

University of Technology Sydney
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Designing higher education curriculum
in partnership with
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders:
a study in Visual Arts education

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Certificate of original authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text. I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The following publications were produced over the period of this inquiry and contain reference either to the study itself or to occasions where the arts-based approach used in this study in mid 2008 was employed in other contexts. Additionally, an individual poster presentation and the group exhibitions of the visual communication produced by the researcher, the cultural mentor and study participants are noted below.

Publications

Burridge, N., Riordan, G., Aubusson, P., Evans, C., Vaughan, K., Kenney, S. & Chodkiewicz, A. (2009). *Evaluation study of professional learning on teacher awareness of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and its impact on teaching* Sydney, NSW: University of Technology Sydney & NSW Department of Education 33-40

Evans, C. (2009). *Designing Higher Education Curriculum in partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders: an action research project in Visual Arts education* (Poster presentation) NSW Institute of Educational Research Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, UTS: Lindfield, NSW

Evans, C. & Riordan, G. (2012). *Indigo Primary School*. In N. Burridge, F. Whalan & K. Vaughan (Eds.), *Indigenous Education: A learning journey for teachers, schools and communities* Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers 87 - 102

Evans, C. & Skuthorpe, T. (2009). *Designing Higher Education Curriculum in partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders: an action research project in Visual Arts education*. *Journal*

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Group exhibitions

Drawing on Research - Gawura Aboriginal Learning Centre, Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE – Northern Beaches College, Brookvale 13 -16 November, 2009

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Signature of student _____

Date _____

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Glossary of abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACDE	Association of Canadian Deans of Education
AGNSW	Art Gallery of NSW
AHO	Aboriginal Heritage Office
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ALC	Aboriginal Land Council
ATSICQA	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance
BOSNSW	Board of Studies NSW
BTRQ	Board of Teacher Registration Queensland
DECS	Department for Education and Children's Services
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations
IHEAC	Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council
LAECG	Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
MATSITI	More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NIAAA	National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association
NITV	National Indigenous Television
NSWAECG	NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc.
NSWDEC	NSW Department of Education and Communities
NSWIT	NSW Institute of Teachers
NTEU	National Tertiary Education Union
QTIP	Quality Teaching Indigenous Project
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RCIADIC	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
TSIREC	Torres Strait Islanders' Regional Education Council
UN	United Nations
UTS	University of Technology Sydney
WIPCE	World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education

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Abstract

The consultative frameworks between higher education and Aboriginal stakeholders and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders are routinely evolving (Behrendt, Larkin, Griew & Kelly, 2012; Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, 2008; Universities Australia, 2011). Effective consultation is necessary to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to participate not only in curriculum dialogue about what knowledge is of most worth (Apple, 2004; Pinar, 2011; Toohey, 1999; Williamson & Dalal, 2007; Young, 1998) but also in dialogue about what knowledge is most appropriate for particular audiences and how that knowledge is represented.

This study responds to the under representation of research about higher education curriculum renewal processes for incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge or ways of knowing, doing and being (Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2008; Nakata 2007a; Williamson & Dalal, 2007). The inquiry builds on the work of Craven and others in primary education and in other higher education programs (Behrendt et al, 2012; Craven, 1996; Craven, Marsh & Mooney, 2003; Williamson & Dalal, 2007) by shifting the focus to a strand of mainstream secondary teacher education at one Aboriginal community and higher education site.

This action research study used an overarching Indigenist research methodology (Page and Asmar, 2008; Rigney, 1997) to privilege the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in mainstream teacher education curriculum renewal. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, drawn from local community, education, Visual Arts, cultural heritage and legal sectors, provided their advice about a selection of Visual Arts secondary teacher education curriculum documents and about aspects of the research itself during focus groups or interviews. Some provided advice about Visual Arts secondary teacher education curriculum through a 'blue skies', arts-based process. An Aboriginal cultural mentor provided advice throughout the study and permission to use a collaborative, arts-based process (Evans & Skuthorpe, 2009).

The significant of this study resides is the way that it investigates, through the lens of an Aboriginal academic, the curriculum overlap (Figure 1) between a subject-specific strand of a mainstream teacher education course, in this case Visual Arts secondary

teacher education, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge (Behrendt et al, 2012) or ways of knowing, doing and being. Also significant is the effect of the cultural customizing of the methodology particularly that of the arts-based component (Burrige et al, 2009; Evans & Riordan, 2012; Evans & Skuthorpe, 2009).



Figure 1: Christine Evans *The curriculum space between higher education disciplinary knowledge and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge* 2013 (digital photograph)

‘How can we, as teacher educators, provide respectful consultative engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local and professional communities to enhance teacher education?’ was the overarching research question. More specifically the research asks ‘How does an experience of engaging with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in secondary Visual Arts teacher education inform curriculum renewal?’ and ‘How might an experience of engaging with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in secondary Visual Arts teacher education contribute more broadly to engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to inform teacher education?’

Outcomes of this study include confirmation of and improvements to content in the selected teacher education curriculum documents, the formulation of knowledge about representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being in Visual Arts secondary teacher education curriculum generally and, importantly, the emergence of a model of consultation for the higher education site. The model of consultation articulates a flexible, authentic approach that takes into account several enabling conditions. The findings also provide new insights into research practices when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The consultative architecture between higher education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders is routinely evolving. In varying ways, each university in Australia, its administrators, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and its local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, engage with each other and representatives from a range of community, industry and professional sectors to resolve long standing issues of access, representation and acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008; Behrendt, Larkin, Griew & Kelly, 2012; Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, 2008, 2010, 2011a; 2011b; Page and Asmar, 2008; Williamson & Dalal, 2007).

Curriculum is one critical part of the dialogue. In each discipline, in each program, there is increasing potential, as a result of enhanced dialogue and partnership, for higher education providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to move toward mutually satisfying, academically rigorous, cultural quality-assured curricula (Behrendt et al, 2012; Universities Australia, 2011a).

This study is a response to the under representation of research about higher education curriculum renewal processes for incorporating Indigenous knowledge (Behrendt et al, 2012; Nakata 2007a; IHEAC, 2008). A decade ago, Craven, Marsh and Mooney (2003, p. 66) explained that ‘there remains much to be done’ in successfully incorporating Aboriginal Studies into teacher education curriculum despite the clear increase in its representation at that time. Included in the authors’ conclusion was the recommendation that existing mandatory subjects ‘be critically examined and refined to maximize their potency’. Later, Williamson and Dalal (2007, p. 55) noted a ‘paucity of studies’ about how higher education curriculum renewal incorporated Indigenous perspectives.

This study builds on the work of Craven and others in primary education and in other higher education programs (Behrendt et al, 2012; Craven, 1996; Craven, Marsh & Mooney, 2003; Williamson & Dalal, 2007) by moving the focus to secondary teacher education and exploring the curricula of subject specific, teaching methods subjects as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education subjects through the lens of an Aboriginal researcher and from the viewpoint of predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. The study provides insights into a dialogue about the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being in curriculum, specifically in teacher education curriculum, at one local community/ higher education site.

The term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance’ (ATSICQA) has been used in this thesis to describe a verification process that accounts for the degree to which Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, as expert individuals and as cultural collectives, have been involved in the development and management of education processes and products that incorporate representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, histories and cultures. The purpose of this form of quality assurance is to verify, culturally, that representations within education process or products, such as curriculum, are authentic, appropriate for the intended audiences and accurate. Similar measures have been articulated in advocacy for cultural competencies aimed at higher education audiences (Universities Australia, 2011).

The term ‘cultural QA’ was referred to by Judy Ketchell, Principal, Tagai State College (personal communication, August 29, 2011) in a Torres Strait Islander community meeting on Thursday Island in the context of highlighting the importance of engaging community to verify the cultural accuracy of content within Torres Strait Islander teaching resources and curriculum. A mechanism has already been established for the Torres Strait Islander cultural quality assurance of teaching and learning through Tagai State College. The Language and Culture program ‘ensures learning activities value and maintain the integrity of traditional protocols, knowledges and skills’ (TSIREC, n.d.).

An assumption of this work was that such consultative dialogue was best approached by following those cultural protocols that would place the Aboriginal academic

responsible for the curriculum representations, in this case myself, as a go between. Additionally it was assumed that I would take the initial responsibility for identifying, in negotiation with the cultural mentor, what the consultation was about, who was being consulted and how the consultation would take place. With the exception of the go-between, these elements of the consultation were open to modification and the subject of investigation throughout the process.

Fundamental to the overarching research question was a determination of ‘who’ to consult with as well as ‘how’ to consult. The collective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholder interests in this study were represented by the higher education provider’s local Aboriginal Education and Consultative Group (AECG) on behalf of the local community. Available Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts represented the Arts, education, cultural heritage and legal sectors in this study. Gender and age diversity were also significant factors in regard to the engagement of participants.

The study, using action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Reason & Bradbury, 2006) within an Indigenous research methodology (Page & Asmar, 2008; Rigney, 1997) sought input into selected teacher education curriculum in Visual Arts at the University of Technology, Sydney, from a representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders as noted previously. Drawing upon modalities inherent in the Visual Arts and also a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, an arts-based method was incorporated.

The ‘how’ of consultation centred upon action research cycles that involved focus group meetings and interviews in participant recommended settings. While it was anticipated that changes would arise as a result of the action cycles an initial visual representation of the research plan (Figure 3, p. 69) was provided to participants. In three focus groups selected curricula was provided to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants. The arts-based component was included in three focus groups and several interviews and represented an assertion of visual and cultural literacies as complementary methods of data collection.

This arts-based component was derived from Aboriginal community development activity undertaken by Nhunggaborra artist and cultural educator, Tex Skuthorpe (Sveiby

& Skuthorpe, 2006; Evans & Skuthorpe, 2009). Uncle Tex was the cultural mentor for this research project and gave permission for the arts-based approach to be imported into the educational research context of this study.

Responding to the research problem, this study asked the question, ‘How can we, as teacher educators, provide respectful consultative engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local and professional communities to enhance teacher education?’ A key focus question posed to those participants involved in the arts-based research component was, ‘What do you consider to be essential knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures that secondary Visual Arts teacher education students should know preservice?’

Findings about the consultative methods used in the research augured well for the use of the culturally endorsed, arts-based approach in the generation of data. There was strong support for the use of a visual research story as complementary research communication with a majority of participants confirming its cultural suitability and their capacity to comprehend its explanation. In one case, local community members responded to it visually.

Also a part of the methodological contribution, the findings on the use of a culturally customised consent form (Appendix B) confirmed the expanded options as popular (Table 1). The take up by participants of the consent form’s expanded options of identification was strong. This enabled an educative capacity to emerge within the findings through the appearance, in text, of several participants’ Country, Place and/or clan as an accompaniment to their name. It also provided a tangible visual representation of diversity according to identification to emerge (Figure 10). Significantly, from among the participants, it was drawn to my attention that the consent form needed further adjustments for it to be more sensitive to the needs of those participants who had had experienced removal or negative experiences of research. Additional findings are presented in Chapter 4.

The findings of this study indicate that mutual, cultural quality-assurance of curriculum content in the space where higher education disciplinary knowledge and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being co-exist (Figure 1) is achievable.

Outcomes of the study include the confirmation of and improvements to content in the selected teacher education curricula, the formulations of new knowledge about representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being in Visual Arts curriculum generally and the emergence of a model of consultation for the higher education site. The model of consultation articulates a flexible, authentic approach that takes into account several enabling conditions. The findings also provide new insights into research practices when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This study and its methodological, theoretical and practice-based contributions are highly relevant to the dialogue in higher education at a time when improvements in the relationships and representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in discipline based higher education curriculum are being sought (Bradley et al, 2008; Behrendt et al, 2012; Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership, 2013; Universities Australia, 2011) in a context where, particularly in secondary teacher education, there is an underrepresentation of established mechanisms and models.

1.2 Definitions and grammatical nuances

In this thesis the terms ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ have been used in preference to the terms ‘Indigenous Australians’ or ‘First Peoples of Australia’. This is to accord with the preference of the local Aboriginal community where this study took place and the Aboriginal cultural mentor. The only exception to this is where terms are included in the form referred to within publications produced in other contexts. One example of this is the term describing the methodology, ‘Indigenist research’ (Rigney, 1997). Another is ‘Indigenous knowledge’ (Janke, 2009; Nakata, 2007a), a term that has now acquired an academic heritage that continues to sustain its current usage (Behrendt et al, 2012). To describe First Peoples globally, the collective term ‘Indigenous peoples’ will be used in this thesis. The term ‘Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ describes the first peoples of the their respective Countries and Places within present day Australia.

The term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being’ is used in this thesis to conform to the current epistemological positioning of what has historically been named as ‘Indigenous Knowledge’. Both terms are defined variously dependent upon the representational sector from where it emerges and holds currency. For the purpose of this thesis, the term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being’ describes the understandings, skills and agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within their own Country/ies, as well as their interactions and connections ‘off-Country’.

The term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance’ (ATSICQA) is used in this thesis to describe a mechanism that deliberately engages appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders, as individual and collective representatives, to confirm that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing are appropriately and accurately represented in education process or product prior to implementation or publication.

The term ‘blue skies’ in scientific research ‘implies a freedom to carry out flexible, curiosity-driven research that leads to outcomes not envisaged at the outset’ (Linden, 2008). In this thesis the term is appropriated and attached descriptively to the collaborative, arts-based approach to assist the reader to appreciate the open-ended and innovative possibilities of the modality in relation to the topic of curriculum renewal. It is also used to differentiate the arts-based research component from more conventional approaches to conducting curriculum renewal.

The term ‘mainstream’ is used in this thesis to provide clarity about teacher education programs. The term is used to describe conventionally delivered programs, differentiating them from those delivered in block-release mode. The use of the term ‘teacher education’ within this thesis refers to mainstream programs unless stated otherwise.

While observing the conventions of English grammar throughout the thesis, where Aboriginal English words and phrases appear, the convention of using inverted commas to draw attention to them will not be adopted. The words or phrases will be included seamlessly so as not to contribute to a pattern of ‘othering’ Aboriginal English terms. If a reader is unaware of an Aboriginal English term it is recommended that research be

undertaken to gain familiarity with its meaning. Examples of Aboriginal English terms used in this thesis are yarning and sorry business. Where there may genuinely be more than one meaning of a term a footnote is included for clarification.

The other instance of variation is where Aboriginal self-determination invokes the conventions of English grammar elevating to the status of a proper noun terms that have particular importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Examples include Country, Elder, Aunty, Uncle and Indigenous Peoples (as a global collective term). In these instances, English grammar conventions are deliberately engaged for the purpose of attributing commensurate respect. If the reader is unfamiliar with the terms and their meanings it is recommended that further research be undertaken.

Finally, the capacity for research to play an educative role in learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is enabled in this thesis in several ways. For local and individual references – of Country and cultural affiliation – participants’ self-determined terms have been adhered to or those of a local community organisation. The spelling of Country may differ between participants at times. If the reader is not aware of the reasons for this, they are asked to undertake further research about the impact of colonization on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the languages belonging to each of those people. Any spelling variations in this regard are simply a show of respect to the determinations of individual participants.

Where participants have consented to being identified by name and by cultural affiliation with Country or Place, the latter has generally been included in brackets after the participant’s name appears in the thesis for the first time.

Finally, it is important that the reader appreciate that this thesis has been written with an intention to provide access for potential readers who do not work in higher education. This group includes some of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants whose knowledge and insights have been included. To accomplish greater access details and explanations of higher education ‘business’ in curriculum and research have been added on occasions. Some of the visual communication that is represented also fulfils that function.

1.3 Motivating factors

This section shares a number of professional understandings and insights that motivated the doctoral inquiry. Those professional understandings and insights are drawn primarily from two sources. The first source was the period of my professional engagements as a Visual Arts secondary teacher and head teacher over a period of approximately ten years. During that period of professional engagement I became increasingly aware, in the area of the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in teaching and learning in the Visual Arts, of the inadvertent cultural breaches that our generation of educators perpetuated and were, arguably, not forewarned about in our own teacher education credentialing.

I noticed at that time that teacher knowledge about protocols associated with customary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art-making practices (Australia Council, 2007a; Australia Council, 2007b; Janke & Dawson, 2012; Johnson, 1996) was not extensive and such an occlusion in teacher knowledge can result in breaches that may inadvertently cause offence and harm to artists and Aboriginal communities (BOSNSW, 2000; Eatock & Mordaunt, 1997; Janke, 1998; Janke & Dawson, 2012; Johnson, 1996; Janke, 1997). Streams of appropriation and eclecticism within postmodern art practice (Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996) exacerbated this trend despite the positive impact postmodernism has played in critical theorizing that has contributed to the creation of curriculum space for hitherto marginalized groups.

All too frequently while operating within teaching and learning experiences informed by postmodern curricula, primary and secondary Visual Arts students, and indeed some of us in the teaching profession have inadvertently appropriated Aboriginal cultural heritage without knowing of the cultural obligation to first seek the informed consent of custodians and/or the local community. This results in outcomes that are inconsistent with Aboriginal customary practices and Law/Lore (Eatock & Mordaunt, 1997; Janke, 1998; Janke, 2002; Janke & Dawson, 2012; Johnson, 1996) and are inconsistent with national and international frameworks, recommendations and policy (Commonwealth of Australia, 1987-91; Johnson, 1996; UN, 2008). Precedents that are created and remain unchecked within the school context can manifest further harm as students transfer their 'skills' of

appropriation, for example, into their future workplaces in commercial and/or community activity.

A range of court actions such as the Milpurrurru vs Indofurn ‘carpet case’ (1994) and the Bulun Bulun and R&T Textiles (1996) case represented legal milestones in the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage and had an impact in the manufacturing industry (Eatock & Mourdant, 1997; Janke, 2008). While these examples of the risks - ethical, legal or spiritual - associated with the postmodern appropriation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imagery are foregrounded in this chapter it is only one aspect of a much greater body of knowledge about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage management that teachers have, in the past, largely been exempt from learning about in their pre-service training.

Interestingly, the latter phase of my professional life as an academic working between Aboriginal education and Visual Arts teacher education has been devoted to trying to ‘make right’ that situation to the best of my ability by addressing that occlusion in teacher education. This thesis is a part of that academic response or contribution through research, by exploring these issues at the local level. This segues to the second source of those understandings and insights that have contributed to the motivation for this thesis. They are my experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in curriculum – teacher education and school curriculum. In higher education, this has occurred through my experiences of the development and review of degrees, coordination and development of subjects, postgraduate coursework and as a professional representative on teacher education course accreditation panels.

This doctoral study emerged at a time when I realized that in teaching future teachers about consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, irrespective of being an Aboriginal academic, I should more formally ‘walk the talk’ of consultation myself to assure the cultural quality of those Visual Arts education and Aboriginal education subjects that I coordinated. This study in Visual Arts education allowed curriculum artifacts from my dual practices, as Visual Arts education lecturer and Aboriginal education lecturer, to be reviewed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to enhance teaching and learning activity in those areas in secondary visual art education at the higher education site.

Typically, the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in curriculum renewal progresses the academic practices of the higher education site in its key roles in research, teaching and learning and community engagement. There are ultimately only local solutions for each university/community site as, for example, the Behrendt Report (Behrendt et al, 2012) illustrates. The progress at each site reflects the degree of readiness and enablement of university and community governance structures.

In the case of this higher education provider/ community site, a range of favorable conditions permitted research activity that was beneficial to the teacher education program. This occurred through practical outcomes from the study's consultation that quite independently demonstrated the program's adherence to external course accreditation criteria. It also provided a largely positive experience of higher education research for the local Aboriginal community representatives and other expert participants. Those who participated in the arts-based component expressed unanimously that it added value to the research project.

While higher education enjoys some degree of autonomy courses are required to adhere to the requirements of accrediting authorities. Thus, working for example within and potentially beyond the requirements of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) (2011a), teacher education programs will continue to share with education students disciplinary knowledge that is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Ideally, representations of such content will be culturally quality assured and, through that process, program administrators will further enhance the quality and innovation of their curriculum products as conveying mechanisms or springboards for the quality credentialing of future teachers (Anning, 2010; Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2010).

The outcomes of this study contribute to this aspect of practice through the emergence of a model of consultation that could be considered in a range of contexts. It also provides general advice for future Visual Arts teachers and teacher education program administrators about curriculum aspirations of a sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

1.4 Summary of chapters

The structure of this thesis is explained in the following summary.

Chapter 1 shared, up to this point, the professional understandings and insights from my own practices that motivated this doctoral study. It also provided definitions of key terms used in the inquiry.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review of those fields pertinent to the study. The literature review ultimately reinforces the claim that research into practices of cultural quality control by higher education curriculum renewal processes for the enhanced representation of Indigenous knowledge remains significantly underrepresented.

Starting with the more central concepts, various definitions and academic contestations of the term Indigenous knowledge are discussed (Horsthemke, 2008; Janke, 2008; Nakata, 2007a) along with accounts of the presence of Indigenous knowledge or what that term might represent in higher education curriculum (Battiste, 2002; Price & Craven, 2009; Williamson & Dalal, 2007). Discussions of vignettes from literature about the histories and functions of the term 'curriculum' and the way that curriculum, as a product, is developed and renewed are represented (Apple, 2004; Apple & Buras, 2006; Barnett & Coates, 2005; Green, 2010; Phelan, 2011; Pinar, 2011; Toohey, 1999; Williamson & Dalal, 2007; Young, 1998) with a focus on diversity representation.

Literature that examines consultative and partnership approaches between education providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian contexts is explored next (Reid et al, 2013; Beetson, 2002; Craven, 2003; Vaughan, 2005) to consider how international, postcolonial trends (Association of Canadian Deans of Education, 2010; Kinchloe, 2006; Williamson, 2007) have been enacted in the national landscape. Literature representing how teacher education and Visual Arts education fields represent culturally diverse or under-represented groups follows looking, in particular, at how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being are represented in Visual Arts, or Visual Arts teacher education, curriculum and research (Boughton, 1996; Boughton, 1998; Clark, 1996; Duncum, 2010; Fisher 2005). The emergence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and Indigenous Australian

education subjects in Australian higher education is also briefly referred to (Behrendt et al, 2012; Craven, Marsh & Mooney, 2003; Kincheloe, 2006; Nakata, 2007a; Price & Craven, 2009; Rigney, 2001) along with recounts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' late access to higher education.

An examination of postmodern Visual Arts curriculum (Clark, 1996; Freedman & Hernandez, 1998) identifies the double-edged sword that postmodernism has been for Indigenous cultures as it invited into mainstream curriculum opportunities for culturally diverse expression but in ways, at times, that disregarded cultural protocols and caused offence. A brief discussion of the history of Visual Arts education research (Eisner, 2006; Finlay, 2008) is represented. Central to this study is the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander intellectual and cultural heritage protection and management (Anderson, 2010; Janke, 1998; Janke & Dawson, 2012; Posey & Dutfield, 1996).

Chapter 3 explains the methodological approach and contexts of this study. The encasing of the culturally vetted, collaborative, arts-based approach within the overarching Indigenist research methodology is explained as well as the use of action research to structurally guide the inquiry. This chapter also provides insight into several cultural modifications of the research design and research methods. The cultural customisation of the research design and methods, some associated with ethics, was deemed necessary to work respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

Chapter 4 details the analysis of data, reports results and shares the major insights arising from the inquiry based upon evidence grounded in the research that includes, but is not limited to, details from visual communication and excerpts from transcriptions from focus groups and interviews held over the three years of fieldwork.

Outcomes of this study include confirmation of and improvements to content in the selected teacher education curricula, the formulation of new knowledge about representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being in Visual Arts curriculum generally and, importantly, the emergence of a model of consultation for the higher education site. The model of consultation articulates a flexible, authentic approach that takes into account several enabling conditions. The findings also

provide new insights into research practices when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Chapter 5 discusses implications arising from the major insights from the inquiry. These include expanded options for consultation by higher education with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders for the purpose of curriculum cultural quality assurance and innovation. It also includes the potential for the consultation model, with appropriate cultural endorsements, to be trialed outside the context of this study.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter significant literature within diverse fields of study relevant to this investigation will be analysed to verify the key messages of the scholarly knowledge produced on the subject of engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in the process of incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, or ways of knowing, doing and being, within teacher education programs in higher education.

The chapter starts by examining literature that reports more broadly on the shifts toward Indigenous knowledge being represented in curriculum generally, in higher education and in teacher education more specifically, along with the policy frameworks, agencies and opportunities that contribute to change in this field. The chapter then reports on approaches by education providers to securing cultural quality control in curriculum development through partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. An interrogation of the reasons for this is also included.

Particular attention is paid to Visual Arts teacher education where the successful co-existence of divergent cultural practices requires solutions for culturally safe inclusion of knowledge, skills and understandings in curriculum. The review examines accounts of, in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts understandings, skills and knowledge and explores the relationships of those with Visual Arts education curricula for secondary pre-service teachers. Finally, having determined the key messages, the chapter closes by drawing upon this body of literature to defend the research question of the inquiry.

2.2 Indigenous knowledge: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being

To preface discussion of literature pertaining to the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, skills and understandings within Australian teacher education curricula it is useful to briefly revisit the body of knowledge often referred to as Indigenous knowledge, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being. This is because Indigenous knowledge in its various representations remains for teacher education a significant source of content that can be embedded in curriculum and be used to guide curriculum design or renewal. The initial exploration for an inquiry into secondary Visual Arts teacher education curriculum renewal is undertaken on the premise that, in a customary sense, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts knowledge is an integrated part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge with the same propensities for the attraction of economic interest, commodification and exploitation (Anderson, 2009; Australia Council, 2008; Eatock & Mordaunt, 1997; Janke, 1998; Janke, 2009; Johnson, 1996; Mellor & Janke, 2001).

The term 'Indigenous knowledge' has been used, by its proponents, to define and articulate understandings held globally by Indigenous peoples that are recognized as distinct from the knowledge and knowledge systems of non-Indigenous peoples. Dove et al (2007) propose that anthropological interest in non-Western knowledge was present as the discipline itself emerged and that that interest has been sustained. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, they explain that those in the discipline of anthropology 'began to invoke indigenous systems of knowledge and practice to critique the dominant development paradigm' (2007, p. 129).

While abundantly represented in academic and popular discourse (Nakata, 2007a), the term is also rigorously debated and redefined regularly by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. Important to this discussion is, as Nakata notes, the increased incorporation of 'a discernible "Indigenous voice" as Indigenous people insert their own narratives, critique, research, and knowledge production' (2007a, p. 8).

The term 'Indigenous knowledge' has heralded or overarched other strands and hybrid constructs such as, for example, Aboriginal English (Eades, 1992; Hanlen, 2008), Indigenous science (Horsthemke, 2010; Michel, Vizina, Augustus & Sawyer, 2008; Michie, 2002) and Indigenous Arts (Jones, 2009; Mellor & Janke, 2001; Perkins, 2010). The use of the term 'Indigenous' as an adjective to make distinct an 'other' strand within a disciplinary area appears to be less problematic in some areas than in others. While the embedding of Indigenous knowledge in Visual Arts education curriculum is an area of interest pertinent to this inquiry, accounts of Indigenous knowledge being embedded in curriculum other than Visual Arts will also be referred to in this chapter.

Aitken and Elliot (2010) assert that the term 'Indigenous knowledge' is problematic not because of the legitimacy of the concept that the term represents but rather because 'the word knowledge is embedded in a Eurocentric epistemology and should be replaced by other expressions that more authentically capture an Indigenous worldview, such as Indigenous ways of knowing, living, or being' (p. 322). Such a proposal seeks to reconstruct the term by attempting to displace the disciplinary limitations it has come to attract. The risk or opportunity of this is that substituted terms such as 'ways of knowing, doing and being' may, in fact, perpetuate the continued marginalising of what the term represents in mandated fields of mainstream curricula. 'Indigenous Knowledge' is a term in the language of the coloniser that has, due to epistemological contestations, been replaced more recently by the term 'Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being' or similar (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2013; Nakata, 2010). Hoffman uses the term 'Aboriginal Knowing' (2013) in his work that articulates 'A Conceptual Framework of Aboriginal Knowing'.

The contentious nature of the embedding of Indigenous Knowledge in curriculum is played out in particular in the area of science. Tension is noticeable when, for example, Horsthemke (2008) disputes the plausibility of the term 'Indigenous Science' in school-based science education in Africa. In making this contestation, Horsthemke argues that some of the premises of Indigenous science are at odds with notions of scientific knowledge and truth (2008). Further to this, Horsthemke has concerns about the ramifications for higher education and tertiary curriculum as a result of his reservations about the validity of 'Indigenous science'. In Horsthemke's exploration of the varied accounts of terms such as 'Indigenous knowledge', 'ethnoscience' and 'Indigenous

science' he does represent the views of opposing scholars who offer convincing arguments for the inclusion of what the terms represent. The view of Odora Hoppers (Horsthemke, 2008) is of interest in this discussion because it reinforces some sound reasons for the embedding of Indigenous knowledge/s in science education stating that:

The relationship between people, the knowledge and the technologies for its application are under-girded by a cosmology, a world view.... In the context of such a philosophy, IKS [indigenous knowledge systems] practice does not seek to conquer or debilitate nature as a first impulse ... Experiences from indigenous communities in other parts of the world emphasize the fact that knowledge is relationship, and relationship brings with it responsibilities and obligations and extends into ecological practice. (Odora Hoppers 2005, p. 4–6).

From a Torres Strait Islander academic perspective, Nakata (2007a) argues that Indigenous knowledge is accepted within 'various clusters of Western intellectual activity' (p. 7) explaining that the renewal of interest in Indigenous knowledge is due to 'a range of interests such as sustainable development, biodiversity and conservation interests, commercial and corporate interests, and Indigenous interests'. Janke (2009), as a Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal legal commentator, attributes the source of 'Indigenous knowledge' directly to Indigenous peoples stating that 'historically, Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices were created by Indigenous people through inter-generational transfer of knowledge, working within their territories' (p. 6). In Nakata's accounting of Indigenous knowledge, he refers to 'the corpus' which is 'that body of knowledge, both historical and ongoing, that is produced by others "about us" across a range of intellectual, government, and other historical texts' (2007a, p. 7).

Neither Janke's perspectives nor Nakata's discount each other but, rather, are nuanced by the professionally distinct lenses of the academic and legal conventions they represent. Nakata, from his expert academic position, acknowledges explicitly that the term 'Indigenous knowledge' in the academy includes non-Indigenous researchers' representations as well as, increasingly, Indigenous representations. Janke, from her expert legal position, prefers to make explicit the primary source of Indigenous knowledge being Indigenous peoples themselves (2009). The engagement of non-Indigenous peoples in Indigenous knowledge transfer, she indicates as one of outsider

agency concerned often with the harvesting or bio-prospecting of Indigenous knowledge (2009).

Independent of the legitimacy challenges that debate surrounding the actual term ‘Indigenous Knowledge’ might raise is the abundant evidence that what it represents is sufficiently tangible to be highly sought after by Indigenous groups or their representatives seeking cultural heritage protection of it (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2012; Battiste, 2008; Eatock & Mordaunt, 1997; Janke, 2009; Johnson, 1996; Janke, 1997; Janke, 1998; Nakata, 2010; National Health & Medical Research Council, 2007; Smith, 1999;) or non-Indigenous groups who seek forms of positive gain by accessing it (Anderson, 2009; Brown, 2003; Posey & Dutfield, 1996). As scholarly debates about the validity and nature of Indigenous knowledge gained traction so too has the focus upon ethical pathways to it (AIATSIS, 2012; NHMRC, 2007).

In the late 1980’s, ownership of knowledge and artistic creations traceable to the world’s indigenous societies emerged, seemingly out of nowhere, as a major social issue. Before then, museum curators, archivists, and anthropologists had rarely worried about whether the information they collected and managed should be treated as someone else’s property. Today the situation is radically different. Scarcely a month passes without a conference examining the ethical and economic questions raised by the worldwide circulation of indigenous art, music, and biological knowledge (Brown, 2003, p. ix)

As vulnerable as Indigenous knowledge broadly may be in the face of the interest of contemporary economic interests, such as in the value of Indigenous knowledge of plants to pharmaceutical companies (Battiste, 2008; Janke, 1997; Smith, 2011), so too is there vulnerability surrounding the maintenance of the control of Indigenous Visual Arts within the arts and tourism industries. According to Anderson (2009), the case of *Milpurruru and Others v Indofurn Pty Ltd* ‘demonstrated how the “uniqueness” of Indigenous Australian cultures, expressed through cultural products such as art, were increasingly marketable commodities’ (p. 1).

Recounts of the commodification, exploitation and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts in the Australian Arts are, for the purpose of cultural quality control or cultural competency, within the scope of teacher education in the Arts and other strands (Board of Studies NSW, 2000; Department for Education and Children's Services, 1994). Knowledge about and understandings of the relationships between Western and Aboriginal protocols that oversee arts production and management are, likewise, within the scope of teacher education curriculum (Department for Education and Children's Services, 1994; Evans & Skuthorpe, 2009; NSWBOS, 2000). A more detailed review of literature examining Indigenous arts knowledge, skills and understandings, or ways of knowing, doing and being, will be included later in this chapter.

2.3 Curriculum

In this section a range of understandings, functions and theoretical framings of curriculum will be examined. In the section that follows, a review of literature exploring relationships between Indigenous knowledge and curriculum is undertaken. In the first instance, views on the origins of the term 'curriculum' are represented.

Reid (1999), while acknowledging a popular view that the term 'curriculum' is, through its link to the Latin word 'currus', associated with a race or a course that is run, suggests that a more accurate interpretation is that of 'a passage of time' (p. 187). Reid provides the example of 'curriculum studiorum' as meaning 'the time taken up by studies'.

Barnett and Coates (2005) were disconcerted by the substitution of the term 'course' for 'curriculum' in three significant higher education government-backed reports in the United Kingdom (UK) suggesting that it 'represents a systematic disinclination to engage seriously with matters concerning higher education as an educational project' (2005, p. 14). In Australia, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), the independent national higher education sector regulating organization, also uses the term 'courses' rather than 'curriculum' in its communication about higher education standards (TEQSA, 2011). While Barnett and Coates may be entitled to be critical of such a change accompanying deeper-seated government agendas, it could be argued that the term

‘course’ represents a more accurate translation into contemporary English from the original Latin term.

Literature on curriculum studies and inquiry reveals a potent space within which to set this study that, through the eyes of an Aboriginal academic, seeks to culturally quality assure the representation of Indigenous knowledge, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being, in selected Visual Arts teacher education curriculum. Repeatedly in literature on curriculum studies and inquiry are questions of *what* and *whose* knowledge is of the most worth? (Apple, 2004; Apple & Buras, 2006; Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996; Reid, 1999; Toohey, 1999; Young, 1998). Toohey (1999), in providing guidance on designing courses in higher education, noted that a socially critical approach to curriculum, based upon the work of critical theorists, recognizes educational institutions as having been created and shaped by social elites. Consequentially, Toohey asserts that the institutions’ role is to ‘maintain and support the status quo’ (p. 63).

Whether one applies the questions about worthiness of knowledge to an ethnocentric elite, professional community or across all representative groups, Green’s comment that representation is ‘inherently, inescapably political’ and goes ‘hand-in-hand’ with power (2010, p. 460) is a necessary reminder for all contributors to curriculum design. Part of the problem of awareness is that the selection of what counts as valid knowledge is illustrative of what is often referred to as the “hidden curriculum.” In other words, the evaluative choices that inform the selection of valid knowledge are power-laden and interested but are often represented as objective and common-sensical. In his critical curriculum theorizing, Young (1998) investigates the stratification and Othering of knowledge. He states that the “power of some to define what knowledge is ‘valued’ leads to the question of accounting for how knowledge is stratified and by what criteria” (p. 15). In this context, the process of curriculum selection and development is not neutral nor necessarily transparent or fair. For this reason, Apple (1993) suggests that it is important to question the “*politics* of official knowledge” (p. 221) and to ask “Who benefits?” from its legitimation (p. 234).

Further to the discussion of power is the representation it enacts. Representation, Green claims, ‘entails speaking *for* as well as speaking *about*—advocacy as well as

knowledge' (2010, p. 460). Kemmis and Fitzclarence acknowledge Lundgren's identification of representation as a 'central problem of curriculum' (Green, 2010), 'a problem that arises when a society reaches a point at which it must organize itself to ensure that the knowledge needed by future generations will be passed on' (p. 456).

The challenges of representation for curriculum at a time when the expectations of curriculum audiences are the most socially, politically, economically, spiritually, technologically and culturally diverse in educational history are, of course, profound (Apple & Buras, 2006; Frey, 2007; Young, 1998). When some constituents within the curriculum production line are educationally disadvantaged and marginalized groups, negotiating access to and securing curriculum product content becomes particularly problematic. How then, from an Indigenous curriculum user perspective, is 'curriculum for engagement' (Barnett & Coates, 2005, p. 124) enabled to operate in the 21st century? The function of curriculum as cultural practice (Kanu, 2006) becomes pertinent in light of this discussion particularly if power assumptions are not checked.

Of particular relevance to this discussion is the influence of the theorizing of a range of scholars that impacted recent decades of curricula iteration. In the mid to late 20th century, the critical insights of writers such as Gramsci, Foucault, Lyotard, Freire, Bhabha and Spivak (Buras & Apple, 2006; Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996), in response to Eurocentric and Modernist agency locally and globally, underpinned a significant renewal process in curriculum that created space for the representations of a range of 'others'.

Relevant is the significant bearing that critical theory, postmodernism, poststructuralism and postcolonialism have had upon curriculum generally and, in the case of this investigation, upon Visual Arts education curriculum (Clark, 1996; Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996) and Indigenous education curriculum respectively (Aikenhead, 2006; Buras & Apple, 2006; Kincheloe, 2006). These theoretical positions are interested in the informed intellectual disruption of modernist theories of curriculum, albeit in the competing era of neo-liberalism and its effect upon education. In higher education, this is evident in the literature about the progress of inclusive practices in curriculum (Branche, Mullennix & Cohn, 2007; Slattery, 2006). That said, it is interesting to note that in the very same substantial international publication edited by Branche, Mullennix and Cohn (2007) on diversity across the curriculum in higher education, not one of the fifty-seven

contributors was identified as Indigenous in the contributors' pages. In itself this provides evidence of an inadvertent or sustained maintenance of the elitism of universities against particular 'others' and sustains debate of the representation 'problem' (Green, 2010; Kincheloe, 2006).

Curriculum is defined variously as process, product (Reid, 1999), institution (Reid, 1999), cultural practice (Kanu, 2006) and praxis (Green, 2010). Reid's claim of curriculum as institution is borne out by it having become 'an institutional category' that can be 'promoted, denigrated, written about, or made into an election issue' (p. 190). As an example, he argues the status of a national curriculum as being comparable in its socio-political regard as a national debt or a national health service (p. 190).

This inquiry pertains to teacher education curriculum and the ways of undertaking curriculum renewal that assesses the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and historical knowledge, skills and understandings in Visual Arts curriculum in ways that engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to assess cultural quality control. Several higher education stakeholders increasingly look to universities to be providing representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge more broadly in curriculum, in graduate attributes and within existing structures (Anning, 2010; Bradley et al, 2008; Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2008, 2010; Universities Australia, 2011).

Important in this discussion, however, is the relevance of this inquiry in light of the changing demands upon higher education curriculum (Bradley et al, 2008; Drummond, Alderson, Nixon & Wiltshire, 1999; TEQSA, 2011) including the increase in professional accreditation demands upon teacher education programs in particular (AITSIL, 2012; Phelan, 2011). In this environment, diverse stakeholder expectations are formalized and universities are increasingly required to demonstrate proficiency in service delivery to external regulatory organisations. In Canada, Phelan (2011) notes that, in regard to teacher education, 'the delicate balance between professional accreditation and institutional autonomy is a constant source of concern to academics' (p. 209).

In conclusion to this discussion about curriculum, irrespective of surrounding theoretical, professional and political advocacy, the temporal qualities and intensity of

curriculum generation and renewal are pragmatically captured in the statement by Young: ‘The curriculum is always a selection and organization of the knowledge available at a particular time’ (1998, p. 12).

2.4 Indigenous knowledge - or ways of knowing, doing and being - and curriculum

‘Indigenous knowledge’, as a term in English, is a European construction that Indigenous peoples have lately repossessed and reconstructed (Battiste, 2002; Nakata, 2007a). What Indigenous knowledge represents for Indigenous knowledge custodians has ancient origins (Battiste, 2002; Smith, 1999; Sveiby & Skuthorpe, 2006) and is fully coherent in its customary language form situated in the lands of its original and sustained usage (Hobson, Lowe, Poetsch & Walsh, 2010; Williams, 2011). Curriculum evolved largely as a functional solution for the consolidation of revered, routinely revitalised Eurocentric knowledge in a form that held capacity to guide educators in the transferal of that knowledge, its understandings and skills, to children and youth in a mass education context (Apple, 2004; Young, 1998).

Approached in this way some of the relationships between Indigenous knowledge and curriculum can be appreciated through two broad phases with the cultural affiliation of the ‘representer’ of either the Indigenous knowledge or the curriculum a significant factor. From the time of its European ‘discovery’ arguably until the dismantling of some Modernist practices, Indigenous knowledge, in Western disciplinary knowledge production contexts, was almost exclusively represented to broader audiences in tangible form by non-Indigenous agents. With no opportunities for Indigenous cultural quality assurances, the bias in knowledge production heavily favoured the researcher and the society/ies that that researcher was a part of. Some time later, with critical lenses, some earlier research has been reviewed to expose bias and harm. Gould (1997) did this, for example, when he reviewed *Crania Americana* by Moreton dispelling claims that emerged from flawed data samples.

Until recently, much non-Indigenous-authored representation of Indigenous knowledge had been re-presented in curriculum that was bereft of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance (ATSICQA) process. In Australia, in the wake of

human rights advances including gains made through the introduction of the policy of Aboriginal self-determination in 1972, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators, communities and other stakeholders requested dialogue with mainstream education providers in order to exercise their rights in decision-making affecting their children and communities (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989; UN, 2009).

Enquiries that responded to widespread discrimination against Aboriginal people, such as the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Commonwealth of Australia, 1991) were held. Its recommendations impacted curriculum processes in Australia. Two of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, 295a and 295b, are of particular relevance to this study about teacher education curriculum. Recommendation 295a states that ‘all teacher training courses include courses which will enable student teachers to understand that Australia has an Aboriginal history and Aboriginal viewpoints on social, cultural and historical matters, and to teach the curriculum which reflects those matters’. Significant to the development of higher education curriculum and this investigation is Recommendation 295c. It states that ‘Aboriginal people should be involved in the training courses both at student teacher and in-service level’. While they are recommendations only, until the incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and adults are reduced and reflect similar levels as those for non-Indigenous people, they continue to have bearing for teacher educators.

Legislative frameworks, similarly, sought to reset relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and insist upon just processes. Of interest to teacher educators in NSW, for example, is the New South Wales Education Act 1990 No. 8 (NSW Government, 2013). It states under Section 6 that:

- (1) It is the intention of Parliament that every person concerned in the administration of this Act or of education for children of school-age in New South Wales is to have regard (as far as is practicable or appropriate) to the following objects: ...
- 6(f) provision of an education for Aboriginal children that has regard to their special needs,
- 6(g) development of an understanding of Aboriginal history and culture by all children

and in 6(m1) ‘provision of opportunities for Aboriginal families, kinship groups, representative organisations and communities to participate in significant decisions under this Act relating to the education of their children’. While these objects pertain to provisions for school education rather than higher education, in the preparation of teachers in mainstream programs, the intentions and outcomes of the objects have at least indirect bearing upon general inductions to educational practice for pre-service teachers.

In the case of Recommendations 295a and 295b of the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody (1991), the intention is very clear. The extent, however, may be contested. What sits beneath recommendation 295b is the issue of adequate cultural quality control. This study responds, in part, to that recommendation by exploring cultural quality control of selected curriculum from the local community and professional community position. Only since Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have become insiders in higher education have we determined that, among other pressing matters, the absence of cultural quality assurance remains a contemporary challenge with a need for solutions and models (Behrendt et al, 2012; Universities Australia, 2011).

What does ‘self determination’ mean to Aboriginal people particularly in an educational context? Various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders have articulated what self-determination has meant (Behrendt, 2001; Nakata, 2003; Rigney, 2002; Dodson, 2002). Behrendt explains that ‘the right to self-determination is recognised under international law in Article 1 of both of the canonical human rights documents, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2001, p. 2). She notes, however, that despite this recognition ‘there is much debate about the application of the concept of self determination as it applies to Indigenous people’.

Behrendt lists a number of examples of what self-determination means ranging from ‘the right not to be discriminated against’ to ‘the right to be educated and to work’ and ‘the right to govern and manage our own affairs and our own communities’ (2001, p. 2). Institutional change is deemed a prerequisite, however, for more just and sustainable outcomes. Rigney, during the period of treaty debate in Australia, saw potency for treaty to enable such solutions allowing ‘Australian society and its structures like education to

be transformed to include Indigenous self-governance and self determination into its daily *modus operandi*' (2002, p. 74).

Even in the present the implementation of Aboriginal self-determination remains elusive for many Aboriginal communities. Dodson noted that:

the best and most viable solution to overcoming the enormous social, economic and political issues affecting Indigenous Australia is self-determination. By that I mean Indigenous people in charge of making and implementing the important decisions about their lives and futures (2013, para 3).

Sanders (2002) describes the history of Aboriginal self determination in Australia (p. 1) commencing with the Whitlam government's introduction of the policy in 1972 and concluding with proposals about an Indigenous order of Australian governance.

According to Sanders (2002, p. 1-2):

Whitlam clearly had a sense that the handling of Indigenous affairs in Australia was part of a much larger global process of international law-making and decolonisation. And he and his government wanted, through the use of the term self-determination in Indigenous affairs, to make explicit their awareness of this connection. As Whitlam noted in his 1972 policy speech, it was on the 'treatment of her Aboriginal people' that Australia would be judged, above all else, by 'the rest of the world' (1985: 466).

In Australia, future possibilities remain encapsulated in the seed of change with, for example, the passing by the House of Representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Bill 2012. Potentially, an outcome from this bill, that acknowledges, through legislative definition, the presence and status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia could underpin future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' determinations in asserting educational entitlement.

The RCIADIC (Commonwealth of Australia, 1991) recommendations regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples involvement in teacher education aligns with principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self determination however that

engagement needs to be authentically embedded rather than tokenistic. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander generated and monitored representations of cultural ways of knowing, doing and being in curriculum renewal and teaching and learning in higher education is crucial for accuracy and quality.

The relationships between Indigenous Knowledge and curriculum were introduced with colonization (Kincheloe, 2006) and continue, in postcolonial contexts, to be battlegrounds of contestation (Edwards & Hewitson, 2008; Nakata, 2007a; Nakata, 2010; Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2013; Smith, 1999; Smith, 2008). Some remain fervent in their views that the academy is another powerful form of Eurocentric domination (Edwards & Hewitson, 2008). Politically, there continues to be sustained advocacy for recognition of Indigenous knowledge, or ways of knowing, doing and being (Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2008, 2011a; Nakata, 2010), at all levels of curriculum.

Battiste (2002) positions Indigenous knowledge as ‘a transcultural (or intercultural) and interdisciplinary source of knowledge that embraces the contexts of about 20 percent of the world’s population’ (2002, p. 7). In the area of changing practice pertinent to this inquiry is the relationship of Indigenous knowledge and curriculum (Craven, 1996; Herbert, 2010; Nakata, 2007a; Nakata, 2010; Price & Craven, 2009; Reid, 2009).

Important to this discussion is the recognition by global human rights bodies such as the UN of Indigenous peoples’ entitlement to educational access. The UN Human Rights Council requested a study by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on this matter. The subsequent report (UN, 2009, p. 11) asserts that:

States are expected to equip indigenous communities by integrating their perspectives and languages into mainstream education systems and institutions, and also by respecting, facilitating and protecting indigenous peoples’ right to transfer knowledge to future generations by traditional ways of teaching and learning. (para. 42).

There is an expectation among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the UN that Australia upholds determinations such as this as well as others articulated in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2008). Article 21 states that:

Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security (UN, 2008, p. 9)

Consistent with UN policy on Indigenous rights, there is an expectation, in Australia, that education providers will demonstrate consistency with the National Goals for Indigenous Education (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989) in which consultation and/or partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in educational decision making is an expectation.

Despite the urging from policy and stakeholders for the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge in curriculum the pathway to the achievement of that goal is not without challenges. Nakata (2007a, p. 8) reports that 'Indigenous knowledge systems and Western scientific ones are considered so disparate as to be "incommensurable" (Verran, 2005) or "irreconcilable" (Russell, 2005) on cosmological, epistemological and ontological grounds'. Further to this, Nakata explains that 'Those who have an interest in drawing in Indigenous knowledge into curriculum areas understand these concepts and have some understanding of how differences at these levels frame possible understanding and misunderstanding at the surface levels of aspects of Indigenous knowledge' (2007a, p. 8).

Indigenous presence in higher education

Since the late 20th century, attention in colonized countries globally has turned to the relationship between Indigenous knowledge and the work of universities (Association of Canadian Deans of Education, 2010; Battiste, 2008; Myer, 2003; Smith, 1999; Universities Australia, 2011) with a particularly strong emphasis on changing practices in research about Indigenous peoples and about the way Indigenous knowledge is represented in curriculum and teaching and learning. This trend is consistent in Australia with the presence and work of a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics who have sought to secure cultural competencies in research affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Brady, 1992; Rigney, 1997; Moreton-

Robinson, 2009; Nakata, 2007b) and a reframing of the representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within disciplines of the academy (Universities Australia, 2011; Behrendt, 2003; Matthews, 2012; Nakata, 2007b).

Grant (1999) argues that the role of universities is to ‘enable their graduates to be competent professionals which, in today’s world, means being able to successfully serve societies composed of people of different races, socio economic backgrounds, languages and lifestyles’ (p. 196). Integral to comments such as this are the tensions associated with the struggle to achieve such a goal as higher education wrestles with the turbulence associated with the knowledge of ‘others’ being represented more frequently and more authoritatively within its workplace (Kincheloe, 2006; Nakata, 2007a; Nakata, 2007b; Sefa Dei & Calliste, 2000). Barnett and Coates (2005) argue that ‘as academic knowledge becomes more available to wider sections of the population, it becomes more difficult to maintain its exclusivity’ (p. 83) and that ‘the knowledge that is deemed to be legitimate in academic contexts must also become legitimate to more people in order for universities to continue’ (p. 83).

The postcolonial reading of scholars such as Kincheloe about the relationships between Western and Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies are also significant. He states, ‘Cartesian rationalism has consistently excluded subjugated and/or indigenous knowledges from validated databases in diverse disciplines’ (2006, p. 184). Kincheloe argues that ‘too often in Western colonial and neo-colonial history Europeans have viewed the knowledges and ways of seeing of the poor, the marginalized, and the conquered in a condescending and dismissive manner’ (p. 184).

In the Australian higher education experience, it was not until the latter phase of the 20th century that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were enabled politically and socially to negotiate entry (Behrendt et al, 2012). The Behrendt report (Behrendt et al, 2012, p. 4) explains that:

The important milestones in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education, such as the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student to receive a degree from an Australian university or the graduation of the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander doctor, came nearly a century after other countries with similar colonial histories, such

as the United States, Canada and New Zealand (Anderson, 2008).

Charles Perkins is credited with being the first Aboriginal person in Australia to graduate from university (http://sydney.edu.au/perkins/about/charles_perkins.shtml). He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Sydney in 1966. Mitchell notes that in 1973 there were approximately ‘five Aboriginal students in New South Wales Universities’ (1973, p. 28). Retrospectively Mitchell’s claim might have been strengthened by an amendment to the statement to state ‘five students who identify as an Aboriginal person’. Such an amendment would allow for the possibility that the figure may have been higher if all Aboriginal students were enabled to identify as such or had the higher education institutions included mechanisms for the collection of such data. Wilson-Miller (2003) notes that ‘by the late 1970’s, a greater influx of Indigenous people was [sic] attending tertiary institutions’ (p. 107).

Some years on, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduands have a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics and educational leaders have reported the resistance experienced and the ongoing experiences of racism encountered with their entrance into higher education and since (Franks & Heffernan, 2007; Herbert, 2010; Nakata, 2007b; NTEU, 2011; Page & Asmar, 2008; Sherwood, Keech, Keenan & Kelly, 2011). Sherwood, Keech, Keenan and Kelly (2011) explain that ‘the academy has not always been friendly’ for Indigenous academics (p. 191). Similarly, Herbert states that ‘we have come but lately to the academe, that bastion of Western knowledge, where we have not been made to feel especially welcome’ (2010, p. 24). Thus, Indigenous representation of Indigenous knowledge is a recent phenomenon in the history of the university (Battiste, 2008; Herbert, 2010; Nakata, 2007a; Smith, 1999) and not without challenges.

Optimistically, Indigenous educational leaders also acknowledge the extent of change within such a short timeframe. Herbert, in acknowledging the role of governments in supporting the stronger positioning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, states that ‘having now established their place in the university, Indigenous Australians will persist in challenging the university to accommodate their goals, to build a different pathway into the future for all Australians’ (2010, p. 30). In Canada, Battiste (2002) similarly celebrates the fact that ‘a generation of Indigenous graduate students has

successfully exposed the Eurocentric prejudices against Indigenous ways of knowing and the Eurocentric biases that associated Indigenous thought with the barbaric, the primitive, and the inferior' (pp. 5-6). From this, she claims that Indigenous postgraduates have subsequently been 'activating interest in Indigenous knowledge in every Eurocentric discipline and profession' (p. 6).

In Australia, there is abundant evidence in scholarly text of the value of embedding Aboriginal studies, Indigenous Knowledge or Indigenous epistemologies in higher education curriculum (Craven, 1996; Herbert, 2010; Miller, 2011; Nakata, 2010; Price & Craven, 2009; Reid, 2009; Williamson & Dalal, 2007) and of proposals for how it might be conducted in some settings (Behrendt et al, 2012; Craven, 1996; Dillon, 2007; Miller, 2011; Williamson & Dalal, 2007). Less evident is how it might be done in secondary, as opposed to primary teacher education, in subject specific strands using rigorous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural quality assurance processes.

2.5 Cultural quality assurance of teacher education curriculum through partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders

Until the entrance of Indigenous peoples into higher education, and the aftermath of the renegotiations of custodianship of and rights to management and representation of Indigenous knowledge, cultural quality assurance in higher education curriculum was still not necessarily understood nor fully enacted. Building upon the phenomenon described in the previous section whereby Indigenous peoples first engaged as insiders in higher education in the 1950's, or in the case of Australia, a decade later, in the 1960's (Behrendt et al, 2012; University of Sydney, 2013), it is clear that higher education knowledge production or knowledge management until that time was largely bereft of cultural quality assurance.

In Australian higher education, with few opportunities for cultural quality assurance before the entrance of Indigenous academics in the late 20th century, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples could only experience research and its impacts from the periphery, predominantly as subjects, unaware largely of the non-Indigenous researchers' intentions. An extreme example, but one typical of the era, was that of the representation

of Aboriginal people by Moreton in his 1839 study titled *Crania Americana* (Gould, 1997). In his findings, ‘Australians’ (sic), which is the term he uses for Aboriginal people, are identified as possessing the lowest cranial capacity of the races of the world included in the study. At the time there was an assumption that this correlated with intellectual functioning. The impact of this, and other similar studies, contained and reinforced attitudinal prejudices of the time, not only for immediate audiences but for generations to come. The findings of *Crania Americana* were accepted by peers and widely disseminated in Europe and the colonial outposts (Gould, 1997).

It was not until much later that other non-Indigenous experts with critical and social justice lenses reviewed such influential research exposing the inherent bias and harm. Gould (1997), for example, did this, when he reviewed *Crania Americana* by Moreton, dispelling the claims of the researcher by identifying flaws in data samples.

This example of scientific research of the 1800s demonstrates the type of harmful agency of representatives of past academic societies (Gould, 1997) that contemporary Indigenous educators and communities, as relatively recent insiders in western education, are required to deconstruct and respond to in present day teaching and learning, curriculum and research (Battiste, 2010; Nakata, 2007b; Rigney, 1997; Smith, 1999). Internationally, Indigenous educators and communities manage this backlog of centuries of inaccurate, prejudiced representations of Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being by ‘others’ (Kincheloe, 2006; Page and Asmar, 2008; NTEU, 2011) while also attempting to represent contemporary innovation, accomplishments and priorities on behalf of local Indigenous communities and stakeholders (UN, 2009).

The embedding of effective, sustainable ICQA (Indigenous Cultural Quality Assurance) mechanisms in higher education, as standard practice, remains a work in progress. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance (ATSICQA) at the curriculum development and renewal level is a fundamental prerequisite for graduate attribute claims in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, skills and understandings (Anning, 2010; Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2008, 2010).

The embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance (ATSICQA) in teacher education curriculum development process is an appropriate and critical strategy to minimize harm caused by inadvertent oversights on the part of ‘others’. It also provides support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander academics who may be marginalized or culturally isolated within mainstream programs and, while in addition to their academic duties, are faced with restorative agency that higher education workloads and role descriptions are yet to adequately recognise (Page & Asmar, 2008). Ensuring connection between faculty-based Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander academics and local and professional communities is critically important for sustainable and quality practice in higher education.

Examination of research on the securing of cultural quality control in curriculum development through partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders reveals some pockets of evidence of curriculum renewal and innovation dispersed with research about approaches to improving future graduates’ knowledge. In primary education, the ‘Teaching the Teachers’ initiative (Craven, 1996) was a higher education curriculum solution that developed partnerships with Aboriginal stakeholders for curriculum development in teacher education. In Craven’s work, an Aboriginal steering committee guided the project. Craven’s work successfully heralded, arguably, a pragmatic higher education curriculum solution for the provision of training in the field within primary education and made transparent the consultative architecture.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and studies in pre-service teacher education representatives acknowledge that more can be done. Craven and Price (2009) lament that ‘very few studies have been undertaken in relation to pre-service education and Indigenous students’ education outcomes’ (p. 3). Reid (2009) attests to the importance of non-Indigenous teachers being prepared through teacher education programs to effectively teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students on the basis that ‘at the present time, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools around Australia is still disproportionate to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population’ (p. 12).

With contemporary conditions of under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers confirmed and further highlighted by recent inquiries and initiatives

such as the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (Patton, Lee Hong, Lampert, Burnett & Anderson, 2012), drawing upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, understandings and skills into teacher education curriculum, remains critically important in the decades to come. While an increase in numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers is a desirable outcome it cannot be expected to be the sole solution to the achievement of improved educational outcomes by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Board of Teacher Registration Queensland, 2005).

Research in Australia on processes of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content within a mainstream higher education curriculum remains limited. While not specifically related to teacher education, Williamson and Dalal (2007, p. 55), note that ‘there remains a paucity of studies that explore the kinds of renegotiated curricula’ within the higher education context that may have supported work they undertook to embed Indigenous perspectives within two of their faculties. They cite Marshall (1997) in their claim of a deficiency of models and literature on the topic.

Williamson and Dalal (2007) describe a pedagogical approach used potentially in the process of embedding Indigenous perspectives in higher education programs. In acknowledging Indigenous positions/positioning, they suggest that, a central tenet is ‘engagement with Indigenous people/communities on their terms and in light of their historical and contemporary experiences’ (p. 56). Williamson and Dalal (2007) indicated that they drew from the literature a ‘number of pedagogical approaches’ to inform their work and enable staff to engage with the embedding process in more effective ways. By drawing upon Indigenous Standpoint Theory, Dillon (2007) embarked upon a personalizing approach to embedding Indigenous knowledge in higher education music and sound curriculum at QUT.

In Australia, the shift of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into higher education in the late 20th century commenced a revolutionary change in curriculum possibilities in terms of culturally more accurate representation of Indigenous knowledge. In NSW, school curriculum in the early 1900’s (d’Arbon & d’Arbon, 2003; Wilson-Miller, 2003) first witnessed uncritical, Eurocentric misrepresentations about Aboriginal peoples. These early school curriculum representations were largely informed and perpetuated for

decades by often inaccurately represented forms of Indigenous knowledge produced by the outsider, curiosity-based anthropological sector of higher education (Nakata, 2007b; Sherwood et al, 2011).

Only relatively recently have Australian school curriculum representations started to be drawn from and be modulated by research that has incorporated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices within the university (Miller, 2003; Herbert, 2010; Nakata, 2010). In Australia, representation of this type in mainstream and public arenas was an outcome of decades of intense Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activism and social justice agency reflected eventually at the policy level by the Whitlam Labor government's establishment of the policy of Aboriginal Self-Determination (Sanders, 2002). This historical backdrop is discussed later in the chapter.

As the transition started and, as it continues, Indigenous knowledge in the academy has been represented by non-Indigenous academics across a range of disciplines. These academics have been variously portrayed in contemporary writings as non-Indigenous 'brothers and sisters' or 'allies' in the cause, paternalistic perpetrators of hegemonic practices (Apple, 2004; Nakata, 2007b; Sefa Dei & Calliste, 2000) and/or professionals with cultural competencies (Price & Craven, 2009; Reid, 2009). Such literary and anecdotal representations only exist because of the stronger representation of Indigenous peoples in curriculum in higher education (Herbert, 2010; Nakata, 2007a; NTEU, 2011). What distinguishes the representations is the experience of Indigenous academics about non-Indigenous educators' commitment to adjusting practice in ways that show respect for the validity and entitlement of Indigenous people, their knowledge and their aspirations to achieve social equity.

The call for shared conversations and shared spaces has been constant in literature in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and in regard to representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge in curriculum (Brady & Kennedy, 1999; Herbert, 2010; Sherwood et al, 2010; Vaughan, 2005; Worby & Rigney, 2006). The rhetoric of 'consultation' with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the 70's and 80's has been progressed to policies that speak of 'partnerships'.

Concurrent with the process of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, skills and understandings in all levels of curriculum are the tensions felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representatives, surrounding the culturally safe passage of their localized, constantly revitalized knowledge as it leaves their domains (Janke, 1998; Janke, 2008; Mundine, 1998). This is, in part, because of Law/Lore obligations and the weight of the localized responsibility of generational custodianship of knowledges that have their own ancient origins (Eatock & Mordaunt, 1997; Janke, 1998; Mundine, 1998; Sveiby & Skuthorpe, 2006). This occurs in a context of colonization that perpetrates and perpetuates multiple dispossessions of cultural and intellectual property (Janke and Dawson, 2012; Mundine 1998).

Irrespective of the challenges for both the academy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in reconciling the appropriate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, skills and understandings, the drive to resolve the tensions at the interface (Nakata, 2007a) remains strong. The Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council identify several factors to support the claim that in the higher education sector 'Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous education is core business' and that 'Indigenous higher education must be embedded across the whole of the sector and across the whole of individual universities' (2008, p. 1). In some locations, progress toward this goal is such that aspects of Indigenous knowledge have become requisites in graduate attribute profiles (AITSL, 2011a; Anning, 2010; Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2010).

The increase in representation of Indigenous peoples in academia and other educational organisations has started to provide orientations for non-Indigenous 'managers' of Indigenous knowledge about how greater accuracy and cultural sensitivity can be achieved. This is significant, in the Australian context, within current higher education accreditation processes (TEQSA, 2011) and always within the anti-racist legal and human rights frameworks within which education authorities operate (NSW Government, 2013a; Commonwealth of Australia, 1991).

In Australia, exposure to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge or ways of knowing, doing and being, for the majority of higher education students will occur through the curriculum and the teaching and learning that is attached to the degree they

are enrolled within. That degree will be offered through one of several faculties at the university. In Australian higher education, the closer that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge can be tailored to individual courses of study, the more possible the goals of people like Barnett and Coates (2005, p137) might become in terms of engaging equally, at least in Australian higher education, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students and students from other cultural affiliations.

In doing so, however, those responsible for the offering of the subject or course can minimize Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural harm and maximize learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge by themselves ensuring that confirmation of the cultural quality of their curriculum is sought through the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community where their course is offered. Internally they would seek the input of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander colleagues by utilizing existing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mechanisms within the university as well as seek the input of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives from the fields, professions and industries most pertinent to the curricula being renewed.

Partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community/ies for the incorporation of knowledge in curriculum

This section leads to discussion of the more mechanical aspects of incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lenses in curriculum production and process. This section interrogates the notion of consultation and also, in privileging Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander authored sources, identifies the many ways in which communities experience this consultation.

As an academic, Vaughan asserts that ‘community consultation is essential in developing an Indigenous Australian perspective in curricula – it reinforces a philosophy of teaching with, rather than about Aboriginal people’ (2005, p. 107). Vaughan uses ‘Aboriginal perspectives’ as a term recognized and popular in educational policy discourse at the time. Words like ‘Indigenous perspectives’, however, are not without contention. Beetson, while speaking on policy (2002, p. 88), argued that

As long as policy developers continue to write about Indigenous ‘perspectives’ we know that it is all still wrong. Indigenous peoples, concepts, ideas are not just ‘perspectives’ – we are not shadows of ourselves. We demand that the suggestions that we provide, the policy that we create, the demands that we make, not be considered a perspective! A perspective just makes us incidental to a dominant theme – and we all know which theme that is.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators understand that Vaughan and Beetson are both calling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge to be ‘built-in’ not ‘bolted-on’ (McRae, Ainsworth, Hughes, et al) as a part of that negotiation of curriculum space and its conceptual framing. A recent UN report (2009, p. 16) articulates some of the advantages for Indigenous students globally:

The integration of indigenous perspectives into mainstream education programmes assists in the development of vocational and life skills and allows indigenous students to be proud of their own cultures and way of life, and confidently engage and succeed academically.

For the purpose of ascertaining the appropriateness of Indigenous knowledge, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander stakeholders need to be fully and respectfully engaged. Discussion about what constitutes ‘community’ is important in defining an approach to partnership or consultation. When Williamson (2007, p. 2) defines ‘community’ in a broad sense he purports that at the minimum it ‘requires people to come together’ and that this is determined usually by three forms that may coexist. Those forms are ‘Locality: Geographical or place-based community’, ‘Interest: Topical community of those who share common interests’ and finally, ‘Attachment’, which he argues is ‘the weakest form of community, suggesting a common sense of identity and level of interaction with others’.

According to Williamson, communities ‘are not rigid monoliths that we can neatly label. Communities come and go. They evolve, grow and die. Definitions of ‘community’ are inevitably problematic and the term remains rightly contestable and malleable’ (Williamson, 2007, p. 1). Through attachment to Country and Place,

commitment to culture and social justice and sense of identity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local communities' resilience and endurance are accounted for in Williamson's definition.

Definitions of the term 'community' can be problematic, challenging and highly politicized. In contemporary Australia, the term 'Aboriginal community' while used with ongoing currency cannot be separated from the social injustices and politicization that heralded its initial application. Dodson's critically astute recount of the initial usage of the term 'communities' by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in the 1970's is powerful. He noted that 'the irony was profound: having created, by its intervention, living situations for us which were destructive and alienating, non-Indigenous society then labeled us with a word which implies that their interventions has brought about social harmony!' (p. 131).

Dodson (1994) explained that:

when people talk about Indigenous 'communities' the implications are those of functional living, relative harmony and commonality of interests. The reality is usually very different.../...What are commonly called 'communities' are usually conglomerations of different groups which have been brought together – by force, incentive or persuasion – to a single physical location, as missions, cattle stations or government settlements. Or to the big cities, mixed in with non-Indigenous society, as they find they no longer have a place in rural areas. (p. 130)

On the notion of consultation Beeton suggests that 'communities refer to consultation and negotiation as mostly opportunities for bureaucrats to have their say, record the fact that they visited a community, consulted and left' (2002, p. 87).

Non-Indigenous researchers too are increasingly becoming aware of the perceptions of Indigenous peoples about their experiences of consultation:

I am reminded of an elderly Pacific Island lady sitting quietly in a focus group. After a while she rose to her feet and said, in a measured and calm way that the trouble

with research was that White men in suits come along and steal our ideas, they take them off on a plane to their conference and what are we left with? Nothing?

This comment touched me deeply. It resonated not only because it was, in my experience true, but also because I knew that there was another way. Reflexively, I was force to challenge my own place in society (undeniably white, middle class and liberal), my role as a researcher (to discover) and, consequently, the power that lay in my hands to choose what I might do with her ideas. Her stories. Her life.

(Williamson (2007, p. 1)

Agency requiring consultation leads automatically to the question of which individuals and organizations should be approached. The Australian Heritage Commission (2002, p. 4) provide definitions to assist those unfamiliar with consulting with Indigenous peoples to appreciate some of the complexities within Aboriginal community constituencies in regard to authority and interest in Indigenous heritage. The definitions are as follow:

Traditional Owners are those people who, through membership of a descent group or clan, have responsibility for caring for particular country. Traditional owners are authorized to speak for country and its heritage. Authorisation to speak for country and heritage may be as a senior traditional owner, an elder, or in more recent times, as a registered Native Title claimant.

Other Indigenous people with interests are those people who through their personal or family history of involvement with a particular place have an interest in its heritage values. Such places could include, but are not limited to mission stations, places of Indigenous protest, and areas of land where people worked. Sometimes these people are described as custodians, but this can mean different things in different areas of Australia. In some areas custodians are responsible for looking after places and sometimes the stories and ceremonies linked to these places. In other areas custodians are Indigenous people who look after a place on behalf of others.

In NSW in Aboriginal Education the term ‘custodian’ is often substituted for ‘owner’ in order to reaffirm the caretaking principle within cultural knowledge and management

(NSW AECG, 2004). The following sections of the chapter review pertinent Visual Arts education literature to establish a position from which the inquiry emerges.

2.6 Visual Arts education curriculum and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being

The challenge for mainstream curriculum designers and curriculum users of stepping outside one's culture to adequately represent Indigenous (or other) ways of knowing, doing and being, is real. To avoid cultural harm for those represented and, indeed, those representing, solutions are required. Evidence for these claims are discussed in the sections that follow.

Research in Visual Arts education about the cultural 'other'.

To lead into discussion of Visual Arts curriculum and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being this section explores the experience of other cultural groups at the interface with mainstream Visual Arts educational research. In the section below, accounts of cultural harm being caused through past Visual Arts education practices in research are identified. This occurs firstly in the context of Western arts education practices being applied to Islamic research participants. This heightens the case for change practice in teaching, teacher education and educational research.

Past curiosity-based research initiatives in addressing multicultural Visual Arts curriculum and research as exemplified in the findings of Mason (1988) demonstrate the potential dangers of instigating research as exploratory learning in cultures other than one's own. There is simultaneously a humanitarian agenda; a blindness to deeper cultural knowledge of the 'other' culture and an assumed ethnocentric cultural positioning that could be read as superiority. From a contemporary standpoint, the readings of White identity and White privilege (Sefa Dei, 2000) provide a critical lens through which to appreciate the cultural harm inherent in this project.

Significant differences between Islamic and Western Visual Arts practices are captured in the work of Mason (1988). When discussing the typically Western artmaking process that she initiated with her participants, largely Islamic school students, Mason stated that ‘some of the children appeared visibly distressed by my instructions to draw people’ (p. 31). From the current vantage point it seems remarkable that the author would embark upon a culturally transgressive, artmaking program with so little cultural preparation. She describes being introduced for the first time to Islamic cultural knowledge/s by the school student research participants as ‘an initiation into a foreign culture for me’ further stating that ‘the next twenty minutes were instructive’ (p. 22). This example demonstrates practices in Visual Arts education and general research that were, arguably, absent of adequate ethical scrutiny prior the project.

As a second example, Schrubbers’ account of the Bildung project at the Georg-Kolb Museum, provides important insights into a museum education project that willfully sought to confront known Islamic cultural protocols and practices (Schrubbers in Boughton, Eisner & Ligvoet, 1996, p. 274). At least one project outcome, arguably, was cultural harm for some, if not all, of the predominantly Islamic, Turkish project participants who were encouraged to appreciate German Arts cultural production at the museum including their exposure to nude sculptures. Boughton notes that the failure of the project ‘is noteworthy for art educators in the rest of the Western world’ (Boughton, Eisner & Ligvoet, 1996, p. 297). He attributed the failure of the Bildung project to ‘the insuperable cultural barriers between the two groups of people’. Boughton anticipated that art educators and evaluators of art education programs would need to ‘increase their understanding of cultural and ideological differences’ (p. 297).

A more recent example pertains to assumptions about Visual Arts criticism being interrogated. In professional art practice and visual art theorizing, Fisher interestingly identified ‘two related “blindspots” in the debates on cultural identity and “multiculturalism” (p. 233) and challenged ethnocentric ‘connoisseurship’ applied to aesthetic judgment. Fisher (2005, p. 233), in relation to a derogatory judgment made by a European art critic of work by the Brazilian artist Helio Oiticima, stated:

That European critics with little experience of other cultures assume they are qualified to make such assertions is a problem yet to be addressed. Such attitudes are

commonplace: on the one hand, the erection of an exoticizing/marginalizing screen through which the work of the non-European is “read”, distracting attention away from its particular aesthetic concerns; and, on the other, an ignorance of the diversity of modernisms each inflected differently through the specific contexts of cultures outside the northern metropolises.

Fisher applies scrutiny to the practices of Visual Arts critics who operate without sufficient cultural sensitivities. In the case of Visual Arts education, Visual Arts criticism along with Visual Arts history and the making of visual artwork form three key strands. Thus the Visual Arts educator needs to be vigilant about cultural sensitivities in their teaching and learning associated with all three strands.

2.7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts knowledge - or ways of knowing, doing and being - and teacher education

In the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: the Arts (ACARA, 2011) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts are described as ‘expressions of the first and most sustained Arts heritages in Australia and the world’ (ACARA, 2012). This statement captures important factors that one expects would be appreciated by all contemporary arts practitioners, that is, that Aboriginal peoples have been managing sustainable arts practices for tens of thousands of years. While the many factors that enable this are the subject of discussion, research and conjecture, the phenomenon itself is presently irrefutable.

Rather than focusing upon a deficit view of the absence of textual literacies, it is rare that school-based teaching and learning provide adequate opportunity to admire the advantages of the largely uninterrupted immersion in visual and other arts communication practice that many Aboriginal peoples have experienced. Hetti Perkins notes that ‘all our children are the inheritors of the world’s oldest continuous cultural traditions and one of the most dynamic contemporary art movements’ (Perkins, 2010, forward). Jill Milroy states that ‘Aboriginal art is recognized as the oldest continuous living art tradition in the world’ (Morgan, 1996, p. 2). It is not enough to acknowledge this remarkable phenomenon and leave it critically unexplored by Australian students of the Visual Arts.

Beyond this, and relevant to the study, Perkins notes ‘art can perform many roles, as an instructive or educational tool, a conceptual and topographical map, a reservoir of memory’ (Perkins, 2010, p197). The qualities of relational aspects of Country, culture and visual communication are powerfully demonstrated by Aboriginal visual communication being received in Native Title Tribunal determination processes (Lowe et al, 2001). Contributor to the canvas, *Ngurrara*, and also a claimant, Skipper explains the communities’ concerns when he says ‘when the mining company takes the earth away they pull out the mangi¹ and take it to another place, they take it away. That’s why we are fighting for our country, to keep the mangi there in our country’ (2001, p. 33).

The challenges for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples of coexisting with and speaking to the colonizing cultures after the initial occupations of Aboriginal Countries and Torres Strait Islander Places right up until today are surveyed by contemporary artists like Brook Andrews who asserts that ‘there is a long and difficult history with the acceptance and treatment of Aboriginal art and artists’ (Australia Council, 2008, p. 5). Some of the historical challenges include the 18th and 19th century assignment by anthropologists of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural products to museum collections (Johnson, 2003; Milroy, 1996) interpreted at that time as artifacts produced by inferior peoples (Johnson, 2003).

This historical experience is picked up again in later paragraphs in this section that draw attention to the unauthorized appropriation of representations of the arts and cultural production of Indigenous people. In Australia, the challenges in Visual Arts and Visual Arts education practices of reconciling mainstream Western approaches in Visual Arts education and Aboriginal practices were heightened in the case of the widespread practices of appropriation that accompanied postmodernity (Eatock & Mordaunt, 1997; BOSNSW, 2000; Janke, 2008; Johnson, 1996). Postmodernism witnessed the wide-scale incorporation of Aboriginal imagery into the work and production of fine art works and visual culture by non-Indigenous artists, designers, manufacturers and students. The cases of Marika, Bancroft and Bulun-Bulun are well documented (Johnson, 1996; Janke; 2008). The incorporation of the imagery was done without appropriate cultural permissions from Aboriginal knowledge custodians/ managers.

¹ ‘Spirit or essence of a person which remains when he/she has gone; presence’ (Lowe et al, 2001, p. . . 41)

The development and agency of the Australian Arts Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board was in part a response to the phenomenon of Arts ‘theft’ that caused another stream of cultural harm for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples apart from the extensive dispossession that had gone before (Eatock & Maudaunt, 1997; 2012; Mundine, 1998). The development of the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association and subsequent advocacy agencies also demonstrated the urgent need to re-educate Australian professional groups about the harm caused by copyright violations (BOSNSW, 2000; Johnson, 1997). The policy statement of the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association (NIAAA) helped to contribute to greater clarification of boundaries for practicing artists and students. The following excerpts from the NIAAA policy statement (Johnson, 1996) express clear expectations:

The Committee of the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association is concerned about the number of non-Indigenous artists using representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural images. Images such as the waterhole circles image and the rainbow serpent have been employed by non-Indigenous artists in their artworks. Specific Aboriginal designs have also been used such as the rarrk, x-ray and dot designs. Even more flagrant is the usage of sacred images such as the Wandjina and the distortion of significant cultural items such as the Torres Strait Island headdress ... / ... [The NIAAA] strongly urges non-Indigenous artists, writers and performers to respect cultural and spiritual significance of their images and designs to Indigenous people and refrain from incorporating elements derived from indigenous cultural heritage into their works without the informed consent of the traditional custodians. (p. 58)

At state levels, curriculum education authorities funded resource production that provided advice to teachers on matters of the appropriate use of Indigenous imagery by Visual Arts school students in their own art making or studies of Visual Arts histories. This is the case, for example, in jurisdictions such as South Australia (Department for Education and Children’s Services, 1996) and New South Wales (BOSNSW, 2000).

In earlier cases of Visual Arts practice in Australia, irrespective of her intention to elevate awareness of Aboriginal culture, Margaret Preston’s incorporation from the 1930s of Aboriginal motifs in her work is now largely acknowledged as appropriation

(BOSNSW, 2000; Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2009). Her practice paralleled Picasso's practice of incorporating representations of the cultural products of 'other' groups without necessarily an extensive understanding of the heritage nor cultural heritage protocols of the group itself. This history of appropriation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' visual culture gives cause for a change of practice in the field of curriculum development.

It is for reasons such as those cited in this chapter that the engagement of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is vital in the development and review of higher education curriculum along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives from the industry or profession that the course or subject represents. In this way harm can be minimized by ensuring content is presented where stakeholders reasonably expect it, inaccurate representations can be eliminated and, even more desirable, innovative curriculum solutions can be co-created.

Still relevant to contemporary dialogue on the issue, Boughton (1988) acknowledged the anxiety of teachers in the broader context of teaching in this area stating that 'the complexities of curriculum development are intimidating for teachers faced with teaching Aboriginal groups not only about traditional Aboriginal art and culture but transitional art, as well as European, Asian, and other world cultures' (p. 44). He noted that 'government-inspired national curriculum reforms have done nothing to address the complexities of these cultural issues' and that 'contemporary curriculum profiles in the arts reflect modernist Eurocentric definitions of artistic practice and analysis, and, while paying lip service, do not accommodate issues of Aboriginality, or non-European artistic traditions, such as the growing Asian or Muslim populations in Australia' (p. 44-5).

2.8 Arriving at a research question

As mentioned previously in this chapter, studies that interrogate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance (ATSICQA) mechanisms and models in the subject-specific strands of Visual Arts teacher education curriculum are, to date, less available. As mentioned previously in this chapter, some studies and reports of the methods of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, knowledge or

perspectives within higher education curriculum do exist. They include cases in creative industries (Dillon, 2007), humanities (Williamson and Dalal, 2007) and in areas of health (Behrendt et al, 2012). In education, studies have been undertaken in early childhood (Miller, 2011), primary teacher education (Craven, Mooney & Marsh, 2003) and teacher education (BTRQ, 2004), but, as late as 2007 Williamson and Dalal noted ‘the paucity of studies’ (p. 55) about how higher education curriculum renewal incorporated Indigenous perspectives.

As an Aboriginal subject coordinator of several mainstream Visual Arts teacher education methods subjects in a Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education, this study represented a rare opportunity to undertake my own cultural quality assurance process and, at the same time, customize the process according to the discipline area of investigation and to provide meaningful, reciprocal engagement with those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders who participated in the process.

In this chapter understandings of the term ‘Indigenous knowledge’ have been examined as have the relationships between Indigenous knowledge and higher education curriculum. This has included its contestation and acceptance across various disciplines and its redefinition by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics gaining access to Australian higher education since the 1960s and 70s.

Policy expectation that education providers partner Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in their enterprise provides stimulus for the exploration of diverse models of engagement. Customary and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of managing knowledge as well as the ever present risk of exploitation give rise to expectations that educational institutions, comprised largely of non-Indigenous employees, engage with Aboriginal people for the purpose of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander historical and cultural knowledge but, in doing so, with cultural quality assurances. Without such assurances, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are reluctant to volunteer knowledge that they are responsible for as custodians.

As summarized at the commencement of this section, the literature review indicates that only a few inquiries into higher education practices of embedding Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures into degrees exist. Of those that do, none target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural quality assurance approaches to curriculum renewal within the discipline or subject specific secondary teacher education degree field of Visual Arts.

From the review of literature the overarching research question becomes ‘How can we, as teacher educators, provide respectful consultative engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local and professional communities to enhance teacher education?’ More specifically the research asks ‘How does an experience of engaging with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in secondary Visual Arts teacher education inform curriculum renewal?’ and ‘How might an experience of engaging with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in secondary Visual Arts teacher education contribute more broadly to engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to inform teacher education?’

In Chapter 3 that follows, the research methodologies of this study are discussed as they inform the research design. This commences with an examination of action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Herr & Anderson, 2005; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Reason & Bradbury, 2006), Indigenist research methodology (Battiste, 2008; Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Rigney, 1997; Smith, 2008) and arts-based research approaches (Eisner, 2006).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present an analysis of the various methodological lenses employed in the investigation. I commence firstly by examining Indigenous research methodologies identifying essential features, motivations and justifications for this emergent stream that seeks to Indigenise existing methodological models (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999). The analysis is a prelude to my account of the design of the study including both its textual and visual components. This account will explain how I have located action research within the pervasive and overarching Indigenous methodological architecture of the study. I also describe the extent to which a hybridization of the action research approach in this study resulted from its infusion with representations of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous action.

Following those orientations I will share articulations about the specific research methods that I chose to introduce including the culturally-vetted acquisition of an arts-based model. I will describe the participants who chose to engage in the knowledge co-creation processes within the localised study and what led to those participants being approached. My proposals for data generation and analysis will be described and explained thereafter with the chapter closing after an interrogation of several ethical considerations unique to researcher agency in the highly sensitized area of research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The simple research question ‘How can we, as teacher educators, provide respectful consultative engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local and professional communities to enhance teacher education?’ has complex considerations and ramifications in regard to the academy, communities and professional sectors.

The methodologies and methods I have used in this inquiry have been selected based upon the knowledge I currently possess about the complexities and ramifications inherent in the research context. They were chosen to, at all times, show respect to, honor and protect the wishes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants who were able to share their knowledge and aspects of their cultural heritages in this study.

3.2.1 Indigenous research

The phenomenon of the ongoing political and social mobilization of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals in the pursuit of social justice through self-determination (UN, 2008) has the capacity to infuse all higher education fields with opportunities for changing practices. A pervasive challenge for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as this mobilization continues is the polarizing of opinion around what constitutes effective management of cultural knowledge. In particular it is the locus of control extending around the custodianship and management of Indigenous cultural knowledge that has demanded clarification (Brown, 2003; Davis, 2008; Janke, 2008; Nakata, 2007a; Nakata, 2010; Posey & Duffield, 1996; Youngblood Henderson, 1998).

In one location of consciousness, the retention and maintenance of localized, Indigenous, culturally-healthy research practices is a rightly valued preoccupation and right (Kovach, 2009; Youngblood Henderson, 1998) through which to secure Indigenous self determination or even affirm unceded sovereignty among other goals (AIATSIS, 2012; Behrendt, 2001; Dodson, 2002; Mansell, 2002). For example, Youngblood Henderson (1998) suggests ‘there is a need for governments to adopt an authoritative declaration to the effect that Indigenous peoples are the true owners of their ecological knowledge’ (p. 50).

In another location, the hybridization of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural ways of undertaking research is a result of unapologetic engagement with ‘the other’ or with ‘others’ at the cultural interface in the present moment (Nakata, 2007a) creating different political and social corridors to the end goal of Indigenous self-determination.

Both philosophical positions feed action that secures pragmatic and essential outcomes in terms of cultural continuance as well as cultural co-existence.

Within the spaces made by the thinking and activism associated with the latter, Indigenous research methodologies have come to fulfil a critical role within higher education. While a more thorough account of such agency is located later in this chapter, a distinction needed to be made initially acknowledging, on the one hand, the customary research that occurs outside universities in culturally exclusive, healthy and appropriate modalities and, on the other, the culturally hybrid Indigenous research methodologies that contribute to knowledge production in the fundamentally different environment of higher education.

The Indigenous customizing of research methodologies: frameworks that bridge community and university

The diverse, largely parallel and at times conflicting strands that speak to the dichotomy previously noted have been expressed internationally as well as very significantly intra-nationally within the borders of many colonially constructed nations such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia. In a chronology that documents the emergence of the streams of Indigenous research methodologies now in the international academic landscape, the most current entry would note that the streams contain localized, co-existing sub-strands that increasingly use country or clan-based lenses as conceptual frameworks. It is Indigenous academics internationally who, in showing respect for their own cultural affiliations, are increasingly choosing to customize research methodologies to represent the customary paradigms of their own clans, bands or tribes in the methodological approaches that they advocate.

The reflections of Indigenous Canadian academic, Kovach [Nehiyaw/ Saulteaux] (2009) about suitable methodology for her research questions speaks to the dichotomy mentioned previously and to the inadequacy of solely Western methodologies for her knowledge work. Kovach explains this position when she says that:

Based upon the work of Indigenous scholars referencing Indigenous forms of enquiry (Atleo, 2004; Bastien, 1999; Bishop, 1997; Cole, 2002; Meyer, 2004) and reflecting upon my culture, I constructed a tribal-centred framework. This involved bridging Plains Cree knowledge and their methods in a manner translatable to Western research. The result was a workable conceptual framework or model. (2009, p. 40)

Kovach's ingenuity reflects international Indigenous innovation in research methodologies as the decolonizing process continues to unfold. Kovach, like many other contemporary Indigenous researchers, has been able to make advances upon the generic Indigenist research methodology of, for example, Rigney (1997) by constructing a methodological framework that draws upon a local Indigenous cultural sovereignty; that of her own Canadian First Nation's heritage of Plains Cree knowledge and methods. There is a global trend among Indigenous researchers of infusing methodologies with the cultural ways of their clan or band (Penehira, 2008).

The term 'intranationally' is employed geo-politically in this research to explain that in any one colonially-constructed nation, for example, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, there exists a plethora of indigenous methodologies, in varying states of resolve and definition, usually in accord with the many Indigenous nations, Countries, clans or bands that hold founding governances within those outwardly western, colonially-constructed nationhood (Rigney, 1997; Smith, 2009). In the Australian context, the map of Horton (1994), while imperfect (Reilly, 2006), presents to me the intranational possibilities for future localized research methodologies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics in universities across the colonially-constructed nation of Australia. Such methodologies could only become manifest with integrity, however, if endorsed by the consensus of the rights and responsibility holders of the Aboriginal Countries and Torres Strait Islander Places. Sufficient time was not available in the case of this research to seek endorsement for a localized Aboriginal research methodology and so Rigney's Indigenist methodology remained a culturally and academically sound choice.

In addition to what has been stated Indigenous methodologies act like a buffer between Western knowledge production and Indigenous knowledge production providing greater authenticity for the Indigenous researcher to respond to the pressures exerted upon them as they operate at the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007a). Minniecon, Franks and

Heffernan (2007) purport that ‘in most cases Indigenous researchers are required to meet criteria set by standards informed by Western epistemologies, which poses additional challenges for the Indigenous researcher who is placed in a position where it is also a requirement to meet the criteria set by Indigenous communities’ (p. 25).

3.2.2 Indigenist research, action research and arts-based inquiry – blending methodologies

In his reflections, scholar and academic, Graham Hingangaroa Smith describes pragmatically from Maori experience the choices Indigenous researchers have in current research practice:

More often than not, we would find in respect of our Maori situation that particular academic issues that we might have been working on, studying, or researching were unable to be addressed adequately by the existing range of theoretical tools and knowledge ... we needed to put some Indigenous theory tools or, in a New Zealand sense, Maori tools on the wall of the university alongside all of the other theoretical tools and all of the other research methodologies, so that we would have a more effective and wider choice of options. What I am arguing for is that there needs to be a space for our knowledge and our tools as well inside the academy. More often than not we are using Western ideas, lenses, and tools to help us engage with our own culturally shaped issues. We also now have the added value and option of being able to use our own tools and our own ways of doing things. It is not an either/ or situation... (cited in Kovach, 2009, pp. 88-89)

The methodological eclecticism structuring my study, blending Indigenist research, action research and an Aboriginal mentor-endorsed, arts-based approach, along with the culturally customised methods, aligns to some degree with Smith’s assessment of the increasing expansion of options for Indigenous researchers in Western higher education.

This study uses Rigney’s Indigenist research methodology (1997) because the principles upon which it operates align with key cultural considerations. Those three principles are ‘resistance as the emancipatory imperative’, ‘political integrity in

Indigenous research’ and ‘privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenist research’ (pp. 118-9). An Indigenist research methodology requires research to be conducted by Indigenous Australians and ‘makes the researcher responsible to the Indigenous communities and its struggles’ (Rigney, p. 119).

The following paragraphs explain how the principles of Rigney’s Indigenist research methodology provide the theoretical framework for this investigation. The explanation also positions action research and arts-based research within the structure. The first of Rigney’s principles, ‘resistance as the emancipatory imperative’, is evidenced in the unfolding of this project in a range of ways. Resistance, in a practical sense, was enacted through:

1. the engagement of an Aboriginal cultural mentor
2. the conscious application of a critical Indigenous cultural lens to the thinking and action associated with research methods and practices;
3. bias in the intention to select Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples as participants and
4. the action research episodes occurring exclusively within Aboriginal community, professional or Arts sector parameters.

Accordance with such forms of resistance was deemed to be an imperative in order to, firstly, unlock and liberate the capacities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the localised inquiry (including those of the researcher). Secondly, it is an imperative because of its potential to contribute politically - outside itself - through the impact that the research enables professionally. Deliberate resistance to conventional solutions created the buffer or guard for a greater freedom for Indigenous action, dialogue and co-creative possibility.

The exercise of Rigney’s principle of ‘political integrity’ within this inquiry encompasses:

1. acting in ways that protect Indigenous cultural heritage
2. demonstrable engagement with critical, distinct, ethical issues for Indigenous peoples and

3. critical thinking about action with regard to the way, politically, Indigenous research is situated within the academy.

To clarify the first point, the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage does not necessarily or automatically imply concealment of Indigenous knowledge from ‘the other’ or other notions of non-disclosure (ie secret, sacred) even though it did at times in this inquiry. It encourages a respectful and critical approach by myself, as researcher, in my actions (Sveiby & Skuthorpe, 2006) so that not only is harm minimised for Indigenous individuals, collectives and, thereby, future generations, but research delivers greater certainty and quality of cultural heritage protection.

The notion of demonstrable engagement with critical, distinct, ethical issues for Indigenous peoples, as mentioned in the second point, is important in order for the Indigenous researcher to grow more confident in knowing the malleability of methodologies so as to deliver tangible improvements in participants’ capacity for self-determination and accuracy of representation. This discussion is resumed later in this chapter in the discussion of ethics.

The final point moves attention away from a focus on the localised study to the ramifications of its process, its methods or consultation, and tangible products, such as visual communication, curriculum resources and publications, within the broader mainstream research arena. Being cognisant of the broader political organisation within which Indigenous research operates is critical in terms of strategising, sustaining and improving practices.

The third and final principle of Rigney’s Indigenist methodology that informs the framework for this investigation is that of ‘privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenist research’. In this research it involves the:

1. representation of Indigenous voices through the verbal co-construction of knowledge in Indigenous culturally-exclusive contexts
2. representation of Indigenous voices through visual communication co-construction in Indigenous culturally-exclusive contexts (ie arts-based inquiry) and

3. re-presentation of published Indigenous voices within the textual and conceptual act of researching.

This principle is justifiable and appropriate on several counts. I determined that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and specifically in this instance, representatives from the sectors previously discussed, local Aboriginal community, Aboriginal education, cultural heritage and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, were the experts required to provide the most rigorous scrutiny of the curriculum material that was at the core of this enquiry. Privileging such voices is an attempt to address the occlusion and marginalisation that hinders the valuing of Indigenous knowledge within the academy (Battiste, 2008, p. 498). It is also a response to past state Aboriginal education policy discourse encouraging dialogue between universities and state education providers in regard to ‘Aboriginal education and training being a high professional priority... in pre-service teacher education programs’ (NSWDET, 2006, p5).

Additionally, the bias inherent in the cultural exclusivity of Rigney’s methodology and its employment in this inquiry has precedent in a range of state legislative frameworks and in policy discourse that recognises the necessity for positive discriminatory action to achieve positive social change. The principles that inform Indigenist research methodology as espoused by Rigney (1997) provide, theoretically, a culturally responsible platform from which this investigation launched. Rigney argues that the methodological imperatives he defined are ‘politically more appropriate’ (p. 119) insofar as they challenge a history of research that has, all too often, exploited rather than prospered Aboriginal communities. Rigney anticipates that an Indigenous researcher will manage the research process using culturally safe practices more readily because of their own lived experiences.

This methodology of Rigney’s as an Indigenous Australian researcher acts as a ‘meta-charting’ of the decision-making that accompanies the entrance of an Indigenous academic into the Western research landscape. The methodology’s cultural exclusivity, in relation to research involving Aboriginal communities being conducted solely by Indigenous researchers, aligns with the affirmative action of the time of its production and builds a site within the Western research landscape for others to assemble at for our research ‘business’.

Rigney's methodology more recently informed the work of Page and Asmar (2008) in a study investigating the nature of Indigenous academic work in Australia. They explain that his principles were 'useful' and were a good match with their own goals for the research. They also claim that Rigney's 'Indigenist' research methodology 'aligns with goals articulated by Indigenous scholars around the world' (p. 110).

An Indigenist research methodology provides the significant cultural architecture encasing this study while embedding action research cycles and arts-based inquiry within its parameters as a means of managing knowledge exchange and generation. A discussion of action research and arts-based research is discussed in detail in the ensuing sections of this chapter. It is in the discussion of the latter that the arts-based approach used by Uncle Tex Skuthorpe [Nhungghal], the cultural mentor for this inquiry, is located and the means whereby it came to be incorporated within the educational research context of this inquiry.

3.3 Action research

Since Lewin legitimized the methodology for the social sciences in the 1940s (Anderson & Herr, 2005; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis, 1988) action research has maintained an emancipatory tradition and capacity. The emancipatory capacity of action research is consistent with Indigenist research principles and recommends action research for this study. The research participants and I work directly or indirectly in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in Australia. There is urgency and demand placed upon social justice work as evident in this field across social indicators (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The Australian Government initiative Closing the Gap Indigenous reform agenda (Council of Australian Governments, 2008) is one of many that seek solutions to combat the disadvantage within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Manifest in numerous models since Lewin's initial representation (Lewin in Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; see also Kemmis in Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988, p. 29) action research requires a cyclic process of inquiry that invites the researcher to facilitate participant engagement through the phases of observation, reflection, action, evaluation

and modification (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011). Arising from new knowledge within the initial action cycle, another cycle builds on the previous, exploring a line of enquiry extending the one before (Figure 2). This continues for as long as resources and/or interests are sustained.

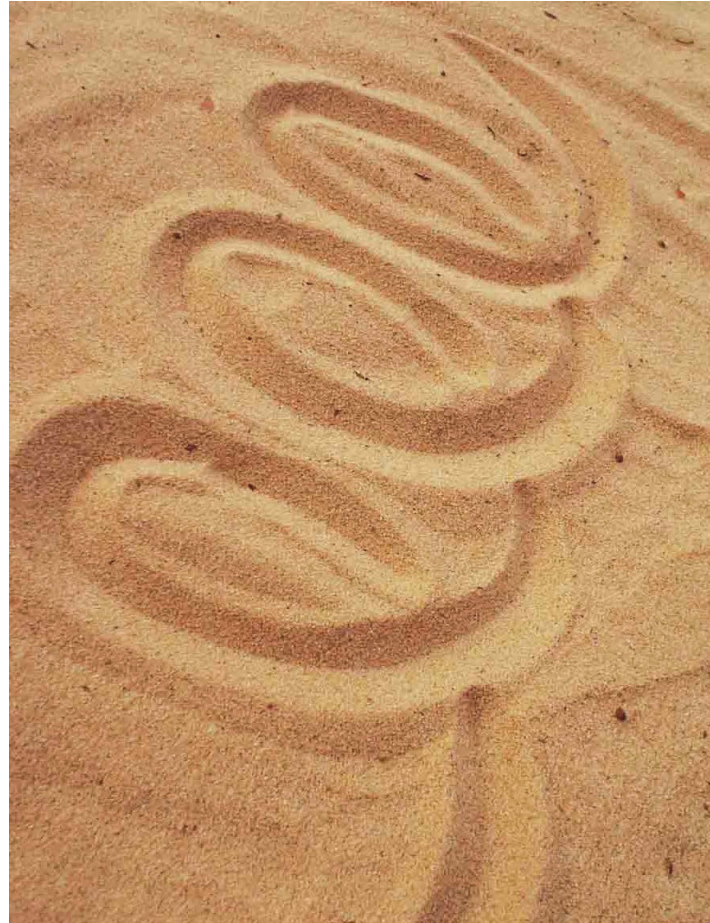


Figure 2: *Cyclic concept of action research* (Evans, 2007). Digital photograph.

Of the variety of action research traditions – emancipatory, participatory, cooperative, collaborative, critical - it is practitioner research (Herr & Anderson, 2005; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006) that best describes the form of action research I have employed in this investigation.

Herr and Anderson (2005, p. 3) suggest that practitioner (or teacher) action research ‘places the insider/practitioner at the center of the research’. The authors also note that it attracts criticism insofar as it can ‘decenter other important stakeholders such as clients

and other community members' (p. 3). While this criticism may be warranted in some cases in this inquiry I have acted in this study from my professional observations that Aboriginal stakeholders have been, all too often, decentred in the process of curriculum development and reform.

As a result this inquiry sought to deliberately centre the input of those with both cultural and geographical relationship to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in the teacher education subjects being reviewed – namely the local Aboriginal community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and educators, Aboriginal cultural heritage representatives and Aboriginal lecturers, tutors and staff associated with the program. Their views were privileged above those whose viewpoints I was confident, from my own experience, were heard routinely. This included input into subject design by the general student body through feedback surveys, input from accreditation bodies through regulatory review, input from university management through line management directives and professional associations through lecturer membership.

Action research is suitable as a means of undertaking inquiry within this context because of a number of its characteristics. The cyclic process, for example, described by Lewin, by Carr and Kemmis (1986) and more recently by McNiff and Whitehead (2006) recognizes the cycle and researcher practice as referents, as constants, amidst the variables among and between participants and the frameworks they operate within. In doing so, the revisiting of practice throughout cycles of research, if respectfully inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, ensures that consultation is sustained throughout the project.

Where this is the case action research through its cyclic structure has the capacity to satisfy aspects of national guidelines on ethical research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2012). The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) notes that 'ongoing consultation is necessary to ensure free, prior and informed consent for the proposed research, and to maintain that consent' and that 'research projects should be staged to allow continuing opportunities for consideration of the research by the community' (p. 7).

In closing, McNiff and Whitehead (2011) note that ‘action research has become increasingly popular around the world as a form of professional learning.’ (p. 7). I have chosen this inquiry as part of an educational doctorate. In other circles, it is known as a professional doctorate because of its interest in making a contribution to the various professional fields. In this study the interest for me is as a practicing Visual Arts educator seeking to understand educational process in higher education and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people - and our ways of doing, being and knowing - within it.

3.4.1 Visual Arts education and research

This section explores a range of pockets of research in relation to the Visual Arts. It commences with a brief background to arts-based research and then provides a comparative glimpse at the relatively late evolution of research in the fine arts, in particular in doctoral research, and then closes with an examination of the broader Australian Visual Arts educational research context.

With the emergence of qualitative methodologies as part of social science, Guba (cited in Finley, 2008) in the late 1960’s ‘foresaw a reformist movement that would bring “art” to inquiry’ (p. 97). Finley acknowledges Eisner as having a catalytic role in the development of ‘arts-based educational research’ (2008, p. 99) at a time when qualitative researchers were revolutionizing ways of understanding research, relationships within it, disseminating findings and appreciating the social justice purposefulness of it.

In Australia, over the same period of time, many Aboriginal people were transitioning in their status from being counted within the Flora and Fauna Act to holding Australian citizenship rights post-1967 referendum. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ access to university was limited and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the case for indigenous peoples globally, were most often subjects of anthropological research (Nakata, 2007b) rather than investigators of research. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in research of the academy as investigators has occurred largely in the past few decades. There continues to be underrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics in disciplines and in higher education programs. In

the area of Visual Arts education, for example, only a small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics have been represented.

Upon returning to mainstream research traditions, it is interesting to note the parallel chronologies of qualitative educational research and practice-based or studio-based arts research. In a UK study, Mottram (2009) notes that the first recorded doctoral degree in studio arts was that of Chew in 1957 with an investigation of British sculptors (p. 7). This was registered within the Art and Design Index to Theses (ADIT) database. Mottram identifies that between 1976 and 1985 the ADIT database records 21 doctoral completions in the fine arts and six in visual communication providing an insight at least in the UK of the recency of this level of credentialing in the fine arts. In Finland, Hannula (2004) claimed that ‘artistic research is a new area’ and ‘is yet to emerge as a full program’ (p. 70). Hannula presents a case for the inclusion of particular criteria in the fundamentals of artistic research. While the above pertains to an arts practice-based field, some of the considerations within the field of either artistic research or studio-based research are useful for the analysis of visual communication within this inquiry. It also reinforces how recently both arts-based research and Indigenous methodologies have emerged within Western research histories.

In Australia Visual Arts and Visual Arts education research has had a shorter history. Davis (2008) claims that ‘in Australia, while education has a critical mass of research, the arts only relatively recently joined the research ranks’ (p. 58). Davis also notes that while nationally art education staff attended to the credentialing that was necessitated by arts schools annexure to universities in the 1980’s and 1990’s, ‘there has been little time for visual education discipline-based research to develop toward maturity’.

In the United States, the Visual Arts education research field was slightly more established with proponents such as Eisner and Smith leading change in the 1960’s until the present with researchers in Australia drawing upon United States trends. This inquiry contributes to Visual Arts education research within Australia in several ways. Firstly by presenting findings from a local, practitioner study of Visual Arts education curriculum reform in higher education consultative practices as a result of consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. Secondly, the inquiry contributes to the Visual

Arts education research because of the use of an arts-based model within an educational research context.

Some argue that arts-based research is substantially different to that of Visual Arts research and Visual Arts education research. Finley's (2008) astute analysis of the term itself validates that difference when she says that 'in the hyphen that connects "arts" and "based" is a textual reference to the arts as a basis for something else, something that is "not art" (p. 102). The term is used in the context of this research because the image making of participants is not intended to contribute to a fine arts work but is rather a visual conversation that accompanies the verbal yarning that takes place in focus groups and interviews.

Finally, this inquiry contributes to the field of Visual Arts education research in its response to issues that designers of Visual Arts education curriculum in tertiary education institutions would presently be facing across the nation particularly as transitioning occurs in the move toward an Australian curriculum: one that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as a priority (ACARA, 2011).

3.4.2 A culturally endorsed, arts-based approach to research

This section provides a background to the Aboriginal arts-based approach used in the inquiry. It describes the method and credits the arts-based model to the project's cultural mentor.

At the commencement of the inquiry, I reflected on the arts-based community work of artist, cultural educator and cultural mentor for this project, Uncle Tex Skuthorpe [Nhunggal] as he had recounted it to me in previous conversations. I sought permission from Uncle Tex for the incorporation of his arts-based model in this inquiry. This was granted verbally and further provision was made by Uncle Tex to enable me to commence the work with a particular cultural endorsement. This will be discussed in greater detail in the recounting of action research cycles and in the analysis chapter.

The arts-based process involved the making of visual communication in three focus groups and in some interview contexts with Aboriginal participants. In another focus group and an interview with Uncle Tex, the arts based process took a critical, interpretive form only. Uncle Tex uses the arts-based process locally and nationally in his agency in Aboriginal community capacity building. The engagement, of which the arts process is a significant feature, is held over several days within community settings at the invitation of the community.

The disciplinary-based integrity of using arts-based inquiry as a methodology for this Visual Arts education-centred investigation was appealing. Indigenising the process by incorporating, with permission from the practitioner, a model of collaborative arts-based activity that had previously operated in Aboriginal community capacity building contexts was valued highly as a significant method to incorporate within the action research cycles that gave structure to the overarching Indigenous theoretical framework.

3.5 Methods

3.5.1 Context

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that ‘it is not possible to understand any phenomenon without reference to the context in which it is embedded’ (p. 302). This section examines several contexts that coincide during the life of the inquiry. They include the curriculum context that inspired the inquiry, the contexts of the stakeholders - local Aboriginal community, the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Arts, education and cultural heritage and, finally, that of the researcher. The multiplicity of the contexts of this inquiry is anchored by its temporal potency.

Curriculum

The curriculum context of this study is an end-on teacher education degree at the University of Technology Sydney, the Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education.

The Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary) is a twelve-month, fulltime degree and replaced the Graduate Diploma in Education in 2007.

When students are accepted into the Bachelor of Teaching, the credit points they have accrued in their previously completed, relevant, undergraduate degree are accepted by the university as a form of recognition of prior learning. At the time of this inquiry, the Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education was to be replaced by a Masters of Education. Within the degree are strands to cater for training in areas such as English, Mathematics, Science, History, Economics, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, Languages and Visual Arts.

From the UTS Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education the following subject outlines and related resources were selected for the focus of this curriculum renewal process. They are:

- 013004 Issues in Indigenous Australian Education (3 credit point)
- 013050 Visual Arts Teaching Methods 1(6 credit point)
- 013062 Visual Arts Teaching Methods 2 (6 credit point)
- 013068 Visual Arts Teaching Methods 3 (6 credit point)
- 013074 Visual Arts Teaching Methods 4 (6 credit point)

These subjects form a suite of mandatory subjects, among others, of the Visual Arts strand of the Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education students.

Communities

There is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community within the university whose members are located either in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education unit or in varying representation across faculties. An 'Indigenous network' has operated for several years and staff members have an option to gather at the meetings of the network or at various other meetings associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

In regard to this study, there was no routine governance structure or process in place that provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural quality assurance to mainstream courses or subject curriculum designers. For the purpose of this study, I did initially approach staff in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education unit that I knew had a creative arts background for advice and contacts. Also, in the case of engaging Torres Strait Islander community and/or Arts industry representatives for the study, I approached a Torres Strait Islander staff member who provided advice. The practice-based challenge before me was determining precisely whom I should engage with in the process of curriculum reform that I was embarking upon.

Because of the specialist area of the degree in Visual Arts education I was aware that I was the only Aboriginal academic with secondary Visual Arts teaching experience and that the unit may not have the capacity of staff with expertise within that discipline and to release staff beyond the roles and responsibilities for which they were ultimately employed for the purpose.

For engagement purposes, as an Aboriginal Visual Arts educator working within an Indigenous research framework, some directions seemed relatively clear. Firstly, the local Aboriginal community, including Aboriginal education representatives, had a fundamental entitlement to know what was occurring within their own community, within the Aboriginal Country where the university campus was located. This was fundamental. Secondly, the disciplinary area of secondary Visual Arts education required input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practitioners and arts administrators. It also required, because of the highly sensitized history of appropriation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts imagery as well as the representation of cultural heritage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' expertise in law and heritage. Without intending any disrespect to the Indigenous Education unit, my direction took me largely to a range of external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – those of the local, arts and cultural heritage – for the sake of targeted disciplinary relevance, coherence and integrity.

Interestingly, there is support for this in the Australian Government's Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Final Report' (Behrendt et al, 2012). Behrendt notes that 'they [Indigenous Education

units] cannot be expected to drive whole-of-university strategies because they simply do not have the reach, resources or discipline-specific knowledge to do so' (Behrendt et al, 2012, xii).

This study, because it is interested in curriculum renewal associated with the northern campus of UTS, is located from a geo-cultural perspective in Guringai country. The local Aboriginal community situated within that country has diverse constituency and experiences. A local Aboriginal community member contributes to a profile of this community in the following terms:

Although the population is small, Aboriginal people have strong feelings of connection spiritually, culturally and socially to the area. The majority of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population currently living in the Northern Sydney region come from Aboriginal countries or language groups outside the original Guringai and Darug homelands. Nonetheless, 'some Aboriginal families have lived in the region for many decades and have a real sense of caring for country and belonging to country' (Moylan-Coombs, 2006, p. 7)

Traditional Guringai custodians are active in a variety of ways in cultural heritage management and observing practices such as welcoming others to their Country at a range of events. Important to remember is that the Aboriginal cultural presence and practices is supported locally by a number of Aboriginal governance networks and legislative frameworks. This includes operations provisioned by the NSW Land Rights Act and the federal Native Title Act. Aboriginal health and housing also work through the local Aboriginal community networks. The region is within the jurisdiction of the Sydney Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council in terms of the NSW Land Rights Act and within NSW there are many claims within the National Native Title Tribunal.

Additionally, and significant to this study in Visual Arts teacher education, is acknowledgement of the expertise of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander 'communities' in the arts, education and area of cultural heritage.

The researcher

I undertook this inquiry as a full-time lecturer within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UTS. I had primary responsibility for the teaching of the areas of Visual Arts education and Aboriginal Education within two degrees – the Bachelor of Education [Primary] and the Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education. I had been a lecturer on the teacher education programs for approximately fourteen years. Prior to this I had been a secondary Visual Arts teacher in NSW for over ten years. Significant to this inquiry is my own cultural heritage. I am an Aboriginal researcher, with connection to the Mudgee region of NSW. This background provides me with some advantages in being able to act as liaison figure between the higher education provider and the local community.

At the time of this inquiry I was also engaged in an evaluation project that used action research within a NSW Aboriginal education teaching and learning project. That project was the Quality Teaching Indigenous Project evaluation (BurrIDGE et al, 2009). In the QTIP project I was able to trial the arts-based approach, with the mentor's permission, in a school-based, action research evaluation (BurrIDGE et al, 2009; Evans & Riordan, 2012)

3.5.2 Action learning cycles

In the research design, an initial preparatory phase (Appendix A) was indicated in order to confirm several cultural permissions. Beyond that preparatory phase the design proposed two sets of action research cycles (Figure 3) with each set comprised of two focus groups and a number of semi-structured interviews. In the research map (Figure 3) the square shape within the diagram represents the university. The arrows indicate my journey from the higher education provider to community focus groups and interviews. The circles represented gatherings of participants. The larger circles represented the focus groups, the smaller circles represented the interviews.

The key issue contained in the original action plan (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011) was centred upon teacher education curriculum renewal as well as the consultative act itself. The study was particularly concerned that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholder voices were represented in dialogue about teacher education curriculum. The

findings from the analysis of data generated during the action learning cycles are detailed in Chapter 4 with implications discussed in Chapter 5.

Included in the findings are examples of the tangible curriculum changes resulted from the revisiting of the issues and research questions during action learning cycles. McNiff and Whitehead (2011) explain that the research question can change throughout the action learning cycles as can the issues themselves. In this study, there were changes over time as exposure to local community experiences, rather than those of higher education, reminded and connected me to the significance of local governance structures.

Action arose from these encounters. As an example, while I used the term ‘Indigenous stakeholders’ in my initial research map (Figure 4) to describe participants, in the title of this thesis, I use the term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders’.

Figure 3 was used in my communication with research participants to explain the intended research journey. A conventional information sheet was also issued to participants. The response to Figure 3 by participants is included in the findings in Chapter 4.

The square in Figure 3 represented the university, symbolically and practically, as the place where the teacher education program in the study was located and where the inquiry was conceived of. The visual representation of the research design explains that my intention was to move outside the university (top left of image) to initiate two action research cycles. This occurred by holding a focus group in Guringai country and another in Gadigal country (represented by the two larger circles) plus a number of interviews (represented by the four smaller surrounding circles). This was broadly referred to as Phase 1 of the study. It was originally intended that the arts-based research methods would be incorporated in Phase 1.



Figure 3: *Visual representation of research design* (Evans, 2007). Digital photograph.

The repeated square motif (centre of Figure 3) indicated that participant advice was to be taken back to the teacher education program and reflected upon for opportunities to be put into practice. After that occurred, I intended holding a second phase which would be the continuation of the action research sets. The second phase would comprise two more focus groups and related interviews to explain outcomes to participants – either specific or general - and further refine curriculum material and/or opportunities. It was intended that the focus groups in Phase 2 (lower right of Figure 3) would comprise the original participants enabling consistency of continuation of the action research cycles at each of the two sites - one in Gadigal Country and one in Guringai Country.

In reality the second phase was challenging to implement in the way it was originally proposed. For example, the two initial focus groups represented valuable input from representatives from the local Aboriginal community and Visual Arts practitioners but didn't capture the input of some of the stakeholder groups originally envisaged. An additional focus group was held in 2010 to more adequately reflect the views of those Aboriginal academics and university staff who were most connected to the subjects as acting coordinators, lecturers, casual tutors or support staff.

Similarly, the eight smaller circles in the diagram, as visual suggestions or indicators of anticipated interviews, were not actually prescriptive in terms of number. Nonetheless, eight interviews did take place between 2008 and 2011. Thereafter, several less formal meetings and phone communication occurred for the purpose of confirming with participants the appropriateness of their representations both visual and text-based.

Practically, the action research cycles resulted in a number of redirections including cycles within cycles. At times the constraints for myself as researcher affected the maintenance of the process. The process became increasingly more complex while still working toward honoring the original communication to participants.

3.5.3 Research Methods

This section outlines the key research methods used in the study.

Focus Groups

As a method of generating data about curriculum and consultative practice I incorporated focus groups because they provided collective opportunity for participants to share their insights about curriculum documents. Barbour (2005, p. 45) suggest that ‘setting them up is bedevilled by many logistical problems’ including challenges in acquiring diversity and in finding suitable meeting times for participants. Barbour suggests that aligning with pre-existing meetings can have many advantages. This was the option chosen when working with the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. It also informed the approach for engaging Aboriginal academic staff at the higher education site. I was aware, however, that this transparency could also have impacts on the preparedness of some members to speak in the presence of others.

The focus group also underwent a form of cultural customization such as, for example, incorporating time and opportunity for a traditional custodian or nominee to be invited to welcome participants to Country. The conventional time frame of thirty to forty minutes was deemed inadequate due to a range of factors including those of a cultural nature. In early planning discussions this was confirmed by the cultural mentor of the project.

Uncle Tex noted that his own arts-based, community development work usually extended over a period of days. He noted that participants would often require time to comprehend the issues fully (ie to come away from the painting and return) in order to make an informed contribution. I did what I could to find a compromise between the two culturally opposing positions and held focus groups that were approximately three hours in duration. A meal was provided within that time ahead of the arts-based component.

Locations were chosen on the basis of maximizing convenience for participants, hence one in Guringai Country at the preference of the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG) and one in Gadigal Country in a community centre known well by participants close to the central business district where many Arts representatives worked. The university has campuses in both Countries and so this also, to some extent, held integrity culturally.

In Chapter 4 the following codes are used to represent the focus groups:

Focus group	Code
Focus group, Sydney (South)	FG-GA
Focus group, Sydney (North)	FG-GU1
Focus group, Sydney (North)	FG-HE
Focus group, Sydney (North)	FG-GU2

The focus groups typically comprised two parts. The first a conventional opportunity to review curriculum documents assembled in a folder (Figure 4) and the other a practical, arts based opportunity to respond to focus group questions or, in one case, to review visual communication.

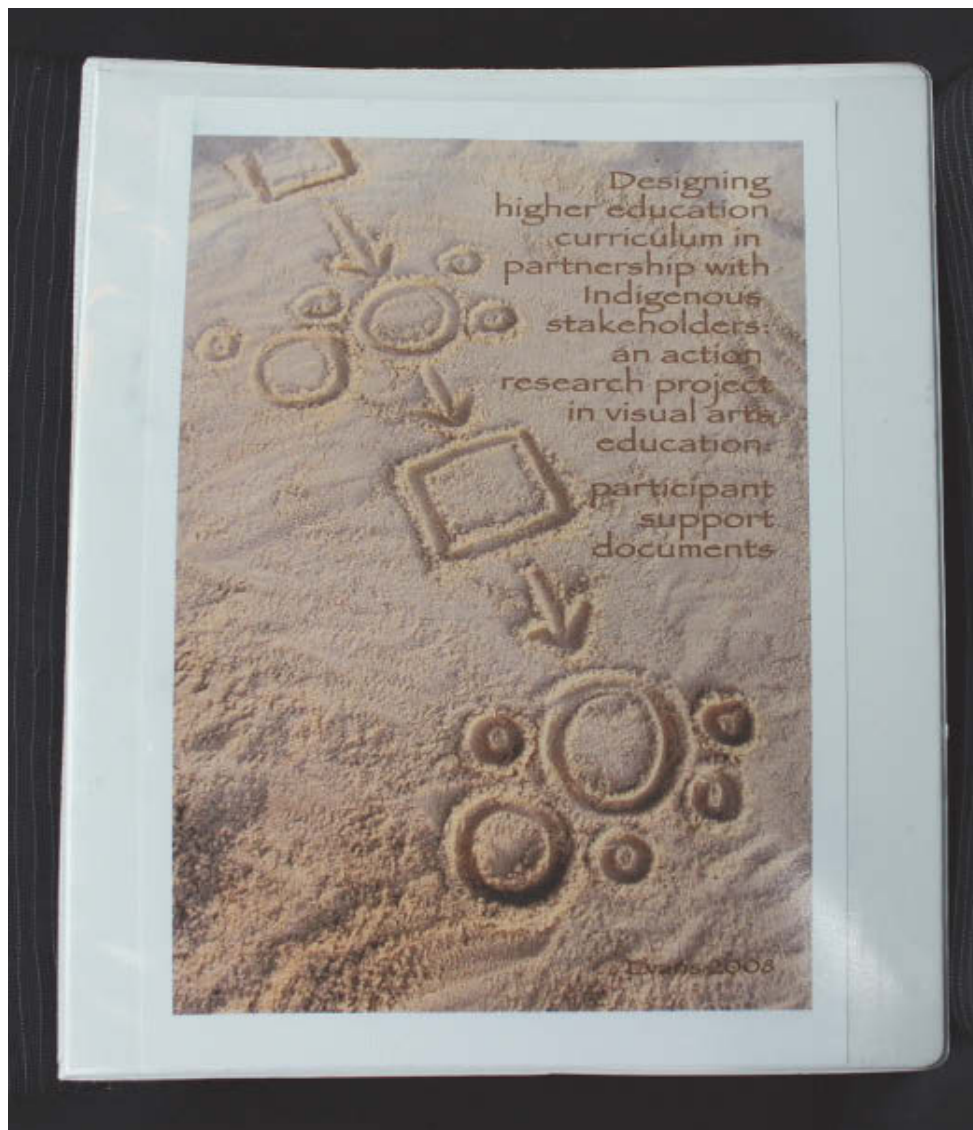


Figure 4: *Participant's folder of selected teacher education curricula featuring visual research story on the cover (2013). Digital photograph.*

Cultural preparation in advance of focus groups and interviews

This study was conducted by an Aboriginal researcher using an Aboriginal arts-based approach for the investigation of a Visual Arts education topic that engages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in collaboratively generating data. Consequently the process of data co-creation was littered at every stage with responsibility surrounding the safe management of consent, attribution and visual cultural property. While keenly aware of the need to work responsibly through those processes, the indication in the university ethics application that working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities classified this application as being of ‘high risk’ added to my determination to interrogate all cultural clearances available to me as I proceeded.

The following sub-sections of this chapter track my steps in making some of the cultural preparations for the initial focus groups. This included the engagement of the cultural mentor and introducing that mentor to academic supervisors as a peer in the process. Preparation also included ensuring that my visual communications did not breach customary Law/Lore by inadvertently appropriating the work of other artists or communities. Finally, to ensure that the cultural credibility of the study was sustained, preparation also entailed seeking the support of and maintaining dialogue with the local AECG whose boundaries the university campus was situated within.

The cultural mentor and the university supervisors

I held conversations with Uncle Tex Skuthorpe [Nhunggal] late in 2007 and early in 2008 about his preparedness to be involved in my thesis as a cultural mentor and how to approach the design of the research project. He had shared with me several years before a story about an Aboriginal community that invited him to work with them on a community development project. As an artist and cultural educator Uncle Tex used an arts-based approach to bring the community together on the project. A large-scale canvas was used as a means of enabling the community to consolidate and record their goals for the community - to develop a plan. He recounted his surprise when the community members involved, at the conclusion of the project, took the painting to the police, the school and

other service providers, to assist with their explanation of their aspirations and goals for the community - their preferred futures.

Uncle Tex said of arts-based process that, ‘you can’t lie when you paint your story’ and ‘when it’s a painting you don’t forget it’ (pers. comm. Uncle Tex Skuthorpe, Jan 2008). He explained that the image is strong and a visual reminder of intentions. This tangible presence of the communication, he implied, enacted a very different relationship with knowledge than that which one might have with a large text-based report. While community mostly engaged readily in the arts-based process, Uncle Tex forewarned me that, nonetheless, some community members ‘took a while’ to engage in the arts based process and some nominated others to paint their responses.

During our discussions in early 2008 Uncle Tex gave me permission to incorporate the arts-based process in the research study. I wanted to ensure that the arts-based process, it being his intellectual and cultural property, was protected though. To achieve this, I expected that it would need to be represented in a published form and so I proposed that he and I jointly write a paper that, to show respect, acknowledged the source of the process and explained its importation into the research study. We presented at the World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education in Melbourne in December 2013, and our joint publication (Evans & Skuthorpe, 2009) was accepted in the WIPCE special issue of the *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*.

‘Showing respect’ is a constant in Uncle Tex’s cultural teaching and was often the confidence-building trigger for me to make modifications in the study’s research methods to favour the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants over the conventions of the academy.

As an academic at UTS working at times across campuses I was aware of the many exceptional academics that potentially were available as supervisors. I was also aware of a renewal process occurring in the faculty’s doctoral pathway at that time through the leadership of Prof. Alison Lee among others and was aware that my peers and I had a number of creative and professionally tailored alternate doctoral options from which to choose. In my discussions with Prof. Lee, while expressing my support for the emerging doctoral pathways, I confirmed that, as an Aboriginal academic, I preferred to opt for a

conventional doctoral pathway that would, nonetheless, retain a creative component through the arts-based research process within it.

After some initial changes to supervisors and after action research was identified as one of the preferred methodologies I had the good fortune of Prof. Peter Aubusson accepting a request to be my supervisor. Dr. Gregory Martin came to the university at that time and faculty management advised that his research background might be a good match with my proposal. Indeed the expertise and professional insights of both supervisors were contributing factors in my capacity to complete the study.

A meeting of my cultural mentor and doctoral supervisors was arranged in January 2008 at a midway location to start a dialogue about planning and for supervisory team members to have time to recognize each other's areas of expertise. This allowed all parties in the research to discuss and begin to consider the ways in which doctoral methods, arts based research, Indigenous research and different ways of knowing might come together.

Seeking Guringai Local NSW AECG in-principle support

The UTS teacher education programs operate at the university's Kuring-gai Campus, Lindfield, on Sydney's north shore. Whilst close to Ryde the campus is on the north side of the Lane Cove River, thus, positioning it in Guringai country. The following extract from my 2008 researcher journal describes the occasion where I attended a Guringai Local AECG meeting and first mentioned the research proposal.

Monday, February 24, 2008 (7.30-9.30pm)

Attended local NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group monthly meeting at Brookvale TAFE to make a brief 10 min ... announcement that I would be pursuing the doctoral research based upon the development of a consultation process between what we do at UTS with the future Visual Arts teachers and Aboriginal stakeholders (commencing with the local Aboriginal community) to improve the Aboriginal perspectives in that stream of the secondary teacher education program. This

presentation was in ‘general business’ at the end of the meeting ... In regard to my doctoral presentation, the chair of the meeting said that ‘you would understand, Chris, that you have our support’. I mentioned that I would return with a more formal presentation at a future meeting.

At a subsequent meeting in the evening on 29 April 2008 I spoke to members about the research proposal, provided a copy of the proposal to the secretary and agreed to email a copy to her after the meeting. Members attending recommended several local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who they felt could provide important contributions to the study. Throughout the study attempts were made to contact those community members and industry representatives.

Records in my 2008 researcher journal recount the conversations with the LAECG president to ensure that the focus group aligned with community members’ preferences. She noted that in a phone conversation (26 May, 2008) that Monday evenings, 6.00 - 6.30pm are the best times for members to meet outside local LAECG meeting times. Two members were identified to represent the LAECG.

The phone communication was an important part of the operationalizing of Rigney’s Indigenist research methodology insofar as it:

- privileged Aboriginal voice in the research process in order to establish preferred days and times convenient to the community;
- enacted a gentle resistance to the convention of assuming the location of the meetings being at the university and
- exercised political integrity by respecting the founding presence of the collective group and took advice on their preferred governance process.

Seeking clearance for visual communication via Artists in the Black - Arts Law Centre of Australia January/Feb 2008

This early preparatory phase was conducted to secure cultural assurances from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander legal consultants working within the Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander Arts industry about the visual communication I created that might potentially be included in the study. The images were largely, initial ‘communication-to-self’ sketches that tested, in a tangible form, aspects of the conceptual framework and research planning to myself. They were contemporary representations that emerged from the research problematic. One example is the special custodial role of those who, while ‘off Country’, have resided in Guringai country for a sustained period of time and care-take Country, often on behalf of the families of traditional custodians who, through forms of genocide, have been removed from their traditional custodian roles and their Country either physically or culturally.

Figure 5 is a very significant image for me in that it made tangible my understanding that every educator/ education provider is located in Aboriginal Country. It also affirms cultural protocols that encourage respect to be shown by education providers to, in the first instance, traditional Elders and other custodians, significant families who may be ‘off-Country’ but have been actively caretaking, culturally, in Country. Finally, it recognizes those Aboriginal people who work in that Country but reside elsewhere. In doing so it attempts to shed some light on the nature of local Aboriginal community constituency particularly for those less familiar.



Figure 5: Protocol map for education provider (Evans, 2008).
Digital photograph.

Figure 5 incorporated a square symbolically as an education provider. The source for that shape came from several western heritages including the Christian symbolism of the square representing earth in contrast with the circle representing heaven. Hechle explains that ‘sacred geometry has a whole complex language of its own, elements of which have been used for thousands of years to create the sacred art and architecture of many spiritual traditions all over the world’ (1999, p. 50). In Renaissance architecture, octagonal floor plans have been suggested as representing an intersection between heaven, the circle, and earth, in the form of the square. According to Hechle (1999, p. 50), ‘many medieval churches and mosques embody a mystical enactment-in-stone of sacred principles, such as squaring the circle (of earth and heaven)’.

The use of pragmatic forms such as the square and rectangle as modules for pre-fabricated, economically efficient construction processes saw these shapes highly popularized and a heritage and economic solution that pervaded the modern and postmodern architecture of contemporary western culture. Institutional learning environments in Australia, in schools and universities for example, typically, draw more upon the square or rectangle in their floor plans than other geometric forms and it is this convention that underpins the use of the square in Figure 5 to symbolically represent education providers.

While the square is also found in the visual communication of Indigenous peoples worldwide, in this particular study, the circular shape is a pervasive motif that typically represents an Aboriginal community or communities. At other times it is used to describe gatherings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The concentric circles, in Figure 5, were indicators of the various constituents of the local Aboriginal community with whom education providers are obliged to consult. The circle enclosing the square originally indicated traditional Aboriginal custodians including custodial Elders, the next were those long term residents in the area, beyond that were those who might work in the area. The image was a reflection upon and an explanation, or visual story, about who school representatives might consult with.

Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 are examples of my own preparatory visual communication and are included here to demonstrate how integral and valid visual communication can be for some in research pathways and to exemplify the type of mark making used in this early phase of the research planning.

Figures 5, 6 and 7 expanded upon key concepts that were emerging about consultation practice. Figure 6 contains visual reflections on the critical determination of the sectors that best match for the purpose of consultation. In the case of this study they were proposed to be the local community as the enduring and first priority. Secondly and of great significance the professional learning communities of Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. Finally and integral to this study is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts sector.



Figure 6: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholder sectors for Visual Arts teacher education curriculum – local community, education and Visual Arts/cultural heritage* (Evans, 2008). Digital photograph.

The folio of visual communication also contain visual reminders of the special place of Elders and the significance of acquiring viewpoints from both men and women particularly cognisant of men's business and women's business (Figure 7).

This phase of confirming that my visual communication was culturally sound involved initial email and phone communication with a local Aboriginal legal consultant within Guringai Country. This led to further email and phone communication with a Torres Strait Islander legal consultant from Artists in the Black - Arts Law Centre of Australia.



Figure 7: *Recognition of diverse viewpoints in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders* (Evans, 2008). Digital photograph.

Arts Law has been providing legal services to the arts community since 1983. However, when we looked at the rip-offs and exploitation of Indigenous artists still occurring, the case for a specialised service for Indigenous artists was overwhelming. <http://www.aitb.com.au/index.php/about/>

From an ethical position any risk assessment in a study within the area of Indigenous Visual Arts education had to ‘walk the talk’ of cultural heritage protection. This consultation was the best means available to me to seek assurances from my own contacts and from the services of public legal service providers to do precisely that before images were used for the study.

Telephone and email communication in early 2008 to an Aboriginal legal consultant in private practice and a Torres Strait Islander legal consultant at Artists in the Black resulted in confirmation that the images created by myself as artist/researcher did not pose a risk of inadvertent appropriation of the creative work of other individuals or cultural groups as far as those consultants were aware of at that time.

In the following sections of the chapter are general descriptions of the four focus groups that were conducted during the study. Analytical commentary is located in Chapter 5.

Several conventional research methods were adjusted as a result of conversations and reflection. Compromises were regularly formed that stretched to meet the expectations of the academy on the one hand and the community in the other. These started with planning the focus groups that followed. One compromise arose out of what seemed to be so straightforward. As routine preparation I asked my academic supervisor and my cultural mentor separately how long a typical focus group might take. The former suggested between 30 and 40 minutes, the latter said I would need a couple of days.

Feeling guilty to be disappointing both, I compromised with a 2 - 3 hour, two-part meeting. The decisions about locations were equally polarized with my cultural mentor suggesting an outdoor location in a national park, a bush setting, and my academic supervisor presuming that it would be practical for them to be held at the university site. The former was a location I found out later was favoured, in fact, by the local AECG for meetings held in summer. The initial focus groups for this study were conducted, however, in winter. Below is an extract from my researcher journal revealing some of the deliberations about venues for the arts-based focus groups:

Sunday, March 30, 2008

Woke up with fresh thoughts about memberships of focus groups and, more significantly, decisive insights about the locations. First thoughts had been typically western solutions...the UTS Kuring-gai site for the northern groups and the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) for those on the southern side...this morning I thought about my own underpinning principles about locations that I tell my

students (ie go to the communities' locations) rather than expecting under-funded, over-extended groups to jump to culturally less easeful locations. Latest thought ... use settings within the two regions where the Aboriginal community and industry representatives will know and feel a greater sense of comfort.

Gadigal focus group FG-GA (Phase 1) – Redfern, 2 June 2008

This 3 hour, daytime focus group, FG-GA was held in Gadigal Country on 2 June 2008 at an established Aboriginal community centre in Redfern. Prior to the focus group I explained the study to a respected Elder in that Country who was a long-standing member of a local Aboriginal organisation. My explanation mentioned several key organisations to be represented in the study. While he was unable to attend the focus group at Redfern he did confirm that another participant attending the second focus group to be held at Brookvale could speak on his behalf. He expressed his confidence in that person. Another member of a key organization was invited to the event. Unfortunately there was no formal reply to the email and it was surmised that a conflicting work commitment was the reason.

While several participants were unable to attend the focus group due to other demands such as carer responsibilities or conflicting workplace appointments, the reduced number enabled sustained and detailed conversation from the two remaining participants. Both of the participants, one Wiradjuri/ Kamilaroi, one Waka Waka, were experienced members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts communities either as practitioners or administrators.

I commenced the focus group by acknowledging Country. Following the acknowledgement of Country, the participants introduced themselves. One of the reasons for the cultural modification to the duration of the focus groups in the study was to provide time to enable participants to introduce themselves in cultural terms that established their connections to Country/ies, to each other and/or asserted representations of cultural identity.

After the introductions, for the first half of the focus group, the participants' attention was drawn to curriculum documents, including Visual Arts education subject outlines.

After lunch, during the second half of the focus group an arts-based ‘blue skies’ response by participants was invited. Participants responded to a set of focus group question by creating imagery on canvas (Figures 16 and 17). They ultimately settled upon one question ‘What is essential knowledge that Visual Arts teachers need to know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, pre-service?’

The participants’ feedback on the curriculum documents confirmed the appropriateness of several features of the subject outlines. The requirement for pre-service Visual Arts teacher trainees to develop their own ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ associated with their professional experience school site was recommended to be retained as an assessable item. This task is in the ‘Issues in Indigenous Australian Education’ subject. Similarly there was confirmation by the Waka Waka participant that publications by Terri Janke on Indigenous intellectual and cultural heritage protection, as long as they were recent and current, were ‘the best you can have’.

While the outcomes of this focus group are presented in detail in Chapter 4 some are noted here. The importance of pre-service Visual Arts teachers’ awareness of ‘engaging with’ the local Aboriginal community was raised repeatedly throughout the focus group. Analysis of the transcriptions revealed the range of participants’ experience of engagement. Both participants provided several practical examples of how engagement might occur. As action arising from the focus group, acting upon participants’ feedback, I was able to identify a current professional experience opportunity within the university’s secondary teacher education program where engagements could be included. The program at that time, in 2008 and 2009, supplemented the teacher education program’s Professional Experience suite of placements. It was titled ‘Professional Experience Enrichment Program’ and enabled additional volunteer hours spent in education settings within the community. It followed then that students could feasibly elect to complete some of their hours in Aboriginal community education settings.

During the second part of the focus group the participants were invited to respond to several research questions by rendering their ideas in images on the canvas. Their visual communication and the yarning that occurred as the communication was being made provided data for analysis contained in the following chapter.

On a pragmatic level I learnt some hard lessons in this focus group that were succinctly captured in the following extract from a later entry in my researcher's journal:

Sunday, March 8, 2009

Reflection from Focus Group 1... never organize a focus group on a Monday morning; never assume that all people will come; have biscuits/ nibbles close at hand as back-up for catering shortfalls (including bringing an esky for milk); check all technical equipment for the durations expected to be used (eg digital tape recorder working for 10 mins).

I went from the Gadigal focus group feeling slightly deflated to prepare for the Guringai focus group that evening.

The Guringai focus group FG-GU1 (Phase 1) - Brookvale, 2 June 2008

As mentioned, the UTS campus where the teacher education program operates is in Guringai Country. In the original research design, to show respect to the local Aboriginal community where the secondary teacher education program was situated, it was intended that the first focus group, FG-GU1, would be held in Guringai country. In the northern beaches area of Sydney the Guringai Local AECG is well established. There are also several Aboriginal artists as well as eminent legal and heritage consultants residing and/or working in Guringai Country. The Guringai Local AECG meets regularly at the Gawura Aboriginal Learning Centre, NSW Institute of TAFE, Brookvale.

The original planning for the Guringai focus group assumed that Uncle Tex, the cultural mentor, would be present. To minimise the impact upon his work commitments I decided to hold both focus groups on the one day and reverse the order so that Uncle Tex could travel more easily from his residence 2 hours north of Sydney to Redfern then Brookvale. His work commitments ultimately prevented him from attending. During the de-briefing conversation that Uncle Tex and I held later we saw the positive side of this in that it allowed me to facilitate the focus groups authentically in my own way.

Guringai custodian, Uncle Bob Waterer, commenced the evening focus group with a Welcome to Guringai Country. Following the Welcome to Country participants introduced themselves most often in terms of cultural affiliation with accompanying stories of Country, kin and connections.

In this 3 hour, evening focus group, FG-GU1, similar to the one earlier in the day, participants' attention was drawn to curriculum documents during the first half of the focus group, including Visual Arts teacher education subject outlines. The seven participants engaged with me and with each other in productive discussion about ways of enhancing some aspects of the teacher education curriculum and aspects of teaching and learning. Details of some of the curriculum amendments are located in the findings in Chapter 4 and in Appendices C and D.

After some tucker that included an array of meals made by community members, at their insistence, accompanied by damper, the second half of the focus group featured an arts-based 'blue skies' response to the single focus group question 'What is essential knowledge that Visual Arts teachers need to know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, pre-service? Selected examples of the visual communication created during this focus group, and its analyses of those examples, are located in Chapter 4. The final collectively painted canvas is located in Appendix G.

Meeting with cultural mentor, Uncle Tex Skuthorpe at Kulnura (2008)

A meeting was arranged where I could take the canvases to Uncle Tex to share what had been created and reflect upon 'where to from here'. I unrolled the canvases on the floor of his home and, with permission, used a digital video recorder to document the meeting. He was pleased with the progress of the projects and agreed with FG-GA participant, Jonathan Jones, in that I should allow the unfinished canvas to be completed in future meetings and interviews.

The Guringai focus group FG-GU2 (Phase 2) - Brooklyn, 11 September 2010

To accord with the original research communication explained to participants, a second focus group, FG-GU2, was arranged through the Guringai Local AECG. As the time came closer and commitments were identified the three community members able to attend indicated that the Phase Two focus group could be held at my home, also in Guringai country, on a day on the weekend. On this occasion, the findings to date were to be shared and resulting actions to be discussed.

The presence of traditional custodian, Uncle Bob Waterer [Guringai], to welcome participants to Country at this second focus group and to provide feedback on the mid-study findings was always a part of the original plan. Uncle Bob, however, had travelled a significant distance for an outing the day before the focus group and suggested that we proceed without him despite his hopes to have been present. An original Guringai Local AECG representative was unable to attend and two community members, Aunty Lois Birk and Julie Hendicott [Ngugi], attended instead. The other representative was Jessica Birk with a fourth participant joining the focus group for a short time.

At the Brooklyn meeting, after an Acknowledgement of Country, the two canvases were displayed, the visual communication on those canvases was explained and discussed by participants and an interim report was provided for the records of the Guringai Local AECG. Findings were discussed and where further actions were required a plan was noted. In this focus group the arts-based component of the focus group was critical and interpretive rather than studio-based.

The Aboriginal cultural heritage representative and local community member, Dave Watts [Wailwan], who had contributed at the initial Guringai focus group, was unable to attend the Phase 2 focus group. I arranged to meet with him at his workplace to explain curriculum changes and the mid study findings. While an interview had been prearranged it became clear when I arrived that he was inundated with urgent work commitments and we agreed to postpone the interview. I left the interim report and suggested he call me when he had read it. The significance of the presence and absence of potential participants as well as the need for flexible approaches to consultation are taken up in greater detail in Chapter 4 and 5.

The Guringai focus group FG-HE (Phase 2) – Lindfield, 24 August 2010

The membership of this focus group, FG-HE, was not originally planned for, however, the opportunity was quite literally seized when it became obvious after reflection on the initial two focus groups that there was another significant stakeholder group which could provide advice to me, as subject coordinator, about the mandatory subjects and the program in general in terms of the representation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander content. That significant group included the current casual and permanent Aboriginal academics associated with the delivery of the mandatory three credit point subject ‘Issues in Indigenous Australian Education’ within the Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education.

While I have been associated with the teacher education subjects, each year for the past fifteen years there have been approximately three or four Aboriginal educators engaged as casual academics to tutor and lecture in the teacher education program

On this occasion Aboriginal participants, arrived in the art room for a light meal. The tables in the room were arranged so that the refreshments were on one large table setting, the folders containing the curriculum documents, pen, paper and post-it notes were on another and the canvas was on a third table setting. Participants could move freely as necessary when the focus changed.

After a light meal I made an Acknowledgement of Country in absence of a Welcome to Country by a traditional custodian. Cultural introductions then took place. The next phase of the focus group was the review of curriculum documents, documents that were already well know to members of this group. Selected recommendations and examples of curriculum amendments are mentioned in the findings in Chapter 4 and in Appendix E.

After the review of curriculum documents participants moved to the table setting where the two metre square, black canvas was laid out. Art materials - paints, palettes, water jars, medium, paper and pencils – were available nearby on trolleys and other tables.

The canvas was the one used in the first focus group at Redfern, FG-GA, containing the visual communication of the two participants. I explained that the participants from FG-GA had invited the remaining space to be filled in a future focus group. The FG-HE participants were then asked to reflect on the question ‘What do you consider to be essential knowledge that pre-service Visual Arts secondary teachers should have about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture before they start teaching?’

Participants made their initial visual responses to the question either directly onto the remaining section of the black gesso covered canvas using white conte pencils to make guiding marks or they worked on paper using conventional pencils on paper. At no point did a participant work over the contribution of another. Rather, they made judgments about how to locate their contribution adjacent to existing images. Some participants used acrylic paint and brushes to complete their visual reply and explained the piece verbally during the process, others returned on the following days to sketch onto the canvas and apply paint. One participant, Joelander MacGregor, collected the canvas several days after FG-HE along with her preparatory sketch, brushes and acrylic paints requesting to complete the work at her home. The remaining voids on the canvas were filled by the visual responses of participants who worked on the canvas in their homes for a few days after the interview using provided art materials.

Using the previously painted canvas was the advice of Jonathan Jones, a participant in the Redfern focus group. The ultimate outcome was highly significant because it liberated the canvas from the conventional approach of being completed in one sitting with one coherent aesthetically unifying structure. It became a sequence of independent communications (see Appendix H for completed canvas) where additions responded to the research question and also to the images laid down previously.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a conventional method employed by researchers to generate data. This method provides opportunity for participants to speak directly to the researcher and can be more flexible from an operational perspective. That is, they can take place at the preferred locations of participants, at a community location or at the

university. Chapter 4 provides specific information about the outcome of interviews held in this study. The interview schedules I designed for phase one action research cycles aimed to elicit responses from participants about:

1. the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander content within the site's teacher education curriculum documents
2. 'blue skies' thinking about Visual Arts education teacher training or
3. consultation approaches (including the customized consent form)

In total eight, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were held between 2008 and 2010.

Uncle Tex Skuthorpe (Sept, 2008)

Uncle Tex Skuthorpe [Nhunggal] is an artist and cultural educator with experience in teaching in industry and vocational education settings. He also operates an Aboriginal cultural education organization that has been engaged by a range of communities and organizations in various development initiatives.

When a respected doctoral program coursework lecturer encouraged student connection with mentors outside the existing supervisory relationship I asked Uncle Tex if he would be that person. Uncle Tex became an authentic mentor prior this project through a shared interest in the Visual Arts and the capacity of the arts for transformative action.

Uncle Tex and I had a face-to-face meeting intended to be with my university supervisors to discuss the research design. A more formal recorded interview after the first round of focus groups was also held.

Terry Doolan – 2 October 2009 (Cultural educator)

Terry Doolan [Wiradjuri] provided feedback on the WIPCE presentation by Uncle Tex and I in Melbourne, 2008. I invited Terry to contribute to the study through an interview after that meeting. Having been involved in Aboriginal community initiatives, education and a range of community roles throughout his life, Terry was able to provide a range of

insights about the project including his perspective on the place of the Arts in Aboriginal cultural practice as well as, from his experience of higher education, advice on aspects of the consultation process.

George Nona – 5 February 2010 (Visual artist/designer)

At the time of this interview, George Nona [Argun] was in Sydney for a group exhibition *Muiyiw Minaral* (3 February – 25 February, 2010) at Hogarth Galleries, Paddington. He has worked extensively for several years with Elders of Torres Strait Islander communities in revitalizing the Torres Strait Islander tradition of dhoeri making. His works are in exhibition internationally and used by Torres Strait Islander performers in their cultural practices. George had time to participate in an interview at the gallery only. There was insufficient opportunity for George to contribute to the arts-based component of this study.

Tania Chambers - 12 and 22 September 2010 (Course graduate)

At the time of this interview, Tania [Palawa] was a Visual Arts teacher in practice and drew upon her recollections of being a student in the Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education during our meetings. Tania is an Aboriginal woman who has a cultural connection with Tasmania. Tania participated in this study by being interviewed and also contributing her reflections through visual communication on the canvas (Figure 19).

Aunty Clair Jackson – 6 and 8 October 2010 (Visual Arts educator/ community member)

Aunty Clair Jackson [Ugarapul; also *Jagara*] has been a school teacher, librarian, former academic and a former Aboriginal Art Education Manager at the NSW Art Gallery. Aunty Clair is a respected educator who resides in Guringai country. She participated in an interview in this study and also contributed her reflections as visual communication on the canvas (Figures 22, 23 and 24).

Veronica Murphy – 19 January 2011 (Adult education teacher/ casual academic)

Veronica Murphy was interviewed independently after being unable to join the Lindfield focus group. In addition to her fulltime work in Aboriginal Education and a range of other commitments Veronica has been a casual academic at UTS for a number of years. She did not participate in the arts-based process but provided her feedback on the subject outlines and readers of the Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education in an extended interview.

There were several other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Arts or Aboriginal education representatives that expressed interest in participating, however, due to time constraints, I was unable to follow-up.

Visual communication

In keeping with the Arts based approach described in this chapter another method employed within all focus groups and in some interviews was visual communication. Images were made either by the researcher to communicate ideas to participants or, and most importantly, by several participants to respond to research questions. In one focus group, and in the mid-study meeting with my mentor, the arts-based engagement was critical rather than practical. Participants responded to the visual communication rather than produce more. Data associated with this feature of the research design is analysed in Chapter 4.

Researcher's journal

A researcher's journal was kept throughout the life of the study from 2008 until 2012. Entries were most often in electronic form as word documents and mind-maps. Entries also took the form of sketches and written field notes. Excerpts from the researcher journal or log were noted in previous sections.

3.6 Participants

There were nineteen people in total who participated, either in one or more focus group or interviews (Figure 8). Another six potential participants expressed their apologies for not being able to attend a focus group citing carer responsibilities, sorry business², conflicting work commitments or study commitments as the reason. Four more potential focus group participants who didn't attend provided no reason. Attempts to contact another four Aboriginal people with expertise relevant to this study as recommended by the local AECG, a custodian and representatives of water management, site management and the film industry, were, unfortunately, unsuccessful. Due to a range of reasons, either my own circumstance or the potential participants' competing schedules, follow-up communication to a further four potential participants was not undertaken.

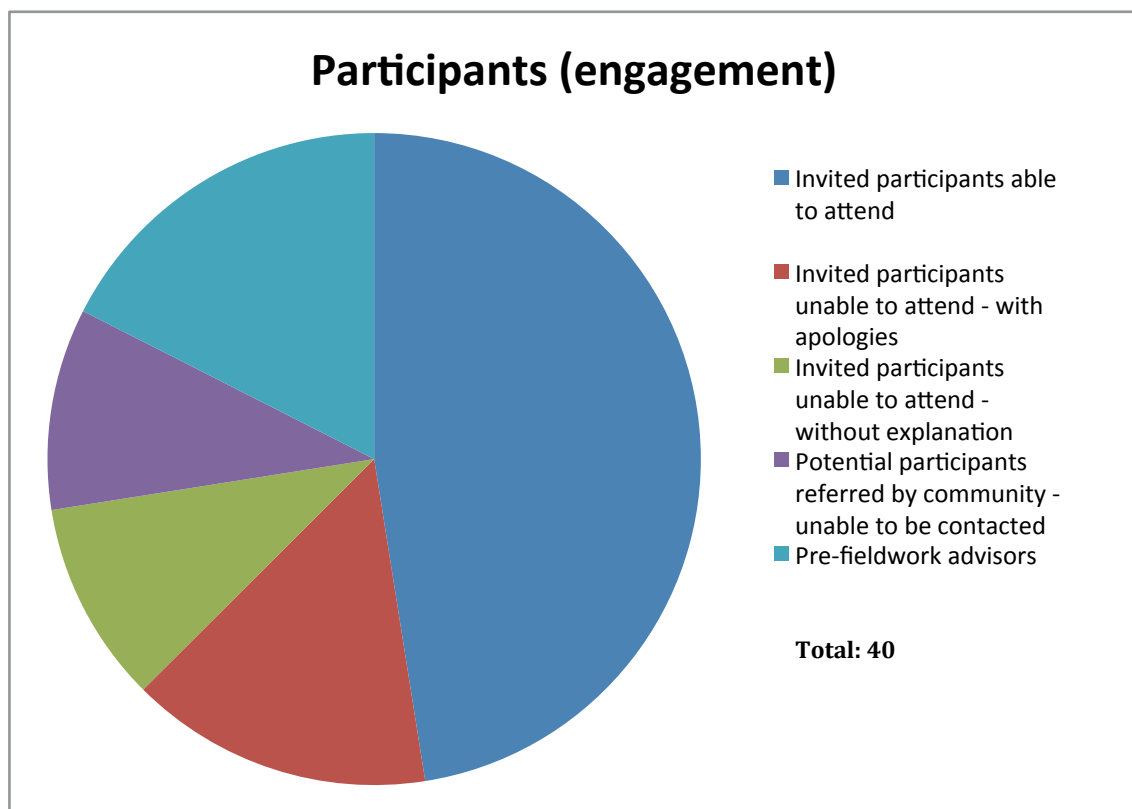


Figure 8: Participants (engagement).

² Aboriginal English term for funeral attendance or grieving associated with loss

The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research states, ‘the research approach should value and create opportunities to draw on the knowledge and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by their active engagement in the research process, including the interpretation of the research data’ (NHMRC, 2007, p. 71). Yet, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are often constructed as a problem, that is, part of a larger ‘Aboriginal problem’, falling under a 'special' category. Some of this might be reinforced within existing ethics protocols designed to minimise harm. But within this context, a ‘deficit model’ is often imposed that reinforces stereotypes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as difficult to ‘recruit’ or work with. Tokenism is often an unintended effect. Equally, First Nation groups are often distrustful of motives of European research (Smith, 2009).

This study appreciates the complexities inherent in undertaking research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but not by attributing the short-comings to community/ies. Rather, it does so by attributing resilience to those community/ies that operate within, and are often debilitated by chronically adverse conditions caused by the unfinished business that is the fall-out of Australia’s colonial histories. As Mooney-Somers and Maher (2009, p. 3) argue, community-based or participatory models of action research focus ‘on developing community capacity’. In doing so community members are able ‘to participate as co-investigators in developing, conducting and disseminating the research’(p. 3) regaining an authoritative presence in inquiry related to their own issues and futures.

Of the 19 participants, 18 were Aboriginal respondents and one was a Torres Strait Islander respondent (Figure 9). Other Torres Strait Islander people were involved in important dialogue initially providing advice on arts, knowledge protection and about participant recruitment.

Participants by cultural identification (Aboriginal respondent, Torres Strait Islander respondent)

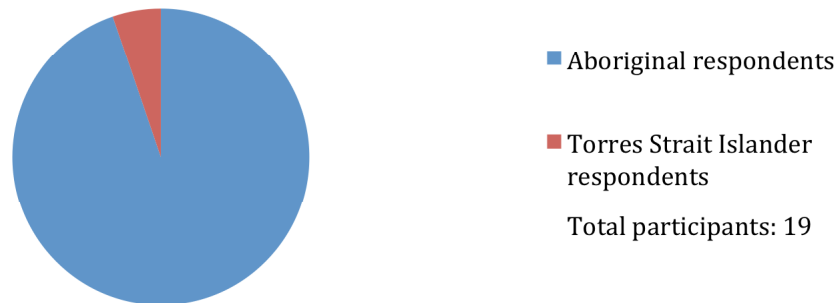


Figure 9: Participants by cultural identification (Aboriginal respondent, Torres Strait Islander respondent).

As noted previously, for several reasons, the consent form for this study was customized. The original motivation was to ensure that practicing artists who contributed to the canvas were provided a means of attribution by name. The second was to enact greater self-determination within the consent component of research practice. Thirdly, it was also to tap into the educative capacity of research to increase the visibility and representation of Aboriginal Country and Torres Strait Islander Place. The consent form provided participants with an opportunity to not be identified or to be identified by name, by cultural affiliation, for example by Country, Place or clan or a combination. The overwhelming majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants chose to identify themselves by name and usually by language group, Country or Place. This data is expressed in Figure 10 . One participant noted a connection to two Aboriginal language groups.

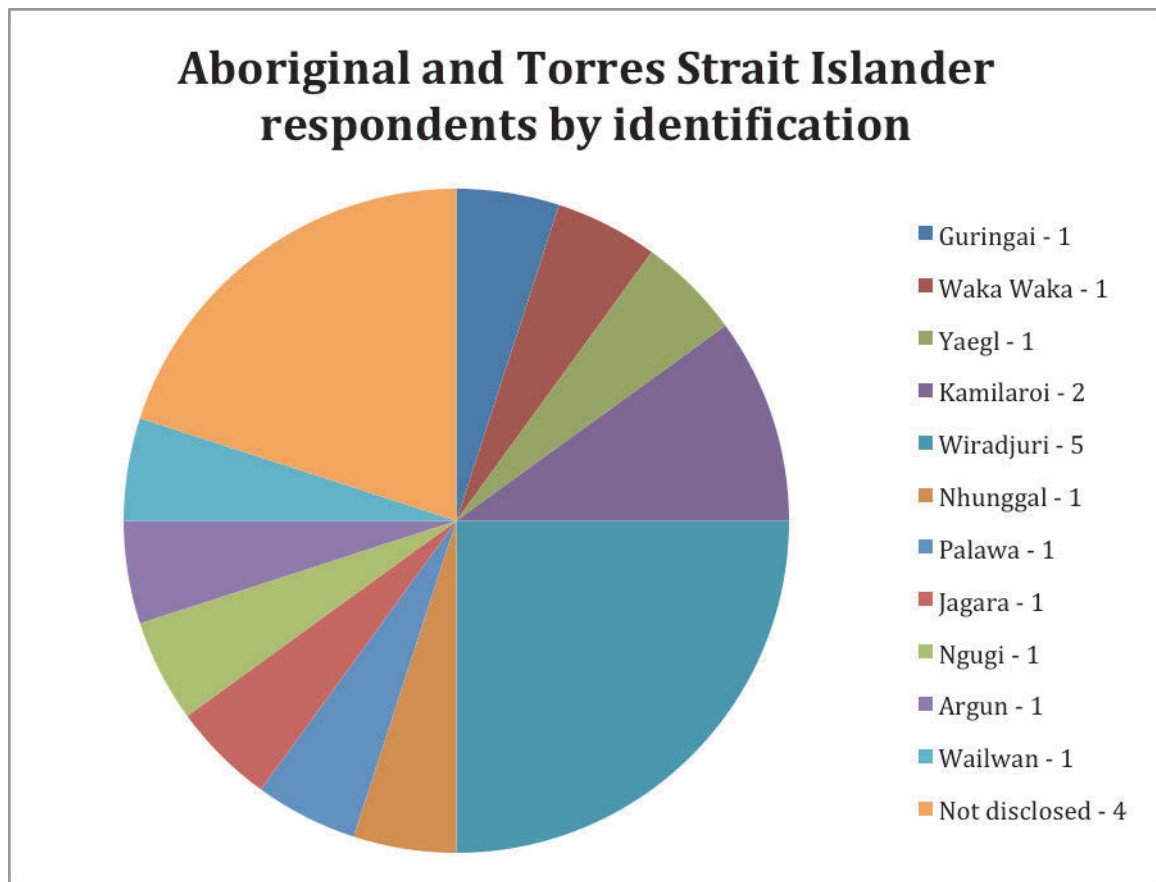


Figure 10: Participant association with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Country, Place, language or clan.

While not participants of the study, significant sector or Aboriginal governance representatives were contacted in the earliest part of planning (Appendix A) to ascertain the appropriateness of aspects of the study. Before fieldwork commenced, personal communication by telephone and/ or email communication was exchanged with the following:

- traditional custodian and local organisation member (1)
- Aboriginal legal consultant (1)
- Torres Strait Islander legal consultant (1)
- Aboriginal academic/ ethics representative (1)
- Torres Strait Islander academic (1)
- President, local AECG (1)
- Secretary, local AECG (1)

Again, before fieldwork commenced, in addition to contact with the individuals noted above, collective, local Aboriginal community, 'in principle' endorsement was sought. I attended two local AECG meetings, one on the 24 February 2008 and another on the 29 April 2008 where several members were in attendance. Brief details from the meetings are included in Chapter 4.

At the second meeting, conscious of the demands upon members, I asked if any members were interested to volunteer to participate in the study. Two members were formally nominated to participate in the research as representatives of the organisation. In local AECG meetings that followed I presented brief updates on the progress.

In the initial research design it was intended that the following representatives be engaged as participants:

- Traditional custodians (male and female) of the country where the university and/or focus group is held;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists – male and female
- Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG) representatives
- Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) representatives
- Aboriginal cultural heritage consultants (male/female)
- Torres Strait Islander representatives (male and female)
- NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) - Aboriginal Education representative
- Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations (DEEWR) - Indigenous Education representative
- Australian Council for the Arts - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board representative
- State Fine Arts gallery: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander curator
- State Applied Arts/Design gallery: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander curator
- Community-based regional Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Art gallery representative

In the initial design the above-mentioned representatives were proposed to include the interests of local, state and national stakeholders despite this being a small-scale, local-site inquiry with a range of resource limitations.

In the study 19 respondents, 18 Aboriginal respondents and one Torres Strait Islander respondent were recruited and participated in focus groups or interviews between January 2008 and January 2011. Overall the study there were comprised 6 male respondents and 13 female respondents. Some of those local Aboriginal community respondents were also members of the local AECG where the university campus was situated. In addition, I was in communication with two Aboriginal legal advisors, two Torres Strait Islander legal advisors and a Torres Strait Islander teacher. While the number of participants appears small, the local focus became significant and those represented were knowledgeable and with strong connections within the sectors represented in the study.

A further five Aboriginal people who were invited to attend were unable to participate due to a range of reasons. Some of those reasons included distance, funeral attendance, work or study commitments, clashes with other meetings and caring for an ill child. Another six people who were invited to participate did not provide reasons for not attending. Of the Aboriginal people recommended by the Local AECG members at initial meetings three were unable to be contacted in time for the focus groups or interviews despite a range of attempts.

Finally, I was unable to conduct interviews with two Aboriginal curators and one Aboriginal designer who I had approached independently and who had indicated their interest in participating in the study. This occurred at times when spikes in my own work, study and family obligations reduced my research capacity.

The Aboriginal mentor, custodians, members of the local Guringai AECG as well as some of the artists and cultural heritage (or legal) representatives were known to me. Aboriginal participants representing higher education I knew in my capacity as lecturer at UTS. Other participants were engaged as a result of the recommendations of members of the local AECG. Within any location or region, Aboriginal networks and professional affiliations are close and well connected.

It would be difficult to undertake research as an Aboriginal researcher within your own field and region and not have prior relationship to participants. In research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people relationship and connection is important to establish trust and respect.

In closing, while it is most important to invite peak industry representatives and organisations and significant representatives from Aboriginal education to have input in this inquiry, the enduring significance of the local Aboriginal community would always be the most critical component of the research. Without the support of the local Aboriginal community the project would not proceed. Conventionally, in NSW, this can come from the LALC and/or the LAECG.

3.7 Data

While arguably a semantic exercise it is nonetheless useful to reflect upon differing understandings of how data comes to be understood paradigmatically. Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012) argue that data have ‘no prior ontological existence as data outside of the framework of a research project’ (p. 79) and are, in fact, generated or co-generated by researcher and participants’. By contrast positivist notions that data are ‘collected’ as though ‘lying around in a field’ (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012) can exacerbate the perception of a separation between the researcher and the field.

In the case of this study data was co-generated during focus groups and interviews with a range of predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholder participants. In focus groups and some interviews participants had an option of responding to an open-ended question via visual communication.

The form the data took included digital sound and video recordings of focus groups, digital sound or video recordings of interviews and the transcriptions of recordings. Data also took the form of responses in visual form as large-scale acrylic paintings completed during focus groups or interviews. In some cases, preliminary sketches were used.

When the visual communication was exhibited on two occasions the comments made in speeches at the exhibition openings or written form (eg visitor's book) constituted data. Similarly, personal communication such as emails and text messages, researcher field notes, researcher reflective diary entries, visual communication by both the researcher and the majority of participants and some of the research methods themselves. All of this data was generated during or on the periphery of several action research episodes between January 2008 and January 2011.

Data storage

Data was coded according to key words, phrases and visual communication while maintaining coherence with the key research questions that follow and those questions designed for focus groups and interviews.

- 'How can we, as teacher educators, provide respectful consultative engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local and professional communities to enhance teacher education?'
- 'How does an experience of engaging with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in secondary Visual Arts teacher education inform curriculum renewal?' and
- 'How might an experience of engaging with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in secondary Visual Arts teacher education contribute more broadly to engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to inform teacher education?'

A focus question used in the 'blue skies', arts-based method is the question 'What do you consider essential for future Visual Arts teachers to know about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture/s?'

Data was entered into excel spreadsheets according to categories, or themes, and sub categories. Physically, electronic data such as digital voice or video recordings,

photographic records, transcriptions and field or reflective notes were stored safely in password accessed computer hard drives, backed up on external hard-drives or stored on flash drives, all of which were stored in locked filing cabinets or the researcher's office. Data that takes the form of visual communication was stored securely either rolled or flat in protective storage in locked office space. With permission from participants, the canvases were exhibited on several occasions.

Data analysis

Grounded theory (Birk & Mills, 2011; Corbin and Strauss, 2008) was used in the analysis of data generated in this study. Initially, coding was employed to extract concepts 'from raw data and develop them in terms of their properties and dimensions' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, 159). Strauss and Corbin explained coding as 'the analytical processes through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory' (1998, p. 3). More recently Corbin, in the third edition (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 159) defines it as 'extracting concepts from raw data and developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions'.

Through the microanalysis of words, phrases and sentences, a technique that was employed in the analysis of data in this inquiry, Strauss and Corbin (1998) draw attention to 'how much is packed into little bits of data'. They place the onus upon the researcher to 'mine the data' (p. 65) to the point where the multiplicity of the meaning of words assists the researcher to dispense with preconceived ideas about associated meanings. Conceptual ordering was employed to 'organize data into discrete categories according to their properties and dimensions and then using description to elucidate these categories' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 19). This process enabled the emergence of categories such as 'cultural vitality' to emerge as a category from coding data according to 'restoration of cultural heritage', 'cultural responsibility' and 'cultural identity'.

The data analysis involved the manual coding of transcriptions, visual communication and researcher notes. Significant to this is the capture of yarning associated with image making as well as scope for analysis of some images isolated from verbal representations.

The latter was rare. In most cases there was a verbal story, or yarning, or, alternatively, some form of problematic that was closely linked to the image.

In-vivo coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) was used as much as possible in the initial coding to retain the integrity of the representations of participants. Codes were attached to key words and phrases within word document transcripts from focus groups and interviews as well as to representations within the visual communication. The latter becomes more evident in Chapter 4 where details from the large canvases have been isolated for their capacity to elucidate particular meaning in response to the research question.

Digital photographs of sections of large-scale canvases were coded and stored in folders under categories such as ‘engaging with local community/ies’ and sub categories such as ‘local Aboriginal community’, ‘respect’, ‘appropriation’ and ‘ask’. Another category was ‘learning from Country’ with subcategories such as ‘rock sites’, ‘saltwater’, ‘freshwater’, ‘writing’, ‘teachin/g’ and ‘learnin’/g’. Beyond open coding, axial coding was employed and supplemented the triangulation used to adequately interrogate data to confirm reliability.

Constant comparative analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) was employed between codes, between categories and between codes and categories (Birk & Mills, 2011). This was done being particularly mindful of not losing sight of the connections between text data and visual communication data and, significantly on several occasions, connections among visual communication data. As Corbin and Strauss note, constant comparisons ‘counter the tendency to focus on a single case by immediately bringing analysis up to a more abstract level’ (p. 77).

Intermediate coding is critical in the next phase of analysis that seeks to move to the generation of grounded theory. Theoretical integration occurs when advanced coding is employed effectively (Birk & Mills, 2011). Drawing upon a grounded theory approach to analysis means that my own assumptions can be challenged by the use of particular analytical tools. The open and coaxial data analysis that occurred at the time of each action research cycle reflection along with the conceptual ordering of data and description

of categories that ensued is consistent with the view that the personal theory arrived at (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006) was grounded by data.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Qualitative reconstructions of validity

Qualitative researchers have operated for some time with the attraction of criticism from positivist practitioners for the many variables and influential factors surrounding the generating of data and validity of research output (Barbour & Schostak, 2005; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Exponents of qualitative research defend their practice in the knowledge that inquiry cannot be separated from the socially constructed environments it operates within. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that ‘inquiry is not and cannot be value free’ (p. 9) and Denzin and Lincoln (2008) note that ‘today, many agree that all inquiry is moral and political’ (p. viii). Methods within qualitative research immerse the researcher in the world outside the laboratory and in doing so welcome the uniqueness, authenticity and temporal qualities of such work (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

Inquiry of this nature requires alternate, paradigm-consistent methods (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Lather, 1986) that nonetheless in-build the means with which multiple audiences adjudicate credibility and worthiness. The challenge for the Indigenous researcher is to find, augment and develop methods that can invite Indigenous participants to engage safely in research despite the well known history of misrepresentation, inaccuracy and harm extended to Indigenous communities as a result of both positivist and naturalistic inquiry (Smith, 2008). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants individually adjudicate this research, however, for cultural credibility, the local Aboriginal community was the first collective engaged. Within that local Country protocol, the adjudications of other collectives whether cultural, geographic, social and/or professional can be subsumed.

The research act itself places considerable pressures upon the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander researcher and those connected to her/him (Minniecon, Franks & Heffernan, 2007). This ripple effect among participants and their communities from an inquiry is unique and separate from the relationship of the inquiry with representatives within professional research and higher education and those learning communities that the research must also be adjudicated by. This issue is discussed further in the following section in the measures employed in the investigation to anticipate the rights of the community to knowledge and scrutiny about research conducted in their country.

Means of establishing trustworthiness and cultural validity in this inquiry

Lincoln and Guba (1996) suggests that meeting ‘the four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability’ (p. 328) is necessary to establish the trustworthiness of an inquiry. Satisfaction of such criteria represents significant means for the researcher to ‘persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of’ (p. 290). The following describes how these criteria were met in this inquiry.

Credibility

The sustained ‘relating’ and relationships that were maintained throughout this research provided sufficient opportunity, coupled also with member checking and triangulation, to ensure that potential distortions could be considered. The research occurred over a period of three years. Contact with participants occurred formally in four lengthy focus groups, several interviews and follow-up telephone interviews, email communication, mobile texting, as well as two exhibitions of participants’ visual communication. Contact occurred informally throughout that period in a range of community or professional contexts with the researcher attending local AECG meetings and community events where this research was an agenda item and also attending a range of Indigenous Visual Arts/ Indigenous Visual Arts education events. This constitutes what Lincoln and Guba refer to as ‘prolonged engagement’ (1985, p. 302). A partially concurrent, overlapping action research evaluation project in which I was a researcher in

the same local community also resulted in heightened contact between the researcher and some local Aboriginal community members who were participants in this study.

The researcher journal, maintained throughout the three-year period, was also a means of taking a critical lens to the activity that occurred throughout the inquiry. Some issues the researcher navigated in this regard include Indigenous protocols and cultural practices. Such qualities as reciprocity or the supportive outcomes of being situated as an insider by the local community all have the potential to create distortions. In addition to the journal, the reflexive aspect within the action research cycles also encouraged the identification and acknowledgement of potential distortions.

Many older publications describing qualitative research methods encourage, without excess, the building of a relationship with the communities being researched. Marshall and Rossman (1995, p. 61) explain that a research design proposal 'should contain plans for negotiating access to the site and/or participants through formal and informal gatekeepers in an organisation'. In actually enacting this they suggest that 'instead of controlling and sanitizing their presence, qualitative researchers identify and present aspects of themselves that will be useful' (p. 61). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias describe field researcher practices of 'participating in the daily life of the observed' as "hanging around". This is a means of 'learning the ropes' (1996, p. 289) they claim in order to 'negotiate entry' into a community to be researched.

The isolated advice appears artificial and contrived but represents a stream of functioning that has supported research communities at least until they have become aware of other socio-cultural factors that encourage alternate practices. On one level it appears to be a reversal of the situated motive (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of a participant wanting to please the researcher. Here it is the researcher wishing to please, appease and arguably mislead the participant. It begs the question 'When does research commence?' and therefore, 'When should ethical scrutiny commence?'

First nations academic, Cook-Lyn (2008) is critical of repeated cases where this advice has been enacted by outsider researchers in communities without restraint. She says:

In the case of the “informant-based” Indian story, there is no length the biographer will not go to in his or her search for the “real story”. He or she spends every summer for 20 years in an Indian reservation community, attends hundreds of powwows, endures the dust and the tedium of these weekend-long or 4-day communal marathons, and puts up with the insults from those who despise his or her curiosity about their lives ... many times, this biographer takes an Indian as wife, husband, lover, or “live-in”. After 20 years the biographer is thought to be master of this territory on Indian lives and can present a manuscript to a publisher that will satisfy any voyeur’s curiosity. (p. 337)

While this account is a generalized criticism its concern around authenticity of motives is understandable in the face of some researcher agency in Indigenous communities in past decades.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in Australia, because of the intimacy of local community/ies, familial networks (Minniecon, Frank & Heffernan, 2007) and Aboriginal mobility between them there often are prior relationships that actually require ‘managing’ differently in a research context in order to uphold research integrity and political integrity (Rigney, 1997) given that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher may be sufficiently knowing about research, its heritage and potential ramifications. It may be argued that, at times, I was, as researcher, acting in an educative manner at various points of data collection and in relating with some participants at some times in order to ‘manage’ a situation toward the more research-trustworthy outcome.

Several times throughout this investigation I acted privately to dissuade participants with whom there was a prior relationship from initial responses that inclined me to ponder if the participant had situated motives where they may be wanting to ‘please the investigator’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 302). While this engagement never constituted dishonesty on any person’s part and indeed was more closely akin to protocol enactment, the researcher recognized that on some occasions the conventional research ‘rules’ to secure credibility needed to prevail. On some matters, this occurred in follow-up phone conversations with participants so that they were comfortable with their responses after further confidential discussion. At other times, what might seem as situated motive in an Aboriginal participants’ action had to be absorbed and understood as an enactment of protocol that did not affect the research-trustworthiness at all. This appears to coincide to

some degree with what Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) describe as the development of the researcher's skills to 'exercise ingenuity and demonstrate sensitivity to the personalities and perceptions of the research participants' (p. 290).

Triangulation was also a means of establishing trustworthiness according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). In this inquiry triangulation was achieved by using different methods. Through the use of differing data collection modes such as focus groups and interviews, along with an arts-based modality within several enactments of the previously mentioned modes, sufficiently diverse sources were accessed and used to pinpoint the regularity or not of particular themes and ideas in response to the research question. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) note that 'confidence can only be achieved as far as normative research is concerned when different methods of data collection yield substantially the same results' (p. 112) and argues that, in reference to Denzin's typology, of the four categories of triangulation most popular in educational research (ie time, space, investigator and methodological) the latter 'has the most to offer' (p. 115).

Methodological triangulation, which Cohen, Manion and Morrison explain as 'using the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same object of study' (p. 113) was a feature in testing the robustness of the art-making process as a sub-thread within the research process. The application of the arts-based approach was tested in three focus group conditions as well as in three interviews. This occurred with input from the outcome of used the method in a separate evaluative study also within a formal education combined local Aboriginal community context in NSW. It is important to note that in both investigations, equally, because a majority of participants contributed in both verbal and visual modalities triangulation of their responses was secured also thus using disparate methods in the one instance to verify data.

Member checking was a significant feature of according with a methodological commitment in an Indigenist research methodology that requires the privileging of Indigenous voice. It is imperative that the representations of 'voice' are accurate to ensure trustworthiness. Nakata describes the discrepancies between his own and his family members' representations of Torres Strait Islander lifeways, experiences of education and association with land compared with accounts from academic representations from higher education disciplines (Nakata, 2007b). He notes his 'growing

awareness of the uneasy relationship between my lived experience and that ascribed to me by the texts produced about Islanders' (p. 3).

In this inquiry, two strategies were designed to serve this function. In the first instance, located on the consent form, an option was created whereby participants could request that the researcher 'provide me with access to a final draft of material intended for publication/ exhibition that uses data gathered from or produced by me'. In the second instance, the researcher would, after ensuring transcriptions were accurate, email to participants, those quotations or representations of images and attributions intended for and ahead of exhibition or publication. Data not authorized by the participant for publication was not used in a published or exhibited form.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that 'a naturalist can only set out working hypotheses together with a description of the time and context in which they were found to hold' (p. 316) and that any possibility of such outcomes holding in another context would ultimately 'depend upon the degree of similarity between sending and receiving (or earlier and later) contexts'.

This is consistent with much anecdotal evidence within and among Aboriginal communities working within the field of Aboriginal education where it is the case that local solutions to educational issues are advocated for repeatedly over programs and initiatives that have emerged outside of that community (McRae, Ainsworth, Hughes, et al, 2002; Sarra, 2003). Local Aboriginal communities, operating at a particular point in the chronology of 'the cause' or 'the struggle' and within tracts of land known as 'country' acting in the capacity of, for example, receivers expect the right to determine whether inquiry-based initiatives conducted elsewhere have relevance in their contexts.

As a qualitative investigation, external validity cannot be specified because of the uniqueness of the context and the time of its production. In accordance with Lincoln and Guba's position it will be the 'receiver' of the findings of this research who makes

judgment about its transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). My responsibility is to, as the ‘sender’, ensure that I have provided the ‘thick description’ (ie a sufficient knowledge base) required for the receiver to base his/her adjudication upon. The representation of visual communication ‘excerpts’ or details, the selection of participant quotations in Chapter 4 and representation of the analysis of data and findings will constitute a ‘sufficient knowledge base’ for ‘a person contemplating application in another receiving setting to make the needed comparisons of similarity’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 360).

This is consistent with the confirmation of the cultural mentor offered well before the field work commenced when he said about the research design ‘this will be *your* story and you’re not tellin’ anyone else how to do it’ (T. Skuthorpe, personal communication, February 19, 2008) noting that others would make up their minds about whether it would be useful to them.

Dependability/Reliability

Guba and Lincoln (1985) explain that defining reliability in conventional terms requires reference to the concepts of ‘stability, consistency and predictability’ (p. 298) demonstrated often by replication. They challenge the latter because of its dependence upon ‘naïve realism’ arguing that the same exact conditions required for replication cannot actually be met. From a naturalist perspective, they suggest that a preferred term might be dependability whereby the researcher working in a qualitative inquiry would ‘seek means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change’ (p. 299).

According to Guba (cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) ‘since there can be no validity without reliability (and thus no credibility without dependability) a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter’ (pp. 316-7). For the purpose of this inquiry and in accord with this premise it is proposed that sufficient means of establishing reliability have been proffered within the trustworthiness framework described in this section as well as in the ensuing section on proposed measures upon which others can judge the Indigenous cultural validity of the inquiry.

Confirmability

This research proposes several means of establishing confirmability as espoused by Lincoln and Guba (1985) based upon the concept of a 'confirmability audit'. While such a model draws metaphorically upon notions of commercial practices that engage an autonomous expert to examine records in order for the broader cultural collective to be reassured of the accuracy of detailed activity as well as the accuracy of its representation, it is important to recognize that doctoral research already builds in, to some degree, its own auditing systems. The two systems immediately recognizable within the mainstream doctoral pathway are the assignment of more than one supervisor to a doctoral candidate and the routine auditing of the ethics committee.

Included in the latter's role is the stipulation that data be kept for a period of up to three years after the investigation providing opportunity for independent parties to access the records of the researcher. This, of course presupposes that those independent parties are sufficiently confident and informed of their rights to access such information. Because, in the case of Aboriginal communities the percentage of those meeting such conditions may well be less than in the case of non-Indigenous communities, this research design in-builds strategies that ensure that, to the most reasonable extent, suitable representation of researcher's activity is made known to Indigenous 'auditors' through means most accessible to them.

In this investigation the necessity for embedding an Indigenous 'auditing' infrastructure in addition to the university's auditing processes was deemed appropriate by the researcher to ensure that the data can be confirmed. This infrastructure is referred to among the strategies described in the following section 'Indigenous cultural validity'. Auditing agencies include the local Aboriginal community of the university's northern campus as represented through the LAECG, Aboriginal participants themselves through contributions and member checking procedures, Indigenous legal consultants to verify via email exchange the cultural safety of the researcher's visual communication and the cultural support of an Aboriginal mentor who accepted the invitation to provide guidance over the three years of the project in regard to its directions, actions, data and closure.

The use of triangulation and the keeping of a researcher's reflective journal are proposed by Guba (cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 319) as means, in conjunction with auditing, to achieve confirmability. It is sufficient for the purpose of this discussion to note that both have been mentioned elsewhere in this section as components of the investigation.

Indigenous cultural validity

What is described previously under 'trustworthiness' draws upon a mainstream western approach in pursuit of research validity in a qualitative investigation. As with many processes it has the capacity to silently subsume an Indigenous theme within it but, as this inquiry's methodology committed to an Indigenist approach, the concept of validity within that domain needs also to be framed, expressed and demonstrate rigor in terms of its own Aboriginality – its capacity to defend its robustness as an act of research according to the Indigenist principles espoused earlier as they have been applied in the context of this inquiry.

Indigenous cultural validity is therefore included within this section to use its semantic potency and structural capacity in order to challenge the research process and its findings to hold in terms of the Indigenised agency that informed the Indigenous cultural customizing of research methods. The choice to add 'cultural validity' indeed, 'Indigenous cultural validity' while the term similarly commences as a mainstream construct, makes explicit a link to the pervading sets of culturally informed adjustments that occurred in this inquiry from its commencement until its closure.

It is consistent with auditability insofar as the worth of the research had to be endorsed and supported culturally outside of itself in a similar vein to notions of collective ownership of knowledges (Janke, 2008).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) locate cultural validity within the broader term of ecological validity. They refer to the 'emerging notion of cultural validity (Morgan, 1999)' as being significant in 'cross-cultural, inter-cultural and comparative kinds of

research where the intention is to shape research so that it is appropriate to the culture of the researched' (p. 111).

While crediting Morgan (1999) they explain that, as is the case in Indigenous methodologies, cultural validity 'applies at all stages of the research and affects its planning, implementation and dissemination' and 'involves a degree of sensitivity to the participants, cultures and circumstances being studied' (2000, p. 111).

How then is Indigenous cultural validity applied in this research design? Structurally the following measures were enacted for this end as sources that would keep me 'on track' culturally:

- the engagement of an Aboriginal mentor throughout the process;
- testing of initial imagery with Indigenous legal consultants expert within the Indigenous arts sector and in Indigenous cultural heritage protection;
- the researcher's original and continued presence at local AECG meetings;
- dialogue with Indigenous academics who had completed doctorates or were in the process of completing;
- the academic 'testing' of research through presentation at conferences and publication/exhibition for Indigenous audiences;
- Indigenous representation in the membership of the UTS HREC; and
- member-checking of selected quotations, images, attributions, identification preference before participants' data was located in the public domain.

In the findings and discussion chapter these strategies will be reviewed as means of framing and achieving research worth in terms of Indigenous cultural validity.

The formal adjudication of the worthiness of this research resides within a higher education framework in accordance with the conventional practice that states that 'the judges themselves should normally be people with doctorates, licensed academics, and people who are active producers of research in the area that the thesis addresses' (Yates, 2004, p. 65). The idea of Indigenous cultural validity is a reminder that an abundance of expert and diverse knowledge holders are situated outside higher education domains, a

percentage of whom are without ease of access into it but with the right, nonetheless, to exercise self-determining agency in regard to judgments pertaining to research affecting them.

3.9 Ethical Indigenous research

This project is located within the highly sensitized area of research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The history associated with such sensitivities has been discussed in detail in the literature review and within this chapter. Indigenous justification for cautious endeavor and intellectual investment is documented as part of the relatively recent entrance of Indigenous academics to higher education (Blair & Hanlen, 2007; Herbert, 2012; Sherwood et al, 2011). As an Aboriginal researcher, similarly, the design of this research has been undertaken cautiously with deliberately sought advice from a range of Indigenous knowledge-holders, individually and, in regard to the local Aboriginal community, collectively. What follows is an account of additional ethical measures proposed beyond those required by the conventional ethics procedures of the university.

In the first instance, it was deemed that Aboriginal cultural guidance, both individual and collective, would be required for the duration of the project. The cultural mentor was approached ahead of formal planning. This was in recognition of the mentor's knowledge about and experiences in Arts-based Aboriginal community development work. The mentor was invited to consider being involved in the project including what the researcher saw as the degree of involvement that was likely to occur. Aboriginal cultural guidance, from a collective, or community was considered to be fundamental to the progress of the project. As the educational research was taking place in Guringai Country it was deemed important that the Aboriginal community organization with responsibility for education be approached for in-principle endorsement of the project ahead of any further action. The feedback of this community represented potentially a range of stakeholders – educators, community and artists or Arts-workers.

Secondly, an Aboriginal researcher within the university where the inquiry was being proposed was invited to review and discuss the research proposal. This was deemed

appropriate Indigenous academic scrutiny providing a valuable adjudication in the planning phase before action research cycles were commenced.

Thirdly, and again before action research cycles commenced, advice was sought from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants who were experts in Indigenous legal protection in the Visual Arts. The Visual Arts are, of course, an important sector that the inquiry targets. Indigenous legal consultants for the Arts were invited to make judgments about the researcher-initiated visual communication that was to be presented to participants (Figure 3). The purpose for this was to alleviate any concerns that, inadvertently, cultural violations were contained in the works.

In summary, the above procedures were put into operation to ensure that the research plan was culturally sound before commencement of the action research cycles. Other instances of ethical determinations follow and draw upon the research methodology.

Once the research preparation was culturally vetted, there was also capacity for the provision of ongoing Indigenous protections and freedoms to be incorporated. Ethical research in this area requires a comprehension of what diverse forms of Aboriginal self-determination continue to offer the pathway to equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is the comprehension of those relationships that informed the choice of an Indigenous research methodology for this inquiry.

For example, adherence, to the key Indigenist research principles of ‘resistance as the emancipatory imperative’, ‘political integrity in Indigenous research’ and ‘privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenist research’ (Rigney, 1997), ensures a culturally, therefore ethically, responsible platform from which to further trial ethically innovative possibilities. In the case of this inquiry, the comprehension of relationships between self-determination and the achievement of equalities informed an entitlement, through ‘resistance’, to test the boundaries and/or elasticity of existing research methods and techniques. In so doing, researchers seek to ‘get it right’ for Indigenous participants so that Indigenous peoples become research beneficiaries rather than solely research targets or, worse, research victims. Indigenous ethical research has and continues to be a necessary growth area for contemporary research internationally.

Beyond the choice of an Indigenist research methodology for this project as a form of resistance are several examples in the research methods used where Indigenist principles were adhered to in ways that the researcher argues necessarily disrupt the status quo through applying culturally vetted alternatives.

In one case the design of the consent form resists the convention of automatically de-identifying all research participants. It does this, with knowledge about Aboriginal cultural heritage protection in regard to attribution of visual cultural production and verbal cultural production. Where a participant is an artist with a distinctive style and/or distinctive story the design makes provision for choice of author representation.

In this research, participants will have a choice about whether they would like to identify themselves or not and whether they would like to reveal their affiliation with Country or not. In exercising that right to choose I have employed a cultural ‘resistance’ to the conventional designing of a consent form. This has been enacted for two reasons. Firstly, it is done in order for the participants to experience the respect of self-determination. Secondly, it is done so that the research products contribute to an educative process that surfaces information about Aboriginal Country and Torres Strait Islander Place thereby further illuminating the diversity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures of Australia.

Research participants will have the option to identify themselves by name and cultural affiliation in this project. The reason stems from the profile of some research participants, including the cultural mentor, as practicing artists. As such it is anticipated that their visual communication may be distinctive and should be attributable to them if they choose. It is also the case that the identity of some Aboriginal participants will be difficult to obscure if the university is named.

3.8 Limitations of the study

This study targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants for their advice and input into teacher education curriculum reform in secondary teacher education subjects coordinated and taught at the UTS Kuring-gai campus by myself. Mainstream student feedback is outside the scope of this inquiry although Aboriginal and/or Torres

Strait Islander student advice was considered within scope. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander historical and cultural content in subjects other than those coordinated by the researcher was not be offered to participants for advice.

Limitations of approach or access to Aboriginal community members and/or Aboriginal Arts or education representatives was the result of demand and resources in most instances, time being the resource most diminished for myself and other potential Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants.

The Indigenous methodological limitations such as the preference for Rigney's Indigenist research methodology over a culturally customized methodology were due to the constraints of time and, being 'off-Country', my lack of opportunity to develop a locally customized methodology with appropriate community endorsement.

From an Arts consultative perspective and, this being a single, student-initiated, self-funded study centred in Sydney, it was not feasible for me to undertake extensive travel. It was intended that a national perspective might be sought through the engagement of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representative from the Australian Arts Council also based in Sydney. Through that connection it was envisaged that interested artists might be interviewed when they travelled to Sydney for various Arts events.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

‘... it keeps us yarning.’ Aunty Lois Birk (personal communication, November 13, 2009).

The contemporary practices of yarning and image making are integral to the continued conveyance of Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being. The literature review of Chapter 2 revealed that higher education, in some research and curriculum production practices of the past, excluded or marginalized Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and ways of knowing, doing and being, exacerbating ongoing cultural trauma and harm for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Battiste, 2002; Gould, 1997, Nakata, 2007b; Rigney, 1997; Smith, 1999). The review also identified that, in Australia, there remains a paucity of research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance (ATSICQA) for curriculum renewal practices in specialist, mainstream, secondary teacher education.

Chapter 3 explained how a particular blend of methodologies and approaches to knowledge seeking was formulated in order to provide a culturally customized, knowledge-production experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. The knowledge production experience was facilitated to acquire external advice on the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being in selected Visual Arts teacher education curriculum at a specific community/higher education site. The ensuing subsections in this chapter privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice, consistent with the principles of the Indigenist research methodology used (Rigney, 1997).

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the key findings of the study. It does this in a multimodal way that draws on the traditions of yarning and image making to present a selection of research stories. Each of the stories, in the form of advice or key themes, is an assemblage of evidence that incorporates data – text and/or visual - and analysis to

support the claims to new knowledge that are made. While these stories may well be newly generated for the site-specific context and touch only sometimes on customary stories, as local community member Aunty Lois indicated, one of the benefits of participation in a project like this is that ‘it keeps us yarning’.

This study invited a representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to provide advice on a selection of secondary teacher education curriculum documents for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, skills and understandings. As noted in Chapter 3 the curriculum documents included the subject outlines and readers of four, sequential, core Visual Arts teaching methods subjects and the subject, ‘Issues in Indigenous Australian Education’ along with other support material.

Where the arts-based component was incorporated, however, the focus was able to widen to Visual Arts secondary teacher education curriculum generally through a type of blue skies mode of inquiry. This appropriation of the concept from scientific research heritages, of curiosity-driven rather than known agenda-driven inquiry (Linden, 2008), was created for stakeholders whose insights are not conventionally well captured in curriculum renewal processes. For participants, this unfettered freedom to imagine curriculum possibilities through a flexible visual and verbal communication modality was one of the several features of the research designed to enact Rigney’s principle of privileging Indigenous voice (Rigney, 1997).

The findings of the study are contained in this chapter in four sections. Beyond this introductory section, the findings associated with the three original motivations for the study are located in Sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. Those motivations were:

- the renewal of selected Visual Arts secondary teacher education curriculum through the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders
- to trial the use of a collaborative, culturally-endorsed, arts-based community development model for a Visual Arts secondary teacher education inquiry
- to explore the capacity of research methods and methodologies for consultative agency between higher education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

In the closing section of this chapter, in Section 4.5, a model of consultation for teacher education at the higher education site is articulated.

Both Section 4.2 and Section 4.3 contain findings about curriculum renewal. The findings in the two sections emerge, however, from the two different approaches taken to generating data about secondary Visual Arts teacher education curriculum in this study in regard to curriculum representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being.

The first approach to acquiring feedback on curriculum resulted in data being generated by participants' provision of feedback in a relatively conventional manner on a selection of subject outlines and related resources that were provided to participants in folders as discussed in Chapter 3. The second approach used the culturally endorsed, arts-based component also described in Chapter 3 and employed in three focus groups and several interviews. Data, in the latter case, was generated through a largely blue skies response that saw participants explain, through yarnning and painting, what they considered to be essential knowledge that any Visual Arts teacher secondary teacher education students should have about Aboriginal education, histories and cultures.

Section 4.4 presents findings on the consultative and methodological aspects of the inquiry, also taking into account the researcher's experiences of and reflections upon engagement. That includes analysis of participants' experience of the complementary use of visual communication as a research method - both their own and the researcher's - as well as the outcomes of trialing a customized consent form. The implications of all findings are explained in Chapter 5.

4.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondent advice on selected secondary teacher education curricula

Participants' feedback on the selected subject outlines, lists of subject readers and sample teaching and learning resources was received during focus groups FG-GA, FG-

GU1, FG-HE and FG-GU2. Participants' advice on selected subject outlines is reported below.

Retain 'Acknowledgement of / Welcome to Country' in subject outlines

The initiative to have an 'Acknowledgement of Guringai Country' to commence Week One, as indicated in all Visual Arts teaching methods and Indigenous Australian education subject outlines in each semester, was welcomed. A focus group respondent in FG-GA noted that there were several reasons why 'Acknowledgement of Country for non-Indigenous students is important'. She explained that 'it's mandatory now across government agencies' and referred to the protocol publication that is required to be used by department schools (NSWAECG, 2004). The respondent also cited the confidence and leadership conferred upon teachers by knowing whose Country they teach upon. She stated in FG-GA:

It demonstrates leadership for students to be able to go, 'Okay, I know what the difference is, and I know that I have the confidence within my abilities in my classroom to do an Acknowledgement of Country and know what Country I'm on, and know where the appropriate resources are to find my community'.

Underlying these statements about the significance of Country, is the pervasive aspiration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in this study to reinforce in teacher's consciousness the viewpoint that custodianship of Country continues to be recognized and that the rights by Aboriginal peoples to their Country remain unceded.

Retain cultural heritage protection references and add explicit guidelines on site visits

A common theme from participants in FG-GA and FG-HE was the importance of cultural heritage protection. This was particularly so through the repeated references in interactions with participants to collective custodianship of story and imagery. The inclusion of reading material, lectures and tutorial content on this topic was confirmed as appropriate. One participant singled out Terri Janke's publications and confirmed her as an expert source in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage protection. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal consultant with particular

expertise in the Arts, Janke's publications were represented in all Visual Arts teaching methods subjects and the 'Issues in Indigenous Australian education' subject.

While it was agreed that there were ample subject content allocations and academic references available to Visual Arts secondary teacher education students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage protection, Jonathan Jones noted in FG-GA that there were no subject readers providing explicit information about the care and protection of sites and other protocols associated with visiting sites by teachers and students. This was rectified in a future delivery of the subject by the inclusion of an additional publication.

This advice was valuable in reminding me of the importance of the opportunity to provide pre-service secondary Visual Arts teachers with initial and explicit guidelines for the appropriate cultural and physical care associated with planning and implementing school excursions that involve site visits. It is appropriate for decisions by education providers about cultural site visits for teaching and learning to be made in consultation with the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community (BOS, 2008). While the readers and lectures included reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contemporary cultural heritage management and protection (Janke, 2008; Janke & Dawson, 2012; Johnson, 1996) there was no tangible evidence in the curriculum of how an educator might make the connection for teaching and learning.

Substitute 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' for 'Indigenous Australians'

The majority of respondents in FG-GU1 explained that 'Indigenous Australians' was not a term supported by the local Aboriginal community. It was identified that the term was problematic insofar as it enabled an Indigenous person from outside Australia, if they had Australian citizenship, to identify as an Indigenous Australian. This circumstance was described from participants' own experience of processing applications.

It was a recommendation that the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people', for example, replace 'Indigenous Australians' in the subject outline. The participants' recommendation was proposed for incorporation into the next cycle of course review.

This variation between ‘Indigenous Australian’ and ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ as a descriptive term illustrates the challenge for higher education providers as they operate between the national government’s collective ‘badging’ of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Frogley, 2013) and the preferred determinations of the local Aboriginal community who represent the views of contemporary custodians. Those local communities, at the grass roots level, are often required to operationalize policy representations. In doing so they swiftly recognize efficiencies and weaknesses. In the case of this research project the term ‘Indigenous Australian’ was used in the title, the initial information sheet and the consent forms. As part of the action research these representations were gradually changed.

Ensuring teaching resources are accurate and recently published.

The issue of accuracy, for the benefit of accelerating future teachers’ knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal education, Aboriginal histories and Aboriginal cultures, was raised in several discussions. It was a pragmatic aspect of cultural quality assurance. In FG-GU1 it was noted that the accuracy of students’ assignments in the past had been affected by an Aboriginal community organization website that required updating. To manage this, as subject coordinator, alternate means were undertaken to secure the corrected information from the organization and presented directly to each semester’s student cohort. The Aboriginal community organisation’s website has subsequently been updated.

During FG-GU1 and FG-GU2 the cultural heritage representative, Dave Watts was able to quickly identify several references that required urgent amendment. The *013004 Issues in Indigenous Australian Education* subject outline includes a section aimed at providing guidance to teacher education students about preferred terminology in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. The cultural heritage officer led discussion that resulted in a proposal to amend the section of the subject outline titled, ‘Guidelines on terminology’ (Issues in Indigenous Australian Education 2007, p. 6). Participants in two other focus groups, FG- GU2 and FG-HE, commented on this section but for different reasons.

In FG-GU1 one of the errors identified by the cultural heritage representative was a typographical error that had stemmed from the pasting of material from another word document into the subject outline without it being reviewed. The term ‘Koori’ had incorrectly been included as a self-naming term for Aboriginal peoples in Tasmania when, in fact, the accurate term was ‘Palawa’ (Appendix C) for those to the north of the island.

Some time later, while undertaking subject outline revisions, I had a phone conversation with a representative of a Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council (personal communication, September 9, 2010) who confirmed the spelling of ‘Palawa’ at that time, and explained that ‘Pakana’ was the currently endorsed spelling used by the southern regional group. Similarly, to confirm the local Aboriginal community’s endorsed spelling of a term used in Western Australia, I spoke by phone to an Aboriginal Land Council representative (personal communication, September 9, 2010) who mentioned that the spelling was varied and that their organization, as a representative body, used the spelling ‘Noongar’ rather than ‘Nyoongah’ or ‘Nyungah’.

In FG-GU1 further discussion arose about the absence of representation of the self-naming term Goori for the north coast groups of NSW. In focus group FG-GU2 there was clarification that the term Goori was used from the Hunter region to the North Coast of NSW (Appendix D).

Several participants in FG-HE wondered whether the higher education provider was in a position to develop an organisation-wide publication for staff and students. A product published by another university was noted as being exemplary. It was recalled that the unit responsible for issues of equity and diversity at the site of the study had previously published a document several years before that provided guidance on current inclusivity and diversity terminology for staff and students.

Another concern by some local Aboriginal community members in the same section was the inclusion of the sentence, ‘In the community context, the terms “black” and “white” are commonly used’. A prominent community member noted that this was not the case in this area but rather that the terms ‘Koori’, ‘Goori’ or Murri’ depending upon where the Aboriginal person using the term is from were most popular as generic, self-naming terms. It was preferred by the community member that the claim be removed.

The cultural heritage representative, Dave Watts, noted that the terms, 'black' and 'white' are used in other communities. I explained that the secondary teacher education students are preparing to teach anywhere in NSW and sought a compromise position to take all of the views and factors into account (Appendix C).

While on the topic of accuracy and recency of references, Veronica Murphy, a participant, and academic tutor on the program, while supporting the curriculum overall, raised her concern about one resource in a separate interview. This was in relation to the subject 'Issues in Indigenous Australian Studies'. For Murphy, the year of publication of the state education department produced Aboriginal Education teaching resource was problematic and did not represent more recent advances in Aboriginal Education. It was only one section of the resource that was used in Week Two tutorials as the basis for an activity. The resource, published in 1996, and used to provide professional development for principals and head teachers initially, provided a series of excerpts from various publications on Aboriginal education in NSW.

As subject coordinator I had witnessed, over several years, the transformative impact of the resource on the awareness of Visual Arts secondary education students, along with their peers in other subject streams such as English, History, Mathematics, Science. This had also been the case for primary education students who engaged in the tutorial activity that drew upon the publication. The particular section of the publication included excerpts from the speeches of politicians, from government documents as well as a range of accounts by Aboriginal people of their experiences of education in NSW.

The suggestion by Murphy was for myself, as subject coordinator, to investigate other, more recently published, comparable resources on the history of Aboriginal Education in NSW but that incorporated the experiences of Aboriginal people since the 1996 resource was produced. Another option, that I reflected upon later, was to pass on this advice to the relevant department with the view that the department consider the feasibility of reviewing the pertinent section of the resource and providing an updated, web-based version. The trend toward web-based resources in Aboriginal Education compared to conventional print version was also a contextual factor.

While not disregarding Murphy's feedback, the online environment that supported the face-to-face teaching of the subject, included several quite recent resources arising out of the 'What Works', 'Dare to Lead' and 'Quality Teaching Indigenous Projects'. The urging toward academically contemporary literature, of course, made the 1996 resources stand out despite its specialist, professional development value. Irrespective of which of the several options available were chosen as action arising from the suggestion, her advice in this particular case and to course administrators more broadly about staying alert to the recency of publications and the accuracy of resources was consistent with the messages to future teachers and teacher education administrators from focus groups (FG-GA, FG-GU1, FG-GU2, FG-HE) and several interviews.

This recommendation is indicative of the type of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance (ATSICQA) reminders that all educators, Aboriginal academics such as myself included, can benefit from. It exemplifies cultural competencies agency in action (Universities Australia, 2011) and recognises Aboriginal community education collectives as essential and first education stakeholder communities (Craven, 1996).

An understanding of the urgency of this type of advice is informed by the ongoing significance of the management of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge throughout the residual chaos of colonization disruptions that prevented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to self-determine representation of cultural knowledge (Battiste, 2002; Fletcher, 1989; Nakata, 2007b). It also speaks to the ongoing knowledge management rebuilding that takes place for Aboriginal communities across the nation to engage with a range of interfaces and audiences (Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2008; Janke & Dawson, 2012; Nakata, 2007a; Nakata, 2010; Price & Craven, 2009).

Retain 'off-Country', Aboriginal Education, digital media resource until a local equivalent is available

A lengthy discussion was held during FG-HE about a video resource that was produced in Queensland about a Queensland Aboriginal community and school relationship. The majority of focus group participants in FG-HE were Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi. There was a strong sense that illustrative resources in the *013004 Issues in*

Indigenous Australian Education subject should be as closely related to nearby Aboriginal communities as possible or, given the likelihood of where education students will teach, to use resources that heighten student awareness about the equally effective work being undertaken across NSW in Aboriginal communities and school partnerships.

Having acknowledged that, participants then heard about the university's Student Feedback Survey (SFS) findings from one 'Issues in Indigenous Australian Issues' tutorial class from a previous year. In the survey results majority of members who had been impressed by the Queensland video resource when they had viewed it in a previous year, participants agreed that it be retained in the Week One tutorial until an equivalent local resource was produced or located (Appendix E).

Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

The mandatory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies subject did contain some representation about the relationships between health and education. There was an inclusion in *Reading 2* where Nigel Parbury (Craven, 1999, p. 83) provides text titled 'Health and other issues'. Online, a website was profiled that provided the contact details and locations of all NSW Aboriginal Medical Services. Finally, a prompt in the professional practice-related *Assessment Task One* required Visual Arts secondary teacher education students to 'identify other Aboriginal organisations (eg Aboriginal medical services)' in their response. A participant, who was an arts administrator/ Aboriginal education representative in FG-GA, noted correctly that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health was not named explicitly in any of the lecture topics and that reference to NSW Health, with Aboriginal Medical Services, was not profiled.

In response, the challenge was one of a typically 'crowded curriculum' circumstance. At the time this study took place the mandatory subject in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, as a three credit-point subject, engaged students, face-to face, for approximately twelve hours only. FG-HE tutors reinforced the challenges they experienced each semester of covering all of the content required in such a short time frame. The FG-HE participants confirmed, however, that health issues were incorporated in each semester's tutorial classes because it was so interconnected with the issues of

education. They confirmed that it was represented in the NSW history of Aboriginal education component and in a range of other places. In the six-credit point version of this subject that was designed for primary education students, it was usual practice to have a separate lecture on health.

The participants' discussion of this topic identifies the area of health, like education, as a key area of concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a result of the extraordinary disadvantages faced and inequities experiences. As a subject coordinator, being held accountable about this important area of study and research was welcomed. As noted, the matter was revisited in FG-HE where it was confirmed that health issues were represented throughout. There would also be potential to address this issue in future course review were the subject to increase in credit point value.

'Background' local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practices in teaching and learning about digital technologies and other subjects for 'incidental' perspectives

While it may seem unusual to request Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge to be placed in the background of other learning, the reality was that this approach in fact increased the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in teaching and learning places that are 'less travelled' due to the prioritizing other subject outcomes. In this case, one teaching learning episode in one of the mandatory methods subjects, *013068 Visual Arts Teaching Methods 3*, involved a demonstration by the lecturer of how to combine particular digital technologies and Visual Arts syllabus content. It was located during class in order to support students' understanding of an assessment task. FG-GU2 participants confirmed that the inclusion of information about the practice of a local Aboriginal artist was appropriate and welcomed. The local artist, upon realizing the requirements of the syllabus and disciplinary conventions regarding attribution, provided additional information to support the demonstration.

As lecturer and subject coordinator, I came to realise the greater value and capacity for the demonstration to incidentally and seamlessly 'background' the work of local Aboriginal artists and designers while addressing pedagogical issues that bridge learning about digital technologies and curriculum. While the demonstration of how to use digital

presentations to explore the practice of artists in an art historical/critical Visual Arts syllabus context held headline status in the lecture topic in the subject outline, subtle or incidental learning was equally taking place.

In the Visual Arts teaching methods subject that explored the NSW visual design syllabus, I also featured the practice of an Aboriginal architect who designed a local building in consultation with the local Aboriginal community. This provided a contemporary and innovative example from within the Country where the teacher education campus of the higher education provider was situated. While this represented my own implementation of fundamental cultural principles, it was confirmed by participants in FG-GU2 that the recognition within the teacher education program of local Aboriginal arts and design practices was very appropriate and welcomed. There was strong endorsement to maintain this type of incidental perspective that ensured that local Aboriginal artists' and architects' practices within the local community were integral to 'background' in mainstream teaching and learning about classroom use of digital technologies, for example.

At an overarching level, this 'discovery' of utilizing less conventional curriculum opportunities for the representation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Arts practices goes to the heart of the contestations surrounding curriculum space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge in mainstream curriculum as discussed in Chapter 2. Curriculum is a highly regulated and guarded interface for the carriage of the skills, knowledge and understandings of so many stakeholders representing disciplines, sectors, societies and cultures. In this instance, local Aboriginal community representatives, the artist and myself, as subject coordinator, could identify several advantages of accelerating Visual Arts secondary teacher education students' knowledge about contemporary local practice particularly protocols foregrounding local Country and engaging with local community. Nonetheless, I was conscious of other protocols. One was the observance of higher education provider protocols that involved satisfying subject outcomes. Another was the observance of disciplinary protocols such as accurate attribution and copyright. Through collaboration of artist, local community and myself as Aboriginal academic, each of those protocols was satisfied.

4.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ‘blue skies’ yarning and painting about Visual Arts secondary teacher education

The findings in this section while pertaining to teacher education curriculum differ from that of the previous section because they were not tied to specific secondary curriculum documents provided. Rather they are generally in response to the question, ‘What do you consider to be essential knowledge for secondary Visual Arts teachers to know about Aboriginal Australia pre-service?’ The term ‘blue skies’ has been appropriated in part from a scientific research approach where inquiry is relatively uncoupled from known research agendas (Linden, 2008). The arts-based component of the study, at least after the initial FG-GA, used a single, open-ended, research question to stimulate visual and yarning responses. No further conditions were imposed.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, this section embraces both visual and verbal communication as sources of evidence. Hence, while the two canvases produced from this study are included in full in the appendices (Appendix G and H), details of images from both canvases are included in this section in the same way as excerpts from transcriptions are used in more text-based qualitative approaches to generate themes. The key advice about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants’ aspirations about Visual Arts secondary teacher education curriculum generally, from the yarning and painting sources within this study, are represented in this section in italics as subheadings.

Despite the participants of FG-GA enduring a less polished facilitation of the focus group than those that followed and the arts-based component of FG-GU2 being more interpretive and critical than studio based, the emerging typical pattern of activity during each of the arts-based components of the focus groups and interviews comprised reflection, yarning, preliminary sketching, planning and painting. This occurred in response to the question ‘What essential knowledge do Visual Arts secondary teachers need to know about Aboriginal Australia pre-service?’ At times, particularly at the onset of image making, the yarning by participants formulated and tested ideas inherent to their response to the question. On other occasions the yarning took the form of supportive negotiations about managing the collaborative image making process.

In the latter two focus groups, where groups were larger in number and represented communities in their own right, either local or teaching/learning communities, there was laughter that punctuated the more contemplative, art making and yarning phases. At times this was spontaneous from pre-existing social dialogue and at other times it arose from the interactions that developed to enable participants to engage with the arts process. This was also the case in several interviews where the arts-based approach was incorporated.

Those participants who engaged in the arts-based component of the inquiry, were unanimous in their affirmative reply to the question, ‘Did the arts-based approach add value to the research inquiry?’ The advice from stakeholders that follows differs from the advice in Section 4.2. The advice below is largely open-ended and uncoupled from the curriculum documents and resources provided.

Local engagement: with local Elders, local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community and local Country or Place

The concept of learning through engagement with local Elders, local community and local Country was established very clearly and very early in the fieldwork as a major message to future secondary teachers of Visual Arts from the participants in this study. It was of such frequency and raised in such diverse, independent contexts that it emerged as something of a fundamental principle of teacher practice. The reasons cited by participants included reciprocity, more accurate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge or ways of knowing, doing or being, more appropriate approaches to Visual Arts practice where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge is involved, and greater responsiveness to the contemporary standpoint of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in classrooms.

In terms of the sequencing of Visual Arts teaching and learning in regard to Aboriginal perspectives, Jonathan Jones [Wiradjuri/ Kamilaroi], suggested in the first focus group that Visual Arts teachers should ‘start with local artists’. Engagement with the local community, for Jones, was also about volunteering for local Aboriginal community Visual Arts workshops or being active in local Visual Arts initiatives. In Sydney, for

example, it could be attending established festivals that coincide typically with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander calendar events:

just engaging in an Aboriginal ‘something’ ... even if it’s Message-sticks down at the Opera House. It’s going, “I’m going there to be a part of the talks.” Being there, actually engaging with the community on that level. And that’s part of, a highbrow - if you like - kind of engagement.

As well as a broad understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts movements and practices participant, S. Jones [WakaWaka], stressed the importance of secondary Visual Arts education students ‘coming up close ... making it more relevant to the community that they end up working within’.

During FG-GU1 Jessica Birk and Susan Moylan-Coombs spent some time yarning in response to the focus group question, ‘What do you consider to be essential knowledge that Visual Arts secondary teachers should have about Aboriginal Australia pre-service?’. During their discussion Moylan-Coombs transferred the initial ideas about Country and into a preliminary sketch drawn on a notepad. Birk, working with Moylan-Coombs, refined the preliminary visual response further in a second sketch (Figure 11) by appropriating, with my permission, motifs from the visual research story (Figure 3). The visual research story was represented in the participant folders (Figure 4) used at the commencement of the focus group to support my explanation of the research process. Birk’s preliminary sketch ultimately informed the overall design of the finished canvas (Appendix G).

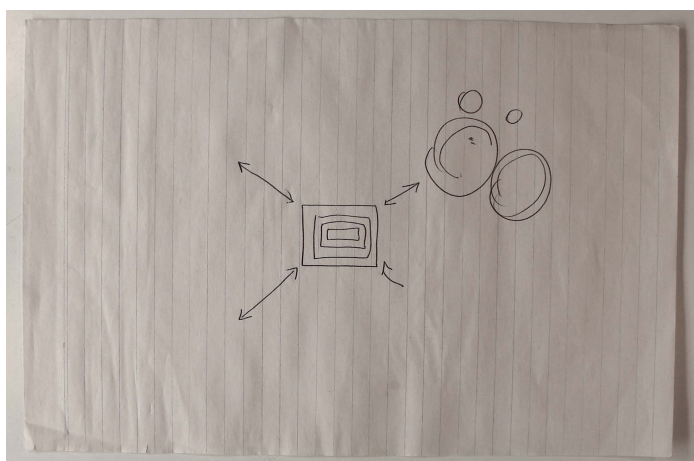


Figure 11: Jessica Birk (2008)
Preliminary sketch for Canvas
2 pen on paper 300mm x
210mm

In the canvas, those clusters of circles which had represented focus groups and interviews in my visual research design and were then appropriated into the sketch by Birk, were enlarged and filled the corners of the large black canvas and were then contextualized by participants to represent firstly, the Saltwater Country (top right) and Freshwater Country (lower left) and that which is produced from those different environments such as sandstone carvings and objects from Saltwater Country (lower right) and paint-up, sand drawings and objects from Freshwater Country (lower left) respectively.

The double-headed arrow symbolised reciprocity and appeared early on in the planning. It was later explained through yarning over the canvas that this particular image demonstrated how the community, while having been invited to provide their views to the university in this study, had benefited also by learning about what is occurring within teacher education. At a practical level, some community members were pleased to retain the folders containing copies of the subject outline and readings as the enclosed lists of resources on Aboriginal education could be considered for future agency.

Jessica Birk [Yaegl] is a practicing artist who has resided in Guringai country for much of her life. She has a familial, cultural affiliation with the area of the Clarence River to the north. Country for Jessica Birk, in both instances, is a coastal, marine environment with cultural connection through story linked to particular waterways and human and other interactions with it.

Understanding by Visual Arts secondary teacher education students of the uniqueness of Saltwater Country as a source for Aboriginal arts or visual production was identified as very important by Jessica and this was reinforced in her painted representations (Figure 13). In elaborating upon this Jessica, and Susan later on, were alerting Visual Arts secondary teacher education students visually to the types of Visual Arts and visual communication that emerges from Saltwater Country and Freshwater Country. In communicating this both Jessica Birk and Susan Moylan-Coombs were referring teachers to the uniqueness of Country that has inspired generations of Aboriginal artists and designers and is, in itself, its own rationale for the visual qualities of localized tangible arts production.



Figure 12: Susan Moylan-Coombs (2008). Detail Canvas 2 *Freshwater*. Acrylic on canvas 470mm x 280mm

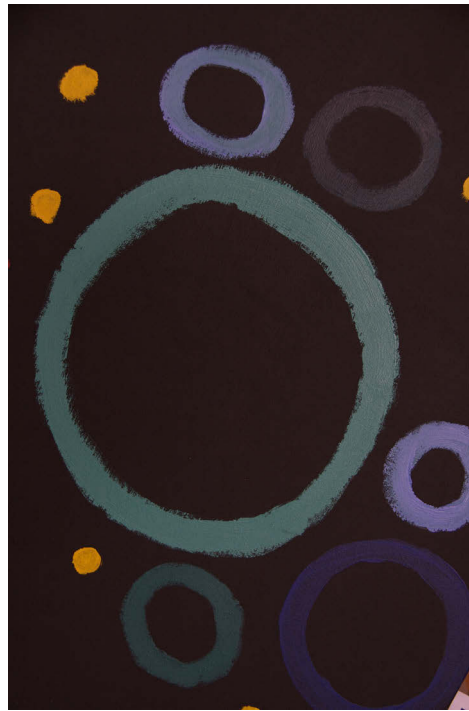


Figure 13: Jessica Birk (2008). Detail Canvas 2 *Saltwater*. Acrylic on canvas 640mm x 540mm

During FG-GU1 Jessica Birk said:

The environment I think does play a huge role in what kind of art is made in different places...and ... in this area. That's one of my main things... is to make sure that they [future Visual Arts teachers] know the richness of the, I guess, the rock platform around here and know the stories and what is the actual importance of what is in those rock platforms. That's one of my big things. That's the whole Sydney basin region...

Susan Moylan-Coombs developed and coordinated visual representation that expressed the other determinant of Country - Freshwater Country - that related to her own cultural association and heritage (Figure 12). The animal and bird tracks and footprints were indicative of the surface environment, wildlife and humans who travelled across that Freshwater Country. In the upper left corner (Appendix G), the handprints and other surface textures were references variously to 'paint up' and have connotations of

preparation for ceremony, decoration of tangible cultural objects and decoration of the ground itself for cultural communication.

The importance of the concept of learning from Country was also well articulated by Aunty Clair Jackson in an interview. She recommended that I consider working with Aboriginal local heritage and national park site experts for the teacher education campus and adjust the subject outline in order to provide teacher education students with the opportunity to ‘walk the story’ in Country but only where the stories were ‘allowable’. She said ‘when you walk a story, you feel it’.

In the equivalent subject in primary education I had incorporated site visits facilitated by LALC representatives. The secondary teacher education program, was significantly shorter, and the subject ‘Issues in Indigenous Australian Education’ was half that of the equivalent primary subject. In a proposed course review the subject was expected to be changed from a value of 3 credit points to 6 credit points and this recommendation could then be accommodated more easily.

Along with learning from Country as expressed in FG-GU1 and several interviews by Aboriginal participants, learning from Elders was also, as expected, a strong theme emerging from this study. In an interview, Torres Strait Islander artist and designer, George Nona [Argun] provided insights into the ultimate authority of Elders. Nona has revitalized the tradition of dhoeri-making. The dhoeri is a very significant and well-recognized symbol associated with Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Nona confirmed the importance of the cultural integrity of this practice and the interconnectedness of it with Elders, their permission, their cultural explanations and the spiritual. George is widely respected for his work. In the interview he provides advice about what is required as a commencing practitioner:

So the first thing would be gaining a lot of respect from Elders and make sure, if you offend them leave everything. Have a break for a while. You have to earn your respect. Earning respect from the Elders before doing it is ... an Elder might tell you to ... ‘cause it’s a spiritual things, what I’m dwelling in ... The Elders, they look at you and they ... they observe you for a while. If you’re a kind of person in there to sell it

for money and just, you know ... it's all that comes in as well ... they think it's going to get abused and they'll completely shut the gate.

This statement surfaces notions of Torres Strait Islander action and the locus of control extended by Elders toward cultural heritage in the act of its contemporary production. It also brings into sharp focus the scrutiny of Elders and community members about people and their intentions. The notion of being 'situated' by cultural knowledge custodians and the community generally is of critical importance in relation to being perceived as possessing a readiness for knowledge. It forms a part of Aboriginal community discourse about teachers (Burgess and Cavanagh, 2013; Evans, 2012) and is supported by evidence from this study.

Another incidental Aboriginal perspective in one of the Visual Arts teaching methods subjects was enabled by the existence of the canvasses as teaching resources in their own right. As a starting point for tutorial conversation about the idea of Visual Arts as inquiry, I was able to use the completed canvas as a teaching/learning resource during the years that followed, from 2008 to 2010.

Expanded engagements: with more than one Aboriginal community, community member or community organization

Participant W1, a staff member at another campus of the higher education provider, made a detailed visual contribution to the canvas (Figure 14) in FG-HE that augmented her verbal contribution in the early part of the focus group. In that visual communication, W1 documented a pattern that she had observed while working within the higher education sector including the experience of students at this particular campus site. One of the insights expressed in this visual communication was about the journey of students in their acquisition of knowledge about Aboriginal education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures while away from the university in schools and school communities. It was premised upon the professional experience program and/or industry experience that the university has a strong reputation for. W1 and I had a yarn about the visual contribution and she explained it to me in the following way:

They're all talking to each other and all this [points to visual communication] and these [points to visual communication] are going to be like blue rivers coming in - of knowledge - or coming in together from the conversation...it's all swirling around here [points to visual communication], the knowledge is building and building - and going back to these people that are in charge...And this [points to visual communication] is all of the teachers going out to community and coming back in and bringing their knowledge back in. And this is the knowledge that is swirling [points to visual communication]. They're going out to community, Aboriginal organisations and they're going out to white organisations like schools...and taking the knowledge out and bringing the knowledge in. But there's a discussion...All these people are talking to each other. They're talking about how do we bring this knowledge in and how do we put this knowledge out. Yeah, I'm saying this is how ... in my mind it should be.



Figure 14: W1 (2010). Detail canvas 2 *Teachers going out to community and ... coming back with knowledge* acrylic on canvas 520mm x 600mm

The white circle in the centre of the image represented the higher education provider itself and the blue colouring within it was the knowledge, almost representative of the academic expression 'knowledge production'. The participant had witnessed teacher education students and those from other degrees travel away from university classes to engage in professional experiences and return to yarn about their experiences.

In light of this and the issues raised during the FG-HE, W1 made a very significant observation that I later alerted a program administrator to. The observation pertained to the rethinking of the negotiations between teacher education administrators and professional experience hosting organisations to consider a proposal to include, in the induction of teacher education students for their professional experience, a mandatory component that introduced students to the local Aboriginal community in all professional experience placements.

The advantage is the potential for a much more accelerated, in-situ professional experience in the first instance but secondly and the greater imprimatur conferred jointly by the higher education provider and the school on the status of an integral school-community partnership. This is no more relevant than in NSW at present for the resetting of relationships between schools and local Aboriginal communities through the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform (NSW DEC, 2013) and in the Connected Communities strategy (NSW DEC, 2011).

Each school has a local Aboriginal community despite some feeling as though they are invisible (Moylean-Coombs, 2006) to the broader community. The introduction of pre-service teachers during professional experience to a local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community can be approached in several ways (Evans, 2012) but widespread application requires a strategic approach by teacher education program administrators. Ideally, this could be managed as a face-to-face meeting on or off the school site. However, if that is not possible, it could be via websites and links to articles and publications and initiatives so that the local Aboriginal community's presence is clearly profiled for pre-service teachers' before they enter the site and later the teaching profession.

While on this theme of localizing practice, Jessica Birk [Yaegl] acknowledged that Visual Arts teachers might be employed in schools at some distance from where they currently study and live. Birk spoke with encouragement that pre-service secondary Visual Arts teachers might consider ‘having a look at what sort of [visual] art is in different places... If they are based at a school out west then it might be very different...looking at what materials are available, what inspiration is in that environment’.

Joelander MacGregor [Kamilaroi] is a secondary school teacher with a number of years experience in NSW state schools and is an active member of the local Aboriginal community organization where she resides. The detail (Figure 15) from Joelander MacGregor’s visual communication reflects the building up of her cultural and professional knowledge from many different sources. MacGregor completed a preparatory sketch during the focus group and completed the painting component later (15 October, 2010) at her home.

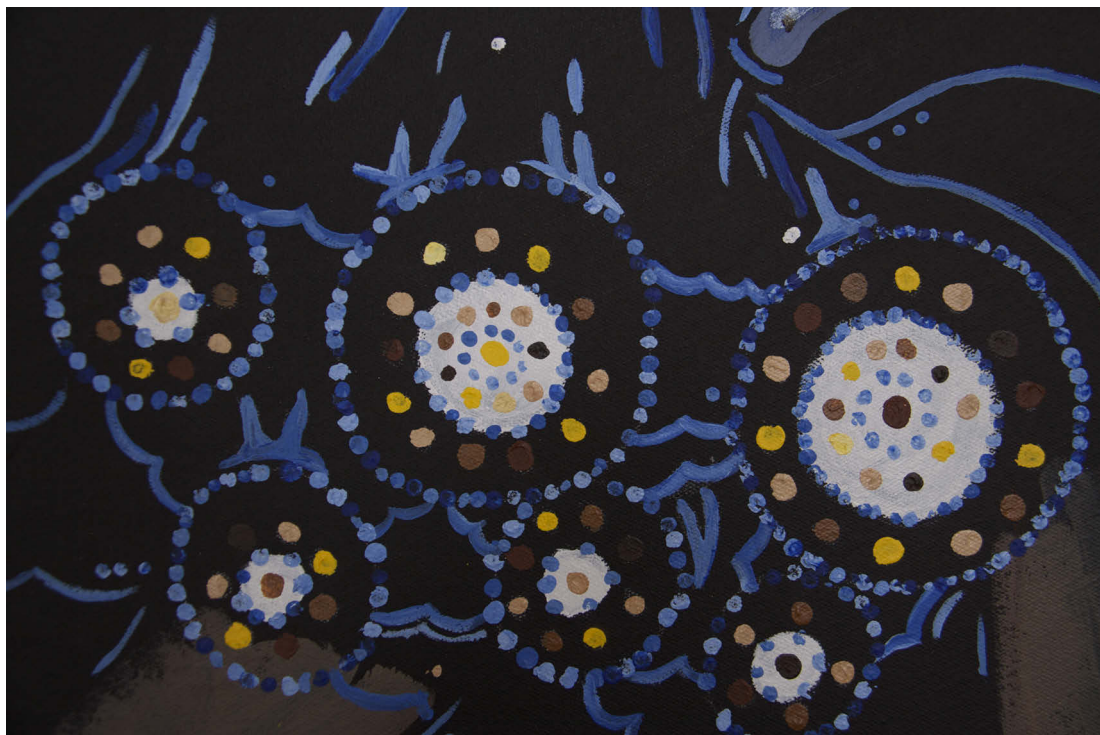


Figure 15: Joelander MacGregor (2010) *Detail Canvas 2 - People, relationships and organisations in community* acrylic on canvas 360mm x 250mm

During the focus group, MacGregor pointed to the central cluster of circles and said ‘that’s community and that’s all of the sort of people and relationships and organisations and things that are there’. The blue lines that pull attention upward and away from the clusters she used graphically to explain how she, or another person potentially, is able to ‘suck up all these [points to image] little bits of knowledge’ from the different constituents and organizational groupings comprising the local Aboriginal community. MacGregor’s contribution reinforces that knowledge of and understanding by future teachers of the constituency of the local Aboriginal community is significant because it is a pre-requisite to quality partnerships. A statement on the NSW Aboriginal Affairs website states that government should undertake its operations ““with” Aboriginal communities, not “for” or “to” Aboriginal communities’ (Aboriginal Affairs, n.d.).

MacGregor created an interesting vortex (Figure 15) above the clusters of circles connected by the upwardly directed blue lines. The vortex represents the self for MacGregor or other people, on their own journey and attracts the learning from the several sources previously mentioned. The learning ‘comes in here and that becomes you - full of knowledge’. Some of the visual communication is autobiographical insofar as it echoes aspects of the maker’s experiences of sharing this community-acquired learning with pre-service secondary teachers in her role as a casual academic at the higher education site. The yarnning by MacGregor over the original drawing can also be comprehended as contemporary story used as a means of teaching others important lessons.

Commitment: to long term professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education

Across three different settings, in FG-GA, FG-GU1, FG-HE and at least one interview, there were references to research participants’ experiences of the learning journey of teachers as they became more accomplished in their professional capabilities in Aboriginal education. Pre-service and initial teacher ‘readiness’ in terms of knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being, is irrespective of higher education credentialing, something that Aboriginal community members adjudicate routinely (Evans, 2012).

The images verifying this theme are symbolic communications depicting, for example, blossoming (Figure 16), geometric pattern (Figure 17), branching (Figure 16), the appearance of bright stars (Figure 19) and footprints through experiences (Figures 14 and 20). When participants talked over or about the image or the preparatory sketch, they saw teacher education professional development in this field as a progression – growth, movement, expansion or inspiration – leading, in clear stages, toward teachers’ heightened awareness.

For many obvious reasons, teacher education programs are less equipped to assess pre-service teacher ‘readiness’ for working with communities, however, the importance of this relational feature for Aboriginal education arguably shouldn’t be left to the arbitrary, the serendipitous or the independently emerging skill set of the individual teacher. This branch of teacher preparation and/or professional development is, arguably, unfinished business (Burgess & Cavanagh, 2013, Price & Craven, 2009) in education in Australia.

While a proportion of the visual data used to formulate this theme was primarily located in Canvas 2 (Appendix H) and an argument could be made that the pre-existing images from FG-GA influenced those created afterwards in FG-HE, there were in fact comparable data from interviews and other focus groups to support this finding. The focus group question itself intended to elicit responses from participants about pre-service teachers’ knowledge of and understanding about Aboriginal Australia.

Interestingly, in this inquiry, several participants expressed in focus groups and interviews their advice to and encouragement of future secondary Visual Arts teachers to embrace and be an active participant in a journey of learning about Aboriginal Australia. In one case, a participant’s visual communication conveyed his anticipation that a teachers’ journey would include phases of calm, turbulence and re-direction. Others recognized the journey as existing in company with others. The majority of participants gave indications verbally and/or symbolically (though image) of the positive outcomes that might transpire from such a professional and personal journey in this field.

Personal and professional growth was an important theme in the focus groups and interviews. S. Jones was one of the first participants in the study to respond to the idea of professional/personal growth in knowledge. She did this both verbally and visually. Her

symbolic use of branches, specifically represented in the act of extending or growing, and the indication of the rewards for professional growth in the form of the emerging blossoms on the branches (Figure 16) additionally confirms her verbal statement at that time.



Figure 16: S. Jones (2008) Detail – Canvas 2 *Branch and blossoms* - *symbolic representation of teacher learning about Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being* acrylic on canvas 210mm x 130mm

In the same focus group, Jonathan Jones' visual communication (Figure 17) progressed intuitively in response to the same focus group question. It was deliberately low key and barely visible. Due to the constraints of the time and my inadvertent omission in providing paper and pencil, there was no opportunity for the participants in FG-GA to plan the work and this was slightly unsettling for Jonathan Jones. He noted with humour, 'I'm an artist – I need time to prepare'. His statement was not lost in designing arts based work in future focus groups.



Figure 17: Jonathan Jones (2008) Detail Canvas 1 – *The experience* acrylic on canvas 660mm x 740mm

Jones articulated, as the work was underway, that the flat, geometrical lines and shapes represented process and a journey that embraces turbulence, challenges and resistances as a part of the redirection or adjustment that might be necessary for progress. The participant confirmed in FG-GA that the response was intentionally tonally low-key making the visual communication subtle. The limitation on colour was also intentional.

Jones' statements resonated with me in regard to my own practice as an Aboriginal academic in teacher education witnessing over several years a percentage of students communicate their own experience of their changing practice in the field of Aboriginal Australia. There were several occasions where coursework experiences and assessment

tasks enabled them to identify attitudes they had previously held, recognize challenges to those attitudes and construct alternate approaches to working professionally to contribute within contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education frameworks.

Jann Porter and Karen Vaughan worked collaboratively on a large-scale rendering of a tree with angular branches the foliage of which drew on the red, gold and black colours of the Aboriginal flag (Figure 18). The tree, like a tree of knowledge, symbolically represented teacher education students' development of skills and understandings in the field of Aboriginal education. The trunk was solid and the branches, like the work of S. Jones, in denoting growth and abundance, reflected and correlated with Porter and Vaughan's observations over several semesters of the increase in the 'readiness' of secondary teacher education students in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.



Figure 18: Jann Porter & Karen Vaughan (2010) Detail canvas 2 *Teacher knowledge in Aboriginal education: branching out* acrylic on canvas 740mm x 500mm

Another participant, Tania Chambers [Palawa], a graduate of the Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education, made a contribution to the canvas as a participant. She represented repeated gold star motifs of varying sizes positioned against a wash of blue and white representing the sky (Figure 19) after having completed a preparatory sketch in pastel on paper in her own time. As Tania and I yarned about her visual communication she confirmed that each star represented symbolically her witnessing of a significant shift in understanding by individuals in the teacher education course about issues in Aboriginal education.

Chambers also noted that learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, histories and cultures, beyond the mandatory subject 'Issues in Indigenous Australian Education' was largely contained to the subjects I taught in the Visual Arts teaching methods subjects and that there was scope for it to be further developed elsewhere in the degree.

In her visual communication, the moments of heightened awareness that she witnessed in her peers' learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures were represented by Chambers as repeated gold star motifs of varying sizes positioned against a wash of blue and white representing the sky (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Tania Chambers (2010) Detail Canvas 1
Teacher insights about Aboriginal education acrylic on
canvas 260mm x 100mm



Figure 20: Joeland MacGregor (2010) Detail Canvas 1 - *Footsteps: lifelong learning about Aboriginal cultural knowledge* acrylic on canvas 400mm x 180mm

Joeland MacGregor, again like others, emphasized the significance of the learning of Visual Arts secondary teacher education students taking place over time and that teachers need to comprehend that knowledge in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and arts practice comes with the experiences of engaging with community.

Knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols

Among the contributions made to this inquiry in 2010 by Karen Vaughan was a visual communication (Figure 21) that invites Visual Arts secondary teacher education students to 'to have enough respect to wait to be asked' in regard to their entry into or acceptance by their local Aboriginal community. This may explain the subordinated body posture of the isolated figure on the right and the extended arms of the community members who sit at either end of an incomplete circle on the left. This advice prepares graduates to understand that entry is not automatic and may take time.



Figure 21: Karen Vaughan (2010) *Detail Canvas 1 Enough respect to wait to be asked* acrylic on canvas 470mm x 230mm

In her image, the incomplete circle of figures located on the left represents Aboriginal community members while the isolated figure to the right represents an outsider, potentially a pre-service secondary Visual Arts teacher or one at a future point in their career, approaching the local Aboriginal community/ies of the school where she/he works. This same image was commented upon independently later by another participant, Jann Porter, who immediately noticed that the representations of local Aboriginal community members who sat at the two ends of the incomplete circle had their arms extended toward the isolated figure to the right. Vaughan explained that another idea within this communication was ‘about finding ways to include people’.

In terms of its visual qualities, the image sought to unite the community and single figure compositionally as well as conceptually. She noted ‘when I just painted the images I thought “we’re not connected” and the thing that does connect us is land, is place, which is what we say all the time’. The representation of Country beneath the figures, in the form of repeated diagonal, brown brushstrokes is communication that makes tangible the concept of a common point of connection and of co-existence.

Vaughan’s advice identifies patience as a desirable capacity for students and teachers in working with local Aboriginal communities. As with any relationship the establishment of trust is required. The potential for rejection, temporarily or otherwise, and the potential need to step away from engagement was also a concept mentioned by

Nona as he explained the broader context of working with Elders in the Torres Strait Islands. In both Vaughan's and Nona's contributions, final or temporary acceptance or rejection of an outsider by a community can be based upon the outsider's degree of accord with the collective values of the community they seek entry to. It can take time for a collective, such as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community, to be convinced of an outsider's genuine accord with or observance of protocols, conduct and intentions. As is the case with researchers, all outsiders need to be aware that they are being 'situated' or 'placed' by the community and this will take time and will be ongoing. Some Elders and Aboriginal community members due to past harm and differing worldview as described in Chapter 2 may be reticent to engage with outsiders until such time as trustworthiness is established or until the deeper constraints of the outsider are known.

Interestingly, the images of Vaughan and Jonathan Jones share several similarities. Firstly, in their use of contrast, both are intentionally low key making their visual impact gentle and unassuming to the point, in Jones' case, of being almost invisible. Secondly, both Vaughan and Jones encourage students to be forewarned that changes of practice and re-direction are to be expected in the initial approach by students and/or teachers to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities that they are new to. These are not to deter students from engagement but rather to provide insights that engender potentially healthier relationships. It is about taking adequate time to form authentic, reciprocal connections.

Jonathan Jones confirmed that despite many years of the profiling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols about local and collective custodianship and/or ownership of visual cultural expression and practices, the appropriation of imagery without permission continues in education. Having explained this phenomenon he went on to conclude that in addressing appropriation in Visual Arts teacher education 'you're fighting, you know, a whole industry out there'. Another participant thought it important that Visual Arts secondary teacher education students are equipped with knowledge of addressing appropriation for their professional practice. S. Jones explained that teacher education students need to be able to identify 'when that does happen ... why that happens and what they can do to combat that in the system within education in the schools'.

What emerged in several interviews was the importance of teachers following the protocol of gaining approval by the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ‘image custodian’, who is recognised as such by the particular community, if Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander imagery is mooted for incorporation into an arts or design practice or process. As noted in Chapter 2, this issue of appropriation is exemplified in several publications and educational resources (BOSNSW, 2000; DECS, 1994; Janke, 2007; Johnson, 1996) but seems yet to be fully established in teacher knowledge and practice. Teacher education is the sensible location for the theoretical and practical resolution of this issue that is fundamental to working professionally with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

George Nona explained the permission-seeking process for a Torres Strait Islander artist in regard to earning the right from Elders to proceed with particular dhoeri making traditions. He explains below.

So the first thing would be gaining a lot of respect from Elders and make sure, if you offend them leave everything, have a break for a while. You have to earn your respect. Earning respect from the Elders before doing it [making dhoeri].

He made it clear that art teachers and artists must not work directly from the ‘proper replicas’ of the dhoeri. Those ‘replicas’ are those headdresses that have largely been represented in collections. These are not to be appropriated, Nona said, because permission for that type of direct work ‘has to be approved properly’. The designs in the centre of the dhoeri have significance to particular language groups of the Torres Strait Islands and custodial rights to represent, make and use those reside solely with Elders or knowledge holders in those groups.

For school-based visual art or design making practices Nona explained what he believed would be an appropriate way of incorporating aspects only of some of the traditions he is talking about.

I would then go back again to the permission. If they contact me and, yes, in a sense, yes, but if it was how would I ... [for example] headdress, if it was bow and arrows ... if it’s headdress you’re invading into people’s spiritual area okay. We’ll go back to that again.

To further clarify Nona explained the appropriate process of permission seeking for a school-based activity that sought to involve the making of a simple form of dhoeri for students to appreciate. His advice was that, if a Visual Arts or design teacher sought permission directly from him to create a headdress and, if that permission was given, students might be permitted to create simplified dhoeri headdresses as long as they did not reproduce the central design at any time. Nona suggested that the central design could be substituted with something very basic while retaining some of the feathers and basic components. It would start with permission from George to proceed and would involve the teacher committing to assuring George throughout the process that the teacher accords with George's directions.

... I mean I don't care if you put a heart ... not a heart but something basic in the middle but not *exactly what I'm doing* in the middle of the face itself. But otherwise cut the feathers - just basics - and that's okay.

During an interview Clair Jackson commented on the issue of appropriation noting that she felt that some devices and visual qualities of Aboriginal arts heritages can be drawn upon in contemporary works 'so long as' she warned the person is 'not appropriating' and that the person is 'not pretending' that they 'can use it'.

Knowledge of subject matter: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts, Literacy and Numeracy

Knowledge of subject matter, the pre-requisite knowledge for Visual Arts educators expected by national and state accreditation bodies (AITSL, 2011a; NSWIT, 2006), was reinforced in a number of focus groups and interviews. Advice from S. Jones, an arts administrator and Aboriginal education representative in FG- GA, indicated that Visual Arts secondary teacher education students should ideally have 'a vast knowledge' and be 'able to comprehend and understand how Aboriginal arts have evolved'. To clarify she went on to suggest that Visual Arts secondary teacher education students should be:

looking at some of the major movements, whether it's looking at, Central Desert movement in the '70's, and sort of earlier and around that time; and how those communities then started to create for an audience beyond their own ... but as well as

being mindful that you're looking at ... some of the imagery ... based on whether it's ceremonial or other.

This theme of knowledge of subject area was assumed as necessary knowledge for any future secondary teacher of Visual Arts. The ramifications of this advice, that future Visual Arts teachers need to have sound knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Art major movements and practice change, were less pertinent to the higher education site of this study. Rather, it was most relevant for administrators of those feeder degrees in fine arts or creative arts that a credential such as the Bachelor of Teaching in Secondary Education adds to. The UTS degree recognises prior learning from those fine arts or creative arts degrees and provides intense immersion in coursework and professional experiences to equip students with professional learning required by teachers. The degree, nonetheless, confirms subject area 'readiness' through its administration of a range of professionally rigorous assessments and teaching and learning engagements for students.

Additionally, the need for teachers to have the capacity to tailor broad subject area knowledge in, for example, art history to the local community/school setting, was reinforced by participants within several focus groups and interviews. S. Jones noted the importance of teacher education students having a broad knowledge of the diverse histories of Aboriginal arts so that they can engage in a significant follow-up process of 'then making it more appropriate to their community that they end up in'. Note that she said community rather than school in this context. The relationship of teachers with local Aboriginal communities is, again, of significance.

Aunty Clair was also interested in teachers' competency in subject knowledge, and was able to speak with the experience of an accomplished secondary and tertiary educator and visual artists and administrator. Aunty Clair, however, included proficiency in literacy and numeracy as essential for practicing Visual Arts secondary teachers. Her innovation in subtly weaving into the body of the serpent the text 'A', 'B', 'C' and '1', '2', '3' (Figure 22), as symbols for literacy and numeracy align, in one visual representation, affirmations of culture that fuse both the enduring and contemporary.

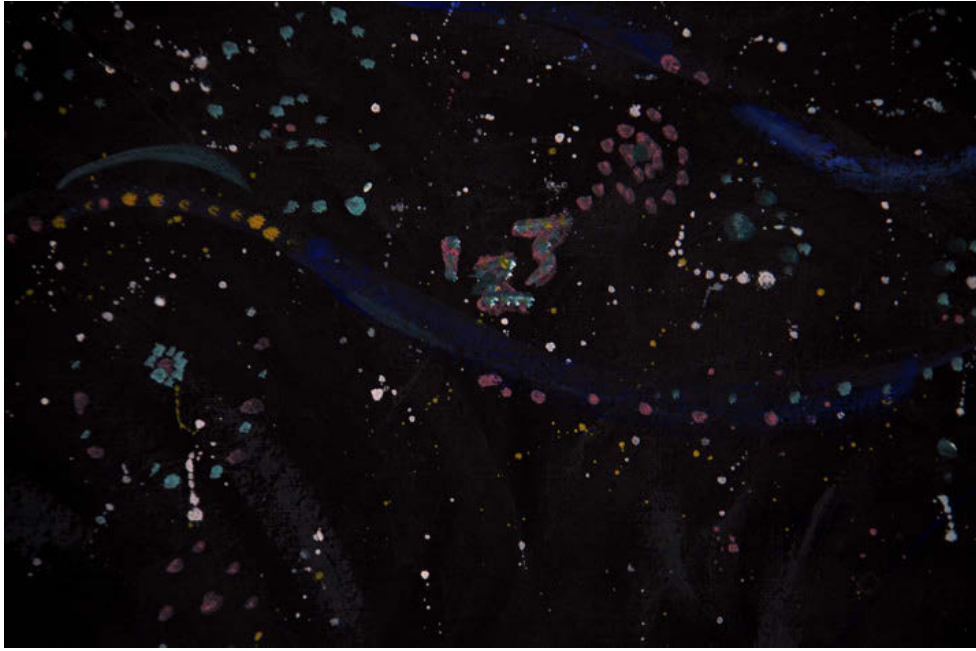


Figure 22: Clair Jackson (2010) Detail Canvas 1 *Numeracy* acrylic on canvas 210mm x 330mm



Figure 23: Clair Jackson (2010) Detail Canvas 1 *Literacy* acrylic on canvas 140mm x 150mm

Aunty Clair's significant point goes, firstly, to the local community's aspirations for all Aboriginal students to gain necessary literacy and numeracy proficiencies. Secondly, the significance goes to the opportunities Visual Arts teachers have, as teachers in other subject areas, in ensuring that literacy and numeracy skills remain on the agenda in Visual Arts classes rather than it being perceived to be solely the responsibility of teachers of English. The NSW secondary school curriculum in Visual Arts requires, as does all NSW secondary syllabuses, that, along with several other cross-curriculum content areas, that literacy and numeracy (BOSNSW, 2003, p. 29) are appropriately incorporated. At the time of this study the teacher education program had explored enhanced means of doing precisely that for all secondary teacher education students.

Skills to respectfully acknowledge and 'situate' spirituality within teaching and learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts

Mainstream higher education remains uncomfortable about accommodating the phenomenon of spirituality within curriculum. It is generally accommodated in the studies of culture and/or religion insofar as it is phenomena that is learned *about* rather than learned *as practice*. Contemporary, outcomes-based educational assessment practices require tangible outcomes as evidence of learning. Equity and diversity frameworks require that the experience and access should be achievable by all students, hence the use of titles such as 'Cultural studies' and or 'Religious studies'. Explanations of the phenomena of spirituality remain at a distance from scientific understanding and explanation. This presents challenges for the incorporation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, which is inextricably linked to spirituality (Hoffman, 2013), into a mainstream curriculum. Disciplinary knowledge navigation and management aside, the responses of several participants in this study referenced spirituality. Some of those accounts are included in the following paragraphs.

Guringai custodian and Elder, Uncle Bob Waterer, in FG-GU1 when he welcomed participants to Guringai Country closed with the statement 'I pay my respects to the Guringai, the spirits of the Guringai'. Aunty Clair, in talking about connection and association with Country in an interview, generously shared her position explaining 'I've

come to say, “This is what has happened. I was brought up here, I have my spirits here that look after me””.

The spiritual was also referenced by George Nona, who described how his practice in restoring the practices of dhoeri and mask making requires him to proceed cautiously, and in collaboration with Elders, because of the spiritual context and potential consequences of the work itself. George Nona explained that the designs of the dhoeri and masks are not arbitrary and are collectively owned and managed by clans within Torres Strait Islander groups. The specific knowledge associated with each mask is of critical importance to the Torres Strait Islander custodians responsible for its cultural maintenance and sustainability. In his own words George Nona explain that ‘it’s a spiritual things - what I’m dwelling in’. The ‘what’ he refers to is beyond merely the physical construction of the mask; it is about an animation of something much more profound for the custodian and user of the respective object. The full understanding is not necessarily accessible to a ‘non-lingo speaking person’.

George Nona described how the cultural understanding of the spiritual is among communities of Torres Strait Islander arts practitioners when he recounted to me his explanation about the history, significance and role of a dhoeri he made to its new custodian:

That’s for dancing ... that headdress is an original replica that I took from Cambridge - put together, gave it ... and said ‘This is your great, great grandfather’s replica so look after it’. The reason I did that, he knows not to sell it, he knows not to abuse it ‘cause like I said the ancestral spirits will be there if you’ve got a headdress on. And you’ll be convicted yourself. So it’s ... it’s not me, it’s him now and he knows, he’s an Islander, he’ll believe in it.

Finally, the reminder of the overarching and constant presence of Aboriginal spirituality was visually communicated by participant, Aunty Clair Jackson in her representation of the protective presence of the serpent in the upper left corner of Canvas One (Figure 24).



Figure 24: Clair Jackson (2010) Detail Canvas 1 *Serpent head* acrylic on canvas 240mm x 330mm

Aunty Clair saw an opportunity as the last artist to work on the canvas to provide an encompassing graphic that culturally and visually sought to complete, enclose and ‘protect’ the existing content by organically surrounding it. The serpent motif she created, that used a type of sparse pointillist texture using a range of pinks and aqua dots, was positioned sensitively in the remaining, vacant space of the canvas (Appendix H).

While Aunty Clair’s main advocacy was for future Visual Arts educators to be skilled also in literacy and numeracy for optimal support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, she nonetheless was drawn to the motif of the serpent as a means of communicating her advice. Aunty Clair explained the presence of the serpent as a reminder of spirit. Such an enactment, that of representing a commonly recognized ancestral form, as in the case of other Aboriginal cultural enactments, invokes protection and affirms Aboriginal worldview.

Evidence from this study suggests that spirituality is a constant presence in the lives of practicing artists and community members and that the higher education provider will

establish stronger relationships with its communities if it is comfortable to position Aboriginal spirituality within its representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts in ways that are consistent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

Arising from this study is advice for Visual Arts teacher education students that those Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists and communities they work with hold spiritual beliefs in the present and that teachers at some point will need to comprehend a positioning of spirituality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and community members in such a way that does not diminish cultural growth and affirmation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have membership of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Skills to recognise, understand and contribute to reciprocity in partnering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

As researcher, conscious of the generosity of the local Aboriginal community in endorsing and physically supporting the research project, and hopeful that the greater benefit for Indigenous Australians in producing knowledge through this research was apprehended by their members, I was less confident of the immediate and medium term benefits to the community. I had underestimated that my explanation of UTS teacher education ‘business’ to members of this forum and the provision of samples of my teaching learning resources was received, at least by some participants, as a demonstration of transparency on the part of myself and UTS and thereby demystified at least some of our operations. By giving the ‘Participant Resource Folder’ to those community members who wished to keep them there was also a professional exchange that I had underestimated the value of in adding to collaborative, cross-sector professional relationships.

Participants Jessica Birk (J.B.) and Susan Moylan-Coombs during FG-GU1 chose to represent this notion of reciprocity in their visual communication (Figure 25) as the work was being progressed. While the symbol started as a conventional arrow, it was completed with an arrow at the other end

J.B: ...but it’s a double-ended arrow.

S.M-C: It's a double ended-arrow.

JB: Yeah, because it [information] is going both ways.



Figure 25: Jessica Birk, Susan Moylan-Coombs and Emma Lowrie (2008) Detail canvas 1 *Reciprocity: community advising on and learning about higher education curriculum* acrylic on canvas 320cm x 230cm

And so, as the ‘concentric squares’ symbolising UTS were being painted in the centre of the canvas by Jessica Birk, Susan Moylan-Coombs drew the first of four arrows. The drawings of the arrows were subsequently painted over by another participant, Emma Lowrie [Wiradjuri], using the colour red. The intention of the four double-ended arrows was to link UTS with the participants’ collaboratively devised, visual responses. These visual responses represent the intimate knowledge residing within diverse Country/ land/ environment (and its arts production) and indicate that future Visual Arts teachers’ might become more acquainted with through their pre-service higher education pathways.

To encapsulate the knowing that this research ‘encounter’ was an exchange of information, discussion arose between participants that resulted in the arrow symbolizing reciprocity.

4.4 Findings about the cultural customisation of research and partnership

This thesis is about the conduct of consultative process that draws on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing as well as research processes of the academy. Understanding the process requires commentary and analysis of the roles played by the people involved because the individuals, community and social systems are integral to the consultative process that evolved. One way to think about a doctoral study is to view the doctoral methods as a means of understanding something. The process of the study and object of the study are distinct. In this research however, the methodological processes and the object of study, consultation (about teacher education curriculum), are inextricably entwined. Consequently, elaborating and analysing the evolving of a consultation with Aboriginal communities also requires consideration of the doctoral process itself.

This qualitative study, like any other, was designed in particular ways to generate theory; to contribute to knowledge production in response to a particular problematic, a particular area of educational work. While curriculum was the educational and primary focus of the investigation, the fact that the study invited engagement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sectors and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge or ways of knowing was represented meant that from the outset, without a culturally sound methodology, the findings about curriculum may well have remained inaccessible. As a result this section attends to findings about the tailoring or customizing of the research design of the investigation to show how it respects its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and the knowledge responsibilities they carry.

The cultural customizing established parameters and freedoms for the research design . Those parameters were:

- the engagement of predominately Aboriginal participants through an Indigenist research methodology
- the engagement of the local Aboriginal community throughout the life of the study and
- the inclusion of an arts-based component.

The freedoms were for participants to:

- self-determine representation through a customised consent form
- attend either a focus group or an individual interview
- operate in a culturally-safe environment and
- have the option to engage in multimodal communication.

Before progressing to the findings, the following paragraphs provide upfront illustration of ways in which the study managed variations or where the study stalled. The first illustration relates to adherence to methodological expectations. The second is more structurally and culturally significant.

As the project progressed, as is expected within an action research context, some of the assumptions around the abovementioned parameters and freedoms were challenged and changes were required. For example, despite my own quite strict interpretation of ‘privileging Indigenous voice’ (Rigney, 1997, p. 118-9) that informed part of the research design for this study, I was required to review my interpretation during FG-GU1.

Invitations for FG-GU1 were made to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants only. As FG-GU1 unfolded, I was left in a quandary when a much-respected, non-Aboriginal relative of an invited Aboriginal participant joined the group. It was not a surprise at all at the community level but in retrospect, it disrupted the purist approach I had taken to the deployment of the principle of privileging Indigenous voices as part of my interpretation of Rigney’s Indigenist research methodology. The boundaries that I had imagined would enable freedom for others to safely articulate their views had been walked through as it were. The relative of the participant was very supportive of her involvement in the study and, important to the research itself, did contribute independently and knowledgeably about several matters. As a consent form was not lodged it was presumed that the contributor saw herself as outside the process.

On another point, while George Nona’s contributions were enormously valuable within this research context and three other Torres Strait Islander people engaged in important

dialogue with me about the study, providing legal, arts and referral advice, I was not sufficiently resourced nor in a position with a young family and work commitments to communicate face-to face over an extended period of time with collective cultural authorities of the Torres Strait Islands. This, of course, impacts the extent of the claim made about Torres Strait Islander cultural quality assurance of the selected teacher education curriculum resources because a Torres Strait Islander collective cultural authority, similar to the LAECG partnered in the study, was not engaged. Solutions to this issue require targeted attention to facilitate a more complete adjudication from Torres Strait Islander stakeholders of the curriculum documents.

A closing illustration of where the study occasionally stalled was in my own capacity to maintain administrative momentum. This contributed, at times, to delays in implementing processes such as follow-up meetings particularly when some of the processes required additional investment. There are resource implications for Aboriginal researchers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in part because of the restorative agency that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are. While caring for a young family and working largely fulltime,

Other practical challenges to my assumptions or research design will be discussed throughout this chapter. In most cases, the elasticity and cyclic structure of the action research methodology encouraged and enabled necessary variations to be made. To contribute to research communities, it is important to tell the methodological stories particularly when the initial idealistic, methodological blueprint was modified as it was operationalised.

A majority of focus group participants, having had practical opportunity to review curriculum documents in the first instance, reported that the blue skies, arts-based approach was a positive feature of the research because it was a less conventional experience of research and it enabled positive engagement in the process and with other participants. Culturally, as Uncle Tex had indicated, it became evident that participants in this component engaged in inclusive ways to co-create responses that either conceptually or stylistically were informed by cultural ways of knowing, doing and being. In the FG-GU1, for example, a few participants with strong arts-based practices and backgrounds

took responsibility for the initial drafting of the visual communication on paper firstly then directly onto the canvas. They working fluidly with the arts-based process as they synthesizing the comments and suggestions of others before broader negotiations commenced that saw those with less confidence in arts-based practice volunteer for or be allocated sections of the canvas to complete. In FG-GU1 and FG-HE, those less experienced or confident in visual arts swiftly attracted the support of others in ways that built upon relationships.

Findings on the customized consent form

As a part of the Indigenist research methodology, to secure greater integrity and emancipatory agency for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research communities, this inquiry trialed a customized consent form (Appendix B). The reasons, to reiterate, were:

1. for the purpose of protecting participating artists’ intellectual property and attribution rights
2. to provide greater self-determining capacity for all respondents about how they would like to be represented
3. to optimize the potential for research to be educative to its audiences about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (Figure 10) and management practices.

When provided with expanded options for representation, an overwhelming majority of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in this study chose the option of greatest disclosure, preferring to be identified ‘by name and Country’. Only one participant preferred to be represented by ‘Country only’. Only one of the nineteen participants preferred to be anonymous (See Table 1).

Table 1

Participant use of expanded consent form options

	De-identified	Identified by name only	Identified by name and Country	Identified by Country only
Participants	1	3	14	1

Despite the high take up of the option of greatest individual and cultural identity the original consent form, the form itself changed in response to feedback to make it more robust and locally responsive. Participants' comments on expanded options for self-identification the consent form were often about the protection of others. This reinforced prevailing community cultural considerations and historical experiences. In regard to the final adjustments (Appendix B) wherever individual participants positioned themselves in relation to knowledge responsibility, disclosure confidence and/or their own cultural connection, the expanded categories of the consent form were able to accommodate needs. Details of feedback from participants and ensuing amendments are discussed later in this section.

In terms of the original goal of contributing to the educative value of research, the resulting tabulation (Figure 10) and the routine disclosure of Country throughout the thesis, where participants preferred Country to be disclosed, has resulted in a level of profiling of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander connection and governance ultimately, that is often absent from contemporary text. On the few occasions where participants chose not to utilize the consent form option 'by name and Country' summaries of reasons are provided below:

- preference to eliminate any possibility that the individual's statements might be misconstrued to be representative of a collective group
- the participant's inability to be certain about their cultural connections due, for example, to removal policies and experiences
- preference to adhere to conventional research practices for de-identification.

One of the participants who chose to be represented 'by name only' was well respected and prominent in Aboriginal Education in NSW. Aunty Lois Birk explained in a phone conversation (personal communication, September 27, 2010) that she wanted to be represented in the consent form 'by name only' because, she noted, 'we know our story, some of us know where we come from and there's no need to wear it like a badge'. Like Uncle Terry Doolan, she was providing a reminder. She asked the question, 'What about others, who may not know their country, where they're from'. She also noted that she was not contributing on behalf of a cultural collective. The flexibility of the consent form

arguably still enabled the tailoring of representation to cater for the participant's judgment about individual and collective identification.

One participant who chose to identify 'by name and Country' and even adding the specific location, held the cultural and personal safety of others at the forefront of consideration in his feedback. He was concerned to ensure care was being extended to those whose cultural identity and knowledge of their own cultural affiliation had been affected by past governments' acts of removal within their families and/or in their own lived experience.

As mentioned previously, there was a suggestion for amendment to the consent form. Perchance a participant's full knowledge of their cultural identity was still obscured, wholly or partially, 'to the best of my knowledge' was added in the section pertaining to 'identify by Country'. That suggestion was made by Uncle Terry Doolan and demonstrates community members' empathy for those who have experienced removal directly or indirectly.

CE: I should have put a sign, like a little gap here to say what, you know, for them to do ... not only to indicate, but to indicate the way they spell it too. You know what I mean?

TD: I'd probably add ... add in there, in all of those things, or put something in there 'to my knowledge', 'to the best of my knowledge', you know? Because not ... like I said with Stolen Generation ... people mightn't know their origins.

CE: That's why that option is...

TD: So if you've got 'to the best of my knowledge' you know?

CE: Oh, okay, yeah. I see what you're saying.

TD: Then it saves that person being castigated by someone else saying 'hang on...'

In designing the forms I had not expected the high number of responses to the categories on the consent form that offered the greater level of disclosure thereby placing those who did not chose cultural affiliation to be in the minority. It may be of interest to note at this point that for each of the focus groups, information on counseling services

was made available to participants at the start of focus groups or interviews per chance. This was to ensure that any aspect of the research that may have triggered past cultural or personal trauma for participants could be managed. The particular counseling service provided for the initial focus groups was on the recommendation of representatives of local Aboriginal community organizations. To my knowledge no participant drew upon the services as a result of the research.

Interestingly, several participants welcomed the option of being identified 'by name and Country' and cited several advantages. For example, Uncle Terry Doolan responded to the features of the consent form by saying

This is pretty unique because ... you got it there that 'the term "Country" denotes Indigenous country or affiliations'. That in itself doesn't blanket. It separates that we're not all *just* Australian Aboriginals. It aligns us to a particular part of Australia, whether it's coastal, inland, a river group or a language group or ... or totem, kinship.

Uncle Terry continued to qualify his statement by elucidating the relationship between the geo-cultural and gender demographic and the study itself. He stated:

My interpretation as a Wiradjuri male in this age group, coming from this part of the Wiradjuri nation, is important. And we ... we can speak on it. We're not speaking for them. We're not holding the laws or the secrets or anything, we're talking in terms of research and we denote and we identify. Identity in Aboriginal culture is everything. The first thing we say to people is 'who your mob, where you from?'

Another person confident that personal and cultural identification in this study was useful was George Nona. It provided the opportunity to, if necessary, dispel any misunderstandings about his practice and representations to others quite directly:

CE: So that provides that option because of this form.

GN: Yeah, yes. That's important thing what you need, what I just said, that's very important. So if anything offended someone in their culture, tell them to contact me because sometimes only an Islander can explain to an Islander to break ... break-up straight from European to an Islander, it's sometimes no-no. So it comes

back to me. That's what I'm saying if they approach me, 'and why did you do that?' then I can break them in. Sometimes they misunderstand. But then, straight away at least, that's one of the frictions sometimes can be caused. It's for that sake.

One another note, the issue of translating oral communication about Aboriginal Country or clan to text-based communication required time and consideration for a few participants and the researcher. The challenge for the English language to represent Aboriginal sounds is well documented (Wafer & Lissarrague, 2008). This explains, in part, the extensive history of spelling variations for each Aboriginal Country or language group.

One participant sought time to check current spelling with her community because the community had recently reviewed the previous spelling of her tribe and newly endorsed a way of spelling the word that the community believed was more aligned with customary pronunciation. Another participant was aware of the several conventions of spelling her Country/Language group as she wrote her cultural affiliation on the form using the spelling with which she was most familiar.

Separate to the issue of spelling, one participant was hesitant at first to write anything down and asked for additional time. While independently completing the painting, she wanted to think about the modality of the consent before making her decision. She explained that she preferred to provide consent verbally. It was important for the participant to retain the discussion and agreement in her memory, rather than risk losing responsibility for it by committing it to another form. Finally, another participant raised the issue of reading out the consent form to community members who can't read.

The use of culturally suitable, complementary visual communication – the research 'map'

There was evidence that the use of culturally suitable, complementary visual explanations in this particular study was effective and, in cases, stimulus for visual responses. Several Aboriginal participants and one Torres Strait Islander research participant found the visual research plan (Figure 3) culturally appropriate and comprehensible. George Nona, in relation to the visual research map, stated:

That does, that does, that makes a lot of sense. Like it's how you did it, like you know the ... you know, on the beach, and just the way it's like an art itself in the form of speaking and understanding ... blending the old Aboriginal art you might say, even Islanders explain things on the beach. So it makes sense.

Nona, added 'we're spiritual people and we like things like that, it's like spiritually explaining things'. Other participants found the research map easily comprehensible and appreciated the instructional or educative aspect of it. Aunty Clair Jackson found the motifs of the circle, square and arrows visually legible. She said 'As soon as I see that in the sand, I can read it'.

Further to this there was evidence from a few participants that they perceived the potential of the visual map as stimulus for their own visual responses on the canvas. Independent of one another, two Aboriginal participants, both practicing artists, explained that they intuitively and practically responded to the visual research communication (Figure 3) one wishing that there were more images to create image responses to. Jonathan's was the first instance and he noted the effect in the following excerpt. In FG-GA, as he drew close to completing his visual communication, Jonathan said:

I was really thinking about, you know, I mean more than anything, I was probably thinking more about your, your one, you know, your image... and that's kind of what I used as the platform to start my work. But if there were kind of more of those examples I mean it would be great to ... tonight when you go through – that's what I was saying before, it might be interesting to keep this [unfinished canvas] to the next group.

Despite Jonathan's suggestion to use the partially painted canvas in the following focus group later that day, my own planning dissuaded me from doing so. It was later that I acted upon his advice and the outcome was a completed second canvas that was visually completely different from the one completed in situ that evening.

The other occasion where my own visual communication acted as a stimulus was in FG-GU1 when participants replicated, on a large scale, the clusters of circles rendered in

my visual research plan, in each corner of the canvas. A participating Yaegl artist, Jessica Birk, with no prior knowledge of Jonathan's comment, appropriated, with permission, those clusters of circles from the visual research plan. That formed the underlying composition of the work that saw a symbolic representation of the higher education provider in the centre of the canvas and the visual 'answers' to my questions in each of the appropriated clusters in the four corners of the canvas.

Having sighted the visual rendering of my research 'map' at the start of the focus group, practicing artist and curator, Jonathan Jones [Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi] suggested, toward the close of the arts-based component of that it might prove useful to pose my research question as images rather than as questions and invite participants to respond with images. Below is an excerpt from the transcription from recording the conversation between Jones (JJ) and myself (CE):

JJ: Perhaps you should present your questions as artworks. And get people to respond, images to images, instead of words to images. Like that's the thing

CE: Yes, that was confronting, yes.

JJ: You have to, we have to sort of process that [the focus group questions], in order to make ...

CE: Yeah, to make a response.

JJ: 'So how do you feel about ... ?'

CE: So yeah, sorry, talking about an artwork rather than ... which I did have planned. I have a whole series of works that I was going to produce; and I was going to, I just, I suppose I wasn't brave enough to actually do that.

JJ: Yeah, sure. That would have been much more interesting. Like you know, let's talk about that idea. Responding, you know, "A" with "A", instead of "A" to "B".

During an interview, Uncle Terry Doolan, in response to questions about the visual research map, said that visual communication for Aboriginal people is 'the oldest form of educational communication we've got because painting is a map. It can tell us all sorts of things. It can tell us about the past present and future, about identity, about Country'.

The arts-based, 'blue skies' approach to data generation

Participants' experience of the arts-based, 'blue skies' approach was overwhelmingly positive, despite the initial hesitation of a few. As noted previously, of those involved in the arts-based research engagement, participants were unanimous in agreeing that it added value to the research project.

One participant, Julie Hendicott, expressed her interest to see the model applied in the context of Aboriginal health research in the future. Uncle Tex Skuthorpe said that what I had done by importing his model into a research study was 'taken art to another level' in terms of realizing art 'as way of writing' (personal communication, October 12, 2010).

Aunty Clair Jackson, former teacher, librarian, lecturer and former Aboriginal Art Education Manager at the Art Gallery of NSW confirmed the value of the Visual Arts within an academic education research context in the following way:

this is integral culture. It's not pretty stuff on the edge; it's not muck-about; it's not ephemeral, it doesn't disappear. It's an intellectual exercise, and it is worthy of putting into an academic setting ... and that's what interests me.

I presented several of my visual hypotheses along with canvases at an exhibition of data generated from the study in November 2009 at a location where the local AECG regularly meet. The images intrigued some community members, including Aunty Clair, who then became interested to participate later in interviews where the arts-based approach was an option.

At an exhibition of the canvases, Jonathan Jones spoke about how the model sat well within other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community arts models that recognized Visual Arts as central to community wellbeing and sustainability. He explained:

That model, of supporting artists, is replicated nowhere else in the world. So that idea of community management, community support through the arts is also revolutionary and if we take some of these really simple ideas I think we could really revolutionise how art is understood globally. And I think definitely this project sits

very well within that model and that we can actually start seeing how art can exist to explore new ideas, explore new ways of thinking and I'm not surprised at all that you were told that when people were taking canvasses home and that people found a whole new voice that they wouldn't have had. That's completely understandable.

Additional feedback from participants about the arts-based component of the research identified several positive outcomes from their engagement in this part of the study. Karen Vaughan [Wiradjuri] explained (23 September, 2010) when she returned to the Visual Arts room to complete her visual communication that the process of painting in the context of the inquiry 'was very therapeutic'. Further to this she explained that 'I was stressed before I started' and she reflected that 'its impossible to be stressed while you are painting'. In a mobile phone message (23 August, 2010) ahead of FG-HE, participant, Joelander MacGregor [Kamilaroi], sent the text 'looking forward to the focus group' and on another occasion, before the exhibition of the work within the faculty, that she felt it was a 'privilege to be a part of this'.

There were some expressions of apprehension in contrast. Where Jonathan Jones had been apprehensive in FG-GA about working in the particular media without a preparatory stage of development, Jann Porter in FG-HE was initially 'terrified' at the prospect of painting on canvas but went on to collaborate with another participant to make a visual contribution. She said later that she enjoyed the process. Within the constraints of the research it was not possible to determine if anxiety may have contributed to keeping away other potential participants but it is, of course, a possibility.

From my own observation what was most remarkable about the process was the extraordinary versatility of the modality and the capacity of the collaborative process to stimulate inclusive, negotiated visual and oral communication. In focus groups where there were several participants, the way in which people were supported by each other to represent their concepts and responses was quite moving in its own right. Self-declared non-artists were encouraged by others to be a part.

4.5 Conclusion

In the previous sections of this chapter the key findings from the study were identified. In this conclusion, the three significant motivations underpinning the investigation and some contextual details are reiterated before a summary of the key findings of the study. The motivation underpinning the study were:

- the renewal of selected Visual Arts secondary teacher education curriculum through the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders
- to trial the use of a collaborative, culturally-endorsed, arts-based community development model for a Visual Arts secondary teacher education inquiry
- to explore the capacity of research methods and methodologies for consultative agency between higher education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

Higher education curriculum renewal was a focus of this study, in particular, teacher education curriculum. The starting point of the research engagement for the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in FG-GA, FG-GU1 and FG-GU2 was their review of a selection of Visual Arts and Australian Indigenous education subject outlines. Those subject outlines were:

- 013004 Issues in Indigenous Australian Education (3 credit point)
- 013050 Visual Arts Teaching Methods 1(6 credit point)
- 013062 Visual Arts Teaching Methods 2 (6 credit point)
- 013068 Visual Arts Teaching Methods 3 (6 credit point)
- 013074 Visual Arts Teaching Methods 4 (6 credit point)

While specific detail were discussed previously, the following overarching advice was received from Aboriginal participants in FG-GA, FG-GU1, FG-GU2 and FG-HE:

- Retain ‘Acknowledgement of/ Welcome to Country’ in all subject outlines
- Retain cultural heritage protection references and add explicit guidelines on site visits

- Substitute ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ for ‘Indigenous Australians’
- Ensure teaching resources are accurate and recently published
- Retain ‘off-Country’, Aboriginal education, digital media resources until a local equivalent is available
- Adjustment to representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- ‘Background’ local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practices in teaching and learning about digital technologies and other subjects for ‘incidental’ perspectives.

The findings from contributions by participants during the arts-based ‘blue skies’ research engagements in FG-GA, FG-GU1, FG-HE or during interviews recommended that Visual Arts teacher education administrators provide opportunities for students to acquire the following:

- Local engagement: with *local* Elders, the *local* Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community and *local* Country or Place
- Expanded engagements: with *more than one* Aboriginal community, community member or community organization
- Commitment: to *long term* professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
- Knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols
- Knowledge of subject matter: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts, Literacy and Numeracy*
- Skills to respectfully acknowledge and ‘situate’ spirituality within teaching and learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts
- Skills to recognise, understand and contribute to reciprocity in partnering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The key findings in relation to the cultural customization of research included the viability of Rigney’s Indigenist research methodology (1997) as an inquiry mechanism to acquire at this Sydney-based higher education site the representation of primarily Aboriginal people in dialogue about curriculum and education more broadly. While

discussions were held with several Torres Strait Islander educators and legal consultants and an interview was held with George Nona, my inability, due to range of material and financial constraints, to engage with a local or education collective in the Torres Strait Islands has impacted the quality of the claim in regard to broad representation of Torres Strait Islander stakeholders within the study. There remains more work ahead to adequately undertake appropriate cultural quality assurance of Torres Strait Islander content and representation within the subject outlines.

The use of action research was successful in providing an authentic and ethically sound pattern of engagement with participants (AIATSIS, 2012). Hoffman cites Meyer when explaining that ‘within an Aboriginal ontological perspective the concept of time is not linear’ (2013). The cyclic rather than linear unfolding of the process has been demonstrated as successful in other contexts where Indigenous participants are engaged (Burridge et al, 2009; Reason & Bradbury, 2006). Whereas the research map indicated the intended pathway through the study, only FG-GU1 and FG-GU2 formally replicated that intention. Beyond the initial two focus groups, various demands upon participants and myself affected out capacity to meet and while cycles continued to operate they did so often as interviews with participants from the initial focus group meeting.

The importance of planning engagement with the local community in ways that are culturally appropriate was a finding of the study. The community’s determination of meeting times and locations rather than those of the higher education representative resulted in higher attendance and quality input. The observance of protocols such as having Elders undertake a Welcome to Country and opportunity for meetings to commence with Acknowledgements of Country and introductions of who and where participants were from, resulted in the establishment of a safe environment within which to target research that relates to broad community goals and aspirations. Aunty Lois said, ‘you have to feel safe’ in regard to knowledge sharing engagements (personal communication July 20, 2013).

Within the cultural customizing of the research methods this study trialed consent forms that aimed to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants with scope for increased self-determine regarding disclosure. The forms explored the expanded options of consent according to various degrees of personal and cultural identification.

Arising from feedback through the action research cycles the findings were that the majority of participants welcomed the expanded options.

I was, however, reminded of the sensitivities that needed to be demonstrated regarding the detail and degree of cultural identification that can be accurately represented. An insightful outcome was the capacity of the data to generate and profile more detailed cultural affiliation representations beyond that of identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The presentation of this level of identification is clear in Figure 10 and provides, culturally, more transparency in regard to the participant group constituency.

Finally, the outcome of the use of Uncle Tex Skuthorpe's arts-based approach in this research engagement confirmed the versatility of the medium to stimulate collaboratively negotiated visual and verbal communication. In this case it was in relation to essential knowledge that visual arts secondary teacher educators might acquire pre-service. The findings also confirmed the appropriateness of the use of visual communication by myself as a complementary means of explaining the study.

This chapter outlined and discussed key findings from the study. The next chapter presents a model of partnership that articulates conditions for consultative engagement arising from the findings of the study including the feedback of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. Those participants included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives from the local Aboriginal community of the higher education provider and from education, cultural heritage, Visual Arts and legal sectors. The following chapter also considers implications of the findings from the study for teacher educators, researchers and also accreditation bodies.

CHAPTER 5

Implications and conclusions

5.1 Introduction

Many people believe that ‘theory’ is something mysterious, which it is not ... A theory is a set of ideas about what we claim to know and how we come to know. (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, p. 23)

As a result of this investigation, the theory – the claim to new knowledge - adds another story to the body of knowledge about the need for and challenges associated with embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and understanding in higher education curriculum (Behrendt et al, 2012; Craven, Marsh & Mooney, 2003; IHEAC, 2010; Nakata, 2007a; Nakata, 2010; Reid, 2009; Universities Australia, 2011).

This study sought answers to the overarching research question ‘How can we, as teacher educators, provide respectful consultative engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local and professional communities to enhance teacher education?’ More specifically the research asked ‘How does an experience of engaging with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in secondary Visual Arts teacher education inform curriculum renewal?’ and, slightly more expanded again, ‘How might an experience of engaging with external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in secondary Visual Arts teacher education contribute more broadly to engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to inform teacher education?’

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, this question was informed by a review of literature about, in part, harmful research practices of the past that have contributed to the fractured relationships between higher education and some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities today (Gould, 1997; Herbert, 2010; Janke, 2008; Rigney, 1997). While the key focus is upon curriculum renewal (Pinar, 2011; Young, 1998) and representation

(Apple & Buras, 2006; Kincheloe, 2006; Green, 2010) that respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples appropriately as first stakeholders (Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2008, 2010), the methodology and consultation was inextricably entwined with the research question in order for a culturally safe engagement to be established to enable knowledge sharing to proceed. Having established in the literature review where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural quality assurance mechanisms had previously been introduced (Craven, 1996; Craven, Marsh & Mooney, 2003, Dillon, 2007; Williamson & Dalal, 2007) it was established that studies in secondary visual arts teacher education curriculum renewal of this type, particularly from an Aboriginal researcher perspective, were not well represented.

The early work of Boughton (1998; 1996) described some of the tensions for mainstream Visual Arts teachers about representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge in classrooms. Postmodern curriculum approaches (Clark, 1996) while heralding inclusivity for marginalized groups also inadvertently caused cultural harm. It did this through indiscriminate appropriation of the cultural heritages of 'others' including, in Australia, the cultural representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Janke, 2008; Janke & Dawson, 2012; Johnson, 1996; Mellor & Janke, 2001; Mundine, 1998). This historical and cultural backdrop also informed this study that invited an external adjudication of my own curriculum work as a Visual Arts teacher educator.

The key findings of this study were presented in the previous chapter. In this chapter their implications are discussed. This study and the methodological, theoretical and practice-based implications of the findings are relevant to the dialogue in higher education at a time when improvements in the relationships and representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in discipline based higher education curriculum are being sought (Bradley et al, 2008; Behrendt et al, 2012; AITSL, 2013; Universities Australia, 2011; Williamson & Dalal, 2007). Those improvements are being sought in a context where there is an under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Quality Assurance (ATSICQA) curriculum renewal mechanisms and models.

Teacher education programs have an established and constantly rejuvenating function in investing in graduates' awareness and practice-based methods necessary for operating

as reflective practitioners in constantly changing workplace conditions (Anning, 2010; Grant, 1999; Universities Australia, 2011). Apart from the findings for curriculum renewal described in the previous chapter, the significance of the consultative engagement was foregrounded in this study. The following section presents a model of partnership between higher education providers, in particular, teacher educators, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. The partnership model is based upon the provision of particular conditions.

5.2 A partnership model for Visual Arts secondary teacher education administrators and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders

In summary, this study suggests that teacher education curriculum renewal by higher education providers in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders is achievable as long as, beyond a match of goodwill and capacity from both, the higher education provider can provide particular conditions. Those conditions include:

1. providing culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to speak openly about the curriculum topic
2. anticipating the already high demands upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community by making engagement easy, and positive
3. more flexible consultation patterns, possibly parallel to the education provider's formal structures but with defined conduits and linkages
4. demonstrating action and tangible outcomes arising from the feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants *and* providing evidence of those actions and tangible outcomes to the stakeholder community/ies
5. maintaining regular, succinct communication at existing local Aboriginal community meetings about the progress of the curriculum in order to establish and maintain community endorsement
6. aligning research, where possible, with the community/ies' research questions and aspirations, for example, improvements in education, health, housing and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
7. understanding the relational and referential capacity of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'community/ies'

8. knowing clearly the role and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector representatives including the fundamental, ultimate endorsement role of the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community
9. knowing the fundamental principle that all education activity takes place in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' Country or Place and appreciating obligations, including the reciprocity, that might arise from that.

This model shares some commonalities with the consultative modeling for primary teacher education developed by Craven (1996). However it moves the focus to one specific discipline, the sphere of a specialist, secondary teacher education curriculum area, and therefore draws more from correlational sector representation. For compatibility sake, this model also uses a discipline-based arts practice as a part of its methodology (Evans & Skuthorpe, 2009). Consistent in maintaining cultural integrity the study also engages more directly with the local community of the higher education provider (Rigney, 1997).

Were this model of consultation to be used in an investigation of curriculum in alternate secondary teacher education subject areas it is anticipated that the main substitution would be the facilitator and the representatives from the professional or industry sectors. The findings of the study recommend that the presence, in an alternate study context, of the local Aboriginal community of the higher education site would, as indicated above, remain constant. An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander expert in the alternate subject area to lead the investigation would be beneficial. Beyond the area of higher education, one participant from the local Aboriginal community recognised the scope of the arts-based engagement to be used outside teacher education, in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Similarly, beyond the teacher education context, with the ongoing enhancement of the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge in higher education through graduate attributes, cultural competencies and other means (Anning, 2010; Behrendt et al, 2012; Universities Australia 2011) this study has implications for accrediting bodies and higher education quality assurance processes. As the embedding of Indigenous knowledge or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being becomes more prevalent in the higher education sector (Anning, 2010; Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2011a, Universities Australia, 2011; Williamson & Dalal,

2007) it would follow that external credentialing authorities, such as AITSL or TEQSA, and curriculum authorities consolidate and make transparent an accountability framework that incorporates their own mechanisms or models to enhance capacity to measure the degree to which higher education courses conform with ATSCQA standards.

On a pragmatic note, the resource implications of this study would require consideration if adopted for another context. Costs included travel expenses for away-from-base site visits, catering, venue cost at one site, transcriptions from digital recordings and for the arts-based research component among other expenses. It is important to note, however, that in this study several expenses were offset by the reciprocity of community, by providing community venues free of charge, and through the provision of catering.

It is reasonable to argue that the partnership or engagement model also informs research practice in its capacity to provide a positive experience of research for the local Aboriginal community and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal representatives from the Visual Arts, education, cultural heritage and law sectors. It did so by negotiating positive, tangible curriculum changes while also providing an alternate experience of research itself in the form of the arts-based process. Participants in the latter were unanimous in agreeing that it added value to the research process. Some of the tangible curriculum changes are discussed in Chapter 4 and samples are located in the appendices of this thesis (Appendix C, D, E). An excerpt from a research progress report provided to some of the participants mid way through the fieldwork also reveals initial insights as they emerged (Appendix F).

In the paragraphs below broad contributions made by the study are articulated. It is reasonable to suggest that the findings from this study have made contribution to knowledge or practice in the following ways:

1. The consultation was effective in generating constructive feedback about the selected curriculum documents within Visual Arts teacher education at UTS (Appendix F). To that effect the advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders resulted in minor amendments (Appendix C, D, E) to the selected

curriculum and communication to other academics responsible for particular administrative functions that the feedback pertained to.

2. The incorporation of the cultural mentor's collaborative, arts-based community development approach (Evans & Skuthorpe, 2009) into an educational research context for 'blue skies' inquiry about Visual Arts secondary teacher education created a largely positive experience of research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants while also generating innovative formulations for secondary Visual Arts teacher education programs.
3. Knowledge production and exchange in this study was enhanced by the use of visual communication produced by the researcher and several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participating stakeholders. The arts approach proved to be inherently flexibility and culturally unifying whether participants contributed in focus group collectives or, due to other constraints, as individuals. The suggestion by one Visual Arts practitioner participant to use visual communication as the primary rather than a complementary means of knowledge exchange emerged as a potential future research direction.
4. The model of consultation that emerged from the study provides explanation for some teacher education course and subject administrators about the 'who' and 'how' of consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in regard to curriculum renewal. For secondary Visual Arts teacher education, this model emphasizes the fundamental inclusion of representation from the local community along with the annexing of a cluster of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts from the Visual Arts, education, cultural heritage and legal sectors.

The following section of Chapter 5 provides concluding statements about this study.

5.3 Conclusion

This thesis commenced by proposing that effective consultation is necessary to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to participate not only in curriculum dialogue about what knowledge is of most worth (Apple, 2004; Pinar, 2011; Toohey, 1999; Williamson & Dalal, 2007; Young, 1998) but also in dialogue about what knowledge is most appropriate for particular audiences and how that knowledge might be represented. From a review of literature it is evident that while, historically, there have been great strides made in the achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to and agency within higher education (Behrendt et al, 2012; IHEAC, 2008), despite evidence of challenges (Behrendt et al, 2012; Herbert, 2010; Nakata, 2007a; Nakata, 2007b; Sherwood et al, 2011; Wilson-Miller, 2003) there remains scope for further interrogation of higher education curriculum renewal processes and mechanisms through the determinations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As an Aboriginal teacher educator working for several years in mainstream primary and secondary teacher education, this study provided me with an opportunity to create an engagement with the local Aboriginal community of one of the higher education provider sites, to 'walk the talk' of consultation on a more formal level in order to ensure that beyond my own professional input, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural quality assurance process (ATSICQA) confirmed or adjusted my professional activity in curriculum. As a doctoral study the research design was not fettered by the constraints of more conventional university processes of consultation where shorter time frames, accreditation criteria limits and other factors reduce some innovation possibilities.

Having been a Visual Arts teacher for several years before working in higher education, I expect that my pedagogical past had exerted influence upon the methodology of the research that sought to maintain integrity with the discipline area of Visual Arts and Visual Arts education while working within culturally diverse spaces (Boughton, 2006; Eisner, 2002). I wanted to do more than that however.

Eisner stated that research 'can be arts-based as well as science-based' (2002, p. 213). I wanted to provide an opportunity to design consultation and research that, while

satisfying the curriculum-centred requirements of the investigation, was invigorating or innovative in some way, culturally, personally or professionally, and therefore more respectful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants (AIATSIS, 2012). This was particularly so to counteract the negative experiences felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a result of externally driven research agenda of the past (Gould, 1997; Nakata, 2007b; Smith, 1999).

The incorporation of Uncle Tex Skuthorpe's community-based, collaborative arts based approach into the study, among other aspects of the research design, seemed a sensible solution to this desire to provide a research encounter that might be culturally and personally nourishing or innovative and also able to give something back to participants. Similarly, investigating the value of the use of visual communication to supplement text-based communication about the research was another endeavor to culturally expand upon research methods.

This study did not make the assumption that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are artists. Including some participants' own admissions, evidence from the study proved that such an assumption would have, indeed, been problematic. Rather, because of the nature of the investigations into Visual Arts education, I did assume that amongst the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholder participant group there would be Visual Arts practitioners, arts administrators and arts representatives, and cultural arts educators. Given that possibility, the inquiry sought to know whether or not the arts-based engagement complemented other research methods or not.

As established in Chapter 4, based upon evidence from the study, the embedded, arts-based research experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to acquire feedback on Visual Arts secondary teacher education curriculum, was successful. The inquiry, overall, accords with Rigney's principles of Indigenist research methodology in providing opportunity for privileging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice, in this case, about teacher education curriculum. It also affirmed the basis for advocacy for arts-based research and artistic research (Eisner, 2002; Eisner, 2006; Finley, 2008; Hannula, 2004; Hanula, Suoranata & Vaden, 2005) where the marginalization of arts-based research and arts knowing is only lately being resolved. Eisner stated:

It is the view of arts-based researchers that bias enters into descriptions and analyses of, for example, a school that has been studied, by virtue of omission as well as commission; when perspectives on a complex matter have no chance of emerging, they cannot be taken into account. Arts based research is a way to ensure that science-based research alone does not monopolize how educational practice can be studied or what needs to be done to describe it. (2002, p. 213)

What I observed of participants' experience of the arts-based research approach in this study resembled what Uncle Tex had explained to me several years before the study about its impact for community members when he introduced the process in community development work. He explained that, whether people painted images themselves on surfaces or had others paint images on their behalf, the act of working together on a large-scale surface allowed participants to, visually and verbally, through spatial and conceptual negotiations with one another, articulate responses to broad questions. In this regard it formed a type of qualitative, blue skies inquiry.

In the recount by Uncle Tex, the negotiations and articulations through visual communication and yarning over the surface, resulted in the formulation, as much as the representation, of significant community goals. In itself, the act of painting collaboratively required negotiation by participants and prompted dialogue about each other's depictions. In turn this stimulated critical dialogue and the sharing of views thereby enhancing relationships. One of the tangible outcomes of the engagement was the completed canvas which, rendered with participants' stories, was transported to a range of locations, as determined, to fulfill a range of functions. One function was to articulate those collectively negotiated messages to a broader audience.

In response to the earlier quotation by Eisner, the culturally endorsed, arts-based engagement enabled 'perspectives on a complex matter' to emerge and be taken into account. It did this by enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation about curriculum while also contributing to expanded methodological options. One of several findings from the study was the recognition of the expanded functions of visual communication for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In light of the contribution of this modality to the study, I would like to conclude, out of respect, with a statement by Uncle Tex Skuthorpe.

Most people see Aboriginal art as a pretty picture. Nobody see it as it has meaning cause that's what Aboriginal art – well - that's what Nhungaburra people - my people - see it as - that it's a way of writing - it's a way of communicating. It was nothing about decoration and it was our way of writing.

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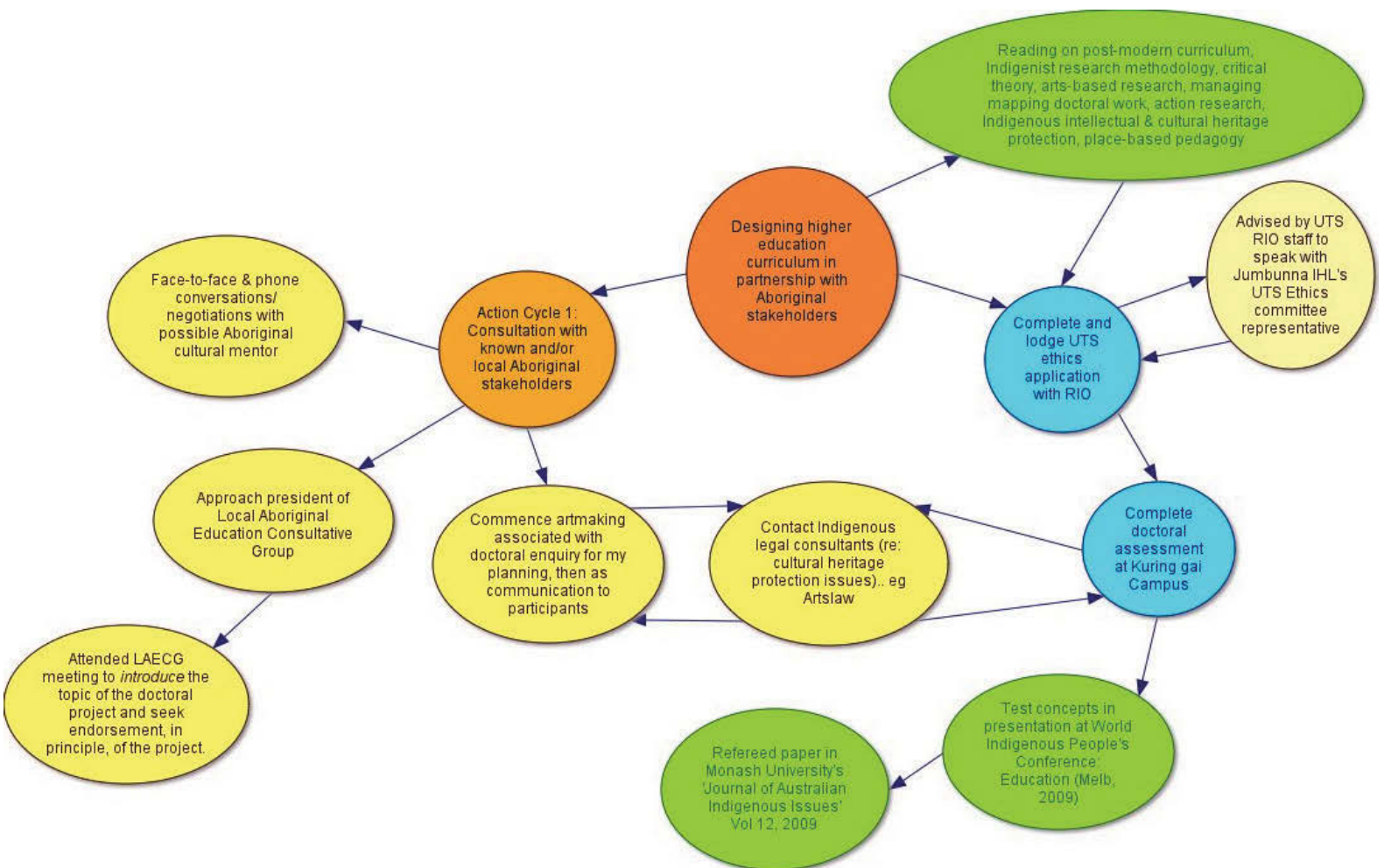
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Appendices



Excerpt from original consent form (2008)	Excerpt from final, revised consent form (2010)
<p><i>In response to the following please place a tick in the appropriate box</i></p> <p>I agree that the research data gathered from this project may be used in a published form that:</p> <p>a) does not identify me in any way</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>b) does identify me by name</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>c) does identify me by name and country*</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>d) does identify me by country* only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>* the term 'country' denotes Indigenous country or affiliation/s</p> <p>I would like Chris Evans to provide me with access to a final draft of material intended for publication that uses data gathered from or produced by me. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><i>In response to the following please place a tick in the appropriate box</i></p> <p>I agree that the research data gathered from this project may be used in a published form that:</p> <p>a) does not identify me in any way</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>b) does identify me by name</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>c) does identify me by name and country*</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____ (country/ies)</p> <p>d) does identify me by country* only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____ (country/ies)</p> <p>* the term 'country' denotes Indigenous country or affiliation/s and acknowledges that, to the best of the ability of the participant this information is accurate.</p> <p>I would like Chris Evans to provide me with access to a final draft of material intended for publication that uses data gathered from or produced by me. <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Original text (2007)	Revised text (2008)	Reason for amendment	Response
<p>Page 6: The following terms all describe Indigenous Australians: ‘Koori/e’ in Victoria, Tasmania and NSW ‘Murri’ in Queensland and northern NSW ‘Nunga’ in southern SA ‘Nyungar’ in south WA ‘Anangu’ in Central Australia ‘Yolngu’ in Arnhem Land</p>	<p>Page 8: The following terms all describe Indigenous Australians: ‘Koori/e’ in Victoria and NSW ‘Goori/e / Murri’ in northern NSW ‘Murri’ in Queensland and northern NSW ‘Nunga’ in southern SA ‘Noongar’ in south WA ‘Palawa’ in Tasmania ‘Anangu’ in Central Australia ‘Yolngu’ in Arnhem Land</p>	<p>Local Aboriginal Heritage Officer noted error re: the inaccurate association of the term Koori/e with Tasmania;</p> <p>Subject coordinator alerted to revised spelling in an alternate document and contacts Aboriginal Land Councils for current spelling for language groups in Tasmania, WA and SA.</p>	<p>Subject coordinator copied text from a previous version without sufficient scrutiny. Apology. Follow-up discussion with Local AECG representatives re: ‘Goori/e’</p>
<p>Page 6: In the community context, the terms ‘black’ and ‘white’ are commonly used. For the purpose of this subject (eg in academic writing), the term ‘non-Indigenous’ or ‘non-Aboriginal’ is preferred to the term ‘white’.</p>	<p>Page 8: In some contexts, the terms ‘black’ and ‘white’ are sometimes used. For the purpose of this subject (eg in academic writing), the term ‘non-Indigenous’ or ‘non-Aboriginal’ is preferred to the term ‘white’.</p>	<p>Feedback from a representative of the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group that the terms ‘black’ and ‘white’ were not used in the local community where the university is located.</p>	<p>Subject coordinator acknowledges local concern and adjusts text on that point. The terms are retained to assist students to support the adjustment of their professional communication.</p>

Revised text (2008)	Revised text (2009)	Reason for amendment	Response
<p>Page 8:</p> <p>The following terms all describe Indigenous Australians:</p> <p>‘Koori/e’ in Victoria and NSW ‘Goori/e / Murri’ in northern NSW ‘Murri’ in Queensland and northern NSW ‘Nunga’ in southern SA ‘Noongar’ in south WA ‘Palawa’ in Tasmania ‘Anangu’ in Central Australia ‘Yolngu’ in Arnhem Land</p>	<p>Page 6:</p> <p>The following terms all describe Indigenous Australians:</p> <p>‘Koori/e’ in Victoria and NSW ‘Nyungar’ in south WA ‘Goori/e in Hunter & Nth. region of NSW ‘Palawa’ in Tasmania ‘Murri’ in Queensland & northern NSW ‘Anangu’ in Central Australia ‘Nunga’ in southern SA ‘Yolngu’ in Arnhem Land</p>	<p>Central coast community member in second Guringai focus group confirmed subject coordinator’s understanding that the term ‘Goori/e’ is one used in the Hunter region.</p>	<p>Subject coordinator adjusted text. Subject coordinator to confirm current spelling of terms by contacting relevant local Aboriginal Land Councils as a part of curriculum review/ renewal. Subject coordinator noted that ‘Indigenous Australians’ was yet to be amended to ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’.</p>

Original use of resource (2008, 2009)	Revised text (2010)	Reason for amendment	Response
<p>Resource below used in tutorial by subject coordinator as one of several resources but not named explicitly (2008, 2009):</p> <p>‘Strong & Smart’ [2004] QUT & Cherbourg State School (Producer: Mark Newman) 27 mins</p>	<p>Resource below named explicitly in subject outline for all tutorial classes (2010):</p> <p>Tutorial 1: Assessment task overview. Viewing of video ‘Strong & Smart’ [2004] QUT & Cherbourg State School (Producer: Mark Newman) 27 mins</p>	<p>Focus group participants comprised largely of Aboriginal casual and fulltime academic staff associated with the UTS teacher education program advised that the digital video resource ‘Strong and Smart’ be retained and featured in the tutorial in Week 1 tutorial until a resource as engaging to students is produced locally.</p>	<p>Subject coordinator reviewed local, NSW-based digital video and assessed reaction of students to it during lectures with a guest speaker while retaining the QUT & Cherbourg School (2004) resource.</p> <p>Subject coordinator will continue to review NSW generated resources of this kind and/or consider partnerships to develop resources.</p>

Appendix F: Phase One - emerging themes

Participants during Phase One made the following suggestions:

1. *Retain information in Visual Arts Teaching Methods subject outlines about the significance of copyright* (eg recent material by Terri Janke) so that Visual Arts secondary teacher education students understand key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols surrounding arts-based practice (ie to avoid the appropriation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imagery without permission);
2. Ensure that Visual Arts secondary teacher education students in the first instance understand their practice-based responsibilities of *working with their local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities* for quality teaching and learning in Visual Arts (eg through local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups in NSW);
3. Ensure that Visual Arts secondary teacher education students *develop a broad knowledge of contemporary Aboriginal art 'movements'* that exist across Australia;
4. Provide teaching and learning experiences that enable Visual Arts secondary teacher education students to understand the *uniqueness/ distinctiveness of the physical environment that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people work in and the distinctiveness of the artwork that is created from those environments* (eg concepts of *saltwater/freshwater, sandstone engravings, 'paint-up'*) particularly in reference to where students' professional experience schools placement are located;
5. Encourage *opportunities for Visual Arts secondary teacher education students to work in voluntary capacities in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts workshop contexts* in order to accelerate their learning (eg through variation on professional experience programs and/or voluntarily in the local community);
6. Alert Visual Arts secondary teacher education students to the importance of their *continued growth in knowledge (ie professional development) in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, histories and cultures throughout their professional lifetime*;

7. Attend to the *contemporary cultural accuracy of information that they [teacher education administrators, curriculum designers] communicate to, and assess from, students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge through teaching and learning activity (eg spelling of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language names, accuracy of information about local organisations)* by taking the advice of the appropriate local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community/ies and organisations (eg Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, Local Aboriginal Land Councils);
8. Ensure that knowledge about and skills to support *Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student literacy and numeracy, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health (eg knowledge of Otitis Media), and cultural site protection (eg to confirm appropriateness of sites with local Aboriginal community)* are adequately represented and profiled among other expected content *in mandatory locations* in Visual Arts secondary teacher education curriculum;
9. Support Visual Arts secondary teacher education students to understand that it is quite conventional for contemporary *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to defer to Elders and collective Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community protocols and endorsements* in a range of ways;
10. Support Visual Arts secondary teacher education students to develop knowledge of and respect for *the positioning of spirituality in the daily lives of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, communities and in the artistic practices of many artists working in and through those communities* when planning curriculum renewal and teaching and learning activities.

Appendix G: Visual communication from FG-GU1. Acrylic on canvas. 2165mm x 1800mm



Appendix H: Visual communication from FG-GA, FG-HE and two interviews.

Acrylic on canvas. 1820mm x 2100mm

