced' and that I can only 'know that historical, socially constructed reality in a partial, provisional sense' (Foley 2002, p.472; Lucas 2012, p.406). This meant being vigilant about the impact that my assumptions would have on the way I conducted the research as well as the impact my subject position as a mature, working class, able-bodied, heterosexual, non-Christian and fair-skinned First Australia female researcher with considerable teaching experience would have on the way that research participants responded to me as researcher (Foley 2002; Madison 2005). In discussing my findings and analysis I have endeavoured to create, through careful language choice, an overall tone that corresponds with these reflexive considerations.

Research Context

The research was conducted with staff and students in two almost identical Indigenous Australian Studies subjects ('the Subjects'), one for undergraduate and one for postgraduate students, at a large regional Australian university. The choice of this research site was based on three main criteria. Firstly, I have an established, longstanding and ongoing collegial relationship with the First Australian teachers of the Subjects. Over the years we have engaged in collaborative theorising and peer-

mentoring about the development of our respective teaching and learning approaches, practices and curriculum design. Therefore, the critical anticolonial and antiracist theoretical approaches and teaching and learning strategies deployed in the Subjects significantly corresponded to and reflected my own current theorising and practice. Conducting the research with my peers presented an opportunity to undertake a close analysis of our collective efforts toward developing effective critical pedagogical theory and practice.

Secondly, the context closely resembled the contexts within which I have worked and developed the rationale and problematic of this research, namely mandatory stand-alone Indigenous Australian Studies subjects in degree courses. Thirdly, the research site suited the time and resource limitations of PhD research and as the campus was located within a two-hour commute from my place of residence, I had relative ease of access.

The Subjects: ‘Equity & Indigenous Australian Peoples’

The two Subjects, ‘Equity & Indigenous Australian Peoples (UG)’ and ‘Equity & Indigenous Australian Peoples (PG)’, referred to hereinafter as ‘UG’ and ‘PG’ respectively, are both mandatory subjects in their respective awards. The UG Subject is a second-year subject in a three-year undergraduate Bachelor of Social Work award. The PG Subject is a second-year subject in a two-year coursework Master of Social Work award. In 2015 when I conducted my fieldwork the Subjects were very similar, sharing identical descriptions, aims and objectives, as described in the Subjects’ outlines and reproduced in Table 3.

Table 3: The Subjects: description, aims and objectives

Description	The subject critically analyses ideas and practices that shape contemporary approaches to human services and social work with Indigenous Australian peoples. Through an examination of a diversity of Indigenous voices within the wider discourse in Australia, past and current colonial politics, policies, practices and socio-economic imperatives are critically analysed from social justice and human rights perspectives. The course will focus on the history and impact of colonisation, governmental responses to Indigenous needs and the challenges of best practice policy-making and service delivery. Students will develop critical analysis skills through the examination and evaluation of various relevant social theories. The development of advocacy skills will be encouraged to enable students to engage the discourse around Indigenous human service and social work policy and practice within Australia.
Aims	This subject aims to convey a critical and broad analysis of contemporary ideas, theories and issues relating to Indigenous Australian peoples and social policy, practice and welfare. Students will explore appropriate methods of identifying and responding to the specific circumstances and relevant paradigms of Indigenous peoples and communities. Specific aims are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a sound basis for understanding colonisation, the phases of colonisation in Australia and specific policy measures through which colonisation is expressed • Identify the discourses through which welfare, health and education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been constructed and rationalised. • Examine contemporary theoretical and socio-political debates for ways of re-thinking the possibilities for welfare, education, and health practices with Aboriginal and Islander peoples; • Support the development of socio-political awareness and critical analysis skills to evaluate the attitudes, values, opinions and beliefs that underpin mainstream representations of contemporary Indigenous Australians peoples and issues. • Support the development of advocacy skills for the promotion of social justice and human rights for Indigenous peoples.
Objectives	After successfully completing this subject you should be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. extrapolate the implications for Indigenous Australians as a result of colonisation since British invasion; 2. express a clearer understanding of the diverse identities, histories, experiences and therefore diverse needs of Indigenous Australian peoples who reside in urban, rural and remote areas; 3. critically evaluate the attitudes, values, opinions and beliefs that underpin mainstream representations of contemporary Indigenous Australian issues; 4. appreciate the extensive and complex manifestation of racism in Australia; 5. examine the ways in which Australian policy, professional practice and mainstream institutions privilege whiteness; 6. critically analyse and articulate the societal constructs, policies and practices that impact Indigenous Australians; 7. articulate some principles of a practice framework for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 8. apply critical analysis and advocacy skills.

The Subjects differed in relation to required and recommended print and audio-visual materials (see Appendix 1) as well as assignments, as overviewed in Table 4 and detailed in Appendix 2.

Table 4: The Subjects: assessment

Subject	Assignment 1	Assignment 2	Assignment 3
UG	Portfolio, 40%.	Case Study Analysis, 40%.	Online quiz, 20%.
PG	Researched Digital Story, 20%;	Portfolio, 40%;	Major essay, 40%.

Each Subject was supported by its own dedicated ‘Blackboard’ online learning site that held the weekly PowerPoint presentations, audio recordings of on-campus workshops, required and recommended print and audiovisual materials related to each topic, assessment details, discussion boards and other student support mechanisms. I was provided with access to these sites and the documentation provided in them was accessed to build a detailed familiarisation with the Subjects. Delivery of the Subjects was conducted both online and in on-campus modes across two campuses (Campus 1 and Campus 2). Online enrolment included PG students only, enrolment on Campus 1 included both PG & UG students and enrolment on Campus 2 included UG students only. As presented in Table 5, enrolment across all modes and campuses totaled 294.

Table 5: Enrolments across Subjects and mode

Enrolments	Campus 1	Campus 2	Online	Totals
UG	69	159	0	228
PG	15	0	51	66
Totals	84	159	51	294

My research focused on Campus 1, on-campus mode only, where there were a total of 84 enrolments made up of 69 UG and 15 PG students. The Subjects were delivered in a combined UG and PG three-hour weekly workshop that included both

lecture and tutorial activities. The workshop was available twice each week on Wednesday and repeated on Thursday. Students had the choice of attending the workshop on either day. The workshops on Wednesdays consisted of both UG and PG enrolments. A timetable clash for the PG cohort resulted in Thursday workshops having UG enrolments only.

The Subjects' syllabus consisted of twelve topics as presented in Table 6. The first eight topics presented factual historical and current socio-political contexts, the ideological, policy and legal environments that shape those contexts, as well as critical theoretical frameworks for professional practice. Topics 9 through 11 focused on three specific sites for professional social work practice: education, child protection and criminal justice.

Table 6: Syllabus topics

Topic 1	Welcome and Introduction.
Topic 2	Diversity: peoples, places & contexts
Topic 3	The Facts: colonisation, dispossession & resistance.
Topic 4	Equity: the struggle for human rights.
Topic 5	Privilege: race, racism and whiteness.
Topic 6	Ideology: racism, assimilation/ism & neoliberalism.
Topic 7	Professional Practice Contexts: media, policy & legislature.
Topic 8	Professional Practice Frameworks: critical approaches to practice.
Topic 9	Sites of Professional Practice 1: Education.
Topic 10	Sites of Professional Practice 2: Child Protection.
Topic 11	Sites of Professional Practice 3: Criminal Justice.
Topic 12	Conclusion: Review, debrief & reflect.

I have provided detailed synopses of the PowerPoint presentations, readings and audio-visual materials of each of the twelve topics in Appendix 1.

Research participants

There were eighteen research participants in total comprising three teaching staff and fifteen students. The Subjects were co-taught by a team of three: Sonia who identifies as non-Indigenous Australian and holds a PhD qualification; Crystal who identifies as a First Australian of Gumbaynggir heritage, holds an undergraduate qualification and was, at the time of data collection, undertaking a Masters by Research; and Will, who identifies as First Australian of Torres Strait Islander heritage, holds a Masters qualification and was a PhD candidate during data collection. The distribution of staff responsibilities across the two Subjects - subject coordination, teaching, marking and student support - are presented in Table 7. Further details and background about the teaching team is provided in Chapter 8.

Table 7: Staff distribution of responsibilities.

Sonia	Will	Crystal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject Coordinator PG;• Teaching UG & PG;• Marking PG;• Student support UG & PG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject Coordinator UG;• Teaching UG & PG;• Marking UG;• Student support UG & PG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching UG & PG;• Marking UG & PG;• Student support UG & PG.

Fifteen students participated in the research representing 17.85% of the total 84 enrolments across the two Subjects. Thirteen of the student participants took part in an interview, four of whom also participated in a focus group. Two students participated in a focus group only. Further details of the student participants are provided in Chapter 11.

Research Methods

Data collection was conducted via three methods: individual in-depth semi-structured interviews with staff and student participants, classroom observations and

student focus group discussions. The fieldwork was conducted between 1 April and 28 May 2015 as outlined in Table 8.

Table 8: Fieldwork schedule

Day/Date	Staff Interviews	Student Interviews	Classroom Observations	Focus Groups
Wed 1 April	✓		✓	
Thurs 2 April			✓	
Wed 15 April		✓	✓	
Thurs 16 April		✓	✓	
Mon 20 April		✓ (x 2)		
Tues 21 April		✓ (x 2)		
Wed 22 April		✓	✓	
Thurs 23 April		✓	✓	
Mon 27 April		✓		
Tues 28 April		✓		
Friday 8 May	✓			
Wed 13 May		✓		✓
Thurs 14 May		✓		✓
Wed 27 May		✓		
Thursday 28 May	✓			

Interviews

In-depth interviews were particularly relevant for gaining depth of insight into complex individual subjective perceptions, viewpoints and feelings of participants (Boyce & Neale 2006; Crouch & McKenzie 2006; Denscombe 1998; Turner 2010; Travers 2013). They afforded the opportunity for the participants to disclose their feelings and perceptions of colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege in private, where perhaps they felt confident enough to ‘speak their minds’ (Denscombe 1998, p.113; see also Hesse-Biber 2006, pp.114–115). Semi-structuring the interviews with open-ended questions maintained a clear focus on the themes of learning about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege while allowing for flexibility and spontaneity so that interviewees’ were able to elaborate on their perceptions and track the issues of importance to them. The semi-structured interview also allowed for improvisation in questioning so that interviewees’ interests and concerns could be

followed up and probed in more detail (Denscombe 1998; Hesse-Biber 2006; Turner 2010).

Individual in-depth interviews with student participants offered insight into the way students attached meaning to their lived experiences of learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies (Travers 2013) and proffered an opportunity for a more comprehensive and in-depth exploration and analysis of their perceptions and emotions than might be possible in a group context. Interviews with teaching staff sought insight into academics' perceptions of their teaching and the student's learning. While the interviews privileged the 'authentic' perceptions of participants (Cuadraz & Uttal 1999, p.2; see also Crouch & McKenzie 2006, pp.485–486), it was assumed that these perceptions were shaped by and interconnected with the broader social climate within which colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege operate. I approached the interviews as an opportunity 'to co-create meaning with interviewees by reconstructing perceptions of events and experiences' (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006, p.316; see also Back & Solomos 1993, p.188; Legard et al. 2003, p.140). To achieve this, I was careful to create a relaxed conversational tone and where appropriate, I contributed to the conversation by sharing my own experiences and insights (Linder 2015).

Classroom observations

Observations in the classroom were conducted in six three-hour workshops across three topics chosen for their particular relevance to the research question: 'Topic 5 - Privilege: race, racism and whiteness'; 'Topic 6 - Ideology: racism, assimilation/ism & neoliberalism' and 'Topic 7 - Professional Practice Contexts: media, policy & legislature'. Considering the underpinning critical social constructionist,

poststructuralist and hermeneutical perspectives that I adopt as researcher, I perceived my role to be that of a 'subjective' rather than 'objective' observer and that of participant observer in that my presence was acknowledged and I participated in discussions when invited. My participation in the specific context, conditions and circumstances of the classroom was an opportunity to observe verbal and non-verbal interactions between teaching staff and students and between students. Classroom observations produced rich data in the form of field notes where unique emergent themes were identified for my evolving theoretical analysis; themes that might not have been uncovered in interviews or focus group discussions alone. These themes formed the basis for the production of important follow up questions and discussion in individual interviews and focus groups.

Student focus groups

The two focus group discussions were each attended by both UG and PG students. I had planned for a total of four students for each group however only two students were present for the second group. As well as addressing emergent themes from individual interviews and classroom observations, my goals for the focus group discussions were to seek insight into students' perceptions of the topics, issues and activities in the Subjects that they found worthwhile or alternatively irrelevant, unnecessary or contentious. Further, I aimed to gain insight into how students' perceptions and constructions about colonialism, racism whiteness and privilege were developed and performed in a group setting. I was interested in observing any implicit social norms or group dynamics that worked to authorise or confine particular modes of articulation, forms of language or frames of conceptualisation in discussions about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege.

I was mindful that focus groups require careful moderation so I endeavoured to engender a relaxed and open environment with a view to create a space where participants felt confident to share their perspectives. It was necessary to carefully facilitate to prevent more outspoken participants from overly dominating the discussions so that a collective analysis of relevant themes could be negotiated. I was mindful that colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege can be contentious issues that can produce divergent and conflicting perspectives (Kitzinger 1995; Travers 2013). I carefully monitored and made field notes about group kinesthetics – body language and non-verbal cues such as facial expressions – to capture interactions not picked up by audio-recording (Travers 2013).

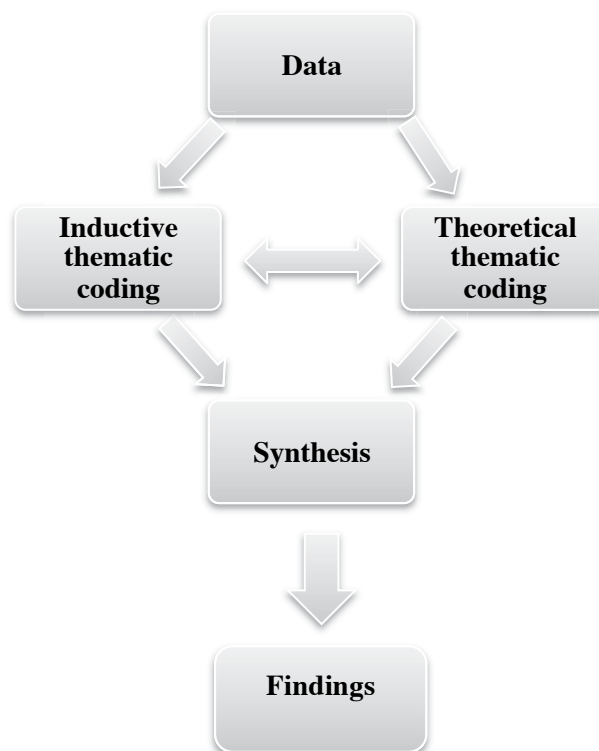
Data from the interviews, focus groups and classroom observations comprised both field notes and, with the permission of participants, audio-recordings. I made the decision to transcribe the recordings of the interviews and focus group discussions myself so that I could closely familiarise with the data. I sought help from a professional service for the transcription of the audio recordings from classroom observations

The Analytic Process

While the central focus of my research is the student experience of teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, the data collected from interviewing and observing the teaching-team served as a valuable source of information for my analysis of the student experience. Using the qualitative analysis software NVivo, I thematically coded the data by employing a combination of inductive, or data-driven, and theory-driven coding. Thematic coding analysis is a flexible method for analysis in qualitative research and well suited to a

constructionist paradigm (Braun & Clarke 2006). Coding inductively enabled the production of rich and detailed accounts and interpretations of students' teaching and learning experiences and perceptions and theory-driven coding enabled analytical connections to be made between these accounts and interpretations and anticolonial, antiracist, whiteness and privilege pedagogical theories. Theory-driven coding was not necessarily undertaken after inductive coding but rather when the conditions of a category become evident, which occurred at various stages of the analytic process (Strauss & Corbin 1998). The analytic process is depicted in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2: Analytic process



Throughout the coding process I employed memo-writing to record the development of my analysis and to generate insights into the conceptual and theoretical interrelatedness of the emergent themes (Charmaz 2008a; Strauss & Corbin 1998). To maintain a committed analytic focus on participants' expressions, interpretations

and explanations and to avoid an over reliance on my subjective and disciplinary interpretations, I used ‘in vivo’ labels, that is labels or names that emerge from the raw data, to name themes (Strauss & Corbin 1998, p.105). Where I wanted to understand the way themes were connected I used ‘gerunds’, or nouns that function as verbs, to maintain a focus on emergence in the data analysis (Charmaz 2008b, p.164).

The analytical process involved a combination of ‘semantic’ analysis where the ‘form and meaning’ inherent in the data was explored and ‘latent’ analysis’ to ‘examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualisations and ideologies that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data’ (Braun & Clarke 2006, para.84). In other words I laboured to take into account ‘how social structures shape and inform the processes by which individual [*sic*] as members of historically defined groups negotiate and interpret their social location’ (Cuadraz & Uttal 1999, p.16; see also Green et al. 2007, p.408). My analysis aimed to contextualise the data within the specific context of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies as well as the broader Australian historical, social, political and ideological context (Cuadraz & Uttal 1999).

Presentation of data

In the presentation of data in the following chapters I have formatted participant quotes from interviews, classroom observations and focus groups in single-spaced indented blocks. While the quotes are presented word-for word to capture the authentic expressions of participants, I have, where it does not change the underlying thrust of the statements, edited out repetition as well as ‘crutch words’ that are often unconscious and add little meaning (words that are expressed in order to provide

more thinking time for the speaker such as ‘you know’, ‘ummm’, ‘like’, ‘kind of’ etc.). By way of example, the following quote from the data is first presented in its raw form and then again after editing for repetition and crutch words.

Quote in raw form

And the other thing is I think that, you know, from peoples’ experiences they might, umm, relate those things differently, you know, if you don’t go through, so, umm, for instance I might, I would have a very different understanding of say privilege as I experience it and maybe [named fellow student] who’s had a lot of crap to deal with and so he sees it, and we have this conversation on quite a regular basis which is kind of (unintelligible) but we have a different understanding of, you know, privilege affects me and very, you know, and I can’t help but admit it, it affects me in a very positive way most of the time, like I’m very mindful of it but it does, there’s not a lot I can do to go around it other than stating this is how it affects me and this is how, you know, I won’t use my powers for evil, kind of thing.

Quote after editing for repetition and crutch words

The other thing is, from peoples’ experiences, they might relate those things differently. For instance, I would have a very different understanding of say privilege as I experience it and maybe [named fellow student] who’s had a lot of crap to deal with and so we have a different understanding. Privilege affects me, and I can’t help but admit it, it affects me in a very positive way most of the time. I’m very mindful of it but it does. There’s not a lot I can do to go around it other than stating ‘this is how it affects me and this is how I won’t use my powers for evil’.

Ethical Considerations

My research was conducted according to UTS Human Research Ethics rules and approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number 2014000092). The research was also approved by the host institution by way of an ‘External Application to Conduct Research on University Staff or Students’. As research participants included two First Australian peoples, two of the three teaching-team members, the research was conducted in accordance with Section 4.7 of the ‘National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research’ (2007) and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (2011). As experts in their fields, First Australian academic participants were recognised as valuable contributors to the research. Their active engagement was encouraged and their suggestions incorporated, where possible, into the research design. As it is customary to recognise the local First Australian custodians and peoples when visiting or working on 'Country', all written and verbal information regarding the research recognised the custodians and peoples on whose land the research was conducted.

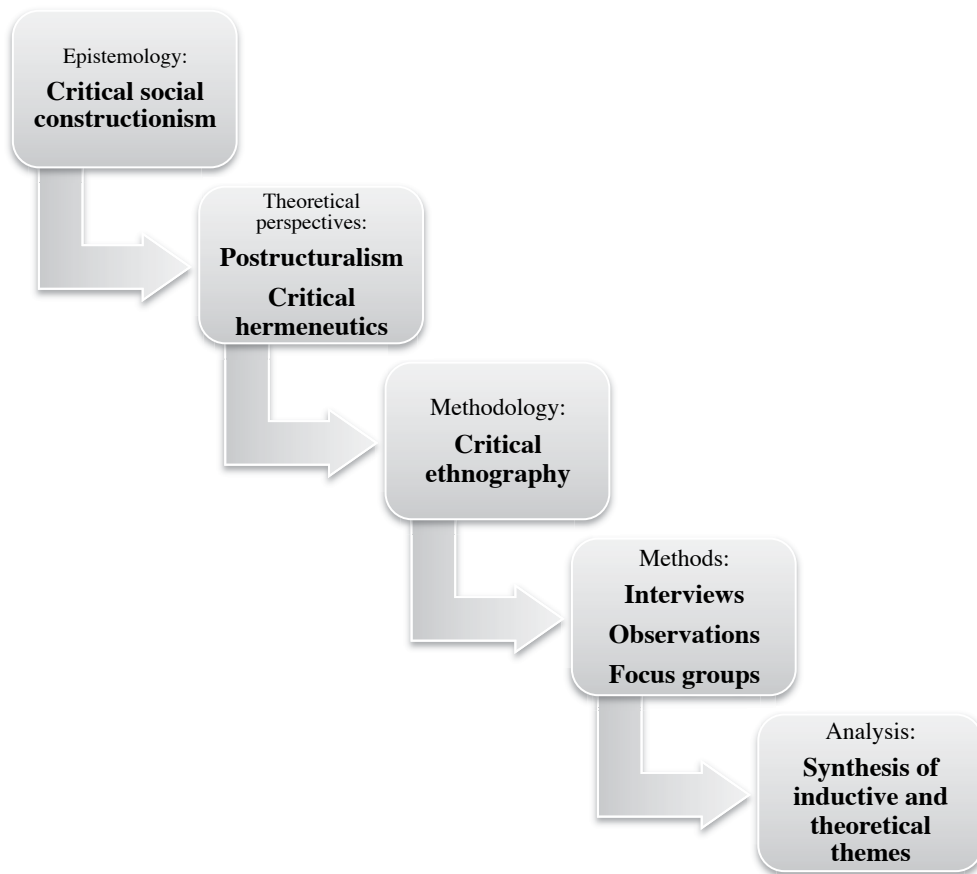
In the first draft of my ethics application to the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee, I stated my intention to de-identify all participants as well as the University where the research was conducted (the host institution). In their feedback, the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee recommended that I give the participants the choice to be identified or de-identified, which I did. As a result, the staff and the host institution were generally happy to be identified, as were approximately 50% of the student participants. However as the remaining 50% of student participants chose to be de-identified, I made the decision to de-identify the University and all research participants to protect the identity, privacy and confidentiality of those participants who did not want to be identified. Therefore, all research participants have been de-identified through the use of pseudonyms and the host institution by way of reference to 'a large regional Australian university'. The Subjects under study and the twelve topics in the Subjects have been de-identified through the use of synonyms. For (hypothetical) example, if a Topic in the Subjects was called 'Social Justice', the synonym might be 'Equity'. Privacy and confidentiality was further ensured through the de-identification of places and institutional affiliations.

Conclusion

The critical ethnographic methodology and the related methods of interviews, observations and focus groups are analogous to the epistemological and theoretical foundations of the research design and were particularly relevant for gathering the kind of data appropriate for a critical hermeneutical analysis. In-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions afforded the opportunity for participants to express their perceptions, interpretations and standpoints authentically and the classroom observations enabled the opportunity to identify relevant themes and issues not emergent from the interviews and focus groups. The analytical process of identifying and synthesising inductive and theoretical themes produced rich interpretations of the data where the complexities, inconsistencies, divergences and ambiguities of key themes were illuminated. The research design is captured in Diagram 3 below.

This is the final chapter of Section 1 that has explicated the disciplinary, theoretical and epistemological foundations of my research and presented the research design in detail. The following section, Section 2: 'Emergent Themes' is divided into two parts, Part 1: 'Teaching and learning in theory and practice: the teacher perspective' and Part 2: 'Subjective Perceptions: the student experience'. Part 1 consists of three chapters presenting findings from interviews with the teaching team and from classroom observations and Part 2, also consisting of three chapters, presents findings from interviews and focus group discussions with students. In the next chapter, I introduce six key emergent themes from the staff interviews and classroom observations and proceed to discuss and analyse the first two themes: 'team teaching' and 'anticolonial pedagogy'.

Diagram 3: Research Design



(Adapted from Crotty 1998, pp.4-5).

SECTION 2

EMERGENT THEMES

Part 1

Teaching and Learning in Theory and Practice: the teacher perspective

Chapter 8

Anticolonial Pedagogy

Introduction

In this section, Section 2: 'Emergent Themes', I present and analyse my data. As the first of three chapters in Part 1 of this section - 'Teaching and Learning in Theory and Practice: the teacher perspective' - this chapter presents and analyses the first two of five themes that emerged from my interviews with each member of the teaching team and from my classroom observations: (1) 'team teaching'; (2) 'anticolonial pedagogy'; (3) 'affective learning'; (4) 'compassionate pedagogy'; (5) 'safe learning environments'; and (6) 'focus on evidence outcomes and systems'. These themes align with fundamental anticolonial principles and constitute the framework that guided my analysis of my interview and observational data. In presenting the themes of 'team teaching' and 'anticolonial pedagogy', this chapter begins by introducing the members of the teaching team and presenting and discussing their perceptions about team teaching. Based on these perceptions and my classroom observations I analyse the opportunities, challenges and risks of team teaching.

I then proceed to analyse the anticolonial approach and teaching and learning strategies in the Subjects focusing on the insights and perceptions of the teaching team and my observations in the classroom. Finally, I present the teaching team

members' observations and impressions about student engagement and about teaching and learning outcomes for students. General conclusions highlight the importance of the expertise of each member of the teaching team, the capacity of First Australian and non-Indigenous partnerships in team teaching, the relevance of the anticolonial teaching and learning approach and strategies employed in the Subjects and the significant investment of personal resources required of teachers for anticolonial pedagogical practice.

The Teaching Team

As briefly noted in Chapter 7, the Subjects were co-taught by a team of three: two First Australian people, Crystal and Will, and one non-Indigenous person, Sonia. At the time of data collection Crystal was 42 years of age and undertaking a Masters degree by research. She identified as a First Australian woman of Gumbaynggir heritage. Will was 49 years of age, a PhD candidate and identified as a First Australian man of Torres Strait Islander heritage. Sonia was in her late thirties with a PhD qualification and identified as a non-Indigenous Australian woman. Crystal began teaching in the Subjects in 2012, three years before the research was conducted and Will and Sonia in 2014, one year earlier.

The Subjects had initially been developed, designed and taught by First Australian academic and experienced social work practitioner, Nick, approximately seven years earlier. Nick taught the Subjects single-handedly for five years initially at one campus and then across two campuses. In 2011, due to increasing enrolments, another First Australian scholar, Jenn, was employed to teach the Subjects at the second campus. Over the course of 2011, Nick and Jenn reviewed, revitalised, updated and redesigned the Subjects. In 2012 Crystal was employed part-time as

tutor to assist Jenn with teaching the Subjects at the second campus where enrolments were increasing rapidly. As a graduate of a full-degree program in Indigenous Australian Studies and as a practicing social worker with First Australian families, Crystal was well suited to the position and a valuable addition to the academic team.

At the end of 2013 both Nick and Jenn resigned from their positions. Nick wanted to return to professional social work practice and Jenn wanted to pursue full-time PhD studies. Their positions were advertised nationally and Sonia and Will won the positions via a competitive process. Sonia had been working in the School since 2007, first as a postdoctoral fellow and later as a senior research fellow. Her appointment as Senior Lecturer in the Subjects and convener of the PG Subject was based on her professional experience working with First Australian communities as a researcher in creative arts education and her qualifications in humanities, applied ethics and human rights. Will's appointment as Lecturer in the Subjects and convener of the UG Subject was based on ten years experience teaching Indigenous Australian Studies in higher education, his qualifications in teacher education and his previous experience as a school principal in First Australian communities. When Sonia and Will joined Crystal to form the current teaching team in 2014, they capitalised on the previous curriculum design work conducted by Nick and Jenn and further improved the Subjects through redesign and updates.

The racialised nature of the teaching teams' qualifications, the only team member to hold a PhD qualification is the non-Indigenous member Sonia, is reflective of the national education disparity between First Australian and non-Indigenous people. While the number of First Australian people with doctorates is increasing, First

Australian completion rates are still well below that of non-Indigenous Australians as reported by the National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network.

In 2012, closing this gap [between First Australian and non-Indigenous doctoral completions] would have required Indigenous postgraduate numbers and completions to increase by 600% to attain parity with population proportions. In 2010... only 0.7% of PhD enrolments nationwide were Indigenous and only 0.4% of PhD completions were Indigenous (National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network 2017).

From my extemporary observations, team teaching in Indigenous Australian Studies subjects is probably not that common in Australian universities except where, as in this case, there are large cohorts across two or more campuses. Even though team teaching is recommended for best practice (Asmar 2014; Gollan & O’Leary 2009), it is likely that it is more common for Indigenous Australian Studies subjects to be taught by one stand-alone teacher. A team of two First Australian teachers and one non-Indigenous teacher is also, I suggest, not that common. Where team teaching does occur it can be assumed that non-Indigenous teachers outnumber First Australian teachers purely based on the fact that First Australian academics represent a very small percentage of national academic staffing levels in Australian universities. For example in 2010, First Australian academics represented only 0.8 per cent of all full-time equivalent academic staff in Australian universities nationally (Universities Australia 2014).

Team Teaching

My observations of the teaching team’s practice in the classroom were that each team member had unique and varying standpoints and areas of expertise and they worked very well together as a team. The composition of the team role-modeled and

embodied solidarity and positive working collaborations between First Australian and non-Indigenous peoples. Each member of the team displayed great respect for their fellow teachers' standpoints and areas of expertise and shared the facilitation accordingly. In doing so, they each shared professional and personal stories that were at times either sobering or inspiring and at other times either cringe-worthy or hilarious.

Sonia took the lead in facilitating the presentation of critical conceptualisations of racism, whiteness and privilege. This was a strategic move to have Sonia, as the non-Indigenous team member, present these confronting and destabilising topics because it mitigated the potential for students to reject the critical analysis of structural domination and oppression as 'just the opinion' of First Australian teachers. It demonstrated how non-Indigenous people can and do stand in solidarity with First Australian peoples to challenge structural domination and oppression. Sonia shared the challenges she faced in her professional experiences as a non-Indigenous person when working and researching with First Australian communities. She proffered insights into the kinds of blind-spots, mishaps and affective and cognitive dissonance that non-Indigenous people can experience when learning to work collaboratively toward social justice and social change.

Will tended to lead the facilitation for presenting First Australian perspectives on historical and contemporary colonialisms and realities based on his cultural, scholarly, professional, social and embodied knowledge and experiences in local, regional and national First Australian affairs. Crystal led the facilitation for presentation of issues specific to social work practice based on her cultural, personal and professional experiences of working with First Australian communities and

families. Will and Crystal both shared stories of their personal and professional lives that proffered authentic insights into their lived experience as First Australian people. The teaching team represented a broad landscape of scholarly and professional expertise and experience complemented by each team members' subjective standpoints.

Perceptions of the teachers

There were three main findings from my interviews with each of the teaching team with regards to the theme of team teaching. The first is that the teachers perceived that non-Indigenous students were more likely to speak more openly about racism, whiteness and privilege with the non-Indigenous teacher than they were with the First Australian teachers. The second is that team teaching role modeled solidarity between First Australian and non-Indigenous people and the third is that there was a perception that the non-Indigenous teacher's knowledge and expertise might be perceived by students to be more credible than the First Australian teachers. All three members of the teaching team indicated that they felt it was valuable to have a team made up of both First Australian and non-Indigenous members. When First Australian and non-Indigenous teachers work together, they create an environment where expertise can be shared, where team members can support each other and where solidarity between First Australian and non-Indigenous Australians in the critique of colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege are role modeled, as Sonia acknowledged:

Sonia

I am conscious that we are kind of role modeling stuff in how we work together.

Team teaching role models the potential for positive working collaborations between First Australian and non-Indigenous peoples and articulates the responsibility of both non-Indigenous and First Australian people to identify and challenge structural domination (Gollan & O’Leary 2009). Reported findings of research conducted across universities in two Australian states, New South Wales and Victoria, titled ‘Indigenous teaching and learning at Australian universities: developing research-based exemplars for good practice’ led by scholar Christine Asmar concluded that,

... a collaborative approach, involving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers, is often effective, and appropriate, signaling the value of Indigenous perspectives. Above all, co-teaching enriches learning for students in contested areas of knowledge (Asmar 2014, p.5).

The teaching team represented the fact that, as expressed by Will, Indigenous Australian Studies is as much about non-Indigenous Australian people as it is about First Australian peoples.

Will

I think it is valuable because that’s the whole point. A lot of what we’re talking about, I keep saying this, ‘that’s got nothing to do with Aboriginal people’. They [students] often mistake historical experience for culture, there’s still that kind of ‘now we know more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture’. So I say ‘well we haven’t talked about culturally specific things we’ve talked about Australian cultural development and some of the paradigms in Australian culture, not First Australian cultures’.

Will’s point is that much of what is presented in the Subjects is the study and critique of non-Indigenous interactions and relationships with, and perceptions and representations about, First Australian peoples and how these have shaped the inequity and disparity experienced by First Australian peoples, past and present.

One of the benefits of First Australian and non-Indigenous teaching partnerships is that non-Indigenous students can feel more confident to articulate their subject

positions and perceptions with a non-Indigenous teacher. Sonia shared her experience of this.

Sonia

We have had the situation, where when I'm alone in the class, the students will just blurt out the most extraordinary racist stuff. I am very certain that it wouldn't happen if Crystal or Will had been in the room. It's almost like, they don't assume complicity, that I share their views, but they assume that it's OK to say that in front of me.

Sonia's presence as a non-Indigenous member of the teaching team resulted in the airing of open 'race talk' that might not have occurred, as Sonia points out, if First Australian teachers had been present. When students articulate their subject positions, pedagogical opportunities to address racism, whiteness and privilege are opened up (Goodman 2011; Leonardo & Porter 2010; Nakata et al. 2014; Pease 2010; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006). The presence of non-Indigenous learning facilitators can work productively to encourage honest and open dialogue that might not occur in the presence of First Australian teachers alone. First Australian and non-Indigenous teaching partnerships can, however, also heighten perceptions that non-Indigenous teachers are needed because First Australian teachers lack credibility, objectivity and expertise. First Australian and other minority academics can be perceived as less credible, less experienced and less authoritative (DiAngelo & Sensoy 2009; Hollinsworth 2014). Will spoke of the tensions that arise from these kinds of perceptions of First Australian academics.

Will

I think the danger with that team approach is that the white person is perceived, by students and others outside the teaching team, as the leader or the authority, the one who's the academic in the mix. Blackfellas always talk about it in universities, it's the white elephant in the room thing about the lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous academic expertise and credibility.

Will related a discussion with a student who indicated that she found learning more authentic from Sonia.

Will

She was saying she struggles because it's all about who you hear it from and she was saying 'I find it easier to hear it through a mainstream medium'. She was talking about the media and then I got on to asking, 'is it different if you hear it from me or Sonia and she said, 'yeah for me it kind of is'.

Accomplished Australian race scholar and Indigenous Australian Studies lecturer David Hollinsworth also recognised this phenomena in relation to the way he is perceived as a non-Indigenous teacher.

... it seems likely that I am privileged as a non-Aboriginal teacher with the presumption of unbiased authority in that my position appears more credible than when Aboriginal colleagues make the same arguments (Hollinsworth 2014, p.10).

The devaluing of the critical role that First Australian academics play in teaching and learning and the wealth of knowledge, expertise, passion and commitment they bring to the task (Asmar & Page 2009b; Hart 2003; Nakata 2004) is frustrating though hardly surprising considering the depth of Australian racism toward First Australian peoples (see *Beyond Blue* 2015; Cunningham & Paradies 2013; Innes 2010). However, I believe that the risk of Will and Crystal being devalued was ameliorated to an extent by the anticolonial teaching and learning approach that centred First Australian knowledges as authoritative (Dei 2000a; Dei & Ascharzadeh 2001; Dei & Kempf 2006; Dei 2010c).

Anticolonial Approaches

Anticolonial approaches to teaching and learning centre and value First Australian standpoints, knowledges and experiences as highly credible expertise for the production of decolonial knowledge that identifies, exposes and challenges structural

domination and oppression (Carey 2008b; Dei 2006; Hart & Moore 2005; Hook 2012; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Nakata 2006; Nakata et al. 2012; Phillips 2011; Williamson & Dalal 2007). An anticolonial approach to Critical Indigenous Australian Studies involves bringing First Australian and Western knowledge systems into communication and negotiation where new knowledge and new understandings can be produced (Nakata et al. 2012; Nakata 2006). Teachers and learners alike are valued as active agents in the production of knowledge requiring the teaching team to be committed to ongoing personal and professional development work to foster compassionate and nurturing leadership and mentoring skills.

The teaching team members were asked in their interviews to reflect on the anticolonial teaching and learning approach used in the Subjects and their views about its relevance and effectiveness. The main finding to emerge about deploying the approach of anticolonialism is that it requires a good deal of personal resources from the teachers. The key concepts the teaching team used to describe the nature of these personal resources were ‘personal development’, ‘leadership’, ‘mentoring’, ‘nurturing’, ‘compassion’ and ‘mindfulness’. For Will, his own personal development led him to more confidently step into the role of compassionate leader and mentor.

Will

Doing work outside of the university around a whole bunch of personal development, you know, personal understanding or reconfiguring what I think it’s all about. I feel I’m at this stage where I’ve just got this level now of experience, a combination of experience, maturity, understanding what is and what isn’t important to me. That’s where Crystal lives in that kind of space and more and more so. One of the things I’m really conscious of and also been willing with what I do, you know, I am in a leadership role, I’m not just a facilitator. I’m in a leadership role, I’m mentoring people and guiding

people and you've got to be really conscious of all the aspects of that. You're not just presenting information and running a workshop and Sonia's been really good at coming on board with that. I see myself more as, you know, in that mentoring, nurturing role and realising that it relates to my own child rearing philosophy. You've got to nurture people through life, you don't beat them through life. You don't punish them and threaten them through life, you nurture people through life and when you do that to someone you see the end result and it's always good, regardless of the circumstances. I think that that's applicable, you know, leadership and mentoring and developing compassion, that's a huge one. Compassion for the whole environment, for everyone that walks through that door.

In committing to his role as leader and mentor, Will strives to fulfill the anticolonial imperative for colonised indigenous peoples to lead the struggle toward social justice (Dei 2010a; Cesaire in Larrier 2010; Fanon 1963; Nyerere 1967) through 'building and rebuilding of human spirit to embrace gentleness, humility, and compassion' (Dei 2002, p.38) in ways that 'enhance the liberty and self-respect of learners' (Adjei 2007, p.1053). As a First Australian teacher Will responds to the anticolonial imperative to honour his cultural knowledge and values and 'ethical traditions of shared interests and concerns, mutual care, social responsibility, equity, and justice' (Dei 2010c, p.95). Personal development work facilitates cognisance of the power and relevance of First Australian identities, knowledges and values for championing and inspiring anticolonial teaching and learning endeavours. Personal development work affords a reflexive context to analyse, develop and draw strength and confidence from individual, social and collective identities, as Crystal infers.

Crystal

With the work that I do and with my obsession around mindfulness and all of the work that I put in on that level, that's the only thing that allows me to do it because I can be personal without putting myself on the line and I'm always self-accountable in that space.

This anticolonial process is as relevant to Sonia as a non-Indigenous person as it is for Will and Crystal as First Australian people, for as Dei asserts,

... the anticolonial theoretical framework is not simply for minority scholars. Anticolonialism must be articulated in the interests of all who struggle against... myriad oppressions... and other antihuman systems (Dei 2009, p.255).

Anticolonial Teaching and Learning Strategies

In the classroom I observed three defining principles of anticolonial teaching and learning practice. The first principle is that teaching and learning was framed as the study of structural domination and oppression from the standpoint of First Australian peoples and this was attended to in the Subjects through a strong focus on systems of domination and oppression (see Chapter 10). The second principle is that teaching and learning should proffer learning opportunities for social change intervention and this was addressed through the focus on allyship, that is a focus on what future social work professionals can do to challenge and change systems of domination that oppress First Australian communities and families. The third principle is the centring of First Australian knowledges, values, expertise, experiences and practices. This principle was operationalised in the Subjects in the two to one ratio of First Australian members on the teaching team, through the use of a broad range of First Australian print and audio-visual resources and by having as standard practice ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ at the start of each workshop.

Acknowledgement of Country

My observations of the standard workshop practice of Acknowledgement of Country in the Subjects was that, as a First Australian custom, it represented an anticolonial process of centring and honouring First Australian knowledges, values and practices (Dei 2012; Dei 2010c). Students were encouraged to conduct Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of each workshop at all but the first workshop in week 1. In the first workshop, the practice was introduced and students were provided with

examples and instructions about how to go about conducting an Acknowledgement of Country. They were asked to develop and rehearse their own version of the practice and to volunteer to deliver their acknowledgements in subsequent workshops.

An Acknowledgement of Country is the ‘twin’ to the contemporary practice of ‘Welcome to Country’ (Kowal 2015, p.174). A Welcome to Country is a modern adaptation of traditional First Australian practices based on ontological, epistemological and axiological concepts of belonging and land custodianship (Pelizzon & Kennedy 2012; Dempster 2007). First Australian custodians of the particular territory on which an event occurs conduct Welcome to Country. Conversely, an Acknowledgement of Country is conducted by those with ancestral lineage from outside that particular territory to acknowledge and respect the rights of local custodians and their responsibilities to protect and care for country (Pelizzon & Kennedy 2012; Kowal 2015).

The practices of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country are of profound cultural and political significance (Dempster 2007; Kowal 2015; Pelizzon & Kennedy 2012) and deeply anticolonial in nature. Welcome to Country asserts unceded sovereign rights to land custodianship and infers the injustice of dispossession and continuing colonial domination (Pelizzon & Kennedy 2012). While not necessarily always overtly so, Welcome to Country practices have been described as ‘de facto’ land claims (McKenna 2014, p.485; see also Everett 2009, p.58; Kowal 2015, p.189). Acknowledgement of Country recognises and supports First Australian sovereign claims. When genuinely and honourably engaged, the practices can be considered performative speech acts with the potential to open anticolonial

possibilities for social change (Dempster 2007; Kowal 2015; Pelizzon & Kennedy 2012). However the practices are not always engaged in this socio-political spirit.

The practices of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country have become increasingly popular at official events in educational institutions, government and non-government and even corporate organisations over the past few decades (Everett 2009; McKenna 2014). In some contexts they have become a fad of political correctness that amounts to no more than tokens of repressive tolerance (Marcuse 1969). When Acknowledgement of Country is conducted without reflection or genuine commitment to social justice and social change it transmogrifies to a ‘commodification and appropriation of cultural practices [that are] objectified and deprived of any political meaning’ (Pelizzon & Kennedy 2012, p.63). In these cases, ‘non-performative speech acts’ (Ahmed 2005, para.2) enable non-Indigenous individuals, organisations and institutions to participate in First Australian cultural practices without risk or liability; ‘an idea of Aboriginal country can be included in state representations without legal or political consequences’ (Everett 2009, p.58; see also Dempster 2007, p.96; Kowal 2015, p.189). In these instances, Acknowledgement of Country becomes a practice of what Sara Ahmed describes as a ‘politics of declaration in which institutions as well as individuals ‘admit’ to forms of bad practice and in which the ‘admission’ itself becomes seen as good practice’ (Ahmed 2004, para.11). Zeus Leonardo and Michalenos Zembylas describe this process as ‘a form of image management, rather than... a political project’ (Leonardo & Zembylas 2013, p.151). When Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country are conducted in this way, as First Australian scholar Victor Hart indicts, they are encounters that amount to,

... epistemological violence... an iteration of terra nullius mythology where blackfellas can appear at the beginning of the event (i.e. the beginning of history) and then conveniently disappear whilst whitefellas do their serious “business” (cited in Kowal 2015, p.189).

The implications of the practice of Acknowledgement of Country as a pedagogical strategy then, presents both risks and opportunities, depending upon the spirit with which it is engaged and received. Therefore in my classroom observations I actively looked for evidence of the spirit in which the practice was conducted. What I observed was that the risk of engaging Acknowledgement of Country without reflection was greatly reduced by the guiding anticolonial pedagogical framework and the teaching and learning content of the Subjects. The Subjects’ focus on evidence-based historical facts that were linked as constitutive of current disparity and inequity, the authorising of First Australian knowledges and values and the focus on critical analyses of colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege suggested that only the most disengaged student would be in a position to resist reflection.

Non-Indigenous Australian performance studies scholar Elizabeth Dempster puts forward that the practices of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country have the capacity to evoke a genuine sense of commitment for social change.

Acknowledgment and Welcome to Country are engines ... of cultural change. They are supplying force and energy to a movement of change, producing a different imaginary. The performance of these ‘ancient modern’ ceremonies keeps the issue of Indigenous rights audible and visible and their claim upon the present vibrantly alive. Most significantly these ceremonies ‘capture’ the stranger, the whitefella is drawn into and included within an Indigenous conceptual system, so that she might begin to learn to ‘care for country’ (Dempster 2007, p.96).

In the classroom setting in the Subjects, I observed how the teaching team pitched Acknowledgement of Country to students as a necessary professional development

skill for working with First Australian families and communities. Students were strongly encouraged to ‘have a go’ and, as already noted, were provided with examples, instructions and time to privately rehearse before conducting the practice in the classroom. I observed that the teaching team went to a lot of effort to create an accessible, safe and supportive environment around the practice so that students might feel confident and comfortable to conduct their Acknowledgements. Despite this, what was most striking to me was the students’ overwhelming reluctance to volunteer to conduct the Acknowledgement and the amount of teaching team encouragement needed before they would do so. One of the main reasons students gave for their reluctance was pronunciation of local First Australian custodial groups, a reason that was expressed all six workshops I observed. I revisit this issue in Chapters 10 and 11.

Teaching and Learning Outcomes: the teachers’ perceptions

Prior to presenting the themes of ‘affective learning’, ‘compassionate pedagogy’, ‘safe learning environments’ and ‘focus on evidence outcomes and systems’ in the next two chapters, I present here the teaching team members’ perceptions of student engagement and likely teaching and learning outcomes. The teaching team expressed general agreement that most students came into the Subjects with a lack of experience in examining issues of colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege. The impression was that the Subjects were approached with caution, apprehension, scepticism and even cynicism that manifest in diverse ways. Sonia’s insights were indicative.

Sonia

I think that a lot of the students come in feeling pretty shit about race relations in Australia. I think most people are generally very unaware of

whiteness, in particular, and very unaware of privilege and I think that it manifests in different ways for different people. It can manifest as extreme denial, aggressiveness, defensiveness. Then I think you've got a bunch of people who are very sensitive people and compassionate, naturally, who just, they just don't know what the fuck to do, I just think they're paralysed. They come in nervous because for self interest or genuinely altruistic motivations, they want it to be better than it is and they come in nervous about themselves in that context of, 'are my worst fears gonna come true? Am I gonna find out that I really am racist'? I think the ones who are nervous but compassionate and sensitive really get a lot of relief out of it.

These insights correspond to my findings, presented in Part 2 of this Section, that students engaged and responded to teaching and learning in diverse and disparate ways. What is notable about Sonia's impressions is that student engagement was characterised by affect. This emergent theme is discussed in the following chapter and constitutes the basis of key findings in my analytical synthesis presented in the concluding chapter (see Chapters 9 and 14).

It is extremely difficult to confidently gauge the efficacy or outcomes of teaching and learning endeavours that challenge structures of power, particularly in terms of how, or even if learning translates effectively or otherwise into personal or professional practice in the longer term. As Nado Aveling suggests, we may 'never know' (Aveling 2006, p.268). Student evaluations of teaching and learning tell us what students think about our curriculum and pedagogies, but they don't tell us of the effects of learning beyond the classroom. They certainly don't discern the degree to which student evaluations might be informed by investments in structures of colonialism, racism, whiteness or privilege. Nonetheless, in my interviews with each member of the teaching team, I asked them to comment about their perceptions of teaching and learning outcomes for students.

Crystal distinguished between a small percentage of students who she described as 'awake' and the majority of students who she described as 'asleep'. To clarify what she meant by this, she shared her experience of teaching a social work subject in the semester following the delivery of the Subjects in the year before my fieldwork was conducted. When the content turned to First Australian perspectives, students seemed to have 'forgotten' or left behind many of the important concepts covered in the Subjects.

Crystal

I think it's different for different people in that space. For some people, they have a whole body awakening. You can see it, they go from asleep to awake. It's transformative and it's actually quite a physical thing, their whole being is opened like a flower, they're just totally absorbing everything and you can see them understanding. Whereas you can look upon the majority of the class who are just still very asleep to that and you can tell that they're not going to get it then and they're not going to get it, you know? That's kind of proven by me receiving them in the next semester. So I walked into class with many of the same students that were in the Indigenous Studies subjects. I got to see them transition into that class and I don't know what it was, but they were like different people and it's really interesting to see people come through and treating a whole different subject in a different way within themselves. There was a handful of the 'gems' and some of them were really onto it but there was still this sense that they were unsure of themselves and had forgotten, oh well I can only assume that they'd forgotten, even the most basic things we were introducing, let alone more complex concepts.

Crystal's insights are telling of the limitations of the Subjects' to inspire long-term commitment to antiracist, social change and social justice goals. On the other hand, reflecting on student assessments in the Subjects in the semester that the fieldwork was conducted, in particular a reflective journal assessment, Will had much more positive impressions of student learning outcomes.

Will

What people are saying is 'wow! It's blown me away, I didn't know anything really, I thought I knew all this stuff' and people who are saying 'Wow! I've just been brought up immersed in racism'. Some people go on to talk about,

‘do you know what my challenge is? My challenge is to have a rational conversation with my partner or my family. Because of what I now know, I’m shocked at what I hear’. Now they’re hearing in casual conversation and in passing comments all the racism and they’re like ‘ I can’t believe I was part of this’! People are saying, ‘it’s changed my whole perspective, it’s changing my whole way of thinking, it’s changed my way of seeing Aboriginal people as groups and potentially as clients, it’s changed the way I see my own culture’. A lot of people talked about the emotional challenge of learning about history. They were really sad and they were really shocked and they were really angry and then they felt really guilty because they realised that they’ve had no empathy. Other people just went ‘yeah I’ve learned this and I’m learning that’, but even they acknowledged that they’d learned historical fact that had made them think and they were incredibly challenged. The things people have found liberating are understanding what privilege is and how it works and understanding history and being able to then start to develop an understanding of what people must be dealing with. We’ve never been able to coach this through the essay process. People have made really dramatic and profound statements and you know, that might be a bit of a rush of blood or whatever, but at the same time, once it’s seen and known it’s always going to sit there as a bubble, as a reference point and that’s exactly what we want in a short course covering a huge amount of ground.

While Will’s impressions are encouraging, he recognises at least some of these expressions are likely to be a short-lived swell of emotion, a ‘rush of blood’ as he termed it, or as Crystal suspects, students writing whatever it takes to pass.

Crystal

I can really see it in their writing...it’s just a mask, it’s just like ‘oh here, I’ll say what I think you want to hear’.

The divergence between Will and Crystal’s impressions might be interpreted as a result of the difference in their personalities, however my impression from their interviews is not suggestive of a great difference in their tendencies toward optimism or pessimism. As already noted, my analysis of student perceptions identified diverse and divergent responses to teaching and learning and therefore I interpret Crystal and Will’s differing impressions as reflective of this.

Will's impressions raise a further important issue worthy of note: the potential for the teaching and learning in the Subjects to result in conflict in the personal lives of students. Unfortunately, this is a common occurrence and I am familiar with stories of students' conflict with friends and family as a result of their learning in my classes. As David Hollinsworth notes students 'are not only dealing with their own awakenings and insecurities; they have to contend with the often-antagonistic views of family, partners and friends. Marriages fail, social networks atrophy' (Hollinsworth 2014, p.15). Considering the 'lack of experience' of racism, whiteness and privilege that learners from social locations of power may have (Pratto & Stewart 2012, p.31), experiencing racism by association can be powerfully destabilising, requiring focused support for learners and attention to the development of coping strategies and skills.

Conclusion

Overall, my observations in the classroom were that teaching and learning strategies well addressed the pedagogical aspirations as expressed by the teaching team in their interviews. The teaching team worked very well together, respectfully sharing the facilitation of classes according to their respective expertise and supporting each other in role modeling positive First Australian and non-Indigenous working relationships. Representing a First Australian and non-Indigenous teaching partnership, team teaching enriched the teaching and learning experience in the Subjects by presenting a unified front of solidarity in the critique of contested knowledge and by demonstrating the responsibility of both First Australian and non-Indigenous Australians to challenge colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege and to advocate and work toward social change. The strong focus on critical analysis of

domination and oppression from First Australian standpoints, the centring of the knowledges, values, perspectives, expertise and practices of First Australian peoples and the personal development work and professional commitment of the teachers attended to fundamental imperatives of anticolonialism. While the anticolonial practice of Acknowledgement of Country has the capacity to inspire a genuine sense of commitment for social change, it also has the capacity to be tokenistic. I contend however, that the depth of reflection commanded by the quality of the teaching and the content and resources in the Subjects mitigated the risk of tokenism.

The next chapter addresses the themes of ‘affective learning’ and ‘compassionate pedagogy’ that emerged from interviews with the teaching team and observations in the classroom. The themes signify the inherently affective nature of learning at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies and the value of compassionate pedagogy in responding to and managing affective learning.

Chapter 9

Affective Learning and Compassionate pedagogy

Introduction

The teaching team's impressions and observations of the student engagement and outcomes, presented in the previous chapter, suggest that affectivity is a key characteristic of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies pedagogy. Their descriptions made strikingly evident that teaching and learning in the Subjects evoked strong feelings and emotions in the students. In acknowledging this, the teaching team emphasised the importance of compassionately responding to student affectivity, as Will wisely reflected.

Will

You've got to nurture people through life... and when you do that to someone you see the end result and it's always good, regardless of the circumstances... compassion, that's a huge one. Compassion for the whole environment, for everyone that walks through that door.

The nature of affective learning and the risks and challenges of managing emotional responses to difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies has been well acknowledged in the scholarly literature. Less well considered has been the potential for affectivity to proffer productive learning opportunities as spotlighted in the interviews with the teaching team, and this chapter explores that potential. I argue that affective learning necessitates affective pedagogical responses and compassionate pedagogy is one such response. Compassionate approaches acknowledge the intense and complex affects that students can and do experience

and labours to mitigate and navigate affect in ways that are pedagogically productive.

The following discussion begins by establishing the affective nature of critical teaching and learning and investigating the utility of affectivity for productive learning. I do so by focusing on two learning activities that I observed in the classroom. I then identify the student support mechanisms embedded in the Subjects' design as constituting compassionate pedagogical approaches. I conclude by arguing that while compassionate approaches to teaching and learning are not without risk, they do have the potential to support students to navigate and productively manage affectivity.

Affective Learning

Learning at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies is an affective process for both First Australian and non-Indigenous students. My own experience of learning difficult First Australian knowledge about colonialism, racism and contemporary realities exemplifies the impact affect can have on First Australian students (see Chapter 1). In the previous chapter, the teaching team described their impressions and observations of the ways that affect impacted non-Indigenous student engagement in the Subjects as 'feeling pretty shit about race relations in Australia', 'extreme denial', 'aggressiveness', 'defensiveness', 'paralysed', 'nervous', 'sad', 'shocked', 'angry', 'guilty' and 'incredibly challenged'. These kinds of responses to pedagogies that analyse colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege are well recognised by researchers and educators from diverse disciplinary perspectives (see for example Allen 2002; Aveling 2006; Choules 2007; Curry-Stevens 2007; DiAngelo 2011;

Flynn 2015; Fuller 2016; Hollinsworth 2014; Linder 2015; McConaghy 2003; Pease 2010; Ranzijn & McConnochie 2013; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006).

Learning the truth about colonisation, racism, whiteness and privilege can be very upsetting. Learning how ideology shapes our worldviews and conceptions of normality can result in highly disconcerting and destabilising cognitive dissonance (Case 2012; Curry-Stevens 2007; Ellsworth 1989; Goodman 2011; Mills 1997). The dissonance caused by pedagogies that make structural domination visible can manifest in feelings of guilt, shame and distress when learners from social positions of power begin to see that their relative privilege contributes to the oppression of others and begin to see themselves as the oppressed see them (Banks et al. 2013; Pease 2010). Further, there is the real possibility for this learning to result in conflict in the personal lives of students, compounding the potential for affective distress. When students discuss their learning outside the classroom with family and friends it is not uncommon to experience mild to highly volatile responses (Hollinsworth 2014; Tatum 1992) that can be described as racism by association.

The implications of affectivity, I submit, are twofold. The first implication is the potential productivity of affectivity for teaching and learning processes and outcomes and the second is that affective learning requires focused care, compassion, leadership, mentoring and support.

Affective pedagogy

To teach and learn critically is to teach and learn affectively. That affective responses to learning present pedagogical challenges and risks has been well identified in the scholarly literature (see for example Aveling 2006; DiAngelo 2011; Fuller 2016; Leonardo & Zembylas 2013; Levine-Rasky 2000; Mackinlay 2012; Matias &

Zembylas 2014; Pedersen et al. 2004; Sharma 2010; Zembylas 2014; Zembylas 2012; Zembylas 2006). Not so well considered have been the pedagogical opportunities inherent in affective learning. My interviews with the teaching team, particularly Crystal's interview, led to a consideration of the ways that affectivity might be theorised and strategically operationalised in productive ways. Drawing from her own learning experiences, Crystal reflected that she did not experience transformative critical learning until she had experiences that made her 'feel'. She identified affectivity as a key factor that enabled her to productively appreciate the connection between her subjective standpoint and structures of domination and oppression.

Crystal

I became aware of my own tendencies and really having to work hard on confronting my own stereotypes and thinking. It feels very raw to admit that I had those very deeply held stereotypes. What I was doing was actually projecting what had been instilled into me. So I was doing that very unconsciously and it took a few shocks to the system, or getting it wrong. It took being on the edge, on the precipice of fucking up in public or whatever. I had to be pushed. There's an expectation that as intelligent humans we should be waking ourselves but it just doesn't necessarily work like that, you can't force yourself. I consider myself reasonably intelligent but I still wasn't crossing those bridges on my own. For me those things only happened when I had a physical experience of the emotion that I actually could see the other side of it. I think sometimes the way that we expect them [students] to learn can keep them in that realm of just being locked in the head, that one-dimensional intellectual experience.

For Crystal, affective teaching and learning moves beyond the conventional academic boundaries of Cartesian dualism, beyond being 'locked in the head'. She advocates a pedagogy that strategically engages affectivity through the examination of current real life situations and personal stories.

Crystal

They're starving for real life scenarios so I bring them stories from practice. We should give them juicy, real life tangible experiences; they really are able to work with that. The best things that students respond to the most is personal stories. If you just get in there and go 'this is my experience' or 'this is what I saw' or 'who noticed that in the news, this is how I felt about that' and then students are like 'oh really, I didn't really see it like that, in fact I didn't even see it, but now that you say it...' When they're raw in that space you can see people, even if they're not going to say anything, they're leaning forward a little more.

In the classroom I observed two particular activities that presented stories from real people in contemporary contexts that engaged students affectively, and I contend, in productive ways: the 'Qualities of an effective ally' activity and the 'Our Generation' activity.

Qualities of an Effective Ally activity

The 'Qualities of an Effective Ally' activity was part of the workshops for Topic 5 (see Appendix 1). It involved viewing Episode 1, Series 1 of the controversial and highly criticised reality TV series 'First Contact' (Sharkey & Weekley 2014). The series follows six non-Indigenous Australians as they travel the country and engage with diverse First Australian communities. The six participants from diverse locations and socio-economic and educational backgrounds had very little prior knowledge about, and had rarely engaged with, First Australian people (see Appendix 1 for more detailed commentary about the series). Like any reality TV, the series was likely designed, directed and edited to sensationalise and it was criticised for essentialising both the First Australian and non-Indigenous Australian people depicted (see Bond 2014a; McQuire 2014; Tyler 2014). Despite agreeing with some of these critiques, in my opinion, the episode did proffer insights into the reality of First Australian peoples' diverse circumstances and the range of attitudes and

assumptions held by non-Indigenous Australians in relation to First Australian peoples.

Before watching the episode, students were asked to consider the ‘qualities of an

Discussion Exercise: Qualities of an effective ally

Allies are members of privileged groups who have “a genuine desire to create justice...they realise that social justice is [also] about their own liberation and humanity” (Goodman, 2011, p. 157). Goodman (2011, p. 158) outlines the following key qualities of effective allies:

1. Knowledge of the oppression (and how to recognise and address it);
2. Self-awareness (insight into own socialisation and experiences, vigilantly self-reflexive);
3. Humility (lets go of internalised sense of superiority, values others’ wisdom and experience, willing to admit they don’t know, open to continuous learning);
4. Non-defensiveness (able to hear critical feedback and use this to learn, acknowledge mistakes, see critical feedback and tough experiences as “gifts”);
5. Ability to choose appropriate action (ability to analyse situations and their own competence, willing to be a part of collaborative action rather than individual decision maker);
6. Commitment to stay conscious and engaged (pays continuous attention to inequality and privilege, doesn’t get prideful or complacent, hangs in there when things get difficult);
7. Accountability (develops relationships with marginalised peoples and gets honest feedback from colleagues and friends, seeks feedback and critique, aims to exercise and achieve values of social justice for self and others).

Please discuss:

1. Do you think any of these qualities for being an effective ally were evident in any of the six people chosen for the First Contact documentary?
2. How might relationships have developed differently taking Goodman’s principles into account?
3. Goodman notes that “even the best allies may fall short at times” (p. 157). Why might this be? How might we respond when/if this happens?

effective ally’ as put forward by Goodman (2011). They were instructed to consider, while they watched the episode, three questions to discern whether any of the participants demonstrated ally qualities (see left).

While the episode was screening, I observed the students closely. Their body language communicated a range of responses from engaged interest to quiet discomfort and from exasperation to shock, particularly during the frequent sequences where overt racism was displayed and where ideological discourse was evoked. I suspect the discomfort students experienced while viewing the episode was, at least in part, due to being able to see familiarities between the views of the non-Indigenous participants in the episode and those of the students’ own subjective standpoints or of others in their personal or professional lives.

After viewing the episode students broke into small groups for discussion that I observed to be animated and engaged. Generally, student feedback to the class after small group discussion was marked by affect. Students conveyed shock at the blatant racism and rudeness demonstrated by some of the non-Indigenous participants in the episode and at the ideological discourse engaged by most of them. Students

expressed anger, frustration and sadness that First Australian people contended with this kind of racism as a part of daily life. They were moved by and in awe of the patience and generosity of the First Australian individuals, families and communities who interacted with the six non-Indigenous participants. The activity engendered productive affective responses in that students identified and challenged rather than denied or defended the colonial, racist and privileged actions and discourses depicted in the episode.

Our Generation activity

As part of the workshop for Topic 7 (see Appendix 1), the class viewed the documentary film ‘Our Generation’ which investigates the implementation, impacts and outcomes of the ‘Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER)’. Staged in 2007, the NTER was an enforced Australian Federal Government intervention into seventy-three remote First Australian communities in the Northern Territory. Many of the measures implemented to enforce the NTER continue under federal policy labeled the ‘Stronger Futures’ legislation. The powerful documentary is an authentic and self-determined exposé of contemporary realities from the perspective of Yolngu people of remote Northeast Arnhem Land (Our Generation Media 2011).

‘Our Generation’ draws from empirical evidence to elucidate the political agenda behind the NTER and the lack of evidence to support the claims of widespread child sexual abuse that were used to justify the intervention and the subsequent policy. It details the intrusive measures imposed such as blanket quarantine of all welfare payments, compulsory transfer of land and community assets to Federal Government and enforced medical checks for evidence of sexual abuse for all children. Police and military enforced the measures. The documentary exposes the flagrant disregard for

moral decency and human rights, the continuing debilitating impacts and outcomes of the Stronger Futures policy on Yolngu families and communities and highlights how ideologies of race, assimilationism and neoliberalism converge to support structural domination of First Australian peoples. As such, the documentary is an exemplar of the kind of analysis that can be considered anticolonial in nature and purpose.

While the students viewed the film in class, I again observed the students carefully for kinesthetic cues about their affective responses. While a few students who were sitting up the back of the room were obviously disengaged and disinterested, the majority of the students were very quiet and attentive, apart from the occasional gasp of shock, disbelief or confusion. In the most heart-wrenching moments of the documentary, such as when grandmothers were explaining the intervention and policy outcomes of an exponential rise in suicide rates in their communities, particularly among youth and young adults, some students wept. After viewing the documentary, the teaching team asked the students to share their reflections. They expressed shock and anger at the overt and shameless media-supported ideological manipulation that manufactured the consent of the general public to support such racialised and oppressive measures. The realisation that media and political discourses are not necessarily sources of ‘truth’ resulted in a palpable sense of cognitive dissonance in the classroom. One female student’s response exemplified the general feeling when she exclaimed, ‘it’s *so* biased in *so* many ways, structurally, but it’s like, *I don’t understand*’!

The students’ shock, anger and confusion led to them ask questions and proffer other contributions to classroom discussion that might not have been evoked through an

abstract theoretical exploration of the NTER and Stronger Futures legislation. For example a non-Indigenous female student expressed her confusion about First Australian peoples' aspirations.

Female Student

I understand that Indigenous people want to be on their own land and all that, and I'm a bit confused with this, I suppose. Do they want to live on their own land and still work in the Western world to generate an income? Or what do they want in that aspect of looking at it as a big picture? That's where my head is because I'm thinking they still need exactly what everyone needs to survive. So do they want to survive amongst their own doing it their own way completely? Or do they still want to have that interconnection?

The confusion that this student expresses is around the tension between the call for self-determination and human rights by First Australian peoples on the one hand, and the commonly-cited assimilationist trope that First Australian people 'can't have it both ways, they can't go back to the past', on the other. This trope is based on essentialist ideology, that fossilises First Australian knowledges, values and practices as a thing of the past, as irrelevant or unworkable in a contemporary setting (Nakata 2007a). The student's question is basically 'do First Australian people want to maintain their knowledges, values and practices *or* do they want to engage in the modern world, as though these two things are irreconcilable and diametrically opposed. In my opinion, Will competently responded to the question in a way that helped to clarify a complex issue.

Will

People will want different things in different places and I guess that's the significance of consultation. But what people want, and generally the message is pretty generic, people want economic security and self-determination. People are quite willing to engage and do a whole bunch of things that aren't necessarily historically 'traditional'; it's not an either/or situation. For the community [in the documentary], a huge amount of their economic security comes from their subsistence economy, from bush food and harvesting resources. The West didn't invent sustainable economies,

there's plenty of examples around the world of income generating or economically sustainable activity that's not inherently Western. There's also employment opportunities through service delivery, so through schools and people being employed in health. There's a lot of models being put forward by people saying, 'well, we could be doing this. We could be doing environmental management. We could be doing coastal surveillance. We can deliver health'. A lot of First Australian people have currency outside of their communities, working and training and going to university.

Will's response addressed the diversity of First Australian standpoints and aspirations in the context of collective struggles for self-determination. He highlighted that First Australian people are already engaging the modern world whilst maintaining, against the odds, their knowledges cultures values and practices. As Will says, 'it's not an either/or situation'.

From my observations there is no doubt that the two activities engendered affect, or in Crystal's words, caused the students to '*feel*' in productive ways. They put a human face to structural domination. This is a necessary anticolonial strategy that Dei describes as 'bring[ing] theorizing back to the ground' (Dei 2014, p.27).

We must rehumanize research and policy by pushing back on the disinterested, disembodied, and objective research that is validated in the academy. To engage lived experiences, experiences of pain, sorrow, joy, and elation, researchers and policy-makers must recall that these moments are laden with the human (ibid.).

My observations impressed upon me the importance of teachers responding to the affective impacts of learning with compassion. Stated differently, affective learning requires an affective pedagogy of compassion. Crystal's advocacy for teaching and learning approaches that affectively move students is on point because they are learning experiences beyond abstract and theory and because affective learning results in lasting and more meaningful learning as my analysis of student perceptions in Chapter 13 illustrates.

Compassionate Pedagogy

Compassionate pedagogical approaches have the potential to productively navigate the difficult affective terrain at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies. The universal human value of compassion is a key component of critical anticolonial pedagogy (Dei 2008) and is also recognised as a key component for effective teaching approaches across the broader literature on pedagogy that seeks to effect moral and political consciousness-raising (see for example Carson & Johnston 2000; Conklin 2008; hooks 2003; Zembylas 2013). Discussing the critical antiracist classroom, Canadian scholars Terry Carson & Ingrid Johnson remind us that racism and oppression harm the oppressor and oppressed alike. They view students affective responses of anger, resentment, frustration, blame, guilt and so on as symptoms of that harm (Carson & Johnston 2000). They suggest that,

... a pedagogy of compassion may help to move us out of a cycle of blame and guilt that can characterize the critical anti-racist classroom, while at the same time taking account of the resistances to knowledge... This pedagogy would attempt to build trust in the classroom, recognizing the need to learn about the realities of other people, but also acknowledging that we come from different subject positions and that we need to examine critically what we share and do not share... a recognition of each person's subject position and point of departure. Our own experiences suggest that although such a pedagogy is not a panacea for the difficult moral and ethical choices that we face in the classroom, it may offer a starting place for productive conversations with our students (ibid. p. 82).

Carson and Johnston draw attention to 'difficult moral and ethical choices' that educators face in critical classrooms. For example if compassionate approaches permit discourses of social domination to monopolise, the classroom can become a dangerous place for First Australian and other minority learners. On the other hand,

if students' subjective viewpoints and perceptions are proscribed or addressed without compassion, important learning opportunities can be closed off.

Wrestling with the 'slap down'

Sonia shared her experiences of the 'difficult moral and ethical choices' that Carson and Johnston refer to. She described several instances of racist student responses that she observed in the classroom and how she came to grapple with how to assertively but compassionately challenge them. She euphemistically refers to assertive challenges as 'the slap-down.'

Sonia

I was all compassion, compassion, compassion, but as a result of really racist stuff I've adjusted my thinking and I've really been wrestling with it. Like at what point do we need the slap down and at what point do we need the compassion and how do we use both approaches in a more fluid way? You know it's a real skill to do the slap-down, it's a real skill. It's about responding in context. Not trying to isolate that person but seeing the broader context.

Certainly, Sonia's questions are salient. Racist discourses and other discourses of power must be directly and overtly addressed and challenged, but doing so compassionately and in a way that learning is optimised is a tricky balance. As Sonia recognises, racist responses of individual students need to be challenged in ways that do not attack or isolate the individual because doing so implies that racism is a problem of individuals rather than a structural problem (Hollinsworth 1992; Jeyasingham 2012; Pease 2010; Walter et al. 2011; Young & Zubrzycki 2011). Further, responding in ways that impugn the individual or in ways that do not identify the causal nexus between individual standpoints, ideologies and structures of domination and oppression is likely to close off opportunities for productive learning (Hollinsworth 2006; Solomon et al. 2005).

Antagonistic responses such as the ‘really racist stuff’ that Sonia alluded to are to be expected in classrooms where power and ideology are challenged. Rather than viewing these responses as resistance or racist, educators that take a compassionate approach view them as productive because they enable the acknowledgement and engagement of learners subjective identities and arbitration of ideological discourses of power (Leonardo & Porter 2010; Nakata et al. 2014; Pease 2010; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006). If learners are unable or unwilling to express their current understandings because they fear that they will not be acknowledged with compassion, how can ‘recognition of each person's subject position and point of departure’ be achieved (Carson & Johnston 2000, p.82)? In my teaching experiences and in my classroom observations for this research, I have observed that when learners do not feel safe to share their viewpoints honestly and openly, they often become alienated and retreat into silent acquiescence and reluctance to participate (see Chapter 10). University students have too much to lose, they cannot afford to risk failing a mandatory subject so they keep their mouths shut and their heads down, concentrating on ways to survive unscathed. In these instances the possibilities for transformative learning are greatly diminished.

Student support

In light of the difficult project of engaging compassionate pedagogy, I keenly researched and observed the ways that the teaching team deployed strategies of compassion and the most evident was the student support mechanisms embedded in the Subjects. In each of the six workshops that I observed, the teaching team emphasised the affective risks of critical teaching and learning and promoted mechanisms for student support such as the opportunity to debrief with peers in

allocated workshop time and the opportunity to debrief privately with teaching staff (and be referred for further support, such as formal counseling services, if warranted). For example, in the workshops for Topic 5, prior to embarking on in-depth investigations of race, racism, whiteness and privilege across Topics 5, 6 & 7, Will and Sonia carefully emphasised the potential for learners to experience emotional distress, framed as ‘grief around racism’ and encouraged students to seek support if needed.

Sonia

Our team as a whole, we want to acknowledge the experiences of grief that a lot of non-indigenous people have already had and continue to have around racism in Australia. You know, this can affect our personal relationships with loved ones. It can affect family relationships. It can affect your own sense of who am I? There may be guilt. All of this is really common. It's common in my own personal experience in my work with colleagues. It's also common when we talk to students undertaking the kind of learning that you're all doing now and it's also in research that I've done when we've tried different ways of, you know, leading students to new knowledge and transformation around social justice.

Will

There's some students starting to talk about their experience of encountering reactions from family members and people when they start to talk about this at home. For example, historical facts. All of a sudden they've got this barrage of negativity and what they're really experiencing is racism. It can be incredibly tough and challenging and it's a graphic example of how unhealthy this ideology is because people are arguing with, you know, people that they care about and love and very passionately a lot of the time. Quite often what people are finding is they have to shut up. They have to be quiet and that's a form of oppression. I mean, if you just can't talk about what you've learnt at university or talk about some historical facts for the fear of being verbally abused or caught up in some sort of drama then that's very telling and unhealthy. People are asking a really good question, which is how do I deal with it, what do I do, what do I say, what are the tactics?

Sonia

It's certainly something we hear a lot in these classes and I've experienced it in my own family. It gets very personal, to the point where some people feel they can't continue relationships, loving relationships. But there are a lot of strategies. Goodman takes her work on privilege and offers really practical

strategies. As we said at the start of semester we're perfectly happy, very supportive to having some of those debriefs if people feel that it's needed as we go along.

The students' questions that Will refers to about how to respond to racism suggest that students in the Subjects have considerable inexperience with and knowledge about racism. To address these questions Sonia refers to 'Goodman', a required reading for the Subjects by US privilege studies scholar Diane Goodman that recommends various useful strategies for 'Responding to Biased or Offensive Comments' (Goodman 2011, pp.165–170). Providing strategies to support students' skills development for intervening as active social change agents is positioned by US social work education scholar Ann Curry Stevens as crucial for social justice and social change education (Curry-Stevens 2007).

The student support mechanisms in the Subjects provided opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom. Support opportunities outside the classroom, such as one-on-one consultations with members of the teaching team, complimented in-class support strategies, such as the debrief time structured into each workshop. Debrief sessions aimed to allow time for students to debrief independently in small groups, without intervention from the teaching team, unless requested, to express thoughts and feelings, to clarify topic themes and concepts and to build supportive relationships and networks with peers. In Topic 6 Thursday workshop, Will asked the class for feedback regarding the value of the debrief sessions. Responses were mixed as per the following exchange that occurred between Will and two white female students ('Student A' and 'Student B') as part of a larger discussion regarding the reluctance of students to ask questions and contribute to discussions in workshops (see Chapter 10):

Will

Does the debrief help with that?

Student A

It does.

Will

Is it not enough time?

Student A

I don't know. Maybe it's just that I'm a female and I can talk 'til the cows come home, but, yeah, I don't know how anybody else feels.

Will

So you'd like a three-hour debrief starting now?

(Laughter).

Student B

I think it's more, like, personal reflection that's the key. I don't really find the debriefs that beneficial because I just like to think and reflect by myself. So everyone's different.

Will

Maybe in the debrief, if you're that sort of person, your role there and your contribution can be listening to other people and giving them feedback and that kind of thing. The reason why we built the debrief in because often that discussion feels less intimidating when you haven't got a convener or a lecturer or a tutor there and sometimes it can help to have someone to guide some of that discussion. So I guess the other point is, when we do the debriefs, we're still available to engage and there's still this crazy old-fashioned thing called student consultation that we still think happens.

In explaining the purpose of the debrief session, Will identifies that the teaching team recognised that it may be easier for some students to share their emotions and confusions without the presence of the teaching team while also recognising that at other times, it may be beneficial for a group to have a teaching team member present to facilitate. Will's whimsical tone talking about 'this crazy old-fashioned thing

called student consultation that we still think happens,' light-heartedly encourages students to seek support privately with the teaching team. Overall, the teaching team made good efforts to compassionately empathise with students and to promote and provide student support mechanisms. The strategy to openly address the potential for destabilising affective impacts, empathising with learners and providing support has been recognised as best practice for Indigenous Australian Studies (Paradies 2005) as well as broader anti-racist and social justice education both in Australia and elsewhere (see for example Curry-Stevens 2007; Goodman 2011; Pease 2010).

Conclusion

In sum, learning at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies is inherently affective. Affectivity proffers pedagogical opportunities as well as challenges and risks. When students express their affective responses to uncomfortable pedagogies, such as critical race, whiteness and privilege pedagogies, opportunities are opened to engage students' subjective standpoints as a point of departure to arbitrate ideological discourse and interrogate structures of domination and oppression. When engaged strategically through case studies and the difficult knowledge of anticolonial analyses that involve real people in real life contexts, productive affectivity can be engendered.

Affective learning requires affective pedagogical approaches, or in different terms compassionate pedagogy. As Carson & Johnston make clear, while compassionate pedagogy is 'not a panacea for the difficult moral and ethical choices that we face in the classroom, it may offer a starting place for productive conversations with our students' (Carson & Johnston 2000, p.82). Critical Indigenous Australian Studies requires dedicated and compassionate support for students that recognises the

destabilising affectivity, cognitive dissonance and even personal conflict that learning can induce. Compassionate student support was well demonstrated in the Subjects by the open and overt recognition of these risks and the support mechanisms built into the teaching and learning within and outside the classroom.

The following chapter describes and analyses the last two themes to emerge from interviews with the teaching team members and classroom observations: 'safe learning environments' and 'focus on evidence, outcomes and systems'.

Chapter 10 - Safe Learning Environments: focus on evidence, outcomes and systems

Introduction

Creating compassionate teaching and learning environments in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies implies correspondence with national institutional-wide, policy-dictated ideals to establish and maintain 'safe' learning environments for everyone in Australian universities. For example the 'UTS Policy on the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment' states that,

... students and staff have a responsibility to contribute to the achievement of a productive, safe and equitable study and work environment by avoiding practices which lead to, support or condone harassment' (University of Technology Sydney 2014).

While safety from harassment and equitable spaces in university classrooms is inarguably a worthy ideal, safety discourse has been critiqued as somewhat misdirected and perhaps unachievable in classrooms that challenge power. This chapter analyses safety policy and discourse and spotlights that when students don't feel safe they often retreat into silence and reluctance to participate in classroom discussions and activities. As an antidote, I explore the utility of teaching and learning strategies that provide opportunities for students to contribute anonymously to complex and confronting themes and concepts.

I then turn to an exploration of the teaching teams' perceptions of the way that safety discourse is operationalised in the Subjects as a device to protect and justify subject positions of power. In particular, they raised the issue of 'opinion discourse' that insists that student opinion be authorised on par with critical scholarly analysis. They

identified the importance of scholarly evidence to establish the reality of systems of domination and oppressive outcomes and I overview the evidence that was deployed in the Subjects.

Safe Learning Environments?

Critical pedagogical approaches that challenge power and ideology rub against the grain of institutional policy imperatives that require the maintenance of safe educational environments (Leonardo & Porter 2010; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006). Safety discourse and policy in the academe, observes George Sefa Dei, 'tends to reside discursively in a "no person's land" of bureaucratic obfuscation' (Dei 2014, p.17). Education scholars Zeus Leonardo and Ronald Porter illuminated the issue of safety in the context of the whiteness studies classroom in higher education in the US. They argued that safety discourse is 'relational', that for the racialised other, it is 'a projection rather than a reality.... Safe spaces are violent to people of color' (Leonardo & Porter 2010, p.152). The discourse on safety fails to acknowledge that in university classrooms where power and ideology are challenged 'there is no safe space' for the oppressed. 'Violence is already there' (ibid p. 149).

In this sense then, when we talk of maintaining safety in the classroom, we are talking about maintaining safety for those who are already protected by social locations of power (Leonardo & Porter 2010; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006). In the Critical Indigenous Australian Studies classroom and other classrooms that challenge power and ideology, the questions posed by Australian teacher educators Sue Shore and Sian Halliday-Wynes are salient: 'What counts as safe? For whom? Under what conditions? At what cost for others in the course?' (Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006, p.10). Safety discourse fails to critically identify that the ideal of 'safety' can be

invoked to protect social locations of domination and reproduce oppressive discourses, effectively rendering the learning environment unsafe for the racialised and others from oppressed social locations (Leonardo & Porter 2010; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006). If we are to create compassionate educational spaces that are 'safe' to articulate discourses of power, what of compassion for and the safety of the oppressed and disenfranchised?

In my interviews I encouraged the teaching team to describe and discuss their experiences of managing a safe learning environment. Sonia perceived that safety discourse creates an expectation that learners will be protected from challenges to their subject positions.

Sonia

Some students expect to be made to feel comfortable and not to go in any direction that makes them feel personally challenged. They like to have a degree of anonymity personally and I feel that they want us to veer away from things that would be personally destabilising for them.

When pedagogy challenges discourses of power and domination, such as in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, the learning environment can be perceived to be unsafe by those who articulate such discourse. When oppressive discourses are challenged, even when challenged with compassion, policy imperatives of safety can be invoked to support claims of harassment or discrimination. Will spoke of such claims made against him in a previous semester's anonymous student evaluations of the Subjects.

Will

I got some really scathing comments back, 'Will hates white people, Will has a dangerous approach, Will should be removed from this university, he's dangerous'. Like that's kind of hilarious but at the same time that's an intense thing to say, they would never say it with their name attached to it.

The students who wrote these comments obviously felt extremely threatened by anticolonial and antiracist analyses of structural domination and oppression. Often, underlying such allegations are claims of entitlement, that in ‘safe’ spaces learners are *entitled to their opinions*. Opinion discourse is a discursive strategy where ‘students reject contrary evidence or argument as the equivalent of their own opinion rather than scholarship’ (Hollinsworth 2014, p.10; see also Augoustinos & Every 2007; Bonilla-Silva 2002; DiAngelo & Sensoy 2009; Dunn & Nelson 2011; Kessariss 2006; Montgomery 2013; Nelson 2013; Solomon et al. 2005; van Dijk 1992). I return to the problem of opinion discourse later in this chapter and in Chapter 12 I present and analyse examples of opinion discourse as articulated by students in their interviews.

Critical educators face a pedagogical double bind between policy imperatives of safety and creating critical teaching and learning opportunities. On the one hand, the safety of the racialised and others is compromised if individual articulations of oppressive discourse are tolerated. On the other hand, pedagogical opportunities to link individual subjective standpoints as shaped by broader social discourses and structures of domination are closed off if oppressive discourses are proscribed. When individual expressions of oppressive discourse are articulated and then challenged, learners from social locations of domination can cry foul, demanding their rights to express their opinions. Alternatively and perhaps more commonly, students can retreat into passive resistance of silence and reluctance to articulate their subject positions (Allen 2002; Garrett & Segall 2013; Gay & Kirkland 2003; Goodman 2011; Housee 2008; Nakata et al. 2014; Putman 2014).

Silence and Reluctance

Student silence and reluctance to participate in classroom dialogue was highly conspicuous across the eighteen hours of workshops that I observed, despite the efforts of the teaching team to encourage open engagement, to create a safe, compassionate learning environment and to provide ample opportunities for learner contribution. That is not to say that students didn't participate in classroom activities and discussions, they certainly did and at times to productive effect. It is to say that students were reluctant to voice their subjective perceptions, impressions, viewpoints and questions. In all six of the three-hour workshops observed, the teaching team encouraged students, usually numerous times in any given workshop, to identify and share issues for clarification, to ask and raise 'burning questions and issues' or to make any other comments about the content and the teaching and learning. In each instance the room became very still and very quiet. The kinesics of the group suggested that people did indeed have 'burning' questions and issues requiring clarification and further discussion, but they were certainly not willing to express them. There were very few instances where students expressed discomfort, confusion, conflicting viewpoints or issues for further clarification.

Silence and reluctance was recognised in discussion by both the teaching team in several instances and by one student in another instance. For example in the Wednesday workshop for Topic 6, Will addressed students' reluctance to ask questions and participate in class discussions following the reluctance of students to volunteer to conduct Acknowledgement of Country. While students claimed their reluctance was fear of mispronunciation of First Australian language terms, Will suggested that the problem was more complex.

Will

I guess some of the hesitance is more than pronunciation. People in some of the other classes have expressed that some of their issues are around sensitivity and not wanting to ask questions that appear to be insensitive so I'd say, at this point of the course, if you've got burning questions, if you've got things that week after week, you're sitting there feeling like you're biting your tongue, if you still have things that are going on or nagging, it's probably a good time to start asking those questions. I mean, I don't know how we can make it any less intimidating.

This encouragement by Will elicited discussion about pronunciation of First Australian language terms but not any vexing issues or questions. In the Thursday workshop for Topic 6 Will inquired if anybody had any 'questions, comments, things they want to talk about'. After several questions about assessment and required materials, a female student raised the issue that she felt that people were bottling emotions and vexing issues rather than expressing them. The following exchange occurred between two students, 'Student A' a white female and 'Student B' a white male, and Will:

Student A

I don't know about how anybody else feels, but I kind of feel like everyone's got emotions and stuff they want to say, but we're not getting it out as much as what we should or could or would like to. So I just wanted to put that out there because we were all talking about it and I just feel like sometimes we're just sitting there. Like shit, we're not expressing it... how does everybody else feel, like that? That we need to get some stuff out, to express it.

Student B

We did a lot of study around ethical writing. So you should be okay to be able to say what you want to say without offending or being offensive, but it's also a learning environment. So you should have the confidence to ask anything you want. That's just the way I feel.

Will

Yeah. It's easier said than done.

Student A

That's right. Yeah.

Will

And I think there's two sides. There's the intellectual asking questions and then the emotional buildup and that's a really personal experience. Keep in mind, we're available to engage outside of this space, too.

This conversation continued for a short time about the value of the debrief sessions and then ended with Will asking 'anything else'? The room fell silent and after a short pause to allow for any further comments, Will pressed on with the presentation for the topic. As a student-initiated signposting of the problem of student silence, this seemed to me to be a very important, break-through opportunity missed. Conceivably Will could have pressed the point and worked harder to encourage the students to open up. Then again, perhaps this would have had no effect other than to browbeat students into an even more determined silence. When Will said to the class 'I don't know how we can make it any less intimidating', he expressed the frustration that I have experienced many times in the classroom. If students are unwilling to engage in discussion, they can't be forced. So what strategies can learning facilitators employ to engender this kind of critical classroom discussion?

Anonymity

One strategy that holds potential is to garner anonymous student contributions as a way to facilitate more authentic and honest expressions of students' subjective standpoints. In the classroom I was able to observe an anonymous activity that the teaching team deployed. As part of the Topic 5 activities, students enrolled in the Subjects across all modes and campuses were encouraged to undertake an anonymous online poll titled 'Experiences of whiteness and privilege' as part of their workshop activities. Online students completed the poll as part of their 'Collaborate'

workshop (an online real-time virtual classroom). The aim of the activity was to prompt students to begin to unpack the concept of race privilege and to investigate the role it plays in their lives. Of the 294 total enrolments 155 students, just over 50%, responded to the poll. Poll questions and results, as presented in Table 9 were deployed as focus points for classroom discussion.

Table 9: Anonymous poll questions and results

Questions	Answers	%
1. How are you feeling about the topic of Privilege for this week?	Nervous	8
	Excited and nervous	9
	Excited	12
	Relieved	4
	Curious	52
	Annoyed	15
2. At this point in time would you describe yourself as privileged?	Yes	76
	No	24
3. Prior to this course, how much do you feel that you understood the oppression that Indigenous peoples have experienced in Australia?	Not at all.	13
	A little bit.	50
	Quite a bit.	30
	A lot.	7
4. True or false? When I think of something being "skin coloured" or "flesh coloured" I automatically think of colours that are associated with "white" skin rather than brown or black skin.	True	57
	False	43
5. Have you ever had to hide or disguise your cultural identity, accent, or skin colour in order to apply for a rental property?	Yes	5
	No	95
6. True or false? I went to a school where the storybooks, textbooks and other classroom materials reflected my skin colour as normal.	True	74
	False	26

7. In your life, which of the following statements is MOST true:	I have experienced settings that make me feel conscious of the colour of my skin colour for most days of my life	7
	I have been made to feel inferior because of my skin colour for most days of my life	6
	I have been made to feel inferior because of my skin colour only on rare occasions	27
	I have never really thought about the colour of my skin before in terms of people judging me for it	31
	I don't feel that I've ever been classified or judged negatively because of the colour of my skin	29
8. True or false? I have never had to fight for my basic human rights.	True	62
	False	38
9. True or false? Your cultural background and skin colour is not a factor in where you choose to live.	True	84
	False	16
10. True or false? Your most recent workplace routinely offers an acknowledgement of country at meetings and events.	True	23
	False	77
11. True or false? You do not need to think about race and racism everyday. You can choose when and where you want to respond to racism.	True	64
	False	36
12. Have any of these questions made you think about things that you have never really considered before?	Yes	79
	No	21

Students were encouraged to comment at any time as Sonia and Will worked through the results of each question. Across the two workshops that I observed, there were minimal student contributions to the discussion. In the Thursday workshop the only contribution made was by one white male student who observed that after reading about the concept of privilege he understood himself, as a white, able-bodied, heterosexual male, to be privileged but that prior to learning about the concept of privilege, he would have denied outright any suggestion that he was privileged.

In the Wednesday workshop some discussion was generated around question 11 about the privilege of choice, how racially privileged individuals have the choice to

challenge or not challenge racism in their daily lives, whereas the racially marginalised do not. In the following exchange Will asked students who answered 'false' to question 11, to share their reasoning. A white male student explained that he interpreted the question as both true and false. He explained that he chooses not challenge racism at certain times when he feels that it's 'too dangerous',

Student

To me, it's like there's a true and a false there. I guess you have to respond to racism every day. So there the answer is false. But then the true is you can choose when and when not to. Like, for me, sometimes you just can't. Like, it's too dangerous or, you know, you're in a pub or something. You can't, you know, respond to racism in that way. So, like, there's that sort of barrier sometimes.

The distinction the student is making here is the difference between what is ethical and what is practiced, that is, the difference between what *should* happen and what *does* happen. In answering 'false', the student conceded, 'I guess you have to respond to racism'. I interpret his meaning to be that from an ethical standpoint, the racially privileged should respond to racism. In answering 'true' the student was referring to what does happen; those who are racially privileged often do not respond to racism.

Another student, a white female student, added to the discussion by relating her frustrating experience of responding to racist incidences in a community setting with young people while undertaking practical experience with a local social work agency. The agency staff played down the incidences and, rather than support her, treated her more like a troublemaker.

Student

Well, my experience at placement, there were racist kids and I wouldn't tolerate it, but I just found that the agency, they would just say, 'oh, these are

just kids that you're dealing with, just sort of tolerate it' and I'm thinking, like, if you don't confront and correct these kind of behaviours, you're just going to promote this kind of culture and I just, I couldn't understand. So I just felt really, like, I'm not scared to confront it so I would say, 'hey, that's just not on' but the agency would not support me in that. They said, 'that's just kids. You've just got to deal with it'. So because I was confronting it, the organisation, the employers were looking at me as if I'm stirring the boat. It was like, 'can we not stir the status quo? Oh, stop making trouble. It's only racism'.

Both Sonia and Will responded to the student's story.

Sonia

These are all really effective ways of maintaining the status quo. So if people speak up they can then be attacked or marginalised or undermined or accused of playing the race card. There's all these things to keep it bedded down.

Will

Racism is still very dominant in terms of playing it down in workplaces and in social work and human services environments. One of the things that people often say is that, 'oh, it's just words' and 'just don't let it bother you'. We have empirical evidence now, longitudinal evidence, to show that racism has severe health impacts on people, to the same extent of domestic violence and other forms of abuse. It's not an ephemeral kind of oh, you're just dreaming it's proven to be damaging to people's wellbeing.

Sonia's point is that the story is a good example of how racism is maintained and reproduced. Will's point speaks to the lack of appreciation of just how damaging racism is for the racially marginalised. Both points are important and, albeit indirectly, point to the links between the actions or inactions of individuals and structural domination.

Overall, the poll was effective in its goal to prompt students to begin to unpack the concept of privilege as it related to their lives. The benefit of using anonymous data generated directly from the student cohort is that, rather than something produced 'out there' by an abstract, impersonal populace, students have a direct relationship

with and are directly responsible for the data. As US teacher education scholar Mariana Souto-Manning found in her study with pre-service teachers,

... engaging in and wrestling with concepts of privilege and power are meaningful processes when authored, owned, and understood by pre-service teachers themselves and not merely professed by teacher educators (Souto-Manning 2011, p.1006).

The poll revealed that a large percentage of students in the Subjects were racially privileged (questions 2 through 11) and that the concept of privilege was new to many of the students (questions 1 and 12). It generated some productive discussion about racism, however because the poll circumscribed student responses to either true or false or to one of the dictated multiple-choice answers, it fell short of facilitating authentic and honest subjective expressions. Collecting regular weekly, fortnightly or monthly open-ended anonymous reflections, either based on specific topics, themes, concepts and/or activities or based on whatever individual students deem of most importance, might better serve this purpose.

Three examples of more open-ended anonymous teaching and learning strategies have been outlined by Dave Sjoberg & Dennis McDermott teaching Indigenous Australian health education (2016), Mariana Souto-Manning, mentioned above (2011) and US communication scholars Marc Rich and Aaron Cargile (2004). In the first example, Sjoberg & McDermott's strategy involved inviting students to submit anonymous questions about First Australian peoples and issues at the beginning of semester to 'eschew an unproductive 'blaming and shaming' methodology' (Sjoberg & McDermott 2016, p.31). In their article they provided examples of questions students asked over three years, a selection of which are reproduced below:

1. Can we really allow the process of decolonisation? And what are the implications for white Australia?
2. How successful has the physical and mental integration of the Aboriginal population into modern western civilisation been? Is the majority of the Aboriginal population willing to integrate or would they prefer to regress back to their Traditional lifestyle?
3. Do aboriginal people dislike us (white people) in regards to what we did to them in the past? Even though it wasn't our generation that were [*sic*] involved in for example the stolen generation?
4. 'Why is it that so many Aboriginal people are uneducated/unemployed?'
5. Why don't we just give them all guns so they can shoot themselves? (ibid. pp. 30, 32, 36, 37, 39).

The diversity of subjective standpoints represented in these five examples are consistent with my findings, presented in later chapters, in that they range from relatively open and interested as in the fourth example, to defenses of whiteness in the first and third examples, to patronising cultural deficit discourse in the second example, to the extreme hostility of the fifth example. The questions, particularly the fifth example, evidence the de-humanising harm that structures of racism and whiteness have on the racially dominant and evince the emotional fortitude required on the part of teachers if they are to engage and respond to students' standpoints compassionately.

After de-identification and thematic collation of the questions, Sjoberg & McDermott deployed them for analysis in both classroom discussion and written assessment activities. The approach was, the authors' explain,

... [a] process by which the very question becomes the focus, rather than any attempt at an answer. Students... are supported in learning appropriate mechanisms to interrogate... the worldviews, philosophical positions and assumptions inherent in the question (ibid. p. 38).

The process shifted the focus from problematising and challenging the subjective standpoints and affectivity of individual students to a foregrounding and problematising of discourse to ‘diffuse sometimes emotive and/or difficult teaching and learning spaces’ (ibid. p. 30). As well as alleviating stress and anxiety, the focus on discourse spotlights the structural nature of inequity. Supporting students to develop ‘appropriate mechanisms to interrogate’ the structural systems and discourses that oppress and disadvantage First Australian peoples, equips students with the critical skills necessary for challenging those systems (ibid. p. 37).

In the second example, using theatre games to illustrate issues of privilege and power, Souto-Manning sought feedback from students about what they learned from the games by way of anonymous written feedback immediately following the activities. Anonymous reflections were then collated and employed ‘as the foundation for the development of generative themes and stories... to be problematised dialogically’ in the classroom (Souto-Manning 2011, p.1003). As explained by Souto-Manning, the process,

... provided a space for us to move beyond awareness and delve deeper into issues of privilege while getting beyond the guilt and discomfort... We engaged in dialogue that problematized the story/stories representing many of the issues portrayed in their written comments. Problematizing such comments as generative themes allowed me to invite pre-service teachers to consider how their initial reactions were influenced by larger socially- and historically-normalized discourses that privileged Whiteness. Dialogically, we sought to move towards taking responsibility for interrupting racism and disrupting privileges (ibid.).

Over the course of three semesters Souto-Manning found that overall, anonymous reflections generally projected students’ social positioning of power whereas in the class discussions students tended to downplay themselves as positioned powerfully.

Students' anonymous written reflections were also more negative than reflections generated in discussion which led her to the conclusion that anonymous reflections were 'much more honest' than classroom dialogue (ibid. pp. 1002-1003).

In the third example, Rich and Cargile, teaching race, racism and whiteness, sought 'anonymous written and audio-taped 'confessionals' so that they [their students] could openly and honestly share their feelings without fear of repercussion' (Rich & Cargile 2004, p.353). They employed a 'recursive loop' where collated anonymous reflections were presented back to students in the classroom as discussion points. Their goal was to 'create a dialogic community where racial issues just beneath the surface are made public' to reveal 'how race and privilege are perpetuated' (ibid. p. 363). Eliciting open-ended anonymous student contributions is a process that has the potential to break through students' silence in a way that supports the imperative of safe learning environments. Anonymous contributions can generate rich material on which to design classroom discussions and activities that spotlight the links between subjective identity and structural domination.

Focus on Evidence, Outcomes and Systems: 'I'm entitled to my opinion!'

As already noted, opinion discourse is common in Indigenous Australian Studies classrooms. Perceptions that First Australian teachers lack credibility and objectivity result in the assumption that what is presented is the opinions of teachers rather than scholarly analysis (Augoustinos & Every 2007; Hollinsworth 2014). On many occasions in my teaching experiences students have challenged, dismissed or rejected information I have presented as my subjective opinion. Being acutely aware of such perceptions, Will emphasised the critical importance of evidence-based scholarship to construct and support the curriculum in the Subjects and the need to

continually point out to students that the issues being presented are based on evidence. According to Will, a strong focus on outcomes is an important element of this evidence.

Will

One of the things I'm increasingly focused on presenting is outcomes, you know, saying to people 'let's look at the outcomes. We're all really vulnerable to being seduced by rhetoric, so let's look at outcomes'. Talking about education outcomes for example or the outcomes of policies such as Closing the Gap. The results people like Margy Hayes at the Barwon Learning Centre in Moree, in the same way as Chris Sarra, are off the scale. They've been getting targets to improve the literacy of the children by 20% and they're improving the kids' literacy by 130%! What I've been able to say to the students is 'OK, I don't want to tell you that this is worth doing so let's look at outcomes, if the outcomes here are 130%, why doesn't it become the norm? No one is asking to do stuff for the sake of it, just to make us feel better or to get some political win, it's all about outcomes'. It's the same with the Closing the Gap policy, it's not getting outcomes and in fact it's going backwards in some locations. We've given them a lot of warning about 'do not look at a policy and read a whole bunch of rhetoric and sit back with a contented glow and think 'thank god they're doing something'. Look at the policy and then look at the outcomes. The policy might sound good to you but is the policy achieving the set outcomes'?

Despite the focus on evidence-based research in the Subjects, claims of entitlement to 'opinion' continued to be asserted.

Will

That comes up, you know, it's like 'I've got a right to my opinion, you're telling me my opinion's wrong' and it's like 'no I'm telling you your opinion's limited in its references'. We really did make a point of that, talking to students about, yeah, we all have opinions but that our opinions are shaped by our experience.

The work of US education scholars Robin DiAngelo and Özlem Sensoy is instructive when they argue that the claim to entitlement of opinion is a discursive strategy in defence of subject positionalities of power.

When the request to situate oneself as knower in order to critically examine the production of knowledge is re-interpreted as "the right to my opinion," positionality

and its relation to the production and legitimization of knowledge is closed off, along with inquiry, reflection, and accountability. In this way, historically marginalized voices and knowledges are dismissed or trumped via alternative and “just as valid” counter-opinions. The effect of this is the silencing of marginalized voices, a rejection of the implications of positionality, and the closing off of the examination of knowledge as socially constructed (DiAngelo & Sensoy 2009, p.453).

The goal to elicit students’ expressions of their subject positions, often proffered as opinions, requires critical interrogation of the ways that opinions are shaped, informed and supported by structural power and domination (DiAngelo & Sensoy 2009; Hollinsworth 2014). Crystal reflects that the clear focus of the Subjects on systems and ideologies was productive in addressing opinion discourse.

Crystal

From the beginning, making it clear that we’re dealing with systems and ideologies, like that’s been my saviour. What we’re talking about is actually, yes to a degree it’s personal to you, but let’s just look at how that works as a system, what are the effects of that system on you? If we can go and look at the structure first and foremost that we can bypass a lot of that angst.

A strong analytical focus on systems of domination emphasises that ‘who you are (as knower), is intimately connected to your socialisation into a matrix of group locations (including gender, race, class, and sexuality)’ (DiAngelo & Sensoy 2009, p.446). Subject positions are not constituted in a vacuum but in relationship to societal norms, ideologies and structures. The value of critical analyses of structural domination and oppression that draw from authoritative evidence is that ideological claims that work to justify domination and oppression, such as in opinion discourse, are discredited.

Systems of domination were dealt with in the Subjects in terms of ideology, that is ideologies of colonialism and racism, and in terms of governance, that is, in terms of

social and economic policy and legislature. Systems of domination were juxtaposed against sites, discourses and strategies of resistance, or in other words, the spaces opened and the discursive and performative strategies deployed by First Australian and non-Indigenous scholars, activist groups and others to challenge structural domination. The discourses and performances of domination were presented against the counter-discourses and performances of resistance. A broad range of evidence supported the presentation of these counter-discourses and performances including scholarly, political, media, activist and popular sources as well as empirically based research. Importantly, First Australian voices were privileged. Table 10 (presented at the end of this chapter) illustrates the relationship between the broad range of sources drawn from to provide evidence for systems of domination and sites of resistance in the Subjects.

Conclusion

University policies on safety and the discourses that inform and engage them can fall far short of protecting people from racialised and minority groups. Safety policy and discourse can be and are operationalised to centre and protect people who already occupy social positions of power. When people from powerful groups feel safe in the classroom, their safety often translates into the airing of open race talk and other discourses of domination and oppression framed as ‘opinion’. The result is a rendering of the classroom as unsafe for racialised and oppressed Others.

However, if students from subject positions of power do not feel safe enough to express their subjective standpoints they can withdraw into silence and reluctance. This is a dilemma for educators because without authentic and honest engagement, it is very difficult to identify and address the particular ideological discourses that

shape subjective standpoints and perceptions. Teaching and learning strategies that provide students with opportunities to contribute to classroom discussions anonymously hold potential for navigating this dilemma in ways that conform to policy imperatives of safety. The strategy deployed by the teaching team to provide substantive evidence of both systems of domination as well as the ways these systems are resisted (see Table 10 below) is crucial for responding to opinion discourses and other discourses of power and for maintaining a dedicated focus on structural analyses.

This is the final chapter in Part 1 of Section 2, 'Emergent Themes', that analysed the themes emergent from my interviews with the teaching team and from my observations in the classroom. Turning to Part 2 of Section 2, 'Subjective Perceptions: the student experience', the next chapter analyses data from student interviews about their experiences of learning the difficult anticolonial First Australian knowledge that characterises Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Table 10: Systems of domination: evidence and sites of resistance

Note: see Appendix 1 for commentary on the quality of sources.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Ideological Systems: Privilege, Racism, Whiteness, Assimilationism, Neoliberalism</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Governance Systems (policy & legislature): Close the Gap, NTER/Stronger Futures, Native Title.</p>
<p>Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodman, D. (2011), <i>Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: educating people from privileged groups</i>, 2nd ed., New York: Routledge. • Hollinsworth, D. (1998), <i>Race and Racism in Australia</i>, Katoomba: Social Science Press. • Thompson, A. 2001, <i>A Summary of Whiteness Theory</i>, University of Utah. • Fronek, P. (2012), ‘Whiteness and Australian social work: In conversation with Maggie Walter’, episode 11, <i>Podsocs</i>, Griffith University. • Beyond Blue (2015), <i>Discrimination against Indigenous Australians: A snapshot of the views of non-Indigenous people aged 25–44</i>, Independent Report, TSN Social Research. • <i>First Contact</i>, (2014), video recording, Episode 1, Series 1, Blackfella Films, Australia. • ‘Fatal Impact’, (2007), video recording, <i>Racism a History</i>, episode 2, BBC. • Young, S. (2004), ‘Social work theory and practice: the invisibility of whiteness’ in Moreton-Robinson (2004) <i>Whitening Race: Essays in cultural criticism</i>. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press. • Haggis, J. (2004), ‘Thoughts on a politics of whiteness in a (never quite post) colonial country: abolitionism, essentialism and incommensurability’ in Moreton-Robinson (2004) <i>Whitening Race: Essays in cultural criticism</i>. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press. • Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (1997), ‘The Assimilationist Culture of the Modern Nation’ in <i>Productive Diversity: A New Approach to Work and Management</i>. Sydney: Pluto Press. • Dockery, A. (2011), <i>Traditional Culture and the Wellbeing of Indigenous Australians: An analysis of the 2008 NATSISS</i>. Centre for Labour Market Research, Curtin University. • Harvey, David. (2005), <i>A Brief History of Neoliberalism</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Government (2012), <i>Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory: A ten year commitment to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory July 2012</i>. Creative Commons, Canberra. • Commonwealth of Australia (2012), <i>Community Affairs Legislation Committee - Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011</i>, Senate Printing Unit, Parliament House, Canberra. • Amnesty International (2011), <i>The Land Holds Us: Aboriginal Peoples' right to traditional homelands in the Northern Territory</i>. Amnesty International Australia: Sydney. • Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2015), ‘A Quick Guide to Australia’s Anti-Discrimination Laws’, <i>Good practice good business factsheets</i>, Creative Commons, Canberra. • Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2008), Building a sustainable National Indigenous Representative Body –Issues for consideration: An Issues Paper prepared by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Canberra: HREOC. • Commonwealth of Australia (2014), ‘Connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Australian Government policies and programmes’, <i>indigenous.gov.au</i>, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Indigenous Affairs, Canberra. • Commonwealth of Australia (2015), ‘Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage’, <i>Council of Australian Governments</i>, Creative Commons, Canberra.

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Part 2

Subjective Perceptions: the student experience

Chapter 11

Learning about Colonialism: First Australian content

Introduction

The preceding three chapters have presented findings about teaching and learning in the Subjects from the perspective of the teaching team. These findings represent a contribution to the growing body of empirical knowledge and theoretical analysis about what we are teaching and what we could be teaching, about how we are teaching and how we could be teaching and the unique opportunities, risks and challenges that educators can and do encounter. While valuable and important, research and theorising from educators' standpoints represent only one of two equally critical perspectives. Without empirical insights into learner perspectives we cannot fully comprehend the opportunities, risks and challenges of the Critical Indigenous Australian Studies project.

This chapter is the first of a series of three chapters that aim to better understand teaching and learning as perceived and experienced by students in the Subjects. Interviews and focus group discussions conducted with students sought to develop an understanding of their perceptions about what they learned, how they learned and the impact of that learning on their personal and professional lives. Like the interviews with the teaching team, student interviews and focus group discussions were semi-

structured and ‘conversational’, affording space for students to concentrate on what they perceived to be of importance. I inquired about students’ prior learning, their perceptions of the ways that the teaching approaches, the curriculum design, the ideas, concepts, resources, classroom activities and other factors either helped or hindered their learning as well as their perceptions of what was or was not important to learn about. In addition, students were asked to comment on my observation that students appeared to be reluctant to participate in classroom discussions, an emergent theme from my classroom observations.

In this chapter, after providing details about the student participants, I present discussion and analysis under five headings: (1) ‘prior learning’; (2) ‘teaching’; (3) ‘learning’; (4) ‘silence and reluctance’; and (5) ‘discourses of domination’. My analysis in this chapter presents two main findings. The first is the potential for learners to experience emotional distress in response to First Australian content. This distress is found to significantly contribute to student silence and reluctance in the classroom. The second finding is that ideological discourse powerfully hinders student learning. By way of example, I analyse two ‘discourses of domination’: ‘cultural deficit discourse’ and ‘cultural appropriation discourse’.

Student Research Participants

Fifteen students participated in the research representing 17.85% of the total 84 enrolments across the two Subjects. Thirteen students took part in an interview, four of whom also participated in a focus group. Two students participated in a focus group only. It had been originally planned for four students to participate in each focus group but two students were no-shows for Focus Group Two. Table 11 provides brief details about the students’ gender, age, course enrolled,

ethnicity/nationality and whether they took part in individual interviews (INT), focus groups or both. The number next to Y in the focus group column (FG) indicates in which of the two focus groups students participated. The descriptions of students ethnicity/nationality are taken from students' self-descriptions provided in interviews and focus groups.

Table 11: Student participant details

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Course	Ethnicity & nationality	INT	FG
Amy	Female	22	UG	White Australian	Y	N
Bianca	Female	20	UG	Filipino/Italian Australian	Y	N
Carlie	Female	20	UG	White Australian	N	Y2
Kyra	Female	21	UG	Pacific Islander/white Australian	Y	N
Matthew	Male	24	UG	White Australian	Y	N
Danni	Female	25	UG	White Australian	Y	Y1
Dennis	Male	35	UG	White Australian	Y	N
Mia	Female	36	UG	Maori/Spanish/white Australian	Y	N
Stella	Female	45	UG	White Australian	Y	N
Cheryl	Female	54	UG	White Australian	Y	N
Monica	Female	24	PG	White Canadian	Y	N
Bec	Female	25	PG	White Australian	Y	Y1
Grace	Female	30	PG	White Australian	N	Y2
Sharon	Female	38	PG	White Australian	Y	Y1
Dianna	Female	51	PG	Dutch/white Australian	Y	Y1

As can be seen in the table above, student participants' who identified as white Australians make up the majority, as do female students. From my observations, this uneven racial and gender spread mirrors the demographic of student enrolment in the Subjects.

Table 12 presents an overview of the interview and focus group schedule detailing the students' names and the dates of each interview and focus group. The topics covered in workshops for each week of the schedule are included because the reader might find it useful to know what content students had covered prior to their interviews and focus group discussions.

Table 12: Interview and focus group schedule

Date	Week/ Topic Covered	Participant/s	Activity
Wed 15 April	Week/Topic 6	Monica	Interview
Thurs 16 April		Danni	
Mon 20 April	Week/Topic 7	Bianca	
		Sharon	
Tues 21 April		Matthew	
		Amy	
Wed 22 April		Bec	
Thurs 23 April	Cheryl		
Monday 27 April	Week/Topic 8	Dennis	
Tues 28 April		Kyra	
Wed 13 May	Week/Topic 10	Mia	
Thur 14 May		Stella	
Thur 28 May	Week/Topic 12	Dianna	
Wed 13 May	Week/Topic 10	Sharon Bec Dianna Danni	Focus Group One
Thurs 14 May	Week/Topic 10	Grace Carlie	Focus Group Two

In the following discussion in this chapter as well as the next two chapters, it will be clearly indicated when quotes from the data are taken from focus group discussions. All other quotes are from interview data.

Prior Learning

Most of the student participants reported having minimal to no prior learning in Indigenous Australian Studies before undertaking the Subjects. Reflecting on what they learned or didn't learn in their schooling compared to what they were learning in the Subjects, quite a few of the students, like Dennis and Bianca, reported having learned very little in school.

Dennis

As far as I knew Captain Cook discovered Australia and only a few people were here, or something, I don't know, I never thought about it!

Bianca

Before I did this, I was very ignorant to everything that happened. In high school I learned nothing, in primary school I learned nothing. It was pretty much in pre-school and all I would do was Dreamtime paintings and stuff, that's all I knew about it.

Others, like Matthew and Kyra, reported having undertaken some Indigenous Australian Studies as part of their secondary schooling but perceived it to be inadequate.

Matthew

We did a lot of things in school celebrating Indigenous culture... like the Apology for example, we had a big assembly. Whilst we were doing that there was never the talk about racism. So we were told to appreciate the culture and to try and understand and be sorry and whatever but what we weren't ever told, we weren't really educated on the real reason why it was happening and what was being apologised for. We knew that children were removed from their families and that we should be sorry for that, that's about it.

Matthew's learning in school involved learning about First Australian peoples and significant events in a way that was glossed and inadequate as illustrated in his example of learning about the formal prime ministerial National Apology to the

Stolen Generations in 2008. His perception was that he learned about the Apology but not 'what was being apologised for'. That is, he learned the 'what' but not the 'how' or 'why'. Kyra relates a similar story and for her, the learning outcome was 'guilt'.

Kyra

So I've only been out of school for three years and I have done a tiny bit of studying in high school. We used to watch Rabbit Proof Fence repeatedly. Well, we didn't answer any questions, didn't debrief and I think that was important. This is year 10, 11 & 12, there's a lot going on. Just add another stress of bringing up all these emotions and then not discussing them and not kind of answering any questions. I feel like in high school I always had this guilt of the past and guilty for being Australian, guilty for *being* and I had that when I started this course and then I started learning properly and getting information into me properly and it's all dissolved, like oh wow!

Learning about First Australian peoples' historical experiences and current circumstances without learning the 'how or why' resulted in Kyra experiencing personal guilt that 'dissolved' after undertaking more critical learning in the Subjects. While it might be easy to assume that *of course* learning in higher education would result in more critical learning, Bec's relatively recent experience of having undertaken an Indigenous Australian Studies subject at another Australian university in a nearby city directly challenges this assumption.

Bec

I'm so glad this is for some people a foundation unit, because I have done an Indigenous subject before [named subject and university] and it didn't do this. It was like these are the problems within Indigenous society and there's no 'why'. It went straight to the fix it, which we actually touched on today and I was like 'yes!' that's exactly what I've learned previously, the top down approach to the issues when working in a cross cultural community that you'll face but not the why and this is the first course which has gone into the why.

Bec's experience reflects the prevalence of liberal approaches and paucity of critical approaches in Indigenous Australian Studies as I identified and discussed in Chapter 2.

While one student participant, Monica, had not previously undertaken Indigenous Australian Studies, she had previously undertaken a stream of First Nations studies subjects in her home country of Canada.

Monica

I did take quite a few courses just looking at race and privilege and ethnicity and then I also did about five separate Indigenous courses centered around Indigenous perspectives in Canada.

Having studied critical subjects around race and privilege and having studied indigenous perspectives of colonialism, albeit in a different context, perhaps Monica was the most experienced participant in the kind of content and critical approaches deployed in the Subjects.

Perceptions about Teaching

Student participants were asked to comment on their perception of teaching in the Subjects. All fifteen students expressed positive experiences around two main points: the teaching team and the design and content of the Subjects. Students' perceptions of the teaching team, each member of the team and how they worked together as a team, were overwhelmingly positive. As summed up by Grace in Focus Group Two,

Grace

Sonia kind of coming from a non-Indigenous social justice perspective, yeah I think that's valuable. So you've kind of got Indigenous and non-Indigenous and I guess for some people it might be good that they might relate to Sonia better, I don't know. I think Will's awesome though, I could listen to him talk for hours. Crystal's good cause she's like in the field of social work still, so

she can relate like real life, this kind of contemporary modern day work within social work and with Indigenous people.

Grace appreciated having access to a balance of both First Australian and non-Indigenous perspectives on social justice and valued the currency of Crystals experience as a practicing social worker. She surmised that some students, presumably non-Indigenous students, might more closely relate to Sonia as a non-Indigenous person, although her qualifier, 'I don't know. I think Will's awesome', implies that she herself didn't necessarily relate 'better' or more closely to Sonia than to Will or Crystal. The following excerpts from a relatively lengthy discussion between the four students in Focus Group One offer some specificities of what students valued about the teaching team and shed some light on Grace's supposition.

Sharon

Being able to have people with different views and different values and different approaches... To be able to deal with whatever really complex and confronting problems...There's lots of leadership, that's what I see, leadership.

Dianna

When I started with this course I did for a little while go 'oh what's Sonia's role in this' but then seeing them work together yeah, I could see that it was actually a good demonstration of that respectful human, it's not about, umm race.

Bec

You've got your emotionally how, spiritually how, academically how and then sometimes they shift roles which is interesting but true values...All of the teachers have different styles but to have Sonia there to be like 'hey, as someone who I can identify with culturally, let's use the racially', and then go 'hey, like there is a place for myself in the future'. There actually is because I'm seeing it embodied right now and then having Crystal and Will validating that to an extent by watching the teamwork and the valuing of opinions and ideas and support.

Danni

So when I came into this class I thought ‘I don’t think there’s really a huge role... I think you’re [Sonia] just here to placate the racist students’ and then after a little while... [I thought] ‘no, this is something that I could see myself doing, this is an outcome that I could see’. It definitely makes sense.

Both Sharon and Bec valued the unique standpoint of each member of the teaching team and how together their standpoints added depth and breadth to the teaching and learning. The perception by Sharon that ‘there’s lot’s of leadership’, suggests that Will’s aspiration for the team to develop ‘compassionate leadership’ was being realised (see Chapter 9). Bec’s articulate and concise summary of Will, Sonia and Crystal’s nuanced yet complementary ‘styles’ as she put it, really rang true to me based on what I observed in the classroom: ‘you’ve got your emotionally how, spiritually how, academically how and then sometimes they shift roles’. While Bec didn’t specify which team member she perceived matched each category, it seemed natural and obvious to me that Sonia matched the ‘emotionally how’, Crystal matched the ‘spiritually how’ and Will matched the ‘academically how’. This is not to say that Crystal and Sonia did not have scholarly expertise or that Will failed to attend to affective concerns, for as Bec noted, ‘they shift roles’.

While perhaps there were students in the class who related ‘better’ to Sonia as a non-Indigenous person, the perceptions of the students suggested that, like Grace, they didn’t necessarily relate to her ‘better’ than the other members of the teaching team but related to her in particular ways. The negative suspicions that Dianna and Danni reported initially having about Sonia’s role as a non-Indigenous teacher were echoed by some of the other students. Like Danni, they worried that it was a strategy based on an expectation that students in the class would be racist. For example in his interview, Dennis shared that he initially perceived Sonia’s presence as an offensive

'message' that 'white people are predominantly racist'. However, like Dianna and Danni, Dennis came to see Sonia's role as positive. Dianna recognised that Sonia's role in the teaching team modeled positive First Australian and non-Indigenous relations. Bec valued being able to identify with Sonia 'culturally' and 'racially' because she represented an embodied exemplar of the kind of legitimate roles that non-Indigenous people can fulfill in working toward social justice and social change for First Australian families and communities. After her initial doubt, Danni came to agree, 'this is something that I could see myself doing'.

Most of the students' perceptions of the Subjects' design were that while the content was challenging it was also rewarding. The Subjects were perceived as well designed and structured and well supported by quality readings and audio-visual materials that were productive for learning. The comments by Dianna and Grace are indicative of perceptions of the Subjects' design and content.

Dianna

It's been really well designed around shifting your focus and how you use your brain creatively.

Grace (Focus Group Two)

There's a lot to learn and know and understand so I like how it's broken up into pieces so I can go 'right well this week I can understand this chunk and go away and do the readings and make sure I understand more about that'. I think it's definitely, wouldn't say changed my views, I think it's opened up my mind a lot more

Both Dianna and Grace linked the design of the Subjects to a change in the way they considered the world, described by Dianna as a 'shift' in her 'focus'. I interpret Grace's qualification that her 'views' weren't changed but rather her 'mind' was 'opened up', to be a way to connote that she considered her 'views' prior to undertaking the Subject as neither inaccurate nor inappropriate (viz. racist) and

therefore unchanged but that the teaching expanded her ability to see the issues more fully. As already mentioned three students, Matthew, Kyra and Bec also reported an expansion of their viewpoints and perceived the reason to be the way the content covered context and causation or in other words, the way it covered the ‘how’ and the ‘why’.

Many of the students commented on their positive perceptions of the resources in the Subjects. In particular, the audio-visual materials were generally regarded as highly effective in supporting learning. References to the documentaries ‘Kanyini’, ‘Racism: A History’, ‘The First Australians’, ‘A Secret Country’, ‘Our Generation’, the satirical ‘mockumentary’ ‘Babakiueria’ as well as the reality television series ‘First Contact’ were common in relation to students’ perceptions of specific aspects of their learning (for details on and commentary about these resources see Appendix 1). One participant, Dennis, perceived a particular audio-visual resource so productive as to consider the effect epiphanic (see ‘Learning’ below). Others, whilst perceiving them as productive even necessary for learning, found particular resources emotionally challenging and destabilising (see ‘Emotional Distress’ below).

Perceptions about Learning

Student participants were asked to share their learning stories and to describe their perceptions of their learning about colonialism and First Australian content. Their perceptions addressed learning process, progress and outcomes and the relevance of their learning for future professional practice. In relation to the latter, students generally agreed that the Subjects were very relevant to them as future social work practitioners, as expressed by Matthew.

Matthew

Once I've started the course and realised how much there actually is to Indigenous studies and Indigenous disadvantage and all the different aspects of it, I think it's pretty important. No matter where you're working you're likely to work with an Indigenous person and if you don't fully understand the complexity of their situation, the complexity of their disadvantage, of your privilege or the privilege of the people around them it's going to make working with them a lot harder and then probably a lot less effective.

Matthew perceived his learning as developing an understanding of the 'complexity' of First Australian and non-Indigenous social positioning or in other words, his development of critical understanding. He recognised the importance of this learning for effective social work practice with First Australian families and communities.

Mia also perceived her learning as relevant to her future profession.

Mia

I think this course is the one course that's really changed me, like really changed my view and I really needed to do this, especially going into the prison systems because they're [First Australians] represented in there so highly. I'm glad I've done this because now I understand that bit more... I questioned why I never looked into stuff myself before but now. It's not that I'm going to stop here. I would continue on because now I understand, I'm getting that.

As well as perceiving her learning as having transformed her views about First Australian peoples and issues, in saying 'I needed to do this', Mia seemed to imply that she came to see her previously-held views as in need of change for the benefit of her goal to practice social work in the prison system in the future. Later in her interview, when reflecting on her past interactions with a First Australian person who was at the time the partner of one of her close family members, she lamented, 'I just wish I was a little bit more understanding I suppose'. Importantly Mia declared her commitment to continue her learning beyond the classroom and into her future personal and professional life. Other students also spoke of perceiving their learning as ongoing. For example Bec described how she perceived her learning as 'laying a

foundation' for ongoing learning. Later in her interview Bec described how she perceived learning new terminology as part of that foundation.

Bec

I think this course has just enabled me to have words for that. So it's like 'oh, that's ethnocentrism! Oh xenophobia, whoop'! So one, to first realise that I'm not all alone, I'm not weird! That's been really good and that it does exist and it is a thing and here are the words! (laughs) There is a word for that!!

Learning new terminology helped Bec to articulate aspects of her social world that she had previously been aware but unable to articulate effectively. The tone of her expression suggested that she found learning new conceptual language empowering and validating. First Australian scholar Martin Nakata and his colleagues have noted the importance of 'the development of better language for navigating such intricate and complex entanglements of meaning' encountered in Indigenous Australian Studies (Nakata et al. 2012, p.136).

From my perspective as an Indigenous Australian Studies educator, Dennis and Monica's perceptions of their learning, as related below, are particularly fascinating. As two very different responses, analysing them comparatively spotlights the diverse way that students engage Critical Indigenous Australian Studies. What I find so interesting about Dennis' detailed explanations of the process of his learning are the insights into the way he conceptualised key ideas and how these conceptualisations impacted his learning. Further, Dennis' perceptions of the effectiveness of some of the audio-visual resources for his learning are illuminating. The following three excerpts are from longer, often circuitous and verbose explanations of his perceptions of the teaching and his learning. In the first excerpt Dennis described his response to a video screened in class about a recent legal conflict between a First Australian community group and an Australian mining magnate.

Dennis

At the beginning of the class I just thought, 'I'm watching videos online', I think 'it's got nothing to do with colonisation, it's just the miners wanting their land you know'...I'm trying to figure out what is colonisation? What is it? I don't understand it. Why do they keep saying colonisation is still happening? I just don't think it is. But it still is.

It seems that Dennis' initial understanding of the concept of colonialism was as an historical event that occurred in the past rather than as an ongoing process involving a complex set of socio-economic imperatives. He went on to talk about the audio-visual materials to describe and explain how they impacted on his learning. In the following excerpt, Dennis discusses the class screening of 'A Secret Country' by Australian investigative journalist John Pilger. The hard-hitting documentary released in 1985 graphically depicts Australian colonial history up to the latter part of the 20th Century:

Dennis

The content is actually very, I feel, not culturally safe. Cause if you're an Aboriginal having to sit there and watch your people on a documentary get slaughtered and killed or whatever, you're not going to think that's a culturally safe environment. I wouldn't think so, but because of the history of Aboriginal people that is a sort of area of cultural safety. I don't have that. I don't have an area of my history where I can go back and say 'oh my god that's really offensive' or 'that's really you know that's really confronting' because I just don't. I mean especially, my race has killed a lot of black people or mostly dominated other races, there's just, there's no person from a black race that's conquered white so I can't relate to how black people feel, you know, that's just it, does that make sense?

Dennis is on point to raise the issue of cultural safety in relation to the documentary. There is little doubt that some, perhaps many, might consider the at times graphic depictions of dispossession, violence, disease and ongoing policy- and legislature-endorsed oppression as 'unsafe'. There is also little doubt that the documentary would be considered 'confronting' from First Australian standpoints, or indeed from any standpoint. In fact some of the other student participants reported finding 'A

Secret Country’, along with various other audio-visual materials, extremely confronting causing them to experience quite intense affective responses (see ‘Emotional distress’ below). Conversely however, Dennis clearly articulates that he was neither confronted by the documentary nor did it cause him to ‘relate to how black people feel’ about colonisation because he lacked reference to ‘a black race that's conquered white’.

It seems that what Dennis perceived to be lacking was a basis upon which he could identify as a *victim* of colonisation and oppression. As a self-defined ‘white’ Australian and therefore a member the oppressor group, Dennis was unable to relate to the oppressed until he too could identify as oppressed (Curry-Stevens 2007). He described how a shift in his ability to relate to experiences of colonisation came about in response to viewing the satirical documentary ‘Babakiueria’, one of the required sources for Topic 6. Set in the mid 1980’s, ‘Babakiueria’ reverses the roles of First Australian and ‘white people’ and parodies the experiences of First Australian peoples but with ‘white people’ in their place. The film is an excellent resource that I have used in every subject I have taught and while it is satirical and meant to be funny, some of my past students have found some scenes quite confronting. Particularly confronting are the scenes that depict riot police harassing ANZAC marches and arresting returned soldiers for participation in an ‘unauthorised gathering’ and scenes of forced child removal and relocation of families. As noted earlier, Dennis found viewing the film a revelatory learning experience.

Dennis

You know honestly the people on Babakiueria, I have to go back to that because honestly that has just changed... that really opened up my vision, it's like ‘oh my god, I didn't see it that way’... I was kicking myself. With Babakiueria, for me it clicked...when the thing of colonisation clicked I

could pick it out and I could pick it out in the media, I could pick it out in my life, I could pick it out in what I'm doing. I couldn't understand how, who I am, like he [Will] said, there's different levels of how people you know... by me not doing anything that's also promoting, in a way, colonisation. So I'm looking at my actions and what I'm doing a lot more.

'Babakueria' 'really opened up' Dennis' 'vision' in a way that 'A Secret Country' and other similar resources did not. It seems that because he was able to culturally identify with the 'white people' in the film, he was better able to imagine himself in their place and in doing so he was moved to empathise with the colonial experience. He became able to 'see' ongoing colonial oppression, 'I could pick it out', and this caused him to self-reflect on his relationship with the maintenance of that oppression, 'I could pick it out in my life...in what I was doing'. The pertinent lesson here is the utility of diverse teaching and learning resources in a variety of media formats and genres. Students in any Indigenous Australian Studies subject, and likely in any subject in any discipline, bring diverse standpoints, life histories and learning experiences and therefore, as is illustrated in Dennis' story, learning strategies and resources that are effective for some may not be for others.

A further point that strikes me about Dennis's learning story is his conceptualisation of Australian colonial history. In his second excerpt above he distinguished between 'his' history, 'I don't have an area of my history where I can go back and say 'oh my god that's really offensive'', and history as presented in 'A Secret Country', that is history told from the perspective of First Australian peoples. Dennis seemed to fail to see that history, as depicted in 'A Secret Country', is as much 'his' history as any First Australian person's. Like Dennis, many Australians including many who've sat in my classrooms, conceptualise history as comprising two distinct and essentialised parts: 'Aboriginal history' and 'Australian history' or in other words, Australian

history that accurately and adequately represents First Australian colonial experiences and Australian history that does not. I presume this to be the result of the common use of the term 'Aboriginal history' in the public domain as shorthand for 'Australian history as told from First Australian standpoints'. Conceptualising history this way enables a distancing or disassociation from 'Aboriginal history', a vantage point from which non-Indigenous Australians can disown it as having nothing to do with them, as Dennis seems to have done.

In contrast to Dennis's learning story, Monica's story provides insights into a very different set of learning outcomes and challenges. The differences between Dennis and Monica's stories have to do with their prior learning experiences. Dennis, as an undergraduate student, had never undertaken Indigenous Australian Studies or been exposed to critical conceptualisations of race and domination whereas Monica, a postgraduate student, had considerable prior learning in similar higher education subjects in her home country of Canada, as has been noted. Reflecting on her learning in Indigenous Studies in both Canada and Australia Monica declared, 'it was my Indigenous courses that I learned the most from'. She perceived that this was because Indigenous Studies involved 'a personal component'.

By way of example, Monica cited the 'Digital Story' that was set as the first assessment for the postgraduate students in the Subjects. The assessment involved the preparation of a five-minute digital story where students were required to consider the extent to which First Australian peoples and cultures were visible and valued in their local area and to explore their subjective positionality and personal story of engagement with First Australian peoples. The assessment also required a

critical evaluation of their prior knowledge of the first five topics in the Subject (see Appendix 2 for full details of the Digital Story assessment).

Monica

You just learn on a deeper level and it's a lot more personal and in that way. I think it means more to you and you take that with you every single time wherever you go and it's not just, 'OK wrote that paper, hand it in, done and then you move onto the next thing'. It stays with you.

That Monica perceives her learning from undertaking the Digital Story assessment as learning that 'stays with you' speaks to the power of engaging learners' subjective identities as a point of departure. Approaching learning this way produces affective learning that endures beyond the confines of the classroom. Requiring students to subjectively engage with the content as an assessment afforded the teaching team insights into students' subjective identities that are not necessarily accessible through classroom interaction. There are various barriers that prevent students from disclosing their subjective standpoints, viewpoints and emotions in the classroom, as has been identified in the preceding chapters and considered again later in this chapter. The insights afforded through teaching and learning strategies like the Digital Story assist educators to respond more appropriately to their students' learning needs and to more effectively support their well-being.

While Monica highly valued her learning, she also grappled with the challenge of translating her learning into professional practice. In her interview, she very thoughtfully and quite vividly explained her concerns. The following excerpt summarises her lengthy explanation.

Monica

Since I've kind of been on that journey of, I guess you'd call it decolonisation, I'm learning certain things. Sometimes it's hard to juggle that

transition. You know when dragonflies come out of their shell? It's that metamorphous. I feel like I'm in that stage of changing... It's a really hard balance when you do kind of open your eyes and when you do see what's going on, you almost feel like you should just hide and not do anything... So that whole transition it's really hard and then you're forever being critical... 'Is my presence being a good impact on this community or is it not and do I have the right to be involved in this or do I not'? It's kind of a dance. 'Am I over-stepping, am I being respectful'? So I think that's hard too cause when you want to be an ally and you want to help it's that fine line between exercising power and being respectful and sometimes it's not that obvious.

In my opinion Monica's description of her learning illustrates a substantive depth of critical self-reflection and represents the kind of learning outcomes that I myself, the teaching team and, I suspect, many other educators aim toward for all our students. The reflexive questions she posed are precisely the kinds of questions that all professionals working with First Australian families and communities should be posing in any and all contexts – social work, health, education, law, governance, business, journalism and more. In fact, there seems little doubt that the world would be a better place if we all, like Monica, were concerned to learn to tread 'the fine line between exercising power and being respectful' in all of our human interactions. The insights gleaned from Monica's story, however, present two significant challenges. The first is how to adequately support students to translate their learning into practice so that they don't 'hide and not do anything' and the second is the limitations of stand-alone Indigenous Australian Studies subjects.

The kinds of learning activities that might support students like Monica to become more confident in their transition from learner to practitioner might involve providing practical strategies, such as developing professional practice check lists and action plans and providing opportunities to rehearse applying those strategies in the classroom to build skills and confidence (Curry-Stevens 2007). These kinds of activities would benefit students such as Monica by validating her concerns and

providing her the opportunity to work with them in productive ways. Opportunities to rehearse applying professional practice strategies could be created through problem-based case study and role-play activities that simulate professional practice contexts. While strategies such as these are constructive, the limitations of single semester one-off Indigenous Australian Studies subjects make difficult the task of balancing the considerable content that must be covered and the complex conceptualisations that must be developed whilst allowing sufficient time for activities that support practical skills development. How do we attend to content and activities vital for students like Dennis who are grappling with key concepts such as history and colonisation, while at the same time attend to activities for students who, like Monica, are prime to begin to apply theory to practice?

Classroom management strategies can only respond effectively to diverse learning needs when teachers have a clear understanding of the learning and skills level of each student in a cohort. If educators were to formatively assess students' learning and skills level, relevant and appropriate teaching and learning strategies could be targeted to the range of identified learning needs. Students could be grouped according to their learning needs to undertake relevant activities. While the process of learning and skills development assessment, establishing groupings of students and facilitating simultaneous activities for each group would undoubtedly be time-consuming, it might not prove to be any more time consuming, and arguably more effective, than trying to cram in all the relevant activities across the whole learning and skills spectrum for every student. For Monica, this would mean spending less time undertaking activities aimed at learning about concepts she has already mastered and more time undertaking activities to rehearse translating her learning

into practice. Perhaps establishing groupings of students based on learning and skills level might have the additional benefit of building group rapport and peer trust so that students feel more confident to contribute to class discussions.

Silence and Reluctance

During my time in workshops, as already noted in Chapter 10, I observed what I described as a highly conspicuous silence and reluctance of students to both conduct an Acknowledgement to Country and to contribute to class discussions. While students did, in the end, conduct the Acknowledgements in each workshop, each time it was only after a process of awkward silence followed by overt encouragement by the teaching team, nervous chatter and more encouragement. Also common to each observed workshop was the palpable atmosphere of silence and reluctance in response to the regular and continued encouragement by the teaching team for students to ask questions, to share points of interest, confusion, or conflict and to share how they are feeling about the teaching and their learning. In the interviews and focus group discussions I described my observations to the student participants and asked them to share their perceptions.

Anxiety

In relation to Acknowledgement of Country, there was general consensus that people were afraid of offending through mispronunciation of the First Australian language terms of local community groups and that people were generally fearful and anxious about public speaking. It was also generally agreed that 'stage fright', as Carlie put it in Focus Group Two discussions, was one of two significant factors in students' reluctance to contribute to class discussions, the second being the fear of offending or being judged by the teaching team and/or fellow students. Interestingly, one of the

students, Amy, so feared offending and being judged, yet so strongly felt the need to ‘get her opinion out there’ and ‘air her thoughts’, that she chose to be a research participant rather than speak up in class.

Amy

I think people just feel very scared to speak up because they fear they’re going to be judged or they’re going to say something offensive or ask a stupid question that could be, you know, something about Aboriginal culture that they don’t know. I think that that’s why you get that sense of people holding back and it’s just under the surface because - that’s the reason I came and did this [interview] because I thought, you know, I’m a bit shy in class in case I say something offensive but I feel like if I do it this way I can still get my opinion out there and I can air all of my thoughts and everything but I don’t have to be like ‘oh someone’s there judging me’ or yeah, if that makes sense.

Amy perceived the research space to be safer than the educational space. The research space certainly afforded formal assurances of safety via research ethics policies and procedures and while the learning environment also afforded formal assurances of safety via university-wide policies that were well promoted by the teaching team, there is one protection that the research space assured that the learning space did not: the assurance of anonymity. Like the research space, the learning space assured protection from risk and harm as well as privacy and confidentiality through the opportunity to debrief privately with members of the teaching team. However the learning environment did not assure anonymity apart from the somewhat confined anonymous learning activity, ‘Experiences of Privilege Poll’, described in Chapter 10. Thus it could be surmised that what drew Amy to the research environment to express her subjective perceptions was the promise of anonymity.

Amy’s reflection intimates two important related findings. Firstly, by choosing to become a research participant, Amy seems to not just *want* to share her standpoint,

viewpoint and feelings but *needs* to do so. This is a good-news finding that some students might be enthusiastic, motivated or perhaps even compelled to articulate their subjective standpoints. When learners express their subjective standpoints learning opportunities are opened to link positionality with discourses and systems of power that maintain structural domination (DiAngelo & Sensoy 2009; Nakata et al. 2014). The second point is that Amy's fear of judgment in the learning environment was strong enough to override her compulsion to express herself and drove her to seek out an alternative context. This tells us that encouragement and assurances of 'safety' are not necessarily enough to educe or support open, honest or authentic learner participation. It suggests more intentional, structured and creative strategies that accord anonymity are warranted.

When I asked Amy whether she feared offending and being judged by the teachers or her peers her reply was 'both' and, asked the same question, many of the other students felt similarly. For some, the main concern was not to offend or be judged by peers but for others the main concern was not to offend or be judged by the teaching team. For example, Kyra's main concern was 'looking good' in front of her peers.

Kyra

I don't really think the lecturer... Like me, personally, I wouldn't really care cause Will knows I'm still learning. He's a teacher so I understand, you know, professionalism, everything like that. But then your peers aren't, they're not trained that way. So yeah, I feel like I would be more afraid of what my peers think of me than the teacher because it's like, you wanna look good in your class, you know, you wanna seem like that. So I'd be more afraid of your peers.

Kyra trusted in the 'professionalism' of Will and the teaching team not to judge her, but did not perceive her peers in the same way. Conversely, Monica mostly feared being judged by the teaching team:

Monica

I guess a lot of people, I mean this is how I feel, you are intimidated cause for so long it's been like your answers are going to be right or wrong and then you're marked on that so there's this, kind of ominous power that you're being judged. You're being marked and if you don't say the right thing then that could be detrimental. It's the environment and how we've been socialised to act at school. You're not supposed to blurt things out or say what you feel, say what you think, that's not normal. So I think it's that. You kind of feel 'oh should I say something or am I going to be judged, is it going to be right'?

Monica was concerned that the teaching team might judge her class contributions and in turn grade her unfavourably, a concern she perceived to be due to having been socialised into an educational culture where it's 'not normal' for students to express their viewpoints or feelings. In other words, she had little or no experience in the 'dialogical relations' of critical approaches to teaching and learning (Freire 2000, p.79), that mitigate the authority of the educator by way of reciprocal teacher/student interaction. Her reluctance to speak up in class seemed to be the result of distrust that the teaching approach would prevent the teaching team from arbitrarily evoking their power over her based on her classroom contributions.

As well as fear of offending, being judged and public speaking, Kyra points to emotional distress as a third significant factor in student silence and reluctance.

Kyra

I guess it's that fear of getting it wrong. 'what if what I say is not correct or it upsets someone or something like that'? As well, like in this class, these questions you know, 'how do you feel about that or what do you think about this'? Everyone has an opinion, how could you not have an opinion? I think maybe people are upset, they're trying to figure it out themselves still and they don't understand it or they just don't want to speak up. It's sort of like the spotlight moment, you don't wanna seem, you know, different.

While Kyra does not clarify exactly what she perceives students might be upset about, I interpret her to mean one of two factors: upset from learning difficult First

Australian knowledge, or upset by the cognitive and affective dissonance that can result from uncomfortable pedagogies. To better understand how emotional distress contributes to silence and reluctance, what follows is an analysis of what student participants shared about their emotional responses to learning First Australian content.

Emotional distress

My discussion in Chapter 9 identified the affective dimensions of learning at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies. As Crystal shared in her interview, the most profound learning for her has been where she has had an affective response. In her view, affective learning experiences can result in effective learning outcomes. In the interviews and focus group discussions, many of the student participants spoke of their emotional responses to learning about past and present injustices against First Australian peoples and communities. Their stories certainly confirm that the learning evoked a range of emotional responses and they also seem to confirm that emotional distress contributed significantly to student silence and reluctance.

Generally students talked about feeling a range of intensities of emotion, from feeling overwhelmed to feeling sad, hurt and angry. For example Bianca and Mia describe their feelings in response to learning about First Australian experiences.

Bianca

I'm just overwhelmed. I had no idea this stuff was happening. All this stuff happened that I didn't know about.

Mia

It's just that eye-opener and it's just that registering it cause it is a lot of information and there was horrible things that happened. So hearing any kind

of horrible, you know, it's hard. It hurts to think that people did things like that.

While Bianca described feeling overwhelmed and Mia described feeling 'hurt', for Cheryl, learning resulted in almost debilitating emotional distress.

Cheryl

I think that it's the content of what has been a very emotional ride for me, generally doing this course, and I've just been crying a lot. It feels like a deep well of sorrow. We're denying human rights of people right in our own faces and it's gob-smacking to me. I've been sort of aware but on the periphery and this is just like 'oh my god'! A couple of weeks ago, after I was here I just went home and, 'oh my god, it's happening, it's fucking happening right now', you know. I got really worked up and I couldn't sleep, I became insomniac for nearly two weeks, I'm just (draws deep breath), I'm really, you know every week I go 'oh shit can I go to class'? It's so, it really gets to me, it really gets to me.

Cheryl's intense emotional response of deep sorrow embodied as insomnia, resulted in a kind of paralysis that caused her to question whether to continue to attend classes. Her paralysis lasted for several weeks until she participated in a debriefing session in class.

Cheryl

Sonia came and kind of did a debrief with a group of women I was sitting with in class and she emailed me later and said 'umm, you know, it's a marathon Cheryl, it's not a sprint' and I was like OK, OK, OK (mimics panting like a dog).

Participating in a small group debriefing session provided an opportunity for Cheryl to express her emotions, which in turn enabled Sonia to reach out to support Cheryl to process her emotions so that she could move forward with her learning. If Cheryl had decided not to attend class or had not expressed her emotions in the small group debrief or in private with one of the teaching team, perhaps she might have remained in a state of learning paralysis. In sharing just how difficult it was for her as a

mature-age student to express her feelings in the debrief, she acknowledged that it might be even more difficult for younger students.

Cheryl

I think it's difficult for 18 and 19 year olds to say 'I'm fucking pissed off', to really reveal something about what they're really feeling or what they're thinking and it's hard for all of us.

Considering the culture of modern Australian society where public expressions of emotion are often considered a sign of weakness, it is not surprising that students may find it extremely difficult to express their emotions in the presence of their peers and teachers.

Stella's story of feeling emotional in class and her observations of her classmates is illustrative.

Stella

It upsets me so much because nobody says anything but today was the day that I thought 'why'? Nobody seems to be shocked after watching some video that we watched how the remote community Aboriginal people right now are living, it's inhumane'. It's like everyone's just shut down. To me, I'm so upset by it, I shut down at times too but that's one thing. I look around and I think 'look there's no tears', there's no one saying 'oh my god this is so bad'. I do say that to my friends and people afterwards, 'sometimes I get a bit emotional' and I don't really know what they think of me but that, 'I can't hold it in' because that's the truth and how the reality is for me. To me it's inhumane and looking at the classroom I don't know whether they're shut down because it's too hard.

That Stella felt the need to explain to her friends after class that she felt emotional and couldn't 'hold it in' is telling of the power of the normalised social imperative to suppress emotions in public. Further, saying 'I don't really know what they think of me' is telling of the social stigma attached to displays of emotion and as revealed above, students can be very concerned not to be judged by their peers or teachers. Moreover, Stella's observation that 'it's like everyone's just shut down... I'm so

upset by it, I shut down at times too' suggests that as well as conforming to social norms, the suppression of emotions works as a kind of self-defensive disengagement against intense and overwhelming emotional experiences. Stella's suspicion that students were shutting down 'because it's too hard' is supported by Amy's description of how she felt in response to viewing the documentary 'A Secret Country' (mentioned earlier).

Amy

I was getting all teary in class and I felt physically sick. I just thought 'I can't, I can't listen to this', even though I sat there and like 'I want to listen to this cause I want to know what happened'. But in my mind I was like 'oh Amy don't listen, don't listen'!

Amy's urge to disengage and stop listening was clearly an instinctive self-defense strategy against her intense affective response. Her description of her internal conflict alludes to both the power of her instinctive urge to retreat into defensive disengagement as well as the fortitude required on her behalf to resist. While some learners will have the fortitude to resist the urge to disengage and to seek support to work through emotional dissonance, others may not. Some learners, like Monica, have the skills to independently process their emotions. In her interview Monica described the way she processed her feelings of anger.

Monica

When I started doing this course and I actually went through this whole process, I was so angry and I could feel this anger in me during class and I'd go home and I'd be aggravated and my partner would be like, 'what's wrong'? And I don't know, I couldn't put my finger on what it was. Finally I just sat down and said 'well I need to figure out what this anger is. I really need to figure it out'. But it does take you a while to process it. It takes time to really process and to make a link between emotion and reality and what's going on.

Monica's prior learning meant she likely had some insights into the nature of the colonial encounter from indigenous standpoints and some exposure with the kind of affective dissonance that can occur in those learning contexts. Making a 'link between emotion and reality', or in other words, acknowledging the link between her positionality and the 'reality' of 'what's going on' at the structural level is an important learning outcome because it opens the space to investigate the ways that our subjective identities can be constituted by and in turn constitute structural systems of domination. Despite Monica's experience the process remained confusing, time-consuming and required real effort. For learners without Monica's experience, the task of processing emotions and moving forward could seem insurmountable, increasing the risk of a retreat into defensive state of paralysed disengagement. If learners do not express their emotions and do not engage available support mechanisms, the ability of the teaching team to provide appropriate and effective support is greatly diminished. As noted above, encouragement and assurances of safety in the learning environment are not necessarily sufficient for evoking open, honest or authentic learner class dialogue, nor are they sufficient to inspire students to seek support to express and process emotional distress. Structured teaching and learning strategies targeted to address these challenges, once again, might include those that accord anonymity.

Discourses of Domination

A range of discourses has been identified in the analysis of student interviews and focus group discussions that I've categorised under the broad theme of 'discourses of domination'. Discourses such as those presented here in relation to First Australian content and those I identify in the chapters that follow in relation to racism,

whiteness and privilege, became apparent in the interviews when students expressed their subject positions in relation to their learning. What follows is an analysis of three students' articulation of their subject positions framed around two discourses that I've categorised as 'cultural deficit discourse', a pathologising discourse and 'cultural appropriation discourse', a fetishising discourse. While these two discourses are antithetical in nature, they result in similar outcomes, namely the failure to consider or challenge structural conditions and systems that create and maintain inequity.

Cultural deficit discourse: pathologisation

Cultural deficit discourse, as the name suggests, is a racist discourse that assumes that First Australian peoples are inherently deficient and inferior, particularly as compared to Western peoples and culture. This discourse is a legacy of 'cultural deficit theory', a 19th and 20th century anthropological and scientific theory of race that regarded First Australian people as 'a child-like race' unable to be mature, independent citizens because of their 'natural handicaps' (D.H. Drummond, Minister for Education, 1937 cited in Parbury 1999, p.71). Cultural deficit theory has been particularly popular in education theories throughout the 20th and into the 21st century and continues to inform popular ideology about First Australian peoples, as I have argued elsewhere (Townsend-Cross 2011). Cultural deficit discourse tends to explain and justify First Australian disadvantage as the result of 'their' cultural deficiencies rather than unjust social systems (Fejo-King & Briskman 2009; Maddison 2009; Hollinsworth 2006).

As shown in the following excerpts, assumptions of cultural deficit ideology can range from the seemingly innocuous to more dangerous assumptions that thwart

critical connections between structural conditions and oppression. Whilst describing her perceptions of learning First Australian content, Dianna reflected on a moment of realisation where she caught herself making ‘stupid’ assumptions:

Dianna

Cause singing, I didn't even know. I stumbled across a radio station one time with little Aboriginal kids singing and I was like, ‘oh my god they sing’! It's like how stupid am I, do you know what, of course they sing, what am I thinking!

The currency and utility of cultural deficit discourse to override logical reason is well illustrated in Dianna’s story. While the assumption that First Australians don’t sing might be considered silly but harmless, the implications are much more serious. It is a logical and reasoned assumption based on difficult-to-contest empirical evidence that music-making is a common marker of what it means to be human. So to be surprised that First Australians sing is to be surprised to realise that they are fully human. Cultural deficit ideology can lead to dangerously uncritical assumptions about First Australian peoples.

In the following excerpt, Dennis perceives First Australian disparity as ‘a problem “we” can’t solve’.

Dennis

I'd certainly like to work with Aboriginal people, I know that much because I just don't feel they've got the same quality of life that what we have. But then you get the problem of Aboriginal people they, the Aboriginal people want to go back to their land and just live a simple life. Do I support that or do I support their advancement? That's where you get confused... Are we trying to advance Aboriginal people by helping them? Ahhhh, this is the big problem that we have. Are we trying to help them get out of a problem that we can't solve? Are we trying to give them the tools of education to advance when you know, then that way they probably lose their culture? If we teach them English and so forth then they're just gonna lose their culture. It's a tricky situation, you know, they're so economically bound that I don't think

they can live the life they want to live anymore which is very sad. I don't know how to fix this problem. What can you do?

The cultural deficit assumptions Dennis made about First Australians simplified his perceptions of the complex problem of disparity to a matter that requires him, as a future social work practitioner, to make a choice between what he saw as two inevitable but nevertheless undesirable positions: either support First Australians' (assumed) aspirations to 'live a simple life', causing them to remain 'economically bound' in continuing disparity *or* support their 'advancement' (viz. assimilation) where, 'sadly', they will 'lose their cultures' once 'we "give" them the tools of education'. It hardly needs to be pointed out that neither of these choices would see Dennis in good stead as an effective social work practitioner in the eyes of many First Australian families or communities. Despite the depth of focus on systems of domination and structural conditions across Weeks/Topics 1 – 7 (Dennis's interview was conducted in week 8), the myths of cultural deficit discourse have seemingly overpowered Dennis's ability to see the complex structural causes of disparity. Further, even though he was exposed to content that evidenced First Australians' ongoing resistance to the pressures of overt and covert assimilation policies (see Appendix 1) he seemed unable to see that many First Australians have indeed maintained their knowledges, values and cultures despite engagement in mainstream education.

The way that Dennis was 'speaking for' First Australian peoples has been described as a narrative of 'white saviour discourse' where whites see themselves as having 'the unique power to uplift, edify and strengthen... to bring necessary information and change to the global poor' (Straubhaar 2015, pp.384–385; see also Bell 2013; Picower 2009; Todd 2011). In their research with white Australians involved in the

Aboriginal Reconciliation movement, Australian scholars Meredith Green and Christopher Sonn found a similar discourse they called 'expert analysis' where 'White reconcilers were positioned as experts of Indigenous people' (Green & Sonn 2005, p.485). White saviour and expert analysis discourses are intimately linked to and informed by cultural deficit discourses and together can be thought of as 'discourses of pathologisation'.

Cultural appropriation discourse: fetishisation

Cultural appropriation discourse fetishises and romanticises First Australian philosophies, knowledges and values. It manifests in expressions of yearning or longing to know and possess First Australian cultures to enhance the cultural life of non-Indigenous Australians and to remedy the ills of modern society. As Green and Sonn found in their research with white reconcilers, 'cultural connection discourse' as they called it, seeks First Australian knowledge as a source of solutions for the troubles of the world, not least the problem of environmental degradation (Green & Sonn 2005, p.484; see also Haggis 2004). These discourses view First Australian knowledges as commodities for the taking, commodities that are needed urgently for problems that can't wait until an environment of social justice has been achieved.

In both her interview and in Focus Group One, Sharon bordered on sermonising her perception of the need to urgently appropriate First Australian knowledges to 'fix' what she perceived as the problems in society. The following excerpt is a summary of the points she made in her interview.

Sharon

I'm looking for a utopia (laughs). I want to be a part of shaping a different way of being and it's come up again and again in the literature that people have found Indigenous cultures as having a lot of answers...So there's been

exciting little glimmers...the extended family system that's quite dominant in Indigenous culture and I hear that and I really like that, I wanna know more about that... I think that community is something that we are really missing out on and it makes us weak. I realise that it's important that we as a society are aware of the level of inhumanity we've treated other members of the human race, just, it's awful, but I also want to move past that and go, 'where are we going now'? I wanna move forward I don't wanna be just focusing on what's wrong, I wanna see what's right.

The priority here is not perceived as mending society through the dismantling of unjust systems and enacting justice, but by patching up the status quo with romanticised notions of First Australian values and cultures. While Sharon concedes the importance of being aware of injustice she is in a rush to 'move forward', to rush past and gloss over the 'wrong' to see 'what's right'. She seems to perceive that 'what's right' is somehow hidden or withheld.

In Focus Group One discussions, Sharon again spoke a lot about her desire to possess First Australian knowledges 'to make modern Australia better'. The following three excerpts are from a longer exchange between Sharon, Danni and me.

Sharon

Indigenous philosophies... could really fix a lot of problems with our system and I think that we need to look at what we can bring from a different cultural perspective into what is modern Australian to make modern Australia better... we really need to be able to bring that in and to start to own those ideas for us to be able to move on and become a healthy society.

Danni responded by pointing out her perception of the dangers of Sharon's quest to 'own' First Australian ideas.

Danni

I think it's really, it can be really dangerous to take that adopting everything and assimilating those things... smooching them into this box...because you don't have a full awareness... I think it takes a very long time to kind of be able to properly incorporate those values or those beliefs, those practices into your life.

While Danni seemed to find it difficult to find the right words to express her concerns, her message was clear enough: rushing to appropriate select bits and pieces from First Australian cultures that might not be fully understood and trying to force them to fit your own agenda, ‘smooshing them into this box’, is unlikely to result in satisfactory outcomes. Using the specific example of a book by a non-Indigenous author about First Australian knowledge, I pointed out how others have appropriated First Australian knowledges to serve their own needs whilst First Australians continue to languish in disparity. Further, by way of a personal story about my own rights to knowledge and the way my rights are prescribed and proscribed based on established cultural rules, terms and conditions, I suggested that any transferal of First Australian knowledges should be negotiated based on these terms and conditions. Sharon however seemed undeterred.

Sharon

I would say it's not just an issue of equality between humans I would say it's a survival thing. It's a thing of being able to go forward together and to survive as a species on a finite world...I want to live like that... I want to feel like that... to be able to articulate the idea of that connection to land and place...I guess too I feel a sense of urgency because I feel we really are going to have to make some major changes for our, just for the environment.

Sharon perceived First Australian knowledges as an urgently-needed elixir that can restore the health of the current dominant social system and regenerate it's capacity to endure into the future without self-destructing and taking the ‘finite world’ down with it. Sharon frames the urgency of the goal to consign and reassign First Australian knowledges to serve these ends as altruistic, for the good of us all ‘to survive as a species’. In this way cultural appropriation discourse becomes normalised as benevolent ‘common sense wisdom’. Sharon's expressions of her yearning desire to ‘live’, ‘to feel’ and ‘to articulate’ First Australian cultural

knowledge suggests that she also has a considerable personal investment in possessing First Australian knowledges.

In the rush to ‘move past’ First Australian peoples’ social justice concerns, the essence of the problem and the solutions so coveted from First Australian knowledges were also rushed past. First Australian knowledges have been commandeered, categorised and reassigned to serve Western social and scientific aspirations since at least the 1980’s when First Australian knowledges began to be considered as other than primitive, outdated and irrelevant to modernity. First Australian and indigenous knowledges globally already inform almost every academic discipline across the natural and human sciences to serve the needs of humanity at large, from environmental sustainability efforts to powerful big business (Nakata 2002). Dislocating indigenous knowledges from indigenous contexts – people, locales, social systems, value systems and management systems - and transplanting them into Western contexts is yet to solve the problem of impending social and environmental disaster. The problem at hand then is one of social systems rather than a lack of (First Australian) knowledge.

The irony is that saving the world and humanity is all about that which Sharon would rush past. The solution that Sharon so desperately wanted from First Australian knowledges was clearly spelled out in the content of the Subjects: saving the world and humanity is all about social justice and social change. It’s about dismantling the social conditions and systems of domination that produce inequity, poverty, poor health and early death for some but not others. It seems that the fetishisation of First Australian knowledges inherent in cultural appropriation discourse blinded Sharon

from seeing the ‘answers’ she so desperately desired presented in the content of the Subjects.

While cultural deficit and cultural appropriation discourses are radically different in the way they conceive First Australian peoples and their knowledges, values and cultures, they both result in disassociation with or disregard for First Australian aspirations for social justice and social change and therefore hinder learning. The viewpoints expressed by Dennis and Sharon are exactly the kind of subject positions that need to be expressed and used as points of departure for teaching and learning in the classroom. If they are not somehow expressed they cannot be adequately addressed.

Conclusion

Overall, student participants’ perceptions of teaching and learning in the Subjects were positive. Students indicated that they found the teaching team, the teaching approaches, the content and the set materials and resources productive for their learning. The efficacy of the Subjects is illustrated by some of the students’ perceptions that the teaching and their learning transformed their views and that the impact of their learning would endure beyond formal education. However the analysis of students’ learning stories identifies a complex range of distinct challenges for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies educators. Understanding and addressing these challenges is necessary if stand-alone mandatory Indigenous Australian Studies subjects are to be effective, particularly subjects that train future practitioners for professional practice with First Australian families and communities.

The challenges identified relate to the diverse learning needs of students based on their varying ontological and epistemological standpoints and divergent prior learning and skills levels. These factors determine the relevance and effectiveness of any given strategy for any given learner. Strategies that are relevant and effective for some may not be for others. For example for some learners, activities that support their understanding of key concepts or guide analysis of ideological discourses might be the most relevant and effective. For others who have a sound understanding of key concepts and well-developed critical analysis skills, activities that support them to rehearse applying their learning to practice contexts might be most relevant to their learning. Further, what might be effective for one learner at a particular learning and skills development level may not be for another at a similar stage of learning and skills development. Activities that engender affective learning experiences for some might not do for others.

Considering these complexities in the context of the limitations of stand alone Indigenous Australian Studies subjects, it seems to me that educators need to either attempt to cover enough ground to address all possible learning needs or to somehow become adequately informed about the learning and skills development needs of each student in each cohort. Both approaches are labour intensive and neither approach is unproblematic. However I believe that trying to cram enough activities and resources to address all learning and skill levels creates a risk of superficially attending to important learning activities. In other words, trying to cover everything for everybody risks covering nothing adequately. Formatively assessing students' learning needs, while perhaps labour intensive, would allow for more in-depth targeted teaching and learning activities.

As noted, when students express their standpoints and emotions, educators are in a much better position to support learning and learner well-being. Considering that learning about colonialism from First Australian standpoints can result in emotional distress, which in turn contributes to students' silence and reluctance and risks learner disengagement, strategies to stimulate the expression of subjective standpoints becomes even more important. With these considerations in mind, the next chapter continues the exploration of students' perceptions and experiences in relation to learning about race, racism and antiracism.

Chapter 12

Learning about Race, Racism and Antiracism

Introduction

To learn about race and racism in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies under a guiding anticolonial framework is to conceptualise race as a powerful social construction that informs and shapes racist structures and systems of domination and oppression. It means coming to understand racism as a manifestation of structural rather than individual forces. It means labouring to see through ideological obfuscation to bring the links between racist structures and ordinary every day racism into sharp focus. Crucially, it means being guided by the knowledge, expertise and experiences of First Australian peoples (Delgado & Stefancic 2012; Crenshaw et al. 1995; Dei 2014; Gillborn 2006a). To learn antiracism is to operationalise critical anticolonial knowledge about race and racism to contest racist systems, discourses and practices.

In this chapter I draw from the data produced in my interviews and focus group discussions with students to analyse their perceptions and experiences around three main themes: ‘conceptualising race’, ‘conceptualising racism’ and ‘conceptualising antiracism’. My analysis identifies that teaching and learning critically about race, racism and antiracism produces both encouraging pedagogical opportunities and concerning challenges and risks. While some students began to cultivate critical understandings, others retreated to ideological explanations, justifications and denials of racism. Generally students’ perceptions of and motivations to engage antiracism suggest the need for a greater pedagogical focus on supporting learners to

conceptualise, develop and rehearse practical antiracist strategies, or in other words, a stronger focus on the application of theory to practice. Considering the powerful role discourse plays in the maintenance of race power, it becomes clear that the most practical and potentially most effective antiracist skills are discursive. The discussion therefore concludes by recommending that discursive antiracism or counter-narratives be framed as a practical skill that learners are supported to cultivate.

Conceptualising Race

In their interviews, I asked students to respond to the question: ‘what is race and has your understanding changed as a result of your learning in the Subjects’? My analysis of their responses revealed varying teaching and learning outcomes. For example Sharon and Dianna recognised whiteness as a racial categorisation as well as the socially constructed nature of the racism.

Sharon

When I was growing up it [race] was clearly about people’s ethnicity and their looks but when I’m reading about it now... the historical background of it, from my understanding, was something that was made up by white people who wanted to be able to justify continuing to suppress people of colour after slavery was abolished. It was a really interesting lens to be able to see through.

Dianna

I’d say before the course I would have thought that race related to where you were from...like the Asian race, the European race and that type of thing... the course has through the concept of whiteness and white privilege made my, it hasn’t changed my view but it’s made me see how in history white people have seen themselves as supreme in terms of not seeing themselves as a race.

Learning about the history of race and racism and learning about the concept of whiteness, covered in workshops in Topic 5 (see Appendix 1), supported Sharon and Dianna to critically broaden their conceptualisations to recognise that the concept of

race is about power. Learning about the history of race and racism is important to challenge the pervasive acceptance of racism as a natural, inevitable and unavoidable individual or psychological phenomenon. Learning about structural whiteness broadens the analytical focus to recognise how white identity has been historically exempt from racialisation.

Other students however did not make these critical connections and defined race in relation to skin tone, ethnicity, culture and/or nationality. One participant, Amy, was unapologetically adamant that her views of race had not changed.

Amy

That's a tough one. I think race is (thoughtful pause) not so much your ideas, I think it is where you're from. I think, not in a bad way, yeah (nervous giggle), I think that race is what you are, so like I'm a non-Indigenous Australian or Anglo-Saxon, whatever you wanna call me... I've never been asked what is race, like I've never had to think about it. But I don't think it's changed, I think throughout the whole thing [learning in the Subject] my views on racism have changed but my views on race haven't changed.

On the one hand Amy claimed to have 'never' considered race before but then on the other she claimed that her views hadn't changed as a result of learning about race. The incongruence of these claims can be likened to what US sociology scholar Eduardo Bonilla-Silva describes as 'verbal pirouettes' that function to preserve a dominant racial positioning of self whilst defending against the appearance of racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003, p.164). In his research with white college students and residents in Detroit in the United States he identified how 'incursions into forbidden issues', such as talking openly about race and racism, can 'produce almost total incoherence among many whites' (Bonilla-Silva 2002, p.43). Amy's perception of race as 'where you're from' and 'what you are' was somewhat awkwardly defended as innocuous by way of establishing intention, 'not in a bad way' and by way of applying the

concept to her own subject position to demonstrate as much. While I did ask students to describe themselves in racialised terms, as discussed shortly, Amy offered her perception of her identity as a ‘non-Indigenous Australian or Anglo-Saxon or whatever you want to call me’ prior to me asking that question. Her insistence that her views about race hadn’t changed belies her claim that she hadn’t previously considered race and tends to suggest an investment in the racialisation of Others but discomfort in the racialisation of self.

To stimulate students’ expression of their subjective perceptions of race I asked how they would describe themselves and how they think others might describe them in racialised terms. A common response was that students had never thought about race before in relation to their own identities. Also common was a discernable sense of discomfort in being racialised. While most described their race in terms of ethnicity or nationality and surmised that others might describe them as ‘white’, Amy actively resisted racialisation of her identity.

Amy

Non-Indigenous Australian. I wouldn’t go as far as Anglo-Saxon cause I think that’s a bit pretentious but non-Indigenous Australian (nervous giggle).

Amy’s rejection of the ethnic category ‘Anglo-Saxon’, her preference for the term ‘non-Indigenous Australian’ and her assertive objections to being racialised as white (considered in the following chapter) evaded self-racialisation by defining self not in terms of ‘what you are’, as per her definition of race considered earlier, but in terms of what she is not, that is, in terms of an Indigenous Other – ‘non-Indigenous’.

Sharon distinguished between ethnicity and race and clearly articulated discomfort with being racialised as white:

Sharon

If I'm filling out forms like on the ABS or whatever and it says what's your background, it would be just English and Scottish, that's my background but I do identify as Australian and I guess then I'd, if I had to say I was a race I would be white but I don't feel comfortable with that as a category. Like what does that mean?

When learners contemplate their identities in racial terms they personally experience first-hand the potentially harmful essentialising nature of racialisation. The discomfort expressed by Sharon and other students represents affective learning that has the potential to engender empathy for the discomfort of Others who are consistently racialised as a matter of course. Sharon's discomfort with being racialised led her to ask a valid critical question, 'what does that mean? It functioned as a scaffold to a more critical consideration about the legitimacy of race as a human category.

Conceptualising Racism

In the interviews the question 'what is racism' sought to understand the ways that students conceptualised racism in light of learning in the Subjects. All but three students defined racism as individual acts of stereotyping, prejudice and judgement despite the framing of racism as ideological and structural in the Subjects. The definitions expressed by Mia, Amy & Kyra capture the general nature of these responses:

Mia

Well I think racism is that sort of thing where you are picking on someone for wherever they're from and it's just that, judging people and that whole stereotype sort of racism.

Amy

Racism is being prejudiced against people who are a different colour to you or different race to you, yeah, different to you in general, yep.

Kyra

Maybe someone is stereotyping someone because of their culture, their dress, their beliefs, the colour of their skin, that's what a racist is to me.

That these responses refer to individual racism is evidenced by the use of singular rather than collective pronouns: 'you are picking on *someone*', 'prejudiced against people who are different to *you*', '*someone* is stereotyping'. US race studies scholar George Lipsitz argues that difficulty in conceptualising racism as structural is due to,

... the overdetermined inadequacy of the language of liberal individualism to describe collective experience. As long as we define social life as the sum total of conscious and deliberate individual activities, then only individual manifestations of personal prejudice and hostility will be seen as racist (Lipsitz 1995, p.381).

The discourse of neoliberal individualism warps the view of social life to obscure the way that individual performances of racism amount to 'collective exercises of group power' that constitute and legitimise structural domination (ibid.).

For two students, Matthew and Bec, learning about the history of theories of race enabled them to articulate racism in more complex terms.

Matthew

Well before I started the course I would most likely have just said that racism is more of an individual thing... There's obviously overt racism where people might just say something racist to a person or they would have a particular hatred or something towards a particular race but then... what I've learned in this course is that there's systematic racism as well and that's where people would be disadvantaged because of the systems of government that have been built over years which probably you could say were founded on racism.

Matthew's perception shifted from understanding racism as something perpetrated by individuals to perceiving it as structural, or in his words 'systematic'. The pedagogical goal achieved here, an expanded conceptualisation of racism, is a scaffold to appreciating individual racism as a constituent element of a harmful racist

structure. However, as will be illustrated later in the chapter, there is no guarantee that learners will necessarily make these links, as Matthew did not. For Bec, learning that racism is a social construct that can be historically identified and traced, rather than a natural human trait as she had previously ‘accepted’, empowered her with hope that it could be challenged and dismantled.

Bec

I have always struggled with racism but I couldn't conceptualise my struggle. Why do you think like that? What's wrong with you?... I put it down to, yeah it was a character flaw, an individual phenomena. Now I understand it more conceptually in terms of the information that people are fed uncritically and you don't have a choice unless you're exposed to alternative information or learnings or even people that challenge your thoughts. It's the lack of awareness [of] the dominant ideology that you're perpetuating... I had accepted that racism was part of humanity and it was so nice to know that it wasn't, that it was constructed and therefore doesn't need to exist. It was so empowering, I get teary (laughs), like yes, there's hope!

If racism is perceived as natural or inevitable it becomes an insurmountable problem and developing antiracist strategies to act for social change can seem like a pointless pursuit. While learning about the historically constructed nature of racism inspired hope for the possibility of effective antiracism for Bec, it conversely seemed to have convinced Dennis of the inevitability of racism.

Dennis

It's historic, that's the problem with race, racism and so forth it's historic. You can't, you can never get rid of it, it's like a, what do they call it, a wicked problem, you know, it is! You can't get rid of it, it's not possible.

Dennis's view that because racism is historical it is inevitable and unchangeable highlights how certain teaching strategies can achieve intended learning goals for some learners but not for others. Perhaps more exposure to the ways that antiracism campaigns have effected successful social change in the past might have inspired hope in Dennis that seeking to dismantle racism could be a worthwhile goal.

Defending Racism: discourses of domination

Learning to critically conceptualise race and racism can prove difficult in the face of contemporary ideologies. In Australia ideologies of race and assimilationism converge with neoliberal ideologies of individualism and meritocracy to constitute an ‘ideologically constructed discursive field of knowledge’ (Dudgeon & Fielder 2006, p.397) that operates to continually reproduce ‘a powerful mode of knowing’ about First Australian peoples (McConaghy 2000, p.51; see also Dockery 2010; Dockery 2011; Fejo-King & Briskman 2009; Kessarar 2006; Pedersen & Barlow 2008; Pholi et al. 2009; Quayle & Sonn 2013). Ideological ‘knowledge’ impedes critical learning by masking the structural determinants of First Australian disparity. The development of antiracist teaching and learning strategies that expose the ways that ideological discourses maintain and legitimate racist structures, as Bonilla-Silva and others have argued, requires analytic focus on the ‘origins and strategic functions’ of the normalised ideological nature of racism in specific contexts (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004, pp.577–578; see also Augoustinos et al. 2005, p.337; Berman & Paradies 2010, p.215; Green & Sonn 2005, p.483; Hollinsworth 2006, p.43; Kessarar 2006, p.358).

As noted in the preceding chapter, discourses of domination were put forward in response to interview and focus group questions that required students to respond from subjective standpoints. The discourse of defending racism was asserted in response to three questions about students’ subjective experiences of racism: ‘have you been the target of racism’, ‘have you observed racism’ and ‘have you engaged in racism’. While none of the students reported having been the direct target of racism, nearly all shared stories of having observed racism, often perpetrated by family or

friends, or as having themselves engaged in racist thinking or discourse. Three students in particular, Dennis, Amy and Matthew, defended the accountability of those who engaged in ideological or casual racism by denying the links between structural disparity and racist jokes, stereotypes and prejudiced 'opinion'. This denial has been identified as a discursive strategy by scholars both in Australia and elsewhere that defends against challenges to racism and reasserts racial power (see for example Augoustinos & Every 2007; Bonilla-Silva 2002; Dunn & Nelson 2011; Hollinsworth 2014; Kessarar 2006; Montgomery 2013; Nelson 2013; Solomon et al. 2005; van Dijk 1992).

Dennis, for example, defended his own engagement in casual racism.

Dennis

I have a bigoted attitude, I've changed that a lot since I've begun social work... I will certainly be or act racist in a joking way but nothing intended for hate, just because it just makes you laugh... I might say something... like it's probably really rude and racist but you don't have the intentions, just teasing. I tend to do that a lot.

Dennis does not deny that he has a 'bigoted attitude' and seems to be undeterred by the recognition that ridiculing racialised Others is 'probably really rude and racist'. He defends his 'joking way' as not harmful because he does not have the intention to cause harm. Defending racism in this way denies the links between individual manifestations of racism and structural domination as well as the need for antiracist social change (Cabrera 2014). In a similar vein Amy revealed that she and her family engaged in casual racism in a 'joking way'.

Amy

My dad, he's *very* racist, he's very racist and he does it in a joking way but sometimes I think 'oh dad, you know, you can't say that' or 'that's a bit too far'. Like he's a lot older though, he's almost 60... but sometimes dad's a bit

over the top and I'm like 'oh my god, you shouldn't have said that'...before I maybe would have laughed and be like 'oh dad, that's terrible' but now... My partner as well, he's quite racist and I have to pull him up sometimes and go 'you can't say that, like that's not funny', whereas like he thinks it's funny (laughs) but I don't think it's funny. But yeah, he grew up in [names city] so he was very, you know, there's a lot of, umm Indigenous people up there...so he is very, he doesn't like Indigenous people, no offence, but I don't like that about him because I need to, oh you know, he may have just had a bad experience, but (laughs) you know.

Amy's story about her dad and her partner are what Bonilla-Silva refers to as a common 'racial story' of contemporary racism. Her 'testimony' can be 'understood as part of the contemporary dominant racial ideology' that defends and denies racism (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004, p.556). In his research, mentioned above, Bonilla-Silva's participants shared stories with a very similar narrative structure to Amy's story.

First, the respondent reveals that a relative is "racist" and then gives an example to illustrate this point. Finally, the respondent ends by explaining why she or he is "not racist" (ibid. p. 559).

While Amy's story does not attempt to position her as 'not racist' it does attempt to position her as *becoming* not racist, as in the statements, 'before I maybe would have laughed and be like 'oh dad, that's terrible' but now...' and 'I don't like that about him because I need to...'. These unfinished sentences do not clearly articulate how Amy might 'now' respond to her father's racism or what it is that she 'needs to' do in relation to her partner's racism, but her story does 'serve a strategic purpose' to 'convey a message about self... through a discussion of others' (ibid. p. 570). Amy's story defended her father and partner's racism as not necessarily their fault. Describing her father as 'a lot older' asserts a common claim that racism is a 'declining phenomenon in Australia... primarily confined to older generations' (Augoustinos et al. 1999, p.366). According to Australian social psychology scholar Martha Augoustinos and her colleagues, this claim 'constructs racism as an

understandable and inevitable part of growing up in a different historical era, subtly discounting individual accountability from older perpetrators of racism' (ibid.).

Amy defended her partner's racism on the grounds that he grew up in an area with a high population of First Australian peoples and 'may have just had a bad experience'. Here, the implication is that her partners' racism was caused by his exposure to First Australian peoples, thus subtly deflecting the blame for racism onto First Australian peoples and protecting her partner from culpability. Amy went on to describe her perception of the impact of learning about racism on her own racist tendencies.

Amy

I know that I'm racist sometimes... and this course has made me realise that I am. Like before I knew, I'd crack a joke and then I'd be like 'oh yeah, that's fine like no one heard it', or 'no one of that race heard it' or 'no one really got offended'...I would think 'oh yeah it's just a joke' but now I realise I've got to tone it down...I treat everyone equally but I do have a joke. Not to their face and I know now that it's not a joke... like I'm not going to go and work in Aboriginal culture and be, you know, have my joking ways or whatever. I'm knowledgeable enough to know not to be like that in front of them.

Amy seemed to perceive that racism is only harmful when the targets of racism 'hear' and become 'offended' so her take home lesson was to 'tone down' racist jokes and to not say racist things 'in front of' First Australian peoples. It is quite clear that Amy had not made the connection between casual racism and the maintenance of racist structures. The problem is not only that of 'offending' First Australian people, the critical problem is reinforcing ideologies about First Australian people that fortify 'the status quo of white dominance in Australia' (Nelson 2013, p.102; see also Augoustinos et al. 1999, p.374).

Even though Matthew articulated more critical conceptualisations of race and racism, as noted above, he quite assertively defended casual racism as ‘just opinion’ and not the fault of those who engage it. Commenting on his perceptions of students’ reluctance to speak up in class, Matthew surmised that students tended to stay silent in class and write what they thought the teaching team wanted to hear in their assessments, rather than what they really thought. His perception of the problem was the ‘strongly opinionated teaching staff member’ who he named as Will. He seemed to view the perspectives presented by Will as ‘opinion’ rather than fact based on evidence and experience. Matthew suggested that if the teaching team wanted to understand students’ frank views, their opinions should be sought through assessment without the threat of losing marks for ‘having an opinion’. His perception seemed to be that opinions should be exempt from critical scrutiny. In another part of his interview, I asked him had he witnessed racism in the university setting. His response lends insights into the way he conceptualised ‘opinion’ as opposed to ‘racism’.

Matthew

I’ve heard people from this course and other courses, like I’ve heard some borderline racist comments talking about the subject we’re doing now and I guess they probably don’t realise that they are racist comments and they might not be racist comments. They might just be opinions.

What Matthew seemed to be suggesting here is that opinion should not be confused with racism so I asked him ‘can an opinion be racist?’

Matthew

(long thoughtful pause) Yeah I definitely think so and I don’t think that’s necessarily always the fault of the opinion holder either, I think it can be something that’s just ingrained in them from socialisation from their parents, from where they’ve come from and stuff like that.

When Matthew conceded that opinions could indeed be racist he retreated to the alternate defence that ‘opinion holders’ were not to blame for having opinions that could be considered racist. Later in the interview in response to questions about his subjective experiences with racism, he similarly defended his friends who had ‘racism issues’ because their parents were ‘overtly racist people’.

Matthew

I know that overtly racist people - and I’m actually friends with their kids, and they’re nice, they’re good people - but they have racism issues because of their parents. I would blame their parents entirely cause I know their parents are overtly racist and when you grow up with your parents obviously their views and opinions are going to be impressed onto you quite substantially... and it’s a real struggle for them to sort of see it as a problem. Also I myself, I’ll notice that I’ll have quite racist thoughts sometimes and I’ll be walking down the street and I’ll see someone and go ‘oh he’s’, make a, maybe, not racist, but stereotype. So straight away in my mind I’ll go ‘oh that’s disgusting I don’t know how, why I would think that, I know better than that’. It’s just something that I guess I’m still trying to work on myself, trying to get that out of my mind... it’s just from the stereotypes and from things that I’ve heard. It’s sort of stuck in my mind that that’s a problem, which it definitely isn’t. But then straight away like I said, I’ll be ‘that’s stupid, I don’t know why I had that thought’.

In this response Matthew, like Amy, positioned himself as *becoming* antiracist, as able to pull himself up and identify and challenge the racist ideologies that got ‘stuck’ in his mind. He positioned his friends as victims who ‘struggle’ with ‘racism issues because of their parents’. While he quite rightly pointed to the power of ideological socialisation, he went on to defend his friends’ casual racism as ‘not hurting anyone individually’ and ‘not important enough to affect anything that’s important’.

Matthew

I think as well it’s the fact that, like my friends they aren’t overtly racist and they’re not causing harm to individuals and they’re not benefitting a racist system and progressing that racist system. So to me it’s really not too important if they have a little umm, not racist thought but just like a

stereotypical thought or something. Oh I'll say 'that's wrong' or whatever but if they go 'oh yeah whatever', I don't like to get into it because as I said it's not hurting anyone individually, it's not progressing the system and it doesn't seem to me to be important enough to affect anything that's important.

Defending casual racism as 'not causing harm to individuals' and 'not benefitting and progressing that racist system' illustrates that Matthew, like Dennis and Amy, was either unable or unwilling to recognise the way that casual racism reinforces, legitimates and justifies the maintenance and reproduction of racist systems that beget life-threatening disparities (Augoustinos et al. 1999; Nelson 2013).

The racial stories presented here draw from an arsenal of well-established discursive tools that constitute Australian ideologies about race and racism. These ideologies are so deeply ingrained, so ordinary, natural, casual, unnoticed and unquestioned that many Australians, like Dennis, Amy and Matthew, deny that racism is linked to social disparity (Berman & Paradies 2010; Hollinsworth 2006; Kessar 2006; Nelson 2013; Riggs & Augoustinos 2005). As First Australian scholar Terry Kessar asserts, Australian race ideology results in the 'majority of nice, decent, regular' non-Indigenous Australians engaging as 'habitual participants in covert group racism' which goes unnoticed by others and themselves (Kessar 2006, p.349; see also Barton 2011, p.18; Pease 2010, p.12). The discourses deployed by Dennis, Amy and Matthew to defend racism functioned to promote positive representations of themselves as either good students who are becoming antiracist or as harmless jokers with good intentions (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004). These 'rhetorical tools' that minimised and denied the impacts of racism were deployed to defend against the implications of accountability for structural race domination and First Australian oppression (Aveling 2002, p.126).

The task of challenging ideological narratives of race requires the development of strategic antiracist counter-narratives (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004; Kessar 2006). Counter-narratives serve the important teaching and learning function of exposing ideological myths that hinder critical learning. In Kessar's words they 'make visible colonial attitudes, talk and behaviours by turning the 'normal' into abnormal, the 'mundane' into the bizarre, and the secret into the exposed' (Kessar 2006, p.359). Counter-narratives comprise the substance of teaching and learning strategies and curriculum for Critical Indigenous Australian studies (Nakata et al. 2014). Studies of colonial historical and contemporary socio-political relationships that privilege First Australian standpoints and accurately and adequately represent diverse First Australian analyses and standpoints constitute the inherent counter-narrativity of my own curriculum development and that of the Subjects. A cursory glance over the content and learning materials evidences the fundamental role counter-narratives play in the design of the Subjects (see Table 10 and Appendix 1).

In addition to deploying counter-narratives in curriculum design, the use of counter-narratives to facilitate and moderate classroom discussions is a crucial but difficult critical skill for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies educators. What makes the skill difficult is the way that ideological discourses of race continuously shift, modulate and adapt to differing socio-political climates and contexts (Bedard 2000; Bonilla-Silva 2002; Crenshaw et al. 1995; Delgado & Stefancic 2012; Gunaratnam 2003; Hollinsworth 2006; Lipsitz 1995; Pease 2010; Zembylas 2012). This means that counter-narratives must also be continuously recreated and adapted to effectively speak back to ideological discourse. Developing, adapting and continuously recreating counter-narratives is an important critical skill for antiracist education and

professional practice and it seems to me that it is a practical skill that perhaps learners should be intentionally supported to develop. While there was a strong focus on the qualities of effective allyship in the Subjects, students' perceptions of antiracism, as detailed in what follows, suggest the need for a stronger focus on the development of practical skills.

Conceptualising Antiracism

Students were asked to share their perceptions of antiracism in light of their learning about allyship in the Subjects (see Appendix 1). Responses to questions such as 'what is antiracism', 'what is your role in antiracism' and 'how might you engage in antiracism' shed light on the extent to which learning about race, racism and antiracism resulted in the development of antiracist ally skills and the degree to which learning inspired motivation for antiracist action. With few exceptions, students' perceptions of antiracism generally reflected their conceptualisations of racism. Those who expressed ideologically informed individualised conceptualisations tended to perceive antiracism as either the responsibility of those who are racialised or as challenging individuals who engage in casual racism. Those who expressed more complex conceptualisations of racism tended to perceive antiracism more broadly to include awareness-raising education and social change activism.

Two students in particular, Dennis and Amy, expressed ideologically informed perceptions of antiracism that reflected their similarly informed conceptualisations of racism. Dennis's perception of First Australian peoples as culturally deficit, considered in the preceding chapter, along with his perception of racism as a 'wicked problem' mentioned above, led to a conceptualisation of antiracism as necessitating

working to educate and ‘advance’ (viz. assimilate) First Australian people. The implication here is that racism can only be ameliorated through a reduction of difference, a goal dependent on the efforts of First Australian peoples. Amy also perceived antiracism to be the responsibility of those who are racialised.

Amy

I think antiracism would be just everyone embracing their race, embracing who they are, embracing their skin colour and being able to be light-hearted, being able to laugh at themselves, being able to laugh at others about, not laugh but you know, be able to, yeah just - I think antiracism ideally would be if everyone could just embrace who they are even though there are differences. Not so much just see there as being no differences but embrace the difference and accept it and just, yeah, just...I think if everyone just lightens up it would be so much better.

Amy’s vision of antiracism implies a perception that racism is only a problem to the extent that targets of racism, coded as ‘everyone’, do not accept or ‘embrace’ their ‘race’, ‘who they are’ or ‘their skin colour’. Antiracism for Amy then, became dependent on the ability of First Australians and others who are racially targeted to be ‘light-hearted’ and ‘laugh at themselves’. The recommendation for ‘everyone’ to ‘just lighten up’ exhibits a marked lack of appreciation of the devastating material, socio-political and psychological impacts of racism. Without an embodied experience-base of what it means to be a target of racism to draw from, ideological ‘common sense’ furnished Amy with explanations that deflected accountability from the beneficiaries of racism and charged the targets of racial oppression with the responsibility for antiracism.

Most common was a delimited perception of antiracism as a confrontational process of antiracist individuals challenging racist individuals. This individualised perception of antiracism caused students to worry about their capacity to effectively engage racist others, as expressed by Cheryl and Matthew.

Cheryl

I would love to do that but I'm also aware that I get a bit emotional and I'd need an ally with me to do that, to just take over when I become a bit fiery, a bit upset or a bit tongue-tied because that can happen to me. But I definitely, you know challenging that is a really vital... I don't know what I can do and I don't know how to help and I don't know if I know enough.

Matthew

I guess I try not to have a role in that, in terms of, I mean obviously if I see overt racism or stuff like that I'd try and not to just let it slip and I wouldn't. But I don't feel like I'm educated enough in the particular issues... without being educated and without more experience I don't want to play too much of an active role... it [antiracism] causes a lot of confrontation... when it comes to people I'm still friends with or acquaintances with, I guess I just sort of let things slip. I don't know if I should or shouldn't but it's just to avoid confrontation for myself I guess. It frustrates me quite a bit as well listening to uneducated people have racist views and then trying to argue with them about it and there's, sometimes it just feels like you're going nowhere and you can't go anywhere so it's, it feels to me like there's sometimes no point.

For Cheryl and Matthew, antiracism is a matter of challenging the discourses and actions of racist individuals. Cheryl's apprehension and Matthew's frustration about doing so has to do with a lack of confidence and skill in relation to antiracist discourse.

As already identified, developing effective antiracist discourse, or counter-narratives, is a key element of antiracist practice but it is a difficult skill to develop requiring insight, time, practice and confidence. Developing effective antiracist discursive skills is not an achievable teaching and learning objective for a single semester of study but developing an understanding of the nature, function and potential of counter-narratives with a view to *begin* to cultivate antiracist discursive skills might be a worthwhile and achievable goal. Framing antiracist discourse as a practical skill requiring ongoing development beyond the classroom and providing supported opportunities to devise and experiment with antiracist discourse would equip learners with a framework for future skills development and might also engender confidence

and inspiration for ongoing commitment to antiracist action. Of course effective antiracism involves much more than challenging individual racists. It involves, exposing and challenging racism as a social structure and antiracist discourse is as important for challenging structural racism as it is for challenging individual racism.

While developing practical antiracist skills is crucial, without genuine inspiration, motivation and commitment, antiracist practice is unlikely to effect social change. Two students in particular, Mia and Bianca, compellingly expressed these characteristics. As mentioned, while students' perceptions of antiracism generally reflected the tone of their perceptions of racism, Mia and Bianca were notable exceptions to this pattern. Both conceptualised racism in relatively limited terms, yet expressed more complex perceptions of antiracism. Mia seemed to have clear vision of the way forward for her future antiracist practice.

Mia

Trying to educate other people and show them... I think it's just going out there and spreading the word and educating... and challenging those sorts of views...that whole letting people see the other side... I think it's important to keep going forward and changing peoples' views and making people understand more. Whether it just be my friends, my colleagues... I know this, I will continue to learn and keep moving forward with it and just that, I suppose, you've got to take as many people with you to make that change... I do have a role in changing that and making people understand and learn, especially that whole white privilege thing has been huge for me and it's like making people understand what their white privilege is.

Mia's commitment to continued learning and ongoing skills development, 'I will continue to learn and keep moving forward' and her commitment to antiracist social change, 'you've go to take as many people with you to make that change' is precisely the kind of fire that I aspire to ignite in the belly of all of my students. Learning about whiteness and white privilege seems to have been a significant factor in inspiring Mia's antiracist motivations.

Bianca not only expressed but also demonstrated her commitment to antiracist action by taking immediate action after only a few weeks of learning in the Subject.

Bianca

What happened was, cause OK, I felt like I was very ignorant to the whole topic and everything. So after a few weeks, once I learned more, I sat my friends down. I'm like 'you need to listen to me' and I just showed them the lectures and everything cause I felt like they needed to know... I just looked at them and said 'you're stupid, you need to know more'. I sat them all down and explained to them everything I could remember from the lectures and they said things like 'oh you've been brainwashed' and I'm like 'I haven't been brainwashed, *you've* been brainwashed! You don't know things, that's a type of brainwash because you don't! It's like they don't care enough to find out and that to me really annoys me because I didn't care to find out but now it's like if I didn't know all this stuff I'd regret it. I regret thinking how I used to think and feeling like that cause it's not OK and I don't want my friends to be like that because my friends are like my family and I don't want to be around people like that... I think that everyone has a role to play in being antiracist... I feel like if you're not saying anything about it [racism] or standing up for it [antiracism] then you're just as bad as the person saying it because if you do really believe that then you're not really being true to yourself in staying quiet.

Learning about racism and reflecting on her own racism motivated Bianca to expose her friends to what she was learning. That Bianca mobilised her learning into immediate action is an impressive learning outcome that supports US psychology of race scholar Beverly Tatum's claim that learning about race and racism,

... changes attitudes in ways that go beyond the classroom boundaries. As White students move through their own stages of identity development, they take their friends with them by engaging them in dialogue. They share the articles they have read with roommates, and involve them in their projects... The heightened awareness of the White students enrolled in the class has a ripple effect in their peer group (Tatum 1992, pp.22–23).

Unlike Tatum's participants, Bianca did not self-identify as 'white' but as 'brown' due to her Filipino and Italian heritage (explored further in the following chapter) and perhaps it was her experience as a 'brown' person that caused her to 'regret'

having racist thoughts and feelings about First Australian peoples. Learning about race and racism certainly changed her attitude in ways that extended beyond the boundaries of the classroom, suggesting that learning about race and racism can be as important for non-white learners as it is for the racially dominant.

Conclusion

My interpretation of the divergent student responses to teaching and learning about race, racism and antiracism is that they are reflective of divergent subjective identities and life experiences that result in varying levels of investment in racist ideologies and structures. The utility of ideological racial ‘knowledge’ to maneuver, dodge and deflect rational evidence-based counter-narratives is well demonstrated by the viewpoints of some of the students examined in this chapter. While learning critical conceptualisations of race and racism critically broadened many of the students’ perceptions, this did not necessarily result in abandonment of ideological justifications and explanations. Ideological knowledge and ‘racial stories’ (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004, p.556) were advanced in response to questions that asked students to share their subjective views, observations and experiences. Further, they tended to be evoked by students who reported never having considered or encountered racism, that is, when students lacked direct experiences of racism. Ideological knowledge functioned to deny and minimise the impacts of racism to defend against implications of accountability, as did racial stories, but racial stories also served the strategic function of promoting positive antiracist representations of self whilst conserving dominant racial positioning (Bonilla-Silva 2003, p.164).

Critical conceptualisations of race and racism and critical examination of the history of theories of race and the impacts of racism constitute fundamental counter-

narratives of antiracist pedagogy. Counter-narratives are the bread and butter of curriculum design, teaching, learning and classroom management strategies for Critical Indigenous Australian studies. They are the fire with which the out of control ideological bushfires that justify and explain racial inequity and impede critical learning are fought. Cognisance of the character and functions of ideological knowledge and racial stories is crucial if educators are to develop effective counter-narratives upon which to base curriculum content and teaching and learning strategies.

Developing counter-narratives, or in other words discursive antiracist skills, is key to effective antiracist practice. It is a practical skill necessary for effectively exposing and challenging racism in all of its complex and diverse manifestations and a skill that learners should be encouraged to develop. Intentionally teaching about counter-narratives, their purpose, characteristics and potential and supporting learners to begin to cultivate antiracist discursive skills would equip future antiracism practitioners with a schema for ongoing development. Without hands-on skills training, antiracism can seem pointless, mysterious and/or frustrating, as was expressed by some of the students. Supporting learners to apply theory to practice is key to effective antiracist pedagogy, as George Dei instructs.

[W]e cannot take a strictly theoretical view of race, racism and difference. Such an approach separates theory and practice. Theorizing about race does not certify anti-racist behaviour/work. In truly progressive anti-racism work, practicality must acknowledge the limits of theory. It also implies developing a clear strategy to put theory into practice (Dei 2000b, p.38).

Teaching the art of discursive antiracism is one such clear strategy to support students to apply theory to practice. Learning practical antiracist strategies can

significantly contribute to engendering the motivation, building the confidence and inspiring the hope needed for committed antiracist practice.

As the final instalment in the series about teaching and learning as perceived and experienced by students, the following chapter considers students' learning stories in relation to the theme of 'learning about whiteness and privilege'.

Chapter 13

Learning about Whiteness and Privilege

Introduction

Learning about whiteness is recognised by many scholars as imperative for any teaching and learning project that aims to critically challenge race domination. George Sefa Dei asserts that ‘an important dimension of any critical discussion of anti-racism and difference is challenging the normality of Whiteness and the pervasive effects of White privilege’ (Dei, 2000, pp. 27-28). A key goal of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies is exposing and challenging racialised domination of First Australian peoples and the importance of critical whiteness pedagogy is recognised by First Australian scholars and others involved in this teaching project (see for example Hollinsworth 2014; Hook 2012; Koerner 2013; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2004b). In this chapter I consider the subjective perceptions of students’ learning experiences to build an understanding of the complexities, risks and challenges to teaching and learning about critical whiteness and white privilege.

The chapter is organised into four sections: (1) ‘new and confronting learning experiences’, (2) ‘racialising whiteness’, (3) ‘excavating privilege’, and (4) ‘valuable lessons.’ The first section highlights that most of the student participants had never considered whiteness as a racial category and that they found the concepts of whiteness and white privilege highly confronting. The second section explores the students’ responses to analyses that racialised whiteness. The third section considers students’ perceptions of and responses to investigating white privilege through an

intersectional lens and the final section considers students' perceptions of the value of learning about whiteness and privilege. My findings affirm critical whiteness and intersectional privilege pedagogy as affective learning and I illuminate the inherent risks. I conclude by identifying risk-management strategies that include scaffolded teaching and learning frameworks and anticolonial strategic approaches.

New and Confronting Learning Experiences

Learning about whiteness and white privilege was overwhelmingly the newest, most confronting and destabilising aspect that students found in critical learning about race and racism. Most of the students reported never having considered whiteness as a racial category nor the possibility of having benefited from the racialisation of others prior to learning in the Subjects. As Danni reflected,

Danni

I admit, when you're a member of a dominant racial group it can be easy to not consider how race affects your life.

While Danni emphasised the ease with which she was able to avoid considering the impact of racialisation on her life, Cheryl emphasised the difficulty of contemplating whiteness and unearned race advantage.

Cheryl

It's hard I reckon to talk about whiteness and privilege, to actually zoom out and have a look because it's just what you breathe. It's really weird, it's a really weird thing but I do feel like that I can live this separate privileged life. I don't really have to if I don't want to think about other people's suffering, I can live over here.

It was easy for Danni and Cheryl to avoid reflecting on whiteness because it was not *necessary* for them to do so. As Cheryl observed, 'I don't have to if I don't want to, I don't have to think about other people's suffering'. It is not necessary to consider the

impacts of racial domination when it's corollary, racial oppression, does not negatively affect your life. Ideologies of race, meritocracy, neoliberalism and ideologies that equate multiculturalism with equality pretermit acknowledgement of whiteness and justify inequity. In other words, while whiteness is ubiquitous, it is normalised to the point that whiteness as a racial category and unearned race privilege become obscured from the view of those who benefit from it. As Cheryl observed 'it's just what you breathe' (Bedard 2000; Dei & Calliste 2000; Goodman 2011; Green & Sonn 2005; Hatchell 2004; Jeyasingham 2012; McGloin 2008; McIntosh 1988; Moreton-Robinson 2006; Pease 2010; Picower 2009; Walter et al. 2011).

Racialising Whiteness

All of the students found the way that whiteness theory racialises white identities particularly confronting. The discomfort they experienced can be understood as the result of pedagogy that interrupts a particular discursive power of whiteness termed 'exnomination' by US media scholar John Gabriel who applied the term to describe 'the power not to be named' (Gabriel 2002, p.13). Identifying and naming whiteness as a racial category was a disconcerting new experience, particularly when contemplated subjectively and my findings reveal that students generally responded in one of two ways, with one exception. They either defended against the racialisation of their identities and those of other white people or they began to more critically consider their subjective positioning and the structural impact of racialisation on non-white Others. The exception was Bianca who didn't defend against racialisation nor did she seem to engage in more critical structural considerations.

Don't call *me* white!

Two students, Dennis and Amy, were particularly discomforted by the identification and naming of whiteness as a racial category and while both self-identified as white when asked to categorise themselves racially, they resisted being referred to as such. Dennis took offence at being racialised based on a perception that whiteness equates to an assumption of racism.

Dennis

You get the assumption that you're a racist... I kind of find in a way offensive for me cause it identifies white as being a person's racist.

Like the undergraduate participants in US communication scholars Danielle Endres and Mary Gould's research, despite exposure to critical conceptualisations that distinguish between being white, and whiteness as structural, Dennis conflated the two (Endres & Gould 2009, pp.424–427). As Canadian education scholars Patrick Solomon, John Portelli, Beverly-Jean Daniel and Arlene Campbell found in their qualitative research with teacher candidates, conflating whiteness with white identity hampers learner progression to interrogation of whiteness as structure.

This conflation of whiteness and white skin makes it difficult for students to move beyond their feelings of anger and frustration to develop a clearer understanding of the way in which whiteness is also a constructed category (Solomon et al. 2005, p.159).

Amy quite strongly objected to and was offended by being referred to as 'white' or 'Anglo-Saxon'. She related an incident in class where she perceived that Sonia referred to all the students in the class as white. Listening back to the recordings from my classroom observations as well as the recordings of all the workshops that were uploaded to the online learning sites for the Subjects, the only reference that I

could identify was in the workshops for Topic 5 where Sonia referred to ‘us whiteys’.

Amy

Well, in class actually, I think it was Sonia, she referred to the whole class as an entirety as white and I thought, ‘you know, I’m not gonna get deeply offended by that’ but I thought ‘oh you know, if we, you know, calling umm Aboriginal people blacks or something like that, then maybe. I just thought that’s a bit hypocritical’, like calling us all white... just calling me a white, even though I am, she just called us all white and I thought ‘hang on a second, you know, that’s a bit, yeah, like I don’t wanna be called an Anglo-Saxon or (laughs) you know, maybe just call us non-Indigenous’.

The resistance put forward by Amy exercised two powerful techniques of whiteness, the power of exnomination and the power to racialise others (Gabriel 2002, p.13). She rejected racial nomenclature such as ‘white’ and ‘Anglo-Saxon’ that identified her position within the racial structure, constructed as it is, in preference for nomenclature that identified her position in terms of the racialised other, ‘just call us non-Indigenous’. This strategy worked to preserve whiteness as an unmarked and normalised racial category. As First Australian scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson explains, ‘[r]epresentations of the Indigenous other work within discourses to enable and sustain the universality of whiteness as humanness which defines itself as what it is not’ (Moreton-Robinson 2004a, p.83; see also Ahmed 2004, para.83; Armstrong & Wildman 2008, p.36; Lipsitz 2006, p.1; Roediger 2001, p.79).

Amy’s charge that referring to white identities is ‘a bit hypocritical’ implies a subtle claim to reverse racism; calling ‘Aboriginal people blacks’ is racist so calling non-Indigenous people white is racist too (Armstrong & Wildman 2008; Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004; Pease 2010; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006). Responses of defence, denial and resistance are roadblocks that impede critical reflection and hinder progression to structural analyses of whiteness. Amy and learners like her require careful,

compassionate guidance and support toward the development of critical reflexivity to interrogate their individual investments in the racialisation of others and their investments in the eschewal of racialisation of self (Bailey 1998a; Brodtkin 2002; Leonardo 2004; Levine-Rasky 2000; Matias et al. 2014; Wise 2002).

I'm *not* white, I'm brown!

For Bianca, a mixed-heritage young woman of Italian and Filipino descent, contemplating whiteness in relation to her own identity was complicated by her embodied experiences of racialisation.

Bianca

When people say whiteness it does, it kind of includes, well in Australia, it includes different ethnicities, so like my mum's Filipino, my dad's Italian but people classified him as white... well I'm not white. If you're going to call Aboriginal people darker or like be racist to them, you should be racist to me as well cause I'm not white, like I'm darker, I'm like brown, I'm not [white]. Do you know what I mean? So it's like then I'm offended cause I'm like 'well why are you saying this to them but you're not calling me that'. I'm not white, I'm not in that group cause I'm not white, like yeah (laughs).

While having one parent who is racialised as white and one parent who is not afforded Bianca some insight into the implications of racialisation, it did not necessarily equate to critical insight. As a self-identified 'brown' or non-white person she was personally offended by white racism towards Aboriginal people, 'if you're going to call Aboriginal people darker or like be racist to them, you should be racist to me as well'. Her offence seems to have been based on her perception that racism toward Aboriginal people because of the colour of their skin was, by association, racism toward her because she is also 'darker' or 'brown'. This suggests a perception that whiteness equates to white individuals being racist toward racialised others or in different terms, it suggests a conflation of whiteness and white identity.

In the preceding chapter, I considered Bianca's response to learning about race and racism where she conceded that prior to learning in the Subjects, she had racist perceptions of First Australian peoples. I suggested that critical learning about structural race power can be as important for non-white learners as it is for the racially dominant (see Chapter 12). The findings here about Bianca's perceptions of whiteness tend to support my suggestion. Being 'brown' has not necessarily prevented the structural nature of whiteness from being obscured from Bianca's subjective viewpoint.

I can't *help* being white!

Those who responded in more critical ways seemed no less confronted than those who did not and their responses were not without some resistance. Resistance comprised of students defending their subjectivities by pointing out that being racialised as white essentialised and inadequately represented their identities and by distancing themselves from whiteness through an emphasis on their perceived lack of power. Sharon for instance resisted being racialised and the implication that she may benefit from the power of whiteness.

Sharon

It's confronting to me to be put into the category of privilege because I don't see myself in that category at all. I don't see myself as being particularly powerful I guess. I don't feel that I have had a lot of agency, although perhaps I have, but it doesn't feel like that. That doesn't feel like a truth to my life at this stage... That doesn't say anything about me. It doesn't say anything about any of the values that I hold as important. It doesn't say anything about any of the goals I'm hoping to achieve in my life... So I have a privilege of having white skin, what is that responsibility for me, what does that make me responsible for?

Subjectively deliberating the implications of whiteness as a racial category provided Sharon with an affective experience of the essentialising tendencies of racialisation,

'it doesn't say anything about any of the values that I hold as important'. She perceived her subjectivity as distanced from the power and agency of whiteness, a commonly reported response in literature about critical antiracism, whiteness and privilege pedagogies (see for example Green et al. 2007; Gillespie et al. 2002; Hollinsworth 2014; O'Dowd 2012; Picower 2009; Solomon et al. 2005). Sharon's perception can be considered the result of the normalisation of whiteness and a lack of experiences or 'social comparison information' of what it means to be racially disempowered (Pratto & Stewart 2012, p.31; see also Choules 2007, p.166; Goodman 2001, pp.24–28; van Gorder 2007, p.9; Hook 2012, p.111).

Like Sharon, Monica was also troubled by the essentialising inadequacy of racialisation. She related her perception that being racialised was 'erasing my uniqueness'.

Monica

It was hard, it was a really hard thing to wrap my head around... When I talk about myself, it's really hard to be like 'oh, I'm white'. Like I kind of go, [cringes then laughs]... It's hard because when you do know that theory you realise what calling yourself white actually means and it is erasing my uniqueness. It's erasing my differences and it's erasing my family and my ancestors and all of the things that made me, me. I have such a problem with saying I'm white because of what that means.

Her statement, 'I have such a problem with saying I'm white because of what that means', expresses her discomfort with coming to see the damaging effects of racialisation and the dominance of whiteness on racialised Others. For Cheryl, the implications of recognising herself as a benefactor of whiteness caused significant dissonance and distress.

Cheryl

There's some definitely big changes happening with me, some big changes and it's boring, that is boring and I feel like, when I see that in action, the white privilege, when I watch it on the street it looks like we're all bland, we're lost, we don't know what we're doing... belonging to this [whiteness] has meant a lot of suffering, there's suffering caused by the group that I belong to... and really I'm not proud of that. I don't like it... the implications of being white. The umm, ohhh, look I feel like crying again, fucking hell, here I go.

The responses of Monica and Cheryl are illustrative of the dissonance, discomfort and distress that learners can experience when they begin to accept that whiteness is constitutive in the oppression of Others (Allen 2002; Case 2012; Curry-Stevens 2007; Ellsworth 1989; Goodman 2001; Leonardo & Porter 2010; Mackinlay & Bradley 2012; Pease 2010; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006). This dissonance caused Monica, Cheryl and others to begin to tease out the distinction between being white and exercising the power of structural whiteness. They realised that benefiting from whiteness was not something they could necessarily control.

Monica

Even though I am benefiting it's not like I can just stop benefiting from it, it's kind of impossible to do that.

Cheryl

If someone said to me 'what's your heritage' or if they were like 'oh there's a bloody whitey in the street', it would be like 'oh hang on I can't help that! Shit I can't help that, what are you doing, you don't even know me blah, blah, blah, blah'. I mean I would feel really a bit upset. I would be upset and yet it happens all the time but not so much for whiteys, but to every other racial group.

Danni

There's not a lot I can do to go around it other than stating this is how it effects me and this is how, you know, I won't use my powers for evil, kind of thing.

Bec

It's outside my control, like I was born white, I was born into whatever area that I live and to the privileges that come with that so to a degree I can't change it, this is who I am, these are the experiences I've had.

These responses are indicative of engagement with a crucial-to-comprehend yet particularly perplexing characteristic of whiteness. While being white, or in other words white subjectivity, does not necessarily equate to exercising the power of whiteness, it *is linked* to the structural advantages and 'cultural practices' of whiteness (Frankenberg 1993, p.1; see also Pease 2010, p.125). The students were coming to see that regardless of their subjective racial attitudes and despite a desire to dis-identify with race domination, the benefits of whiteness are afforded without the need for their awareness or consent (Ferber 2010; Leonardo 2004; Mills 1997; Monahan 2014; Walter & Butler 2013). In my own teaching experiences, I have come to see this stage as a critical juncture of learning about whiteness where students are dangerously vulnerable to becoming despondent and disengaging with learning because they feel overwhelmed, disempowered and often emotionally distressed. They feel lost as to how to challenge the monumental power of whiteness. In these instances I have found that critical anticolonial approaches, in particular the focus on practical social change skills development and the ethic of compassion, can help mitigate these risks.

As despondency and disengagement are symptoms of perceptions of disempowered lack of agency, the antidote is empowerment through practical skills development. As I have noted in the previous chapter, race domination is, in no small part, sustained and enacted discursively and therefore the development of discursive antiracist skills can empower learners and strengthen their commitment to

challenging race power (see Chapter 12). The ethic of compassion is vital if learners are to be effectively guided and supported, as is well demonstrated by Cheryl's learning story of her intense emotional responses. Without Sonia's compassionate guidance and support Cheryl may well have ceased to attend class or to engage critically in her learning (see Chapter 11). If learners are guided and supported with compassion, their dissonance, discomfort and distress can lead to a heightened empathy for those who are habitually racialised. This was demonstrated, again by Cheryl, in her response above. Experiencing the distressing nature of racialisation led her to empathise with racialised others, 'it happens all the time but not so much for whiteys, but to every other racial group'.

Discomforting affective learning experiences can lead to deepened critical reflection both inward on the individual self as well as outward on collective others. Kyra's response demonstrates how a subjective focus can induce critical reflection beyond the subjective to the social.

Kyra

It's really confronting and it was one where I really had to sort of reflect personally on my own self and I'm like, 'well you know I'm white and so what does that mean to me'? And sort of thinking about society in a different way and saying 'well how does it portray on everyone else'?

Contemplating whiteness subjectively, 'what does it mean to me', led Kyra to begin to consider whiteness beyond her own subjectivity, 'how does it portray on everyone else'? In theoretical terms, contemplating whiteness psychologically served as a pedagogical scaffold toward critical consideration of the social and structural implications of whiteness.

Excavating Privilege

A focus on the ways that racialisation shapes learners' identity formation and subjective experiences is a useful entry point for investigating whiteness and a propitious point of departure for progression to analysis of the ways that normalised social groupings produce and reproduce race domination and oppression (Bailey 1998a, p.40; Banks et al. 2013, p.104; Blum 2008, p.318; Endres & Gould 2009, p.425; Levine-Rasky 2000, p.284). In the Subjects, the way that whiteness shapes identity and experience for white subjects was pitched as white privilege and positioned within an intersectional framework.

For many of the students, their previous understandings were limited to understanding privilege only in relation to class and therefore conceptualising privilege as intersectional was a new experience, as expressed by Stella.

Stella

For me, I believed privilege meant how well or how not so well I was doing in society. I compared myself to people who are middle class or richer and it was more about money and material things rather than control and power. In one of my journals that I had to write, I talked about privilege and how unaware of the word, what it actually meant. My meaning was completely different to what I was learning and I just, I'd never come across it in my entire life which is frightening.

Stella, a mature-age student, expressed her dismay that throughout her life experiences and prior studies she had not considered privilege beyond class or in relation to 'control and power'.

Matthew highlighted the way that intersectional privilege studies helped him to develop more complex conceptualisations.

Matthew

Before doing the course privilege was something that I would never really have thought about. Like I knew that there was disadvantage and I knew that there was racism but I didn't realise the extent to which privilege existed in society. I still was only thinking of privilege in terms of economics and what I had physically, what my possessions were as opposed to all the different facets like my whiteness, the fact that I'm not disabled, the fact that I'm a heterosexual male. Reading about general [intersectional] privilege, really opened my eyes up to all the different aspects of privilege and the way in which we're privileged systematically and the extent of privilege and disadvantage as well.

Matthew's responses emphasised the way that intersectional privilege studies helped him to better understand his social positioning and the impact that intersecting privilege has had on his own life.

Sharon reported having considered multiple axes of inequity and described the way she understood it from an affective standpoint prior to learning about intersectional privilege, 'my heart told me that's not right'. She appreciated the way that focusing on privilege rather than oppression locates accountability for social inequity firmly with the socially dominant, 'it puts the onus of responsibility back on the people with the power'. She found that intersectional privilege studies introduced her to a conceptual framework as well as 'the words to explain' or in different terms, the discursive skills to enable her to articulate 'what I feel is the truth'.

Sharon

I guess the ideas or the concepts themselves are not so new because you see it reflected in lots of ways. So you see it with feminist debates about maleness or you see it in, I guess different religions and that sort of thing. So within Australia we have Christianity as being a dominant religion and the values of that religion really infiltrate and control people's minds in a way that they may not even question. And the ideas of capitalism and that the capitalist value system and individualism and all of those ways of seeing the world. I have become aware of those ways of how, if you fit within those mindsets and within those categories that society has made up, you get along a little bit more easily... I think what was useful about labeling it as privilege is that it puts the onus of responsibility back on the people with the power. I didn't

have the framework before to be able to put words to question that emotional reaction. My heart told me that's not right. But I'm learning now to be able to get the words to explain what I feel is the truth and that's an important thing.

What is interesting about Sharon's response is the way she identified the axes of privilege in which she is not represented but failed to identify the privileged groups in which she is represented. As a white, able-bodied, working class, non-Christian female, she identified the axes of class, gender and religion but not the axes of race or ability. Her response is in line with prior research that found that those whose identities were made up of intersecting privilege and oppression were well able to identify categories of privilege to which they did not belong but they found categories of privilege to which they did belong much more difficult to identify (Allen 2002; Goodman 2011; Hatchell 2004; Nicotera & Kang 2009; Pease 2010; Picower 2009; Pratto & Stewart 2012; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006). Sharon's response is a roadblock to progressing from a subjective to a structural analysis of privilege because if a learner is unable or unwilling to identify their subjective privilege they will be unlikely to be able to identify their positioning within a structural framework.

US sociology scholar Ann Curry-Stevens' (2007) puts forward a psychological explanation and pedagogical suggestions to address this learning roadblock. A key finding from her empirical research with adult educators (described in Chapters 5 and 14) is that psychologically, to be able to recognise and acknowledge their privilege, learners first need to be able to affirm their disadvantage.

This appears to stem from a need to be recognised as a vulnerable individual who needs affirmation and to know one is worthy of care. This affirmation needs to come from both the educator and from other group members... before it is possible to begin to understand oneself as privileged (Curry-Stevens 2007, pp.47-48).

Sharon's response tends to support these findings and Curry-Stevens' pedagogical framework, 'Pedagogy for the Privileged', has merit for compassionately supporting and guiding learners such as Sharon. The framework incorporates learning activities where learners identify the axes of disadvantage in which they are represented as an early step in a scaffolded process. In classroom discussions learners share and discuss their disadvantaged social positions to build empathy, compassion and solidarity among the teachers and learners in the class. It is only after this step that learners then engage activities to identify their privilege.

This process seems to have merit in that it anticipates and integrates learners' psychological needs and responses into the pedagogical process rather than attempt to proscribe or discipline them. As mentioned, the first activity for learning about whiteness and intersectional privilege in the Subjects was a poll designed for students to interrogate their white privilege (see Chapter 10). As Curry-Stevens notes, 'undertak[ing] these decentring activities too early will result in generating considerable resistance that is then hard to overcome' (Curry-Stevens 2007, p.47). Perhaps an initial focus on learners' positioning along axes of disadvantage might have better supported Sharon and expedited her ability and willingness to identify her privilege.

For Kyra, the intersectional approach to learning about privilege and oppression in the Subjects adequately affirmed her position as disadvantaged in relation to the axis of gender. She applied her personal understanding of the impacts of male gender privilege to better appreciate the impacts of white race privilege.

Kyra

You know from my background I'm white so I'm privileged but then I'm a woman so, and that was the easiest way for me to sort of understand the racism and stuff because I compare it to sexism and how I deal with that and what life is like dealing with sexism. It's not the same but it's still an 'ism'. It's definitely one of the ways that I could understand and sort of step back and go 'OK, how can I relate this to myself and understand these concepts'.

As with US social psychologist Kim Case's research participants, Kyra drew on her 'own gender oppression as a resource for a deeper understanding' of racial oppression (Case 2012, p.86). Identifying and acknowledging the ways that learners are represented along axes of oppression can work to establish the empathic groundwork for relating to the way racialisation oppresses others and the motivation to activate for social change (Curry-Stevens 2007, pp.45–50).

I really *am* privileged

Some students reflected that learning about intersectional privilege helped them to recognise the social and economic benefits whiteness afforded them in terms of health, wealth, education, housing and social mobility. Danni put it this way,

Danni

Being white and from being from a white upper middle class family has really helped to kind of protect me in situations... I always have that basis. I'm white and I come from a fairly affluent family which means that I've always had securities that kind of counteract it [disadvantage]... Having that background of my family and my whiteness has definitely come in handy... it effects me in a very positive way most of the time.

Here Danni recognised how the intersection of race and class privilege impacted her life positively by providing her with 'protection' and 'securities'. In the following two responses Mia and Monica also recognised the positive impacts of whiteness and how white privilege intersects with other axes of domination to intensify privilege.

Mia

You know, if someone said to me that I was privileged I would say ‘what a load of shit! Do you know what, my life's been hard and I've struggled really hard to get where I am, that's not privilege!’. But now, well you know what? I really am, even though like everyone has their crap, I really am... There's jobs that I know that I've got, especially back you know ten, fifteen years ago when I was really thin and very attractive and I got those jobs because I was white and attractive and that's who they wanted to have on their front bench. I know for sure that's why I got those jobs.

Mia recognised how she had been privileged not only due to being racialised as white but also due to being attractive. ‘Lookism’ has been recognised by theorists and researchers as a powerful force that privileges and disadvantages, particularly in the field of human resources in relation to employment opportunities (see for example Cavico et al. 2013; Warhurst et al. 2012).

In saying ‘I thought I was being a good person’ Monica, in the excerpt below, seemed to be indirectly referring to the ideology of meritocracy that presumes that socio-economic status is determined by ability and effort alone.

Monica

I thought I was being a good person, but then to really analyse it and realise that a lot of my privileges, you know, doors just fly open! To be quite honest it's been a pretty easy ride and to really realise that my easy ride in life has been off the exploitation and oppression of others. So that's kind of my whole experience of racism is that it benefited me, still benefitting me and it probably will continue to benefit me. Getting jobs, I never have to worry about my resume or my name on it or anything like that.

An intersectional privilege framework led Monica to see beyond the ideology of meritocracy where privilege is justified as the result of the will and commitment on the part of those who are not disadvantaged and beyond the justification of inequity as the result of the *lack* of will and commitment on the part of those who suffer it (Argy 2006; Henry et al. 1988; Liu 2011; McCoy & Major 2007; Tan 2008; Tannock 2009; Young 1994). Importantly Monica recognised that her privileges accrued at the

expense of the 'exploitation and oppression of others' or in different terms, she recognised the relational and structural nature of whiteness.

Privilege defines *who I am*

Dennis and Amy described how intersecting axes of privilege not only benefited them but also how it impacted their identity formations. Dennis described how class and race privilege defined his identity when he was growing up and prevented him from interacting with First Australian members of his community.

Dennis

There wasn't any Aboriginal families that were of middle class, white class that I knew of basically, so I wouldn't want to go to any of their houses. This is the thing; you wouldn't want to be friends with them because our class defined who I was basically.

One of the main impacts of class and race privilege on Dennis's identity formation was to isolate him from First Australian members of his community. Not interacting and lack of first hand experience with the issues impacting First Australian peoples is a powerful mode of 'knowing'. Lacking first hand experiences, Dennis had no basis upon which, and therefore no reason, to question racist ideologies about First Australian peoples and he was therefore more susceptible to accepting racist ideologies as 'common sense' knowledge (Pettman in Hollinsworth 2006, p.51). Social isolation or segregation based on axes of privilege facilitates maintenance of, and thwarts challenges to discourses, cultural practices and structures that perpetuate whiteness and other forms of domination and oppression.

Amy's response to the question 'do you think that you play a role and/or have a role to play in whiteness and privilege' is illustrative of the way that whiteness can shape identity formation and the non-productive dead-end that can result when privilege is

contemplated from a personalised individualistic frame, or in other words when contemplated psychologically at the expense of structural interrogation.

Amy

I think I kind of have a role in being privileged because of my family. I think if (long thoughtful pause), yeah, I don't know (long thoughtful pause). I feel like I have an image to uphold because of my family. If I just, you know, went and lived in a tent or something they would be like, 'why are you doing that, you have a beautiful house, beautiful family'. So I feel like I have to be, you know, act like I sort of got this, you know my family's beautiful, I've got this lovely house in the mountains.

Perceiving her privilege as 'an image to uphold', Amy focused on the 'who' at the expense of the 'how' of whiteness (Levine-Rasky 2000, pp.285–287). Her focus led to a narrow perception of the possibilities for challenging privilege as confined to individualist interventions, to forsaking her 'beautiful house' and 'beautiful family'. Akin to Endres' and Gould's research participants, Amy accepted rather than challenged her privileged positioning (Endres & Gould 2009) and defended it as necessary if she were to stay true to her identity. When the focus on the subjective individual becomes the destination or end-point, privilege can be justified and reinscribed in ways that occlude possibilities for social change action (Ahmed 2004; Lensmire et al. 2013; Leonardo 2004; Levine-Rasky 2000; Monahan 2014; Wise 2002).

I'm not as privileged as I *should* be

That Amy's focus remained squarely on the individual is well demonstrated in her perception of her learning about intersectional privilege. She perceived her learning as valuable in providing a more complex conceptualisation of privilege and assisting her to identify her own social positioning. Her main concern however, was how intersectional privilege illuminated how she was *not* privileged.

Amy

Yeah, cause you could just be broad and be like ‘oh yeah I’m privileged cause I can pretty much get everything I want, just given to me pretty much, like a job, education and anything like that’. But then when you break it down like that you think ‘oh hang on a second, you know, I’m not as privileged as I think I am or as I think maybe I should be’, like with the job pay and that, yeah.

Amy’s take-home is a surprised realisation that she is positioned as disadvantaged on the axis of gender. Her individualising discourse resulted in a re-centering of the focus on herself from privilege back to oppression. Individualising discourse shifts the focus from that of social justice, to focus on neo-liberalist and meritocratic notions of individual justice calculated on the basis of merit which obscure oppressive discursive and structural social forces (Goodman 2011; McGloin 2008; Pease 2010). Maintaining a focus on privilege can be difficult because while the attributes of oppression are generally well understood, the attributes of privilege are often obscured (Pratto & Stewart 2012). Focusing on oppression is also a protective measure to avoid the implication that privilege is productive in the maintenance of oppression (Allen 2002; Ferber 2012; Goodman 2011).

While Amy has not necessarily ‘mis-positioned’ herself as simply oppressed (Choules 2007, p.172; see also Nicotera & Kang 2009, p.198), she does recognise that she is privileged, ‘oh yeah I’m privileged cause I can pretty much get everything I want, just given to me’, her response prioritises concern for her disadvantaged positioning on the axis of gender, at the expense of consideration of white privilege. Amy’s individualising discourse is indicative of the care that must be taken to scaffold learning (see Curry-Stevens 2007; Goodman 2011).

Valuable Lessons

Despite the divergent responses of students to learning about whiteness and privilege, all of the students perceived their learning as valuable. They stressed the value of their learning in terms of both professional and personal growth. Mia and Monica both spoke of the importance of learning about whiteness and privilege for their future practice as human services and social work professionals.

Mia

Understanding that white privilege thing. That was really the most important thing. I think that's really changed me... that's what I feel is so important for when I do go into the workplace... It's so important, I think I actually, if I hadn't learned that I would never have known that, and I would have gone in with that same view that I had and I think it would have been detrimental.

Monica

It's really important... when you're going into human service kind of work I think that is a theory that you, by the end of your degree, you should know on a very thorough level... it's a huge bias I guess, if you don't understand what whiteness really means.

They both emphasise their perceptions that had they not learned about whiteness and privilege, their impact on the workplace would be, in Mia's words, 'detrimental'. For Monica, practitioners without critical knowledge of whiteness, bring 'a huge bias' to the workplace.

Stella put it in more personal terms but elided naming whiteness, as she did throughout her interview where she did not say the words white or whiteness once, despite my direct questioning about whiteness and white privilege.

Stella

I am now aware of who I am and what impact I can have on others just by colour, just by being Australian, being non-Indigenous. That has definitely made me more aware of my culture and the impact I may have on others and that was a big learning for me.

While Stella seemed to find it difficult to name whiteness directly, preferring terms such as ‘colour’ and ‘non-Indigenous’ or in other parts of her interview, ‘race’, her response indicates that she highly valued learning about whiteness and privilege, ‘that was a big learning for me’.

I’ll remember how I *felt*

Reflecting on her own learning experience and her perception of the experiences of her classmates, Bianca spoke in terms of the value of affective learning, the way that learning about ‘racism, whiteness and privilege’ made her feel.

Bianca

I’d say a majority of people that I’ve spoken to feel bad, including myself. We feel bad because we’ve thought those things before [racist thoughts about First Australian people] and we shouldn’t have. We didn’t know any better but we should’ve...it’s not Ok that we didn’t know any better... I think everything that’s taught to me, I won’t remember but I’ll remember how I *felt* learning the stuff. Like (thoughtful pause) with racism and whiteness and privilege, I won’t take away dot points of information about each one, but I’ll remember... it makes me feel like this so I must have learned this... it does get me a bit emotional... I think that it helps me in that I remember things because it’s offended me or it’s hurt me or it’s made me feel hurt for someone.

Learning about whiteness and privilege did not necessarily result in Bianca progressing from an individualist to a more critical structuralist engagement as already noted, and for a young, relatively inexperienced learner this is perhaps to be expected. It is a tall order to expect such a learner to develop critical cognisance in one semester after a lifetime of immersion in the culture of Australian whiteness. While Bianca acknowledged the limitations of her learning when she avowed, ‘everything that’s taught to me, I won’t remember’, she nonetheless perceived her learning as having the capacity to endure and develop into the future because it was affective, ‘I’ll remember how I *felt* learning this stuff’. Learning about race power is

inherently affective, particularly when learner subjectivity is engaged as an analytical point of departure. Bianca's perception affirms the utility of affective learning for Critical Indigenous Australian Studies and other teaching and learning projects that aim to inspire, motivate and activate for social justice and social change.

Conclusion

Reflecting on my analysis of the data as well as my teaching and learning experiences, I remain part of the chorus of theorists and researchers who regard the critical analysis of whiteness as crucial for cogent and effective Critical Indigenous Australian Studies (see for example Aveling 2012a; Hollinsworth 2014; Hook 2012; Koerner 2013; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2004b). Critical whiteness studies is crucial because the blatant claims of white biological, intellectual, cultural and moral superiority that justified the dispossession and oppression of First Australian peoples in the past continue to be covertly predicated to explain and justify contemporary disparity, racism and socio-political exclusion in the present. In different terms, whiteness, ideologically normalised and obscured, continues to constitute contemporary justifications and explanations for the economic, social, political and cultural domination of First Australian peoples. I am adamant that if Indigenous Australian Studies is to effectively contribute to positive social change it requires, as Aileen Moreton-Robinson asserts,

... serious intellectual engagement with the hegemony of whiteness and how it functions, discursively and ideologically, as a regime of power in nation building and the cultural formation of subjectivities and identities (Moreton-Robinson 2004b, p.137).

Whiteness is a complex and confronting concept and discursive ideological normalisation and obfuscation makes difficult the pedagogical task of unmasking it

as constitutive of structural inequity. As my analysis of Bianca's responses suggests, the power of whiteness is such that it can be obscured from those who are racialised as non-white and therefore critical whiteness studies are important for all students, regardless of their ethnicity.

My findings affirm that intersectional privilege pedagogy, while not without risk, can serve as a productive strategy for the interrogation of whiteness. The data suggests that many of the students found the concept of privilege and the framework of intersectionality accessible for the identification and articulation of the unearned advantages that accrue from whiteness and useful for examining their subjective positionalities. Excavating white privilege subjectively through an intersectional lens served as a scaffold for some students to comprehend the relational and structural anatomy of whiteness resulting in heightened empathy for oppressed Others and invigorated motivation to advocate for social change. Intersectionality afforded a deeper understanding of white privilege by illuminating the way that class, gender, ability, sexual orientation and other axes of domination intersect to intensify white privilege (Case & Hopkins 2012; Ferber & Herrera 2013). The strength of intersectional privilege pedagogy lies in its capacity to engage learner subjectivity to evince the influences that shape their identity formation and subjective experiences. The destabilising effects of this process means that learning becomes affective and therefore can have effects that are lasting as perceived by Bianca. Excavating white privilege subjectively and intersectionally functioned as a accessible analytic point of departure as well as a scaffold toward broader structural analyses of whiteness (Bailey 1998a; Banks et al. 2013; Blum 2008; Case 2015; Endres & Gould 2009; Ferber & Herrera 2013; Levine-Rasky 2000; Monahan 2014).

As well as affirming the strengths of an intersectional privilege approach to critical whiteness pedagogy, my findings also exemplify some of the inherent risks of the approach. A few students were particularly affronted by the concept of whiteness and put forward considerable defenses of denial that hindered their learning. The process of subjectively investigating intersectional privilege personalised and individualised whiteness in such a way as to result in non-productive dead-ends such as the acceptance of white privilege and the reinscription of whiteness (Lensmire et al. 2013; Leonardo 2004; Levine-Rasky 2000; Monahan 2014). For others, potential roadblocks were not borne of resistance to the recognition of whiteness but of acquiescence or admission that the advantages of white privilege result in disadvantage for Others. The danger here is that students will become despondent and disengage from learning. Strategies for ameliorating these risks include a scaffolded learning sequence that attends to learners psychological needs prior to progression to analysis of broader critical implications, compassionate guidance and support for learners and empowerment through practical skills development (Curry-Stevens 2007).

Having completed the presentation and analysis of the data, the concluding chapter is an analytical synthesis that presents the key findings of my research.

ANALYTICAL SYNTHESIS

Chapter 14 Teaching and Learning at the affective intersection

Introduction

The enduring inequity and iniquities that First Australian families and communities contend with are manifestations of the denial of First Australian Sovereignty and the entrenched colonising power structures that constitute contemporary Australian society. As I acknowledged in Chapter 4, the anticolonial pioneers of the study of colonialism teach us that whiteness and racism constitute the key apparatus of colonialism. Contemporary colonising power in Australia is, as the global project of European colonisation has always been, legitimised by ideologies of white supremacy and mobilised through racism. In other words whiteness and racism underwrite contemporary Australian social structures, systems and cultural practices that fortify the continuing colonial domination of First Australian peoples and their territories (Aveling 2006; Moreton-Robinson 2004b; Perera 1999). If Indigenous Australian Studies in higher education is to productively contribute to creating possibilities and opportunities for emancipatory social change, critical anticolonial and antiracist analytical and pedagogical frameworks are crucial (Aveling 2006; Fredericks 2008; Hart 2003; Hollinsworth 2014; Hook 2012; Koerner 2013; McGloin 2008; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2004b; Moreton-

Robinson et al. 2012; O'Dowd 2010; Pedersen & Barlow 2008; Walter et al. 2011; Young & Zubrzycki 2011).

My research study has revealed that while teaching and learning critically about colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege has the capacity to create promising opportunities for social change action, it is also characterised by challenging complexity and rife with serious risks. In this concluding chapter I coalesce my analysis of the data into two key findings and discuss their implications for pedagogical design. The first key finding is that teaching and learning at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies engages the subjective identities of students in such a way as to elicit a 'spectrum of subjective affectivity' that plays a determinant role in the opportunities, challenges and risks of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies. The implication of this finding is that to effectively capitalise on the opportunities, attend to the challenges and mitigate the risks, the 'spectrum of subjective affectivity' must be taken seriously and dealt with compassionately.

The second key finding is the crucial need for a strong pedagogical focus on supporting students to develop the knowledge and cultivate the skills that will enable them to operationalise their learning in personal and professional practice. The implication here is that without such a focus, learning is more likely to result in despondent inaction than it is to result in social change practice. In the discussion that follows, I emphasise the significance of my findings and the implications for the development and design of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Engaging Subjective Identities

In Chapter 6 a poststructural framework for understanding and analysing the entangled concepts of identity and subjectivity was established and the term ‘subjective identity’ was put forward to signify this entanglement. Subjective identity, the relationship that an individual or ‘subject’ has with ‘self’, is always in a complex process of formation and reformation. This relationship with self is constituted in mutable and precarious relationships of power with others and informed and circumscribed by established, though never fixed or closed off, socio-cultural patterns (Foucault 1993). Therefore subjective identity is perpetually subject to change, ‘inconsistency, contradiction and unself-consciousness’ (Mansfield 2000, p.6). Also in Chapter 6, I theorised learning as a process of negotiating new knowledge to continually form and reform our subjective identities and to reappraise our values, beliefs, relationships, experiences and subject positionalities. The process of teaching and learning, particularly in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, is an intimate encounter where learning impacts the subjective identities of students and, reciprocally and simultaneously, their subjective identities impact teaching and learning (Billett 2006; Deakin Crick et al. 2012; Fenwick 2006; Millei & Petersen 2015; Olesen 2006; Pryor & Crossouard 2010).

My data exemplified the complexity and inconsistency of subjective identity and the impossibility of assuming or predicting how any given learner will engage or respond to teaching and learning (Billett 2006). Students who seemingly shared identity-defining attributes such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, physical ability, social and educational experiences and so on, engaged and responded in divergent ways. For example, Amy and Danni, who both self-identified as physically able

‘white Australian’ heterosexual women from middle-class families in the same region and who were of a similar age and educational background, engaged with and responded very differently. While Danni engaged and responded quite productively, Amy responded with considerable resistance. In the context of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, the implications of subjective identity are acute because the socio-cultural foundations upon which it is constituted and operationalised are subjected to critical analytic contestation.

Uncomfortable Pedagogies and Difficult Knowledge

In my critical appraisal and review of the literature on Indigenous Australian Studies (see Chapter 2), Critical Indigenous Australian Studies was located as operating at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies. The learning stories shared by the students in their interviews revealed that teaching and learning at this intersection disrupted and destabilised their socially shaped perceptions of the normalised social structures, systems and ideologies that constitute our socio-cultural environment. It unsettled their perceptions of First Australian peoples, their perceptions of Australian colonial history and contemporary realities and their perceptions of their subject positioning in the current social order. Critical interrogation of race, racism and whiteness impelled students to consider racialised inequity and discrimination in ways they had not previously considered, that is, from the perspective of their own subjective identities.

Two specific assumptions of critical whiteness studies were particularly confronting and destabilising. The first is that whiteness is a normalised referent of racial categorisation that has long been furtively situated as the archetypical exemplar of humanity (Ahmed 2004; Armstrong & Wildman 2008; Frankenberg 1993; Lipsitz

2006; Moreton-Robinson 2004a; Roediger 2001). The second is that whiteness affords advantages to white subjects, or in other words, white subjects benefit from white privilege. These assumptions compelled the students to contemplate themselves as racialised subjects and to reappraise their experiences, relationships and achievements in light of previously unconsidered benefits of white privilege. This unsettling engagement of students' subjective identities was magnified by the difficult knowledge of the Critical Indigenous Australian Studies curriculum. Learning at the intersection of uncomfortable pedagogies and difficult knowledge was deeply unsettling because it is an intensely challenging ontological as well as epistemological encounter.

The Affective Intersection

This intense engagement of subjective identity produced a divergent range of learner responses from the student participants in my research. A key commonality of these responses is that they were characterised by affect. While most students expressed distress and remorse in response to difficult First Australian knowledge and all expressed discomfort and dissonance in response to uncomfortable pedagogies, their emotional reactions varied considerably in nature and intensity across a spectrum that I will refer to as 'subjective affectivity', represented in Diagram 4 (below). To enable a theorisation of subjective affectivity I have identified three extreme characteristics of the spectrum: 'critical affectivity', 'privileged affectivity' and 'debilitating affectivity'. In the diagram, the gradient shading represents the mutable degrees of intensity of affect across the three extremes.

Diagram 4: Subjective Affectivity Spectrum



‘Critical affectivity’ was characterised by a willingness to question the legitimacy of the concept of race as a human category, to examine the ways that subjective identity and standpoint might be invested in and shaped by racialisation and to interrogate the structural nature of racial domination. It was driven by compassion and empathy for First Australians and others who are routinely racialised and a heightened passion for social change. ‘Privileged affectivity’, tended to be driven by affront and involved the invocation of ideological discourses of denial, exculpation and individualism to resist the implications of uncomfortable pedagogies and difficult First Australian knowledge. It manifested in denial of critical race and whiteness assumptions, ideological justifications for racialised inequity and individualising discourses that conflated white subjectivity with whiteness as structure resulting in the acceptance of, rather than challenge to, racial domination. Amy exemplified this acceptance when she defended her white privilege as ‘an image to uphold’ if she were to stay true to her identity (see Chapter 13).

‘Debilitating affectivity’ describes a kind of learning paralysis based on feelings of distress, dismay and pessimistic resignation to seemingly insurmountable social

problems (Sjoberg & McDermott 2016, p.41). For one participant, Cheryl, making connections between her subjectivity, the structural power of whiteness and the impacts of colonial and racial domination on First Australian peoples caused her to experience significant distress resulting in immobilisation. Had she not expressed her feelings to a member of the teaching team she may very well have withdrawn completely from the learning encounter (see Chapter 11). Cheryl's experience proffers two important lessons: the critical need for learners to express their subjective affectivity as part of the teaching and learning process and the necessity of pedagogies that inspire hopefulness for the possibilities of social change and that proffer practical strategies to pursue it (see 'Mangaging subjectivity' and 'Translating learning into practice' below).

My analysis indicates that subjective identity variously shapes the way individuals engage difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies. My data revealed a range of emotions encompassing compassion, empathy, passion, affront, anger, guilt, despair and despondency that varied widely in intensity and manifest in divergent, inconsistent and unpredictable ways not only between students but also by individual students in response to different themes or activities. Further, my data suggests that learning that engenders strong emotions can have lasting impacts on the learner. This was most compellingly articulated by Bianca when she reflected that while she might not remember the specific details of all that she had learned, she would remember how she *'felt learning the stuff... because it's offended me or it's hurt me or it's made me feel hurt for someone'* (see Chapter 13).

If learning at the intersection of uncomfortable pedagogies and difficult knowledge is inherently subjective and affective and if learning that engenders significant affect

has indelible consequences, then subjective affectivity represents the genesis of the opportunities *and* the risks of this pedagogical project. If critical affectivity is supported and encouraged, opportunities for propitious learning outcomes are enhanced but if privileged and debilitating affectivity are not effectively managed, the risks of adverse learning outcomes are heightened. Considering these significant opportunities and risks, a dedicated focus on managing, navigating and guiding, and supporting students to identify, examine and manage, subjective affectivity is warranted (Ranzijn & McConnochie 2013; Sjoberg & McDermott 2016; Zembylas 2012).

Managing Affectivity

While divergent subjective and affective engagements in learning can lead to very different destinations, I propose that they all hold pedagogical opportunities *if subjective affectivity is expressed* as part of the teaching and learning process. The expression of affect, whether expressed publicly in the classroom or privately in conversations with teachers or in written work, can enable the encouragement of critical affectivity, the arbitration of privileged affectivity and support and guidance for debilitating affectivity. When learners express their subjective affectivity their subject positions can be acknowledged and their emotional responses can be validated, supported and guided (see Leonardo & Porter 2010; Nakata et al. 2014; Pease 2010; Shore & Halliday-Wynes 2006). If students do not express their emotions these opportunities are closed off (Ranzijn & McConnochie 2013).

The subjective affectivity experienced by the student participants in my research was revealed to me in the interview data but was not clearly evident in classroom observations. In the classroom I observed a conspicuous silence and reluctance of

students to express their subjective perceptions despite encouragement and assurances by the teaching team. In their interviews, students identified anxiety about being judged as ignorant, racist or overly emotional by teachers and peers as the barrier that prevented them from doing so. Dave Sjoberg and Dennis McDermott made similar observations in their teaching of cultural safety in Indigenous Australian health education.

[P]articipants may fear being judged as unsure, ignorant or racist... participants in Indigenous health and cultural safety education may find themselves experiencing classic ‘flight, fight or freeze (paralysing-to-action)’ responses to sudden threat (Sjoberg & McDermott 2016, p.36).

In her research about the development of antiracist white feminists with her former undergraduate students, US higher education scholar Chris Linder also found that ‘guilt and shame with being White fueled participants’ fear of appearing racist’ and prevented them from speaking out against racial domination (Linder 2015, p.544). She concluded that,

... [w]hile it is important to teach students the facts related to power, privilege, and oppression, it is equally important for students to understand their emotional responses to working through their own privilege. When students understand the ways in which their own guilt, shame, and fear get in the way of action, they may be able to move through these emotions to action (Linder 2015, p.548).

The salient point here is that unpacking and examining subjective affectivity is a key process for developing the critical knowledge necessary for learners to develop skills for productive social change practice.

My data suggests that students were not only reluctant to express their emotions because they feared being judged as ignorant or racist but also to avoid stigmatisation for contravening the proscription of public displays of emotion so

entrenched in Australian cultural mores. More than this, my analysis suggests that students suppressed their emotions as a self-defence mechanism against intense and overwhelming affective dissonance. Unless subjective affectivity is expressed, opportunities to productively address and manage it are restricted and possibilities for teaching and learning to translate to effective social change practice are diminished. At the same time however, entreating students to express and examine rather than contain their emotions brooks a significant risk of the learning environment becoming bogged down in an atmosphere of individualism that re-centres the (white) individual and loses sight of the collective goals of racial justice and social change (Endres & Gould 2009; Fuller 2016; Lensmire et al. 2013; Leonardo 2004; Monahan 2014; Ranzijn & McConnochie 2013; Wise 2002)

In her interview, Sonia reflected that the policy discourse on safety often results in an expectation that learners be protected from situations that are personally challenging or destabilising (see Chapter 8). The discomfort of laying bare emotions for examination can be perceived as unsafe and while discomfort does not necessarily amount to a lack of safety it can be conflated as such (DiAngelo 2011). If, for instance, privileged affectivity and the discourses upon which it is cultivated is expressed and then challenged, safety policy discourse can be invoked to charge the teaching and learning process unsafe. On the other hand, if ideological discourses are authorised and abided unchecked, dominant racial positioning will be reinscribed and the teaching and learning space will be rendered unsafe for First Australians and other minority learners.

Considering the complex nature of subjective identity and the improbability of being able to effectively predict how learners will engage or respond to teaching and

learning, educators need to be able to formatively assess the nature of subjective affectivity so that pertinent strategies can be dynamically deployed to address the specific needs of individuals and cohorts and to mitigate the risks. Formative assessment can facilitate dynamic and responsive pedagogy (Black & Wiliam 2009; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006; Pryor & Crossouard 2010; 2008) but these opportunities are dependent on the willingness of students to express their subjective standpoints and emotions. Without a sense of trust that learners' subjective affectivity will be met with compassion, they are unlikely to be expressed.

Compassionate Pedagogy

The inherently affective nature of learning at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies necessitates affective pedagogical responses. Compassionate pedagogy is an affective response that acknowledges and addresses affective learning. It acknowledges the fact that the grief, distress, guilt, shame, anger, resentment, fear and frustration that students can and do experience at the affective intersection is symptomatic of the harm inflicted by colonial and racial domination. Racialised systems, practices and discourses wreak dehumanising psychological damage on us all, regardless of our social positioning, as American multicultural studies educator Joseph Flynn succinctly explains.

Racism, as a system of advantage based on race, has been used to perpetrate physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual violence on each and every one of us for over 400 years, albeit in drastically different ways. I say racism has perpetrated violence upon each of us because as a system we all occupy roles, dictated by the nature of the system. Have White folks been privileged in this particular system of oppression? Absolutely. Along with that position of privilege, however, White people also have to carry a history of genocide, manipulation, force,

theft, lying, and dehumanization they are systematically encouraged to disregard (Flynn 2015, p.122).

There is a growing body of international literature that calls for critical anticolonial and antiracism pedagogies to compassionately account for the harm caused by colonial and racialised structures, not only for those who are pathologised and disadvantaged but also for those who are normalised and advantaged (see for example Allen & Rossatto 2009; Carson & Johnston 2000; Curry-Stevens 2010; Curry-Stevens 2007; Dei 2008; Flynn 2015; Goodman 2011; Pease 2010; Zembylas 2012). This position has been received somewhat controversially and critiqued as risking a dangerous concession to the belligerent demands of whiteness to be reinforced and re-centered (Curry-Stevens 2007; Curry-Stevens 2010; Flynn 2015; Leonardo 2004; Mayo 2004). Despite these credible risks, to my mind, compassionately engaging and supporting students from social locations of power is morally justified.

Ethical imperatives compel educators to enact a duty of care for all students and in the context of Indigenous Australian Studies these imperatives are bolstered by First Australian values of care, respectfulness and generosity of spirit (Hogan & Randall 2007; Martin 2003; Sjoberg & McDermott 2016; Waltja-Tjutangku-Palyapayi 2001). Just as we are morally bound to engage First Australians and others who are disadvantaged by racialised colonial systems with mindfulness, empathy and compassion, so too are we bound to equally engage those who are advantaged yet also harmed by those systems. Just as we need to be compassionately mindful that Critical Indigenous Australian Studies can produce intense emotional impacts for First Australian students, we also need to be compassionate toward the intense emotional impacts that the racially dominant can experience, albeit from radically

disparate standpoints and subject positions. In my view and in the view of the teaching team, compassionately responding to the emotional turmoil that students from social locations of power can experience is much more than a pedagogical approach we can opt to engage or not. It is an ethical responsibility (Zembylas 2012).

In the context of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies, compassionate pedagogy can be characterised as an endeavour to empathetically acknowledge and mitigate the distress engendered by the arduous task of bearing witness to difficult First Australian knowledge and ‘coming to grips with and fully understanding the depth and complexity of systemic and institutional racism’ (Flynn 2015, p.119). The approach that I am putting forward is a compassionate yet critical anticolonial project. It is compassionate in that it suspends the kind of judgment that might categorise certain students as resistant or indifferent or perpetrators of racism or champions of whiteness to recognise students as humans who have been enculturated in and injured by colonial and racialised structures, systems and ideologies. It has faith in the capacity of people, given appropriate and committed support and guidance, to critically transform as agents for racial justice and social change (Curry-Stevens 2007; Flynn 2015; Zembylas 2012). It is critical in that it is committed to the principles and imperatives of critical theory and refuses to abide ideological discourse, appease racism or concede to the demands of whiteness (Allen & Rossatto 2009; Carson & Johnston 2000; Flynn 2015; Zembylas 2012). It is anticolonial in that these efforts are made in a context that privileges First Australian knowledges and centers First Australian aspirations of decolonising social justice and social change.

Compassionate pedagogy has the potential to produce classroom environments of trust in which to critically engage in teaching and learning (Carson & Johnston 2000; Flynn 2015; Zembylas 2012). In such an environment, students might feel supported enough to express their standpoints and emotions, enabling educators to dynamically deploy targeted strategies and support mechanisms that can productively and ethically navigate the affective terrain at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogies. Cypriot education scholar Michalinos Zembylas confidently declares that compassionate pedagogy, or in his terms ‘strategic empathy’, fosters ‘connectedness’ between teachers and students and among students, decreases the risks of learner disengagement and increases the possibility of transformative learning outcomes.

To say that a teacher uses strategic empathy means that he or she encourages empathetic engagement with troubled knowledge, even when there are seemingly intractable obstacles to imagine students’ emotional experiences. This connectedness with the other, without rushing to categorize him or her as ‘perpetrator’, ‘misguided’ or ‘evil’, is precisely what avoids premature closure and sustains the possibility of transformation (Zembylas 2012, p.122; see also Carson & Johnston 2000; Flynn 2015).

Of course it takes time to build trust and connectedness and as my classroom observations revealed, despite the teaching team’s stated commitment to compassionate pedagogy and their encouragement and assurances to students, there remained a significant reluctance to express subjective standpoints and emotions. This finding intimates that intentions and declared assurances, no matter how genuine, may be insufficient to establish the trust required for students to risk engaging honestly and openly. The implications here are that in addition to genuine commitment, declared assurances and role modeling in classroom interactions, it

may be useful to identify strategies that embed compassion in instructional processes. In my analysis I suggested anonymity as a strategy that might encourage authentic student engagement and it is a strategy that can be considerate compassionate.

Compassionate anonymity

Anonymity is a compassionate strategy because it aims to mitigate the fear and anxiety that results in student silence and reluctance and facilitate the expression of frank learner contributions in a way that responds to the principles of safe learning environments. Strategies that afford anonymity can generate authentic student engagement particularly if activities do not circumscribe learner contributions. For example, the anonymous online poll activity conducted in the Subjects as part of the teaching and learning about whiteness and privilege, confined learner responses to yes/no, true/false and multiple-choice answers. While it generated some productive discussion, it could not be said to have proffered robust insights into the subjective standpoints or affectivity of the students nor robust opportunities for critical engagement (see Chapter 10). Teaching and learning activities that pursue open-ended anonymous expression of students' questions, objections, confusions and reflections have the potential to proffer insights that generate rich material upon which to dynamically design and deploy responsive teaching and learning strategies.

The potential of the strategy of anonymity was highlighted in Chapter 10 through examination of three examples of specific activities presented in the literature by Sjoberg & McDermott (2016), Souto-Manning (2011) and Rich & Cargile (2004). Each of the examples employed anonymity as a means to gain insight into learners' subjective standpoints and affectivity and to dynamically design responsive teaching

and learning activities. Specifically, each example productively deployed the students' de-identified and thematically collated anonymous contributions as points of departure for classroom discussion. Particularly relevant is the first example where Sjoberg & McDermott productively deployed the strategy of anonymity in an Indigenous Australian Studies subject teaching antiracism, whiteness and the principals of cultural safety to non-Indigenous health profession students.

Sjoberg & McDermott found that de-personalising the students' questions and deploying them as material for analysis facilitated 'an apprehension of challenging material to proceed in the face of both a potential cognitive dissonance and emotional disquiet' (Sjoberg & McDermott 2016, p.37) and ensured student engagement in 'the hard conversations in a pragmatic manner that challenges whiteness, whilst honouring each student's dignity' (ibid. p. 45). They concluded that the process enabled them to,

... address unexamined, racist language in a measured manner that avoids the emotive or combative nature of unstructured discussions about the impacts of racism. Apart from the emotional toll on both student participants and their facilitators/tutors, what is also avoided is significant student disengagement from the very curricular material that is crucial to allowing the emergence of a culturally safe practitioner (ibid. p. 44).

Sjoberg & McDermott's strategy elicited honest expressions that, in my experience and as suggested by my data, might not have been otherwise expressed. Strategies of anonymity such as Sjoberg & McDermott's activity can break through students' silence and reluctance in ways that are compassionate and supportive of the imperatives of safe learning environments.

Strategies of anonymity enable the identification of pertinent points of departure to responsively address the ideologies that underwrite structural domination and oppression. They afford useful insights into the nature and scope of students' subjective standpoints and enable the compassionate navigation of subjective affectivity. They proffer formative clues for the design of strategies and activities that might be most relevant and effective in guiding students through the ideological fog to bring racialised colonial structures into sharp analytical focus.

Compassionate scaffolding

As I have noted, grappling with difficult First Australian knowledge about the enormity and complexity of the impacts of structures, systems and ideologies of colonialism, racism, whiteness and privilege can be intensely destabilising and can beget pernicious affect. Unlearning normative constructions of Australia as an egalitarian society and coming to terms with critical evidence-based analyses can be overwhelming. In my analysis of the data in Chapter 13, following Ann Curry-Stevens (2007; 2010), I suggested that a scaffolded learning sequence might help to ameliorate this turmoil and mitigate risk by presenting curriculum in tractable stages. As Sjoberg & McDermott point out, teaching and learning at the intersection of difficult knowledge and uncomfortable pedagogy requires careful scaffolding.

An approach that confronts students with difficult material, yet lacks a manageable pathway for learning, is more likely to cement entrenched misinformation than to develop or enhance criticality (Sjoberg & McDermott 2016, p.40).

Scaffolding can pave a manageable and compassionate learning pathway. Scaffolding learning has been recommended for Indigenous Australian Studies (see for example Asmar 2014; Hollinsworth 2014; Nakata et al. 2014; Page 2014)

however, few articles present comprehensive theorising or research about how scaffolding might be conceptualised and deployed in practice.

Perhaps the most comprehensive theorisations are those put forward by First Australian scholar Martin Nakata and his colleagues, Vicky Nakata, Sarah Keech and Reuben Bolt (Nakata et al. 2014). Their recommendation for scaffolded learning ‘in the form of Major sequences of courses’ or in other words, across multiple-subject Indigenous Australian Studies Majors (Nakata et al. 2014, p.8) is based on a ‘cultural interface’ theoretical framework developed by Nakata (see Nakata 2007b). Conceptualising Indigenous Australian Studies as operating at the complex, contested and difficult to navigate interface of First Australian and Western knowledge systems, the authors identify the potential of multiple-subject Major sequences to enable scaffolding learning tasks that ‘engage students in a wider field of scholarship and deeper intellectual debates’ (Nakata et al. 2014, p.8). They recommend the sequencing of learning tasks as follows:

... first, prioritise the building of students’ knowledge foundations; second, provide learning engagements that historicise and make more tangible the convergences, ruptures and discontinuities in Indigenous experience at the discursive level; and third, provide learning engagements that will assist students as future professionals to navigate the complexities of this contested space rather than accept the limits of current thinking and practice. This requires a focus on and the sequenced development of student learning dispositions that are more open to uncertainty and unresolved positions and more willing to reflect over time when they are confronted by the ongoing complexity of various contests and debates in professional or scholarly practice (Nakata et al. 2014, p.17).

From my own experiences designing coordinating and teaching Indigenous Australian Studies degree programs, major and minor sequences as well as stand-alone subjects, I wholeheartedly agree that scaffolding learning across multiple

subject sequences proffers the best opportunities for productive critical learning engagements. I have observed first-hand the benefits of embedded scaffolded learning. Unfortunately however, Indigenous Australian Studies degree programs and major and minor sequences appear to be relatively rare in education for professional practice. In contexts such as teacher education, health, welfare, law and other human service professions, mandatory stand-alone subjects proliferate. As a designer and teacher of stand-alone Indigenous Australian Studies subjects in pre-service professional practice programs, I have been frustrated by the seemingly unachievable task of designing Indigenous Australian Studies that can effect productive critical learning in a single semester of study. Confining the complex, difficult and discomfoting teaching and learning tasks of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies to one-off subjects constrains the possibilities and opportunities and exacerbates the challenges and risks that are the focus of my research.

The literature on antiracism, whiteness, privilege and other forms of critical social justice and social change education presents some valuable theorising and research about scaffolding learning that is applicable for stand-alone subjects (see for example Curry-Stevens 2007; DiAngelo 2011; Ferber & Herrera 2013; Sleeter et al. 2004). While this literature tends to concur that the study of inequity requires analyses of oppression and power from both structural and individual perspectives, there is some divergence as to the sequencing of analyses. American whiteness studies scholar and educator Robin DiAngelo, for example, recommends a ‘pacing’ of analysis that begins with the individual or the ‘micro’ and extends out toward analysis of the structural or ‘macro’.

It is useful to start at the micro level of analysis, and move to the macro, from the individual out to the interpersonal, societal and institutional. Starting with the individual and moving outward to the ultimate framework for racism – Whiteness – allows for the pacing that is necessary for many white people for approaching the challenging study of race (DiAngelo 2011, pp.66–67).

This recommendation is based on the rationale that ‘Whites have not had to build the cognitive or affective skills or develop the stamina that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides’ (DiAngelo 2011, p.57). While this is perhaps a reasonable argument for an individual-to-structural sequence, on closer analysis there are incongruences with this sequence and the goals of social justice and social change.

Critical Indigenous Australian Studies might be summed up as teaching and learning that aims to identify, analyse and challenge racialised colonising power in pursuit of equitable social change. The central focus here is social rather than individual so it seems counterintuitive to begin a scaffolded sequence with individual analyses. Doing so sends the message that the individual is more important than collective or structural concerns and heightens the risk of reifying and entrenching neo-liberal ideologies of individualism. Prioritising individual analyses can serve to mire the learning process in individualism to the extent that progress to structural analysis is impeded and the significance of social structure in the maintenance of inequity is obscured (Endres & Gould 2009; Fuller 2016; Lensmire et al. 2013; Leonardo 2004; Monahan 2014; Ranzijn & McConnochie 2013; Wise 2002). Further, in Indigenous Australian Studies classrooms where the majority of students are from racially dominant social locations, a prioritised focus on individualism can work to re-center and reinforce whiteness. While individual analyses are necessary to proactively

engage learners' subjective standpoints and affectivity, scaffolding needs to maintain a firm focus on structural concerns as the destination.

Curry-Stevens' 'Pedagogy for the Privileged' framework is a scaffolded learning model that maintains a secure focus on structural concerns whilst necessarily attending to individual concerns. Based on findings from an empirical research study conducted in Canada (Curry-Stevens 2010), the model has three significant characteristics that make it instructive for developing a compassionate scaffolded learning sequence for stand-alone Critical Indigenous Australian Studies subjects. Firstly, it is a structural-to-individual-to-structural sequence, secondly, it innovatively scaffolds to ameliorate the discomfort learners can experience when interrogating their subject positions and to mitigate risk and lastly, it has a strong focus on the development of practical social change skills for professional practice.

Using an intersectional approach to analysis, Curry-Stevens' ten-step model begins with structural analyses of oppression and power (steps 1-2) and then moves to a carefully scaffolded four-step process that supports students to locate their subject positions within and to interrogate their subjective identities in relation to structures of domination and oppression (steps 3-6). The sequence concludes by returning to structural concerns with a four-step process designed to 'assist learners to prepare to intervene for social change' (Curry-Stevens 2007, p.52). The ten-step process is presented in the Table 13 (below). The sequence of steps for individual analysis (steps 3-6) is quite radical in that, prior to subjective analysis of social locations of power and privilege, it intentionally requires students to locate themselves as oppressed. The rationale for this is based on a key finding of Curry-Stevens'

research, that there is a psychological imperative for humans to be acknowledged as disadvantaged before being identified as advantaged.

Table 13: Pedagogy for the Privileged scaffolding sequence

Steps	Analytical Focus
1. Awareness of oppression.	Structural
2. Oppression as structural and thus enduring and pervasive.	
3. Locating oneself as oppressed.	Individual
4. Locating oneself as privileged.	
5. Understanding the benefits that flow from privilege.	
6. Understanding oneself as implicated in the oppression of others and understanding oneself as an oppressor.	
7. Building confidence to take action—knowing how to intervene.	Structural
8. Planning actions for departure.	
9. Finding supportive connections to sustain commitments.	
10. Declaring intentions for future action.	

(adapted from Curry-Stevens 2007, p.51).

My data analysis supports Curry-Stevens’ findings in that it illuminated the determination of some students to identify themselves as disadvantaged rather than advantaged and the difficulty and discomfort they experienced from interrogating their privileged positioning. The strategy to sequence a subjective analysis of the impacts of oppression before a subjective analysis of privilege is an effort toward building trust, ameliorating discomfort and mitigating risk. Demonstrating that most people occupy social locations of disadvantage within a socially constructed system of oppression and power establishes rational grounds upon which to then demonstrate that, within this system, most people also occupy social locations of advantage. The logic of the sequencing eases the discomfort and distress of suddenly

being implicated as complicit in the oppression of others and serves to mitigate the affront and denial demonstrated by some of the students in my research.

The final four-steps in the Pedagogy for the Privileged model (steps 7-10) 'are dedicated to building both the skill base to undertake action as well as the confidence and commitment to do so' (ibid. p. 51). This sequence directly corresponds to a key finding of my research, namely the crucial importance of pedagogy that supports students to translate learning into practice.

Translating Learning into Practice

My analysis of students' perceptions of their learning identified two related justifications for a stronger focus on practical skills development. The first is that when students were asked in their interviews to describe their perceptions of antiracism, their responses were in most cases limited, often vague and uncertain, sometimes confused and in a few cases ideological. Apart from a few exceptions, there was a marked inability to conceive antiracist practice beyond challenging racism at an individual level, a practice perceived to be frustrating and dangerous, to be approached with caution if at all. The second justification for a stronger focus on practical skills development is that this fear and apprehension about antiracist practice and the debilitating affectivity experienced by some of the students was symptomatic of uncertainty and confusion about how to apply learning in social and professional practice. One of the students, Cheryl, exemplified the lack of a sense of ability, confidence and agency to challenge racist structures and systems of domination when she said 'I don't know what I can do and I don't know how to help and I don't know if I know enough'.

A dedicated focus on developing skills to mobilise learning for practice is vital to empower students with the capacity and confidence to act for social change.

Discursive practice

As I theorised in Chapter 12, considering the powerful role discourse plays in the maintenance of oppression, it follows that the most pressing skills to develop for antiracist and anticolonial practice are discursive. Antiracist and anticolonial discursive skills, or in different terms counter-narratives, are complex and difficult to master and their effective development is almost certainly an unachievable objective for a single-semester stand-alone subject. However what *is* conceivably attainable, and almost certainly constructive, is supporting students to develop cognisance of the characteristics, application and utility of counter-narratives and providing opportunities for students to begin to cultivate discursive skills. Activities such as role-playing scenarios that simulate professional practice contexts can provide opportunities for developing and rehearsing discursive skills, as can classroom discussion and written activities.

Sjoberg & McDermott's 'deconstruction exercise', mentioned above, is a useful example of an activity that supports students to cultivate counter-narrative discursive skills. The exercise required students to analyse ideological discourse about First Australian peoples and 'articulate hidden assumptions and show critical writing about the origins of those assumptions, as well as the impact they may have' (Sjoberg & McDermott 2016, p.42). In other words, the activity served as practical training in cultivating counter-narrative discursive skills.

Mobilising knowledge for practice

In addition to cultivating discursive skills, identifying how and where those skills might be effectively deployed is an important component of translating learning into practice. ‘Mobilising knowledge’ involves devising a clear plan of how knowledge and skills might be operationalised in social and professional contexts. The strategy to support students to develop a ‘knowledge mobilisation plan’ was introduced to me by my colleagues, critical global studies scholars and educators Soenke Biermann from Australia and Lorna Baez from Costa Rica, who presented the strategy at the ‘Eighth International Conference on Global Studies’ held in London in 2015. Formulating a knowledge mobilisation plan involves three elements (1) critical reflection on major concepts, theories, themes and skills from teaching and learning; (2) planning how this learning might be deployed in social and professional contexts and (3) identifying networks that might support social change action.

A knowledge mobilisation plan can be described as a combination of a reflexive professional practice checklist and an action plan. A knowledge mobilisation plan impels a reflexive approach that draws on critical learning to pose questions such as those posed by Monica in her interview (see Chapter 11): ‘is my presence a good impact on this community or is it not; do I have the right to be involved in this or do I not; am I over-stepping, am I being respectful?’ In the context of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies where students have been supported to cultivate counter-narrative discursive skills for example, a knowledge mobilisation plan would identify particular discursive skills that might be relevant in divergent social and professional contexts. It would operate as a contingency plan that considers and poses questions about hypothetical or real-life case study scenarios such as what kind

of counter-narrative discourse might be appropriate to deploy with a group of school children or alternatively with their teachers or parents; with police officers, legal representatives, the judiciary or alternatively their prisoners, clients or accused or for appeals to policy-makers or alternatively for political activism and protest?

A knowledge mobilisation plan would identify anticolonial and antiracist networks through which students could find solidarity and support in pursuing social justice and social change and continue to develop their knowledge and skills. Such a strategy would be particularly helpful for guiding students such as Monica who, while exhibiting a substantive depth of critical reflexive engagement, expressed significant uncertainty and lack of confidence about operationalising her learning in practice.

Monica

It's a really hard balance when you do kind of open your eyes and when you do see what's going on, you almost feel like you should just hide and not do anything.

Without a clear pathway for translating learning into practice, students like Monica can become overwhelmed and paralysed by the momentous and seemingly insurmountable power of racist and colonial structures of domination. The strategies to cultivate discursive skills and to develop knowledge mobilisation plans have the potential both to mitigate the risk of anxiety, distress and despondency as well as to empower students by building confidence, inspiring hope, engendering motivation and stimulating commitment to act for social change.

Epilogue

First Australian higher education scholar Susan Page judiciously observed that it is unlikely that efficacious or cogent tertiary level Indigenous Australian Studies pedagogy can be developed without ‘understanding how students learn and indeed experience teaching’ (Page 2014, p.22). She identified an imbalance in empirical research about teaching and learning in Indigenous Australian Studies that is marked by ‘a dearth of systematic evaluation of the student perspective’ (Page 2014, p.27). The student-centered focus of my research is a contribution to an enhanced understanding of how students perceive and experience teaching and learning in the specific context of Critical Indigenous Australian Studies.

Teaching and learning in Critical Indigenous Australian Studies operates at the intersection of uncomfortable pedagogies and difficult knowledge and as such, it is a pedagogical encounter that ‘goes to the very heart of our socially constructed identities’ (Aveling 2006, p.264; see also Hollinsworth 2014) and one that produces a complex spectrum of subjective affectivity. This finding signposts the need to take into serious consideration the emotionally onerous task of learning at the affective intersection. Taking affect seriously reorients pedagogical problems from that of contending with ‘learner resistance’ (see for example Aveling 2002; Goodman 2011; Hollinsworth 2014; O’Dowd 2010; Phillips 2011), to that of compassionately working with and in support of students who are likely struggling to navigate and manage very real, very complex and very powerful emotions (Garrett & Segall 2013). Compassionate pedagogical approaches proffer opportunities to productively engage learners in ways that formatively inform educators to enable the dynamic

deployment of teaching and learning strategies that can capitalise on opportunities, attend to challenges and mitigate risks.

The purpose of Critical Indigenous Australian studies is to teach students about colonial and racist structures that produce the exigent socio-political injustices - grinding poverty, poor health, early death, incarceration - that First Australian peoples experience. The objective of this teaching is for students to learn about these incontrovertibly urgent matters of life and death, so that they might act in their social and professional lives in ways that contribute to positive social change. It is crucial then, that teaching and learning focus equally on both the 'know-what' and the 'know-how'. Knowing what the urgent matters are without adequate knowledge and practical skills for redress, or in other words without knowing how to act, falls short of meeting teaching and learning objectives. The implications of my findings are that unless students are supported to develop practical skills to operationalise their learning they are susceptible to feelings of uncertainty, apprehension and inadequacy that can result in despondent inaction. A dedicated and substantive focus on cultivating know-how through practical skills development is a pedagogical pathway toward empowering, inspiring and motivating learners to act for social change (Curry-Stevens 2007).

In sum, the implications of my findings are that developing potent Critical Indigenous Australian Studies pedagogy requires a commitment to compassionate engagement. It requires a pedagogical process that lays the foundations necessary for producing graduates who are knowledgeable enough, skilled enough and confident enough to commit to social justice and social change action.

Appendix 1

Syllabus Synopses: topics, themes and teaching and learning materials

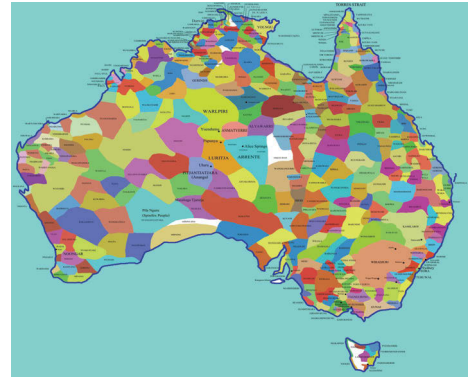
The purpose of this appendix is to provide comprehensive descriptions of the syllabus topics and the teaching and learning materials for the Subjects to expand insight into the context within which the classroom observations, focus group discussions and interviews with students and staff were conducted. The descriptions are drawn from information provided for each topic on the Blackboard learning site for the Subjects. A detailed synopsis of the Lecture Capture recordings, PowerPoint presentations and required and recommended materials for the foundational topics, topics 1-8 follows. Topics 9 – 11, covering specific sites of professional social work practice, are dealt with only briefly. As there was no PowerPoint presentation or materials provided for topic 12, a synopsis is not provided.

The topics and PowerPoint presentations are identical for each Subject. The required and recommended print and audio-visual materials in each Subject is identical for some topics and different for others as detailed in the text boxes at the end of each topic (see below). Commonalities and differences between the two Subjects are highlighted.

Topic 1 - Welcome and Introduction

The first topic was framed as a welcome and ‘invitation to participate’ in the Subject. The seventeen slides of the presentation had a background image of an outdoor stone semi-circle meeting place or talking circle that conveyed an atmosphere of inclusivity. After acknowledgement of Country and introduction to the First Australian peoples and lands on which the University is situated, broader First

Australian peoples across the continent were acknowledged, supported by an image of a map of First Australian territories (see right). A brief overview of some inappropriate terms such as ‘aboriginals’, ‘natives’ and ‘blacks’ was presented.



Equity was defined as ‘fundamental human rights as identified and accepted by Indigenous peoples collectively at a global level’. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice and Native Title Reports were identified as key documents. Attention was drawn to the fact that historically, social justice for First Australians has been ‘defined and controlled by non-Indigenous Australians’ with a ‘history of poor results’. It was proffered that First Australian peoples ‘have the clearest and most informed understandings regarding the barriers and opportunities for equitable social justice outcomes’.

The teaching and coordination team were introduced and their roles and responsibilities outlined, as were the roles and responsibilities of students. Students were expected to,

- Engage.
- Listen to yourself and others – reflect and be aware of what’s going on for you.
- Reflect on your personal and particular relationship to an issue or theme. How is it influencing your thinking?
- Include and support each other.
- Ask for help and support.
- Do the research before challenging the research.

Teaching approaches in the Subject were described as ‘informed and inspired by Indigenous and anticolonial approaches to teaching and learning as individually embodied and understood by each of the teaching team’ and founded on the following assumptions:

- Contemporary Australia remains a neo-colonial experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and societies;
- Decolonisation is the only process that will enable equitable social justice outcomes for all people in Australia.

Fundamental principles for teaching and learning in the Subject were described as:

- Narrative and story;
- [new] Ways of knowing, seeing, being and doing;
- Embodied and emplaced;
- Compassion and conflict - it can "hurt to heal";
- Cultural safety - non-homogeneity, self-agency, care, and respect;
- Embodied social work practice (get out of your head!);
- Engaging with people and communities holistically and flexibly;
- Indigenous ways of being, seeing and doing are not just for Indigenous people (Shared power, connectivity, spirituality, creativity, respect for Elders and family, eco-sustainability, deep listening – these are valuable to all of us both personally and in practice!).

Finally, recognising that the Subjects may prove challenging for students, an ‘end of workshop debrief’ process was introduced where, at the end of each weekly workshop, time was allocated for students to debrief in small groups to provide,

- time to share thoughts and feelings about the workshop;
- opportunity to express yourself and to support others;
- chance to build relationships and networks;
- chance to clarify themes and content.

Required and recommended materials

The required reading for the topic by Chelsea Bond (2014b) is an on-point article that recognises the commonly occurring disconnect between First Australian academics’ aims and objectives and non-Indigenous student expectations. The article

provides insights into the risks and challenges First Australian academics face in the context of compulsory Indigenous Australian studies classrooms and preempts some of the challenges that students may face. The postgraduate cohort had an extra required reading by U.S. scholar Rashné Jehangir (2012) who discusses the conflicts and cognitive dissonance that students can experience when learning about issues such as racism, sexism and homophobia. She argues that this ‘conflict’ can be viewed as a valid ‘catalyst for learning’ more deeply and critically.

UG Required Materials	UG/PG Recommended Materials	PG Required Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bond, C. (2014), ‘When the Object Teaches: Indigenous Academics in Australian Universities’, <i>Right Now – Human Rights in Australia</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per UG. Jehangir, R. (2012), ‘Conflict as a catalyst for learning’, <i>About Campus</i>, 17(2), pp. 2-8.

Topic 2 - Diversity: peoples, places & contexts.

The background image of a map of First Australian territories (see image above) on the fourteen presentation slides for Topic 2 supported the overriding theme of diversity. The topic evolved around two sub-themes ‘what’s imagined’ and ‘what’s real’ to culminate in a critique of deficit-based versus strengths-based approaches to First Australian issues, policy, practice and politics. The topic began with an activity called ‘what’s imagined’. Students were asked to spend five minutes writing about ‘what you know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures’. Students were not required to share what they had written with the teaching staff or other students. Rather, it was to be retained so that it could be reflected on over the course of the semester. This activity had merit in that it gave students the opportunity to articulate their current knowledge and understandings and provided a personal reflective framing for the Subjects.

The topic then moved on to the first sub-theme, ‘what’s imagined’ and introduced the concepts of ‘archetypes’ and ‘stereotypes’. While the concept of stereotypes is common in teaching Indigenous Australian studies, the concept of archetypes is less common. Distinguishing between these two concepts was an effective entry point for interrogating the simplified binary criteria of ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’, often employed to categorise and judge First Australian identity. ‘Traditional’ First Australian peoples are perceived as romanticised and essentialised archetypes of pre-colonial people, original and ‘authentic’ First Australian identities. First Australian peoples considered to be traditional are however, often stereotyped as stuck in the past and out of touch with the modern world.

‘Contemporary’ First Australian peoples on the other hand, those who live in urban areas or those whose engagement in the modern world is obvious, are often judged to be ‘inauthentic’ because they are perceived to be ‘Westernised’, out of touch with or as having ‘lost’ their culture, or as being in ‘transition’ between a primitive and modern existence. As Australian anthropology scholar Jeremy Beckett points out,

Aborigines like native Americans and others, face the unending task of resisting attempts, on the one hand to cut them off from their ‘heritage’, and on the other to bury them within it as ‘a thing of the past (1988, p.212).

The point was made that archetypes and stereotypes are perpetuated by media-fuelled public opinion and students were asked to consider two questions,

- who has taught you about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- has limited experience led to generalisations and stereotypes?

The second sub-theme, ‘what’s real’, asserted the diversity of First Australian identities, cultures, viewpoints, circumstances and environments. First Australian identities were presented from an intersectional perspective as, ‘combinations that

break homogenising stereotypes... shared *and* different experiences and attitudes’ (original emphasis). A diagram (below left) was used to demonstrate how identity is



shaped by intersectional elements and two examples were given:

A person may be Indigenous, female, and lesbian. Alternatively a person may be Indigenous, Buddhist, and heterosexual. All of these elements of diversity exist within Indigenous communities in Australia.

Diverse First Australian identities were described as ‘defined and authorised within Indigenous cultures by relationship and affiliation’ and it was pointed out that ‘arguments about who is ‘authentic’ should have no merit outside the societies and groups they relate to’. The colonial history of First Australian experiences being defined and identified by others and informed by ideologies of race, racism and whiteness was demonstrated to be an ongoing process as exemplified by a report, viewed as part of the workshop activities, by Australian journalist Mary Gearin for the ABC’s current affairs program ‘The 7.30 Report’, titled ‘The Bolt Verdict’. The report covers the Federal Court ruling that journalist Andrew Bolt breached the Racial Discrimination Act in his blogged articles that criticised the legitimacy of fair-skinned First Australian peoples’ identities and therefore their rights to speak and act on First Australian issues. The report cites Bolt’s polemic articles titled ‘It’s so hip to be black’, ‘White is the New Black’ and ‘White Fellas in the Black’ where Bolt writes, ‘meet the white face of a new black race: the political Aborigine’. He wonders ‘how such fair people can claim to be one of them and take black jobs’ and attacks First Australian lawyer and scholar Larissa Behrendt as someone who has ‘worked as a professional Aborigine, despite looking almost as German as her

father'. Bolt's views are an excellent example of the kinds of views about First Australian identity when those views are informed by ideologies of race and based on archetypes and stereotypes.

The sub-theme of 'what's real' was continued through a thumb-nail sketch of current socioeconomic circumstances and the disparities that First Australian peoples experience. The topic culminated with a comparison between deficit-based and strengths-based analyses. A deficit based approach was described as,

- Locating people as inherently disadvantaged rather than structurally or purposefully disadvantaged;
- Placing focus on 'helping' the disadvantaged rather than stopping the disadvantage occurring;
- Inspired by social and political histories of racism and oppression – people see what they are taught to see;
- Supported by mainstream media and dominant governance systems – legislators and policy makers.

Strengths-based approaches were described as requiring critical interrogation of the 'complex circumstances' that lead to socioeconomic disparity.

Required and recommended materials

Strengths-based approaches were detailed at length, and positioned as highly preferable to deficit-based approaches in the UG required reading, a discussion paper produced by Uniting Care (2011) and the in the PG recommended reading by Mark Brough, Chelsea Bond, and Julian Hunt (2004). The journal article by Kerryn Pholi, Dan Black and Craig Richards (2009) is a recommended reading for the UG cohort and a required reading for the PG cohort. The article convincingly critiques the 'Close the Gap' policy, a recent coalition of Australian governments' policy intended to reduce First Australian socioeconomic disparity, as a deficit-based approach to policy-making. A YouTube video recording of First Australian author and scholar

Anita Heiss' TedX talk titled 'One & Sameness' is vibrant and entertaining in addressing relevant points in relation to First Australian identity and was recommended viewing for both UG and PG cohorts.

Additional materials for the PG cohort were a required reading by Reconciliation Australia (2015) titled 'Let's Bust Some Myths' and a recommended video recording titled 'Aboriginal Embassy' about the significance of the 'Tent Embassy' on the lawns of Canberra House. Established in 1972, the Embassy still stands today, forty plus years later, making it perhaps the longest surviving political protest in Australia.

UG Required Materials	UG Recommended Materials	PG Required Materials	PG Recommended Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scerra, N. (2011), <i>Strengths Based Practice: The Evidence</i>, Research Paper, Uniting Care Children, Young People and Families, Sydney. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'One Sameness', (2013), video recording, Anita Heiss, <i>TedX</i>, Brisbane. Pholi, K., Black, D. & Richards, C. (2009), 'Is 'Close the Gap' a useful approach to improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians?' <i>Australian Review of Public Affairs</i>, 9(2), pp. 1-13. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pholi, K., Black, D. & Richards, C. (2009), 'Is 'Close the Gap' a useful approach to improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians?' <i>Australian Review of Public Affairs</i>, 9(2), pp. 1-13. Reconciliation Australia, (2015), 'Let's Bust Some Myths', <i>Resources</i>, Reconciliation Australia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'One Sameness', (2013), video recording, Anita Heiss, <i>TedX</i>, Brisbane. Brough, Mark K. and Bond, Chelsea and Hunt, Julian (2004), 'Strong in the City: Toward a Strength Based Approach in Indigenous Health Promotion'. <i>Health Promotion Journal of Australia</i>, 15(3), pp. 215-220. 'Aboriginal Embassy' (2014), video recording, <i>The Feed</i>, SBS, Australia.

Topic 3 - The Facts: colonisation, dispossession & resistance.

Topic 3 covered the historical experiences of First Australian peoples from pre-colonial contact through the early colonial period up to 1900. The colonisation of Australia was framed as 'a story of invasion and resistance to invasion' occurring in three phases: 1. 'initial invasion'; 2. 'colonial occupation of Indigenous lands' and 3. 'colonial establishment'. Two main points were emphasised across these three phases. Firstly, prior to federation in 1901, Australia was not a nation but a series of separately governed colonies with divergent approaches to colonisation. Nonetheless,

First Australian experiences of violent dispossession were similar across the continent over the 112-year period. Secondly, First Australian peoples resisted invasion, they ‘did not willingly leave their country despite the consequences’. The impacts of colonial violence, introduced diseases and the destabilisation of First Australian economies were balanced against initial failed attempts by First Australians to diplomatically negotiate and consequent strategies of active resistance to dispossession and colonial rule.

Required and recommended materials

Required and recommended materials for the topic are high quality and provide both details and context to support the themes of the topic. Details of significant historical events were provided in two timelines prepared by the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Museum. Historical events were contextualised by three seminal documentaries. The first was ‘They Have Come to Stay’, episode 1 of the multi award-winning documentary series *First Australians* (Perkins & Dale 2008). Described as ‘the documentary of the decade’, the series draws from First Australian oral histories as well as colonial archives, to tell the story of the colonisation of Australia from First Australian perspectives (Australian Screen 2016b). Episode 1 explores the first three years of the colony of New South Wales centering on the experiences of key First Australian identities: ‘Bennelong, a diplomat-ambassador; Pemulwuy, a freedom fighter; and Windradyne... a peacemaker’ (Australian Screen 2016a).

The second documentary was renowned journalist John Pilger’s powerful documentary ‘*The Secret Country: The First Australians Fight Back*’ (Pilger & Lowery 1985). It unflinchingly traces 150 years of colonial socio-political history

from a human rights and social justice perspective. Third was the award-winning documentary ‘*Kanyini*’ (Hogan & Randall 2007). Tjilpi Randall, traditional custodian of Uluru from Mutiljulu community, presents the historical and contemporary experiences of Anangu people through the prism of “‘Kanyini”, principles of caring for the environment and each other with unconditional love and responsibility’ (Romdahl 2016). Importantly these resources privilege diverse First Australian voices and perspectives.

UG/PG Required Materials	UG/PG Recommended Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Human Rights Commission, (2015), ‘Timeline - History of separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families’, <i>Australian Human Rights Commission</i>, official website. • Australian Museum, (2015), ‘Indigenous Australia Timeline - 1901 to 1969’, <i>Australian Museum</i>, official website. • ‘They have come to stay’, (2008), video recording, <i>First Australians</i>, episode 1, Blackfella Films, SBS and Screen Australia. • <i>The Secret Country: The First Australians Fight Back</i>, (1985), video recording, Central Independent Television, Sydney. 	<p><i>Kanyini</i> (2007), video recording, Reverb Films, Australia.</p>

Topic 4 - Equity: the struggle for human rights.

The first point made in this presentation was that the topic was ‘big’ requiring independent and ongoing study. The topic covered the history of human rights and social justice activism, advocacy and policy relating to First Australian peoples and included an overview of the history of land rights. The topic began by emphasising that colonisation has resulted in the ongoing denial of First Australian human rights. This point was illustrated by an image of three First Australian women holding a placard reading ‘your law is killing us’ (above right). It was emphasised that human rights have always been a part of First Australian and international indigenous cultural values, as per the presenter’s notes that accompany the presentation slide,



Indigenous communities internationally have always upheld “human rights” in their communities. Indigenous law and governance has been passed down over thousands of generations and is intimately connected to indigenous spirituality and country. As part of colonisation and assimilation, governments have consistently failed to “see” or recognise indigenous cultural practices related to upholding the health and flourishing of peoples (human rights) and attempted to replace indigenous practices and law with imposed Western systems. This has been both an ethnocentric and a deliberate act that enabled colonising governments and others to continue to treat Indigenous cultures as “primitive” and “inferior” to “civilised” Western cultures.

Human rights were defined as tri-generational, as described by former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma in his speech titled, ‘The role of social workers as human rights workers with Indigenous people and communities’:

- First generation rights: civil and political rights (e.g. the right to vote, freedom of speech, freedom from discrimination, fair trial etc.);
- Second generation rights: economic, social and cultural rights (e.g. the right to health, housing, social security and education);
- Third generation rights: collective rights (e.g. the right to development and self determination).

It was emphasised that social workers have a responsibility to uphold human rights by further quoting Calma from the same speech:

- social workers by very definition are human rights workers. Social workers help individuals realise their rights everyday and are ideally placed to help communities claim their collective rights.

Social work activities that support human rights were described as,

- First generation human rights activities: advocacy on behalf of individuals or disadvantaged groups.
- Second generation human rights activities: establishing and facilitating access to services such as education, health care, housing and employment; identifying service gaps.
- Third generation human rights activities: facilitating and supporting self-determined and self-governing grass-roots community development initiatives.

Three recent key human rights reports and their recommendations were highlighted: ‘Social Justice & Native Title Report 2014’; ‘UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people Report 2009’ and ‘Human Rights Watch Global Report 2015’. The issues raised and recommendations made in these reports were detailed and summarised as,

- the lack of Australian government support for First Australian human rights in relation to land, heritage, culture and self-determination resulting in socio-economic disparities and over-representation in the criminal justice and child protection systems;
- the need for nation building guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The history of First Australian human rights advocacy from first colonial contact to the present day were overviewed with URL’s provided for independent study. This section was contextualised by providing the lyrics and YouTube clips of two iconic songs: ‘From Little Things Big Things Grow’ by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody about the famous Gurindji walk-off and strike of First Australian pastoral workers in 1965, and ‘Treaty’ by First Australian band Yothu Yindi in response to former Prime Minister Bob Hawke reneging on the promise of a treaty.

A ‘myth alert’ for this section highlighted common Australian ideological discourse,

- Indigenous peoples have historically been passive and remain passive regarding their own human rights;
- Indigenous peoples are not willing to “help themselves”;
- Indigenous peoples expect the government to fix everything for them and give them handouts;
- Indigenous peoples are not willing to take responsibility for their own lives and communities.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was presented as a seminal guiding framework for working with First Australian Peoples. It was proffered that ‘in order for the Convention to work we need to breathe life into

it'. A ten-minute community education video produced by the Australian Human Rights Commission titled 'UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' featured First Australian leaders, custodians and community members introducing and explaining the convention with the overall message, 'Get it, know it, use it' (see 'Required Materials' text box below). The overriding theme of the UNDRIP, the right to self-determination, was explained and explored. The current state of self-determination for First Australians was outlined and international exemplars of successful self-determination practices were highlighted.

A 'myth alert' for this section presented alarmist conservative views about self-determination,

- Self determination has been tried and failed in Australia;
- Self determination means that all indigenous peoples want a separatist state;
- Self determination (and native title) means that non-Indigenous peoples will lose their houses and businesses.

Questions for class discussion were posed:

- Must Australia abide by the articles set out in the UNDRIP?
- Is the UNDRIP enforceable?
- How is the UNDRIP relevant for our work?
- Which elements of the UNDRIP surprised you?
- Which elements of UNDRIP do you think are most important?
- Do you know of any government or non-government organisations that use the UNDRIP as a broad framework for practice with Indigenous peoples in Australia? If so, how is it being used?
- Which areas of the UNDRIP can you contribute to as a professional in your chosen field?

Required and recommended materials: Topic 4 – Human Rights

Authoritative required and recommended materials provided in-depth detail and context for the topic themes. Two episodes of the documentary series First Australians, mentioned above, traces First Australian political activism in the struggle for human rights. Episode 6, 'A Fair Deal for a Dark Race' covers the

political struggle, between the 1930's to the late 1960's, to have First Australian peoples counted in the Australian human census and to shift the power to legislate for First Australian peoples from State governments to the Federal government. Episode 7, 'We Are No Longer Shadows', covers the continuing struggle for recognition of First Australian land rights focussing on the 'Mabo Case', the high court case that overturned the legal fiction 'Terra Nullius'. The recommended reading by Ganesharajah (2009) continues the theme of land rights and focuses on contemporary concerns. The required and recommended readings for the topic focus on First Australian peoples' rights to self-determination as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

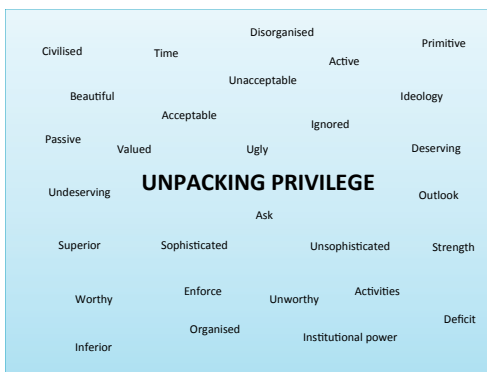
UG/PG Required Materials	UG/PG Recommended Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'A Fair Deal for a Dark Race', (2008), video recording, <i>First Australians</i>, episode 6, Blackfella Films, SBS and Screen Australia. • <i>UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i>, (2012), video recording, Australian Human Rights Commission, Sydney. • Behrendt, L. (2001), 'Indigenous Self-Determination: Rethinking the Relationship Between Rights and Economic Development', <i>University of New South Wales Law Journal</i>, 24(3), pp. 850-861. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Human Rights Commission, (2010), <i>The Community Guide to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i>, Paragon, Sydney. • Ganesharajah, C. (2009), <i>Indigenous Health and Wellbeing: The Importance of Country</i>, Native Title Research Report No. 1. Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra. • 'We Are No Longer Shadows' (2008), video recording, <i>First Australians</i>, episode 7, Blackfella Films, SBS and Screen Australia. • Maguire, A. (2009), <i>The Right to Self-determination for Indigenous Peoples in Australia. A submission to the National Human Rights Consultation</i>, Newcastle Law School, University of Newcastle, NSW.

Topic 5 - Privilege: race, racism and whiteness

The presentation for this topic opened with the statement, 'if you don't have to think about it, it's a privilege'. Students enrolled in the Subjects across all modes and campuses were encouraged to undertake an anonymous online poll titled 'Experiences of Privilege' as part of their workshop activities. Online students completed the poll as part of their 'Collaborate' workshop. Collaborate is a software program where participants meet in an online, real time virtual classroom environment. The aim of the activity was to prompt students to begin thinking about

the role of privilege in their own lives. Students were given five minutes of classroom time to complete the poll. The results of the poll and the group discussion that was generated in the workshop are analysed in detail in Chapter 10.

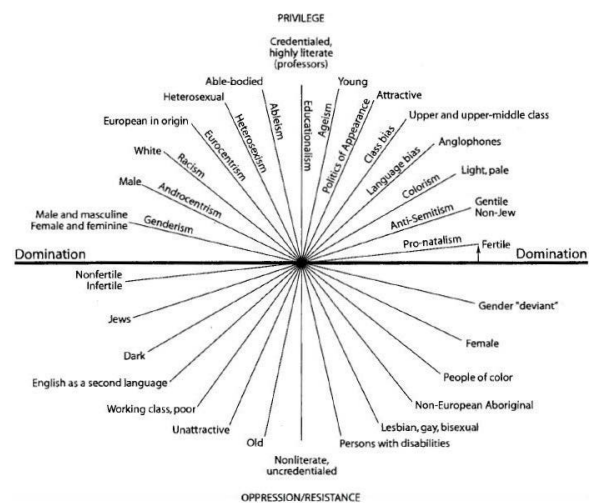
Quotes from the required reading by Diane Goodman were used in the PowerPoint presentation to define privilege and identify other key terms such as ‘domination’ and ‘dominant ideology’. The reading, titled ‘About privileged groups’, is the second chapter from her 2001 book, *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: educating*



people from privileged groups. It provides definitions, descriptions and explanations of the characteristics and contexts of privilege. A word cloud around the heading ‘Unpacking Privilege’ (see left) highlighted how language

is deployed to categorise individuals and groups into dominant and subordinate binaries.

Privilege and disadvantage were presented as intersectional where individuals can experience ‘simultaneous privilege and disadvantage’. This was illustrated by a diagram of a ‘wheel of domination and oppression’ representing diverse social categories of privilege and disadvantage including race, gender, class, ability, sexual preference, age, nationality, skin colour, language and attractiveness (see right).



Drawing from prominent Australian race and racism scholar David Hollinsworth, the concept of race was defined as an ideological ‘social and political construct’. Racism was defined as ‘prejudice plus social power’ and presented as manifesting in diverse ways,

- Classical or scientific racism where the alleged inferiority of groups is believed to be caused by biological or genetic differences;
- Institutional racism – formal and informal, intended and unintended;
- Ideological racism – social myths about and representations of certain groups;
- New racism – assimilationist stances, essentialist view of dominant culture “FIOFO” (fit in or fuck off);
- Casual racism e.g. jokes, nick names;
- Micro aggressions - intended and unintended, e.g. moving away from an Indigenous person in a store or on public transport;
- Individual racism - individual pathology.

First Australian peoples’ experiences of racism and non-Indigenous Australian peoples’ discriminatory attitudes were evidenced by way of data gathered by ‘Beyond Blue’, an independent, not-for-profit mental health support, advocacy and research organisation. The Beyond Blue data was contextualised by a YouTube clip of First Australian rap artist ‘Caper’, performing his song, “How would you like to be me”? The rapped lyrics are a hard-hitting expose of a young First Australian man’s experiences of racism, such as in the overriding lyrical hook of the song, ‘how would you like to be me? Stereotype, should I paint myself white? Discriminated, hated and judged by society’.

The myth of ‘reverse racism’ was well illustrated by way of a YouTube clip titled ‘Reverse Racism’ by Australian comedian, Aahmer Rahman. In the clip Rahman comically and convincingly explains why prejudice and discrimination against white people cannot be described as ‘reverse racism’ because people of colour do not have social power over whites. The notion of ‘reversing the gaze’ was used as a segue to

how difficult interrogating racism, whiteness and privilege can be and pre-empted some of the cognitive and affective, challenges that critical race and whiteness studies might induce.

<p>Set 1: Whiteness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power, privilege, and identity of white people; • White systems and institutions; • Inherited privilege; • Invisibility; • Whiteness = “Hegemonic racialised identity”; • Whiteness ≠ ‘fixed embodied form’ (those with white skin); • Assumption: white cultures don’t have culture or “race” – others do; • “I don’t see race: we’re all the same”; • “White trash”; • Possibility of strengthening white privilege in acknowledging “whiteness”; • Built on essentialism and binaries “us and them” “good and bad”.
<p>Set 2: Defensive Myths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who talk about white privilege are reverse-racists; • People who talk about white privilege don’t expect Indigenous peoples to be responsible for themselves; • Race and racism can only be discussed and challenged by Indigenous peoples and people who aren’t white; • White people who challenge racism are guilt ridden apologists; • White people who challenge racism are just perpetuating colonialism* (a tricky one); • All Indigenous peoples are experts on race and racism and really want to discuss your and their feelings on racism at social gatherings; • I have had hard times in my life therefore I’m not privileged; • Indigenous people are the only ones who are privileged in Australia! They get all of the handouts. I don’t get anything; • I’m not privileged because I really earned everything that I have achieved; • People who talk about privilege and whiteness are blaming me for Indigenous disadvantage; • People who talk about privilege hate white people and men; • All white and privileged people are the same; • Oppressed peoples deserve what they get; • Oppressed peoples are oppressed in every way and in every context.
<p>Set 3: Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism separates us from our humanity; • It is often hard to name what is invisible or painful; • “I don’t feel permitted to talk about racism”; • “I don’t feel permitted to talk about Indigenous issues and colonial history”; • Stereotype threat: “I don’t want to be <i>that</i> kind of white person” • “I feel paralysed and anxious, don’t know how to act, frightened to offend”, “I watch my every word” “walking on eggshells”; • What can <i>I</i> do? • Rejection and conflict in personal and family relationships.

Two quotes by anti-racism activists concluded the topic. The first was a 1949 quote by author Lillian Smith who, as a white woman living in the racist south of America

in the first half of the twentieth century, spoke out against racism and segregation in her novels and autobiography.

I knew... that in trying to shut the Negro race away from us, we have shut ourselves away from so many good, creative, honest, deeply human things in life... that the warped, distorted frame we have put around every Negro child from birth is around every white child also... that what cruelly shapes and cripples the personality of one is... cruelly shaping and crippling the personality of the other.

The final quote was by First Australian scholar and activist Lilla Watson representing the Aboriginal Activists Group, Queensland in 1970.

If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

These concluding quotes emphasised the dehumanising effects of racism and oppression on the oppressor and advocated that challenging racism is in the oppressor's best interests. This strategy has been described as 'interest convergence' where the dehumanising psychological, social, intellectual, moral and material costs of oppression to people from dominant groups are accentuated to appeal for commitment to action for social change (see Goodman 2011; Case 2012; Pease 2010).

Required and recommended materials

The two required readings for the topic were Goodman's chapter, discussed above, and an opinion piece by US journalist Zach Stafford who addresses the problem of the ideology of colour blindness. In addition to the 'Reverse Racism' and the 'How Would You Like to be Me' YouTube clips described above, two video recordings comprised key components of the required audio-visual materials for the topic: Episode 1, Series 1 of the controversial and highly criticised three-part reality TV

series 'First Contact' and 'Fatal Impact', Episode 2 of the acclaimed three-part BBC documentary series 'Racism: A History'. In 'First Contact', six non-Indigenous Australians visit diverse First Australian communities and engage with First Australian peoples for the first time. In Episode 1, the six participants exemplify the racist views and stereotypes held by many non-Indigenous Australians and in this way, the resource has merit as a teaching tool about contemporary anti-First Australian racism. However, the series has been highly criticised by both liberal and conservative First Australian and non-Indigenous commentators. Compelling criticism by Amy McGuire (2014), Chelsea Bond (2014a), and Emmeline Tyler (2014) for example, argue that the series lacked criticality and represented First Australian peoples and communities from a deficit-based perspective. Conversely, polemic commentator Miranda Devine's conservative criticism concerned her perception that the series 'stereotyped' white people as racist (in Bond 2014a).

The series, 'Racism: A History' examines the origins, manifestations and impacts of racism from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century. Episode 2, 'Fatal Impact' investigates the development of theories of scientific racism such as eugenics and phrenology across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Focusing on examples from Australia, South Africa, Canada, Argentina, Jamaica and India, it traces how these theories were used to justify imperial expansion into indigenous lands, dispossession, slavery, racial oppression and genocide. Through specific examples of genocide at the hands of Europeans during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – the millions of people who died of starvation in India; massacres of First Australians in Tasmania and elsewhere and the Hereros death camps in South Africa – it is demonstrated that contrary to popular belief, the genocide of Jews in Nazi

Germany was not a historical aberration, but rather a manifestation of the evolution of imperial and colonial racist practice.

Recommended materials comprised a reading and a podcast. The reading by Audry Thompson from the University of Utah is an easy-to-read overview of whiteness theory. The podcast features First Australian Social Work scholar Maggie Walter discussing how whiteness operates in Australian social work. The range of materials for this topic showcases diverse First Australian, non-Indigenous and international perspectives and viewpoints.

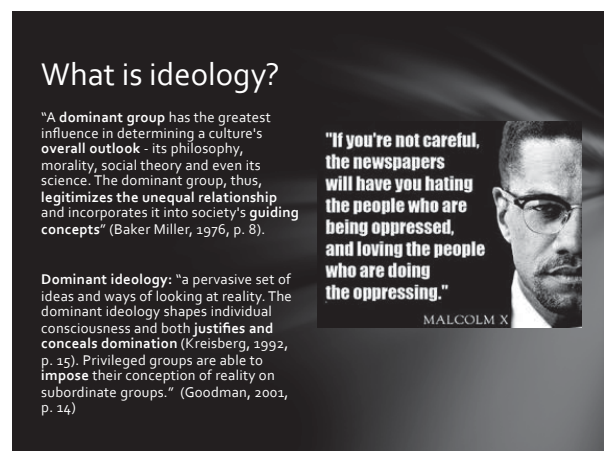
UG Required Materials	UG/PG Recommended Materials	PG Required Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodman, D. (2001), 'About privileged groups' in <i>Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: educating people from privileged groups</i>, Sage Publications Inc, Thousand Oaks, pp. 13-36. • <i>First Contact</i>, (2014), video recording, Episode 1, Series 1, Blackfella Films, Australia. • 'Fatal Impact', (2007), video recording, <i>Racism a History</i>, episode 2, BBC. • Stafford, Z. (2015), 'When you say you 'don't see race' you're ignoring racism, not helping to solve it', <i>The Guardian</i>, 27 January. • 'Reverse Racism', (2013), video recording, Aamer, Rahman, <i>Fear of a Brown Planet</i>, YouTube. • <i>How would you like me to be?</i>, (2011), video recording, Caper, YouTube. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thompson, A. 2001, <i>A Summary of Whiteness Theory</i>, University of Utah. • Fronek, P. (2012), 'Whiteness and Australian social work: In conversation with Maggie Walter', episode 11, <i>Podsocs</i>, Griffith University. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per UG. • 'Do Human Races Really Exist?' (2015), video recording, <i>Science Alert</i>, UNSW, YouTube.

Topic 6 - Ideology: racism, assimilation/ism & neoliberalism

The aims of Topic 6, described in the overview at the beginning of the presentation, were to identify the 'dominant ideologies surrounding and affecting Indigenous families and communities in Australia' and to appreciate the 'way that they are produced and reproduced'. Four quotes by authoritative scholars from diverse fields set the scene for the presentation. The first quote by American feminist and scholar Jean Baker Miller explains how dominant groups gain influence and control over

society. In the second quote, US privilege studies scholar Diane Goodman cites American education scholar Seth Kreisberg's succinct definition of dominant ideology: 'a pervasive set of ideas' that 'shapes individual consciousness and both justifies and conceals domination'.

The third and fourth quotes captured the pervasive power of ideologies to influence an individual's worldview. The striking image of well-known American human rights activist Malcolm X alongside his hard-hitting warning about the ideological influence of the media is compelling (see right). The final quote, by American historian and social critic Morris Berman was presented on a separate slide like a punchline: 'An idea



is something you have; an ideology is something that has you'. The series of quotes very effectively captured the gravity of the impacts dominant ideologies can and do have on society. The accessible yet cogent language in each quote by well-regarded scholars in diverse fields is quite captivating.

The next series of slides posed three questions with dot-point responses. Points made in response to the first question 'How is Ideology produced and reproduced?' drew from philosophers Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser and Noam Chomsky,

- Ideas and values of "ruling classes" become the norm: Who does this benefit?
- By manufactured "Consent" (see Chomsky viewing).
- Repressive state apparatuses (by force e.g. army, police, and judiciary).
- Ideological state apparatuses (by socialisation and learning e.g. education, media, institutions).
- Repressive tolerance (tokenistic placating gestures).

The points in response to ‘Why do we need to be aware of ideology?’, emphasised that ideologies create the real material and social disparities to which human service and social work professions are expected to respond and ameliorate.

- Ideological ideas, values, and assumptions affect people’s lives;
- Past > present > future;
- Identifying and interrupting destructive and discriminatory ideologies are a foundation of anti-colonial and anti-oppressive practice.

The points responding to the third question, ‘What are the persisting ideological legacies surrounding Indigenous peoples?’, listed three broad and overarching ideologies:

- Assimilationism
- Neoliberalism
- Racism

Instructions for a small-group discussion exercise were presented next where each group was asked to respond to two questions about one of the listed ideologies and to report their findings back to the class in a five-minute presentation.

1. what you see as the underlying ideas, values, and assumptions of **one** of the following ideologies:
 - Assimilationism,
 - Neoliberalism,
 - Racism;
2. how this ideology might effect the lives of Indigenous families and communities today.

The presentation concluded with a quote and a meme that reinforced the message that ideologies are insidious, potent and harmful. The quote by American writer Edward Abbey likens ideology to cancer, ‘growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell’. The meme was an image of a small boy and a toddler in a bath. A speech-bubble shows the boy as saying ‘I want to be part of a hegemonic superpower that disregards human rights all over the world’.

Required and recommended materials

The required reading for the topic titled ‘The Joy of Unlearning Privilege’, is Chapter 7 of the second edition of Diane Goodman’s book *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: educating people from privileged groups* (2011). Goodman introduces the chapter by stating that it,

... describes the benefits people from privileged groups have gained by engaging in a process of unlearning privilege and oppression, and offers visions of healing and liberation (2011, p.11).

She summarises ‘unlearning privilege’ as,

examining one's biases, socialization, attitudes, behaviors, and worldview. It also entails understanding 1) the historical and contemporary manifestations of the oppression, 2) how inequality is systemic and institutionalized, and 3) the privilege and oppression experienced by the dominant and subordinated groups. It means learning how to be an ally and challenge injustice (2011, p.102).

The other required source for the topic was the classic satirical video recording ‘Babakiueria’, produced in 1986. The film is a critique of Australian colonisation using role-reversal where ‘white natives’ are oppressed by ‘black colonisers’. The ‘mockumentary’ is framed as an ethnographic investigation from the perspective of the black colonisers into white natives’ cultural practices and socio-economic circumstances. Through satire, the film highlights the unreasonable and untenable expectations of racism and assimilationism.

The recommended material provided rich and diverse analyses of the topic themes of ideology, assimilationism and neoliberalism. The film ‘Manufacturing Consent’ addresses how ideologies are produced and reproduced. It showcases the renowned U.S. philosopher and political activist Noam Chomsky’s career, focusing on the thesis of his coauthored 1988 book, with Edward Herman, of the same name. The

authors deploy an analytical framework they call a ‘propaganda model’, to explain how the media ‘propagandize’ the ideologies of ‘powerful societal interests that control and finance them’ and the resultant ‘internalization of priorities’ of those interests by the public. In short, Herman and Chomsky’s thesis argues that the media ‘manufacture’ the ‘consent’ of the public to support hegemonic policies and practices (Herman & Chomsky 2010, p.xi).

Two readings addressed the theme of assimilationism. The reading by Australian scholars Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis analyses the assimilationist nature of modern societies. The research report by Australian labour market researcher A. Michael Dockery draws on empirical research to demonstrate that past assimilationist policy has been constitutive to the health, wealth and education disparities that First Australian peoples experience. The research illustrates that current Australian policies and practices in relation to First Australians continue to be assimilationist in nature, compounding rather than ameliorating disparity. The research findings show that initiatives of self-determined governance, connection to country and maintenance of First Australian philosophies and cultural practices are the most effective in addressing socio-economic disparities.

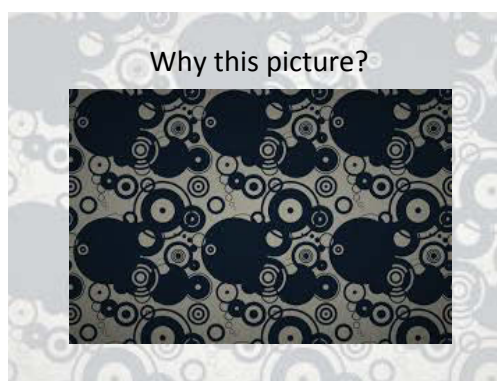
The theme of neoliberalism was addressed by two readings. Eminent U.S. scholar David Harvey’s reading describes the capitalist ideology of neoliberalism and traces its origins and development. Titelius’ article tells the story of a First Australian community’s battle against powerful mining interests on their heritage country. The Yindjibarndi people’s story is a valuable case study that well demonstrates the way neoliberalist policies and practices contribute to the erosion and denial of human rights for First Australian peoples.

UG/PG Required Materials	UG/PG Recommended Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodman, D. (2011), 'The joy of unlearning privilege/oppression' in <i>Promoting diversity and social justice: educating people from privileged groups</i>. 2nd ed., Routledge, New York, pp. 101-120. • <i>BabaKiueria</i>, (1986), video recording, ABC, Sydney. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media</i>, (1992), videorecording, YouTube • Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (1997), 'The Assimilationist Culture of the Modern Nation' in <i>Productive Diversity: A New Approach to Work and Management</i>. Sydney: Pluto Press. • Dockery, A. (2011), <i>Traditional Culture and the Wellbeing of Indigenous Australians: An analysis of the 2008 NATSISS</i>. Centre for Labour Market Research, Curtin University. • Harvey, David. (2005), <i>A Brief History of Neoliberalism</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 1-3, 64, 65-66, 76. • Titelius, R. (2011), 'Yindjibarndi Aboriginal People take on WA FMG mining magnate', <i>The Guardian: the workers weekly</i>. Issue 1512, 3 August.

Topic 7 - Professional Practice Context: media, policy & legislature

The presentation for this topic began with an overview of three 'broad environments for practice: media, policy and legislation'. The overall aim of the topic was to address the question, 'how do these environments and resources challenge or reproduce dominant ideologies surrounding and affecting Indigenous families and communities'?

The second slide of the presentation had the heading 'Why this picture', referring to the background design of each of the 21 slides for the presentation (see right). The presenter's notes that accompanied the slide pointed out that



media, policy and legislature environments are complex 'social constructions... intimately shaped by ideologies'. Nonetheless, dominant environments are not impenetrable or immutable, 'there can be "spaces of freedom" and "spaces of social justice" within dominant environments'.

Media environments were overviewed with four sources. The first was a YouTube short film exposé of stereotyping of First Australians in the media by Australian student David Muggleton. The remaining three sources featured First Australian

media highlighting the ways that First Australians are using media to ‘restory’ historical and current issues from First Australian perspectives. The NITV ‘Living Black’ episode features First Australian film maker and director Rachel Perkins; the Sovereign Embassy YouTube channel contains dozens of current affairs issues from First Australian perspectives and the Barkly Regional arts website is an example of how First Australians are using new media to promote their knowledges, values, cultural practices and political viewpoints. The media’s responsibility to challenge conservative ideological framings of historical and contemporary reporting in relation to First Australian peoples was presented by way of a quote by Jeff McMullen, ‘Australian foreign correspondent and strongly pro-Aboriginal journalist’,

The media has a responsibility to tell the country what is happening in a way that connects Australians. If you see that people are not listening to the truth, find another way to tell the story.

Two questions posed for small group discussion examined the role social workers have in contributing to ‘restorying’,

1. What role do you as a current or future social work, human services, child and family studies, education, criminal justice, or other professional have in “*re-storying*” conceptions of Australian colonial history and current negative perceptions of Indigenous cultures and peoples?
2. Do you feel that this re-storying is a central role for your profession? How does the process of restorying relate to what you see as the core values and tasks of your profession?

Current Australian policies and legislation ‘shaping First Australian peoples’ lives’ were described as ‘highly complex, existing on multiple levels of government and governance’. Two major policies and two major pieces of legislation were highlighted for consideration and discussion. The policies of ‘Close the Gap’ and

‘NTER/Stronger Futures’ were defined as ‘repressive and ideological state apparatus’ based on a ‘deficit paradigm’. The Native Title Act and the Racial Discrimination Act were considered in relation to their ‘significance for human rights and social justice’. The onerous nature of appeals processes in relation racial discrimination and human rights infringements were framed as barriers to ‘social justice outcomes for First Australians and other individuals who experience discrimination in daily life’. The presentation concluded with an overview of representative committees and peak bodies that advise and consult on First Australian legislation, policy and practice such as the ‘National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples’, the ‘Prime Minister’s Indigenous Advisory Council’, the ‘National Aboriginal Community controlled Health Organisation’, and the ‘Secretariat of Aboriginal and Islander Child Care’.

Required and recommended materials

Required materials for the topic, a documentary film and an investigative news article, provided factual detail and critical analysis of the Northern Territory Intervention and subsequent ‘Stronger Futures’ legislation. The powerful documentary ‘Our Generation’ is described as,

a ground breaking, powerful and upfront documentary on the Australian Aboriginal struggle for their land, culture and basic human rights driven by the Yolngu people of Northeast Arnhem Land in Australia’s remote Northern Territory (Our Generation Media 2011).

In detailing the impacts of NTER and Stronger Futures legislation on Yolngu families and communities, key issues of human rights, constitutional reform and sovereignty are addressed in the film. The reading ‘Bad Aunty: The truth about the NT intervention and the case for an independent media’ by Australian investigative

journalist Chris Graham, is a scathing in-depth critique of the Australian Government’s implementation of the policy and the complicity of the Australian mainstream media’s sensationalist coverage. The broad range of recommended materials for the topic featured diverse authentic and authoritative First Australian and non-Indigenous critical analyses of the main themes of media, policy and legislature. Various government and non-government web links that provided details, reports and critiques of policy and legislature were referred to for class discussion and ‘ongoing self-education’.

UG/PG Required Materials	UG/PG Recommended Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham, C. (2012), ‘BAD AUNTY: The truth about the NT intervention and the case for an independent media’, <i>The Tracker</i>, ALL NEWS, 30 June. • <i>Our Generation: Land, Culture, Freedom</i>, (2011), video recording, Our Generation Media. • ‘Indigenous Australian Representation in the Media’, (2013), video recording, <i>Communication, Culture & Indigenous Australians</i>, David Muggleton, YouTube. • ‘Rachel Perkins’ (2013), video recording, <i>Living Black Conversations</i>, SBS, YouTube. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dickson, G. (2012), ‘How not to report on Indigenous education’, <i>Crikey Independent Media</i>, Independent Minds, 20 July. • Bacon, W. (2005), ‘A Case Study in ethical failure: 20 years in media coverage of Aboriginal Deaths in Custody’, <i>Pacific Journalism Review</i>, 11(2), pp. 17-41. • Foley, G. (2013), ‘Liberation Through Acquisition’, <i>Tracker Magazine</i>, April. • <i>Sovereign Embassy</i> (2015), YouTube Channel. • Gondarra, Rev. Dr. D. OAM, Kunoth-Monks, R. OAM, Ryan, J., Nelson, H., Murunggirritj, D., Shaw, B. Mununggurr, Y. (2011), <i>Statement by Northern Territory Elders and Community Representatives</i>. Melbourne. • Martin, L. (2012), ‘Australian Intervention Concerns UN’. <i>The Australian</i>, August 2. • Maddison, S., Denniss, R. & Hamilton, C. 2004, ‘Summary’ and ‘Conclusion’, <i>Silencing Dissent: Non-government organisations and Australian democracy</i>, Discussion Paper Number 65, The Australia Institute. • Australian Government (2012), <i>Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory: A ten year commitment to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory July 2012</i>. Creative Commons, Canberra. • Commonwealth of Australia (2012), <i>Community Affairs Legislation Committee - Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011</i>, Senate Printing Unit, Parliament House, Canberra. • Amnesty International (2011), <i>The Land Holds Us: Aboriginal Peoples’ right to traditional homelands in the Northern Territory</i>. Amnesty International Australia: Sydney. • Stop the Intervention, (2015), ‘Stronger Futures Legislation, <i>Facts & Info</i>, Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney. • <i>The Intervention</i> (2008), video recording, Ronin Films. • Women for WIK (2015). ‘What’s Working: Aboriginal women have answers themselves’, <i>What Now?</i>, Distaff Associates. • Commonwealth of Australia (2014), ‘Connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Australian Government policies and programmes’, <i>indigenous.gov.au</i>, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Indigenous Affairs, Canberra.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Congress of Australia's First Peoples (2015), 'National Congress of Australia's First Peoples', <i>Home</i>, Sydney. • Commonwealth of Australia (2015), 'Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage', <i>Council of Australian Governments</i>, Creative Commons, Canberra. • Australian Human Rights Commission (2015), 'A Quick Guide to Australia's Anti-Discrimination Laws', <i>Good practice good business factsheets</i>, Creative Commons, Canberra.
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Topic 8 - Professional Practice Frameworks: critical approaches to practice

This topic overviewed a broad range of theoretical approaches to social work practice. To begin, common approaches for working with First Australian families and communities were highlighted:

- Cultural affirmation approaches: 'cultural awareness', 'cultural sensitivity' & 'cultural competence';
- Indigenous Social Work;
- 'Anti-' Approaches: anti- racist/oppressive/colonial/discriminatory;
- Structural Approaches;
- Post modern approaches;
- Whiteness Theory.

The accompanying presenter's notes for this slide pointed out the contradictions between the social work goals of human rights and social justice and neoliberal ideology that informs social policy. Drawing from one of the recommended readings for the topic, a book chapter by Australian social work scholars Linda Briskman, Bob Pease, and June Allan (2009) titled 'Introducing critical theories for social work in a neo-liberal context', these contradictions were explained.

Social workers can be seen to be 'stuck' between adhering to neoliberal social policy and being committed to human rights and social justice. Social policy often ignores the bigger context of history and politics. Briskman, Pease & Allan promote social work as inherently political and the necessity for social workers to be politically savvy so that they can perform the role of political activism on behalf of their clients, 'Social workers need to move to the centre stage of activism in order to position themselves as key actors in the policy realm'.

It was recommended that, considering the cultural, socio-political and economic diversity of First Australian peoples and contexts, effective practitioners need to be able draw from a range of critical approaches to tailor to the unique needs of First Australian families and communities. This approach was defined as ‘radical pluralism’, but could also be described as an intersectional approach to practice.

Radical pluralism was described as:

... a combination of approaches that enables the deconstruction of a complex range of overlapping ideologies around class, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, economy and religion.

The presentation concluded by promoting the notion of social workers becoming social and political ‘allies’ of First Australian peoples. Drawing from the required reading for the topic, a chapter by Diane Goodman titled ‘Allies and Action’ (Goodman 2011), allies were described as:

... recognis[ing] that social justice is about their own liberation and humanity, not solely about the liberation of people from the subordinated group.

Qualities of an effective ally were overviewed as:

- knowledge of oppression;
- self awareness humility;
- non-defensiveness;
- ability to choose appropriate action;
- commitment to stay conscious and engaged;
- accountability;
- self compassion;
- plenty of swagger.

Required and recommended materials

Along with the chapter by Briskman, Pease and Allen on critical approaches for social work practice, recommended materials addressed strengths-based approaches to practice. Recommended materials for PG students included extra readings that

address the need for ‘compassion’, ‘self-compassion’, ‘self-care’ and ‘mindfulness’ in social work practice.

UG/PG Required Materials	UG Recommended Materials	PG Recommended Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodman, D. (2011), ‘Allies and Action’ in <i>Promoting diversity and social justice: educating people from privileged groups</i>, 2nd Ed., Routledge, New York. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briskman, L., Pease, B. & Allan, J., (2009), ‘Introducing critical theories for social work in a neo-liberal context’. In J. Allan, L. Briskman, & B. Pease, eds. <i>Critical Social Work</i>, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, pp. 3-14. • Brough, Mark K. and Bond, Chelsea and Hunt, Julian (2004), ‘Strong in the City: Toward a Strength Based Approach in Indigenous Health Promotio’. <i>Health Promotion Journal of Australia</i>, 15(3):pp. 215-220. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per UG. • Scerra, N. (2011), <i>Strengths Based Practice: The Evidence</i>, Research Paper, Uniting Care Children, Young People and Families, Sydney. • Neff, K. (2015), ‘Self-Compassion Guided Meditations and Exercises’, <i>Self-Compassion</i>, The University of Texas, Austin. • Rebick, J. & Ripper, V. (2013), ‘10 key points for becoming a more compassionate activist’, <i>Rabble: news for the rest of us</i>, 19 April. • Salloum, A., Kondrat, D., Johco, C. & Olson, K. (2015), ‘The role of self-care on compassion satisfaction, burnout and secondary trauma among child welfare workers’, <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i>, 49, pp. 54-61. • Newsome, S., Walso, M. & Gruszka, C., (2012), ‘Mindfulness group work: preventing stress and increasing self-compassion among helping professionals in training’, <i>The Journal for Specialists in Group Work</i>, 37(4), pp. 297-311.

Topics 9, 10 & 11 - Sites of Professional Practice

This series of topics presented First Australian perspectives on three broad contexts or ‘sites’ of social work practice,

- Topic 9 – education;
- Topic 10 – child protection;
- Topic 11 – criminal justice.

Each topic overviewed First Australian knowledges, values and cultural practices, detailed the history of the imposition of colonial policy, practice and legislature and provided factual information about contemporary First Australian socio-political realities in each context. Three strong and important messages were conveyed across each of the topics:

1. First Australian peoples' knowledges, values and cultural practices have successfully served First Australian peoples for thousands generations and have much to offer contemporary Australian society;
2. Past injustices have shaped and produced the current disparities and socio-political realities that First Australians experience;
3. A practitioner cannot effectively support or advocate for First Australian families or communities if they do not have a sound awareness of the historical factors that have shaped and influenced the current environment.

As with all of the topics in the Subjects, the required and recommended materials for this series of topics were high-quality, diverse and substantive in range and centred First Australian knowledges.

Required and recommended materials: Topic 9 - Education

UG/PG Required Materials	UG/PG Recommended Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atkinson, J. (2012), 'An educaring approach to healing generational trauma in Aboriginal Australia', <i>Seminar</i>, Australian Institute of Family Studies', Melbourne. • World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education (1999), <i>The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Education</i>. Hilo Hawaii, August 6, 1999. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Townsend-Cross, M. (2004), 'Indigenous Australian perspectives in early childhood education'. <i>International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood</i>, 2(2), pp 2-11. • Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, and Education Services Australia (2010), <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014</i>, MCEECDYA, Melbourne. • CAAMA (2014), <i>Residential schools.... can they really work for remote Aboriginal kids in the N.T.</i>, audio recording, CAAMA, Alice Springs. • Commonwealth of Australia (2016), 'Wulungarra Community School: Walmajarri language and English literacy', <i>What Works</i>, Creative Commons, Melbourne. • Commonwealth of Australia (2016), 'The Murri School, Brisbane: It's an ownership thing, that's what it is' <i>What Works</i>, Creative Commons, Melbourne. • Hymba Yumba (2016), <i>Hymba Yumba Community Listening and Learning Place</i>, Springfield, QLD. • Ferrari, J. (2012), 'Arts program closes indigenous gap in one year', <i>The Australian</i>, 22 October. • Four Corners (2009), 'Chronology: the Bilingual Education Policy in the Northern Territory', <i>Four Corners</i>, ABC.

Required and recommended materials: Topic 10 – Child protection

UG/PG Required Materials	UG Recommended Materials	PG Recommended Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bringing them home: separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families</i>, (1997), video recording, Human Rights Commission, Sydney. • Australian Institute of Family Studies (2015), <i>Child protection and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children</i>, CFCA Resource Sheet, Creative Commons, Canberra. • SNAICC (2013), 'Keynote: Prof. Judy Atkinson', video recording, <i>For Our Children: Ngallak Koorlangka</i>, SNAICC National Conference, 15-17 September, Perth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atkinson, J. (2002), 'Song Lines and Trauma Trails' in <i>Trauma Trails: Recreating Song Lines</i>, Spinifex Press Pty Ltd, North Melbourne, Chapter 2, pp. 23-92. • Commonwealth of Australia (2015), 'National Framework For Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020', <i>Families and Children</i>, Department of Social Services, Creative Commons, Canberra. • SNAICC (2015), <i>Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Official Website</i>, Melbourne. • Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2014), <i>Indigenous child safety</i>, Australian Government, Canberra. • <i>Took the Children Away</i> (1990), Archie Roach, YouTube. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per UG. • Stolen Generations' Testimonies Foundation (2015). <i>Testimonies</i>.

Required and recommended materials: Topic 11 – Criminal justice

UG/PG Required Materials	UG/PG Recommended Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant, E. & Paddick, S. (2014), 'Aboriginal Women in the Australian Prison System', <i>Right Now: Human Rights in Australia</i>. • Georgatos, G. (2013), 'Funding cuts means more Aboriginal peoples incarcerated', <i>The Stringer</i>, 9 May. • Ting, I. (2011), 'Deaths in Custody: A Crikey Investigation', <i>Crikey</i>, 4 March. • Cunneen, C. (2006), 'Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: A continuing systematic abuse'. <i>Social Justice</i>, 33(4), pp. 37-51. • Williams, M. (2012), <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Justice Reinvestment: Discussion Paper</i>, Project 10% Queensland Ltd, South Brisbane. • Calma, T. (2009), 'Chapter 3: Justice Reinvestment: A new solution to the problem of Indigenous overrepresentation in the criminal justice system', <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Social Justice Report</i>. HREOC. Canberra. • Richards, K. (2009), <i>Juveniles' contact with the criminal justice system in Australia</i>. Australian Institute of Criminology. • Johnston, E. (1991), <i>National report: Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody - overview and recommendations</i>. Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service.

Appendix 2

Assessment Details

Subject	Assignment 1	Assignment 2	Assignment 3
Undergraduate	Portfolio, 40%.	Case Study Analysis, 40%.	Online quiz, 20%.
Postgraduate	Researched Digital Story, 20%;	Portfolio, 40%;	Major essay, 40%.

Undergraduate assessments

Assessment Task 1: Online Portfolio

The portfolio will be built incrementally from Week 1 - Week 9 via a variety of reflective writing tasks that will be developed during or after weekly workshops. There will be a number of submission dates over the assessment period so that you will be submitting smaller units of written work a number of times rather than submitting a large piece of written work at one time.

This portfolio will be developed online via a set template which you will be given access to via the Blackboard site for this subject. The template will come with clear instructions as to what needs to be done and when it will be due for submission.

The portfolio will require you to create and submit a series of responses to material presented and discussed in weekly workshops.

In total there will be four pieces of reflective writing that need to be submitted over the assessment period.

Criteria & Marking:

The reflective writing for this assessment tasks requires thoughtful and considered reflection on the set reflection tasks as detailed in your online template. There may also be a requirement to include further or relevant reference and resource links with the written work. If this is required it will be specified.

In total there will be four reflective pieces each worth 10%. This will add up to a total of 40%.

Written pieces will be awarded marks based on the following criteria:

- evidence of considered reflective practice
- utilisation of available reference points for consideration
- inclusion of appropriate references and resource links

Assessment Task 2: Case Study Analysis

The purpose of this paper is for you to consider in an in-depth and critical way how previous policies, events, and ways of working with Indigenous peoples in Australia since contact have shaped current realities for Indigenous families and communities. This will include analysis of past and current professional practice in relevant human services fields.

The assessment will be based on a case study approach. Students will choose a particular case study from a selection of case studies relevant to the Sites of Professional Practice section of the subject content. These include case studies from areas such as education, child protection and criminal justice.

In considering the case study there will be a requirement to consider the following questions:

- a) how have historical processes and practices influenced the scenario outlined in the case study?
- b) how is the culture and policies of human service administrators and providers influencing the scenario in the case study?
- c) how are the cultural beliefs and practices of non-Indigenous people more generally influencing the scenario presented in the case study?
- d) what, if anything, needs to change so that the scenario presented in the case study would not occur or have different outcomes?

Word limit is 2,500 words.

Assessment 3: Online Quiz

The online quiz will be a multiple choice and true/false style format. Instructions for completing the quiz will be clearly included with the quiz. The quiz will include content from across the entire subject from Week 1 to Week 12.

Once opened you will have two hours to complete the quiz. The quiz must be completed in one session. You will not be able to save and return to the quiz at a later date.

Postgraduate assessments

Assessment 1: Digital story

Digital stories are widely recognised as a transformative medium for both storytellers and story listeners. They offer a valuable way of increasing people's awareness of taken for granted and "invisible" aspects of their own lives and sharing experiences and "voices" that are rarely seen or heard in mainstream media.

You are required to engage deeply with your local environment and prepare a 3 - 5 minute digital story that presents a story about yourself and the country upon which you live and work. As part of this task you are required to:

- Identify and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which you live and work;
- Observe, experience, and critically evaluate the extent to which Indigenous viewpoints and cultures are visible and valued in your daily living and working environments and why this might be the case;
- Observe how you personally feel when you engage with different aspects and understandings of country where you live (e.g. natural versus built environments, Indigenous spaces versus mainstream spaces);
- Explore and share your personal historical story of engagement with Indigenous country, peoples, and cultures.

This personal story should:

- include a self-critical evaluation of your prior knowledge of and reactions to the content we have covered in weeks 1-5 of this subject. This may
- include a critical examination of your own cultural positionality/standpoint/biases as an Indigenous or non Indigenous person.

Important note: You are required to display your understanding of the subject content from Weeks 1-5 throughout your story (e.g. through appropriately applying 2-3 key concepts or reflecting on events and policies discussed in the subject). You do not need to use academic referencing in this assignment but you may like to briefly mention author names etc. as part of your story. Try not to let this interrupt the flow of your personal story.

Criteria & Marking:

Critical engagement and analysis - 5 marks:

- Offers insightful, relevant, and critical commentary on the visibility and valuing of Indigenous peoples and cultures in local environments;
- Offers insightful, relevant, and critical commentary on history of own engagement with Indigenous peoples and cultures and own cultural background.

Evidence of reflective engagement with subject content - 5 marks:

- Displays and integrates knowledge of relevant content (e.g. 2-3 main ideas or concepts) from weeks 1-5 across the entire story;

Presentation - 5 marks:

- Presents original self authored content that is clearly audible, visible, and creates a cohesive and compelling story;

Peer review - 5 marks:

- Offers at least two constructive comments to two different students on their submitted digital story via the forum provided.

Assessment 2: Portfolio

Portfolios offer students an opportunity to engage critically with contemporary environments and events that shape their professional practice. Portfolios also offer students an opportunity to develop skills in presenting information in online environments. We have found that this Portfolio assignment is a valuable way for students to express their learning and insights that differs from the standard academic essay format.

The purpose of this portfolio is for you to gather, present, and critically analyse representations of a current issue or topic for Indigenous families and communities in relevant contemporary media, policy, and legislation. You should choose a specific current issue or topic from within one of the key areas of social work and human services practice covered in this subject (weeks 9-11) i.e. child protection, education, or criminal justice. For example, you may wish to focus your portfolio on the high increase in the number of Indigenous women who are involved in the corrections system over the past decade. NB. You can focus your Portfolio on the same topic that you will cover in your major essay if you wish to do so. This Portfolio must be presented in the form of a Google website. A simple template for your site will be provided for you.

Your portfolio must include the following elements:

1. A collection of at least 6-8 broadcast and social media resources (i.e. newspaper articles, YouTube videos, news stories, etc) and at least 4-6 policy and legislation resources (e.g. policy documents, action plans, international charters or agreements, legislation, etc.) available in the public sphere that relate directly to your current topic or issue. This collection must include Indigenous and non-Indigenous media sources and policies wherever possible.
2. A concise, well structured, and well argued 1000 word written critical analysis of your selected media and policy resources drawing on ideologies covered in Week 6 of this subject. Your analysis should answer the following question: How are historically powerful ideologies reproduced or challenged in the media, policy, and legislative sources you have selected? This should include a critical comparison of how your chosen topic or issue is represented in Indigenous and non-Indigenous media and policy.

Criteria & Marking:

1. Portfolio multimedia content - 20 marks
 - Inclusion and brief explanations of relevant contemporary mainstream, independent, and Indigenous media sources and perspectives;
 - Inclusion and brief explanations of relevant Australian and international government and Indigenous led policy documents and charters and legislation.
2. Portfolio written critical analysis of multimedia content - 20 marks
 - Effective and well supported critical comparison of the content of selected Indigenous and non Indigenous media, policy, and legislation sources;

- In-depth and insightful critical reflection on how selected media, policy, and legislation sources are reproducing or challenging dominant ideologies surrounding Indigenous families and communities.

Assessment 3: Major Essay

Academic essays provide students with the opportunity to develop and showcase their academic research, analysis, and reasoning skills in the context of their discipline. This essay will provide you with an opportunity to consolidate and present your learning from across the subject this semester.

The purpose of this essay is for you to consider in an in-depth and critical way how previous policies, events, and ways of working with Indigenous peoples in Australia since colonisation have shaped current realities for Indigenous families and communities in relation to a specific topic or issue of your choosing. The essay also requires you to consider and present practice frameworks that will respond appropriately to your chosen topic or issue.

You are asked to complete three distinct sections of the essay:

1. **Statistics and current reality:** Here you should clearly define and discuss the current issue you have chosen using relevant sources. You should clearly articulate the current reality for Indigenous families and communities in relation to your chosen topic using relevant statistics. Where possible this should include acknowledgement of current community, non government, and government initiatives relating to your chosen topic area. That is, what is currently happening in relation to your chosen issue? You should also research and discuss positive trends and community strengths when outlining the current reality.
2. **How did we get here?:** Here you should critically analyse how history can be seen to have shaped or led us to current realities for Indigenous families and communities in relation to your chosen topic or issue. You are not asked to simply recount historical events in this section. Rather, you should identify and critically discuss 2-3 major events, policies, or trends that have most clearly led to the current reality you have chosen to discuss. These might include, for example, specific former policies and practices around assimilation, racism, colonisation, self determination, and dispossession. It may also include a review of historical activism and advocacy on the part of Indigenous leaders and community members that has led us to where we are now. Important note: You need to make a persuasive analysis and argument regarding why these historical events have clearly shaped current realities and outcomes for Indigenous peoples. Your arguments should be supported by scholarly peer reviewed sources and other sources (e.g. community websites and reports) as needed.
3. **Where are we headed?** This section requires you to draw on the frameworks for practice discussed in this subject to develop suggested frameworks and principles for future practice in your chosen area. Wherever possible please include Indigenous community authored sources to inform your recommendations.

Criteria & Marking:

Length: 3000 Words including references and reference list.

Quality – 20 marks:

- Clear introductory paragraph and conclusion that summarises the core topic and argument of the essay.
- Well presented and structured essay including clear "signposts" (e.g. headings) for the reader.
- Technical quality and thorough proof reading (spelling, grammar, punctuation etc.).
- Clear expression.

Content – 30 marks:

- Essay includes content that clearly follows the task description.
- Relevant content included for all required sections of the essay i.e. sections 1, 2, and 3.
- Draws appropriately on subject content and Indigenous community perspectives to develop frameworks for practice.

Critical analysis – 30 marks:

- Evidence of reflection and informed critical analysis across all sections of the essay.
- Good linking between historical ideologies, practices, and policies with current realities.
- Thorough and appropriate frameworks for practice that display critical insight and understanding.

Research/Use of Material – 20 marks:

- Use of relevant links/examples (references) to support argument/s.
- Use of appropriate APA referencing style in the body of the essay and the reference list.

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