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Training Teachers for Reconciliation: A Work in Progress

Presented by

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Biography

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All presenters are Indigenous.

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Acknowledgment and Opening Statement

The traditional owners of the land, air and waters on which this conference and the greater Adelaide area are located are the Kurna people. We begin our presentation by acknowledging this historical fact. Yunggorendi is the name bestowed upon the First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research in which we work by Kurna elder Uncle Lewis O'Brien and in Kurna its meaning is: to inform, to communicate, to impart knowledge.

The foundation for this paper is based on over a decade of work at Flinders University in Indigenous education where staff in the Yunggorendi First Nations Centre have fulfilled a variety of roles including student support, teaching and research related academic appointments; administrative and leadership roles and policy advisory committees. In a symbolic manner it is also an account of our own growth as Indigenous academics in parallel with the Centre's growth and development during the period 1990-2003.

Introduction

The question being asked of us in this session is **what is the role of curriculum in creating a new Australia?** In framing a response from within our context as Indigenous scholars we feel it important to briefly position the history, politics and strategy of Indigenous engagement with higher education at Flinders University, even if only to contextualise our presentation and envisage the next challenge. This is a challenge for the University and Yunggorendi in real and symbolic terms with respect to our role as pedagogues in this state, nationally and increasingly internationally as Indigenous communities globally look to build supportive and strategic alliances.

Setting the Scene for Indigenous Engagement in Curriculum at Flinders University

In the late 1970s the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) and the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (SAAECG)¹ lobbied the higher education sector to establish 'Aboriginal Enclaves'. The primary purpose was to increase Indigenous access and participation in higher education and to include Aboriginal Studies within their courses and curricula. The call for increased access had a particular focus in teacher education with the NAEC setting a target of one-thousand Aboriginal teachers by 1990. By the mid 1980s discussions were taking place between the South Australian Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) and Flinders University about the establishment of a designated Indigenous position/centre within the University. The discussion also involved a broadening of the focus of access and participation to include all academic areas of the university - though with particular emphasis on teacher education, the arts and health.

In 1990 merger talks commenced between Flinders University and the South Australian College of Advanced Education (Sturt campus). In the context of those talks the responsibility for and involvement in supporting Indigenous students at the merged university were discussed. Later that year the University appointed an Indigenous liaison officer with funds gained from the Commonwealth Department of

¹ From hereon we will use the term Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) as a generic term to encompass the various manifestations of South Australian state Indigenous education consultative bodies.

Education. The initiative, whilst a step forward, was limited because at the time there was little infrastructure support and no real sense of how the role might operate nor what would happen to this Indigenous education initiative beyond the life of the Commonwealth's 'soft monies' (Faith Trent, personal communication, 2003).

In 1991 Flinders University established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Advisory Committee (AEPAC) that operated until 1996. The AEPAC in conjunction with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Programme (ATSIEP), the forerunner to Yunggoendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research, determined that one of its priorities was to build a greater operational and structural presence in teaching and research activity.

Indigenous staff in the Centre and our many non-Indigenous allies in the University put the argument that Indigenous peoples had to be at the forefront of engagement with the strategic planning processes of the University as it related to, or should have related to, Indigenous education. In particular, but not exclusively, we argued for the development of education plans for Indigenous peoples in the University that were not limited to or narrowed by the discourses of access, equity and participation. To consign the operationalisation of our involvement in the University to a discourse of access and participation would leave untouched Indigenous theoretical paradigms, the Indigenous critical consciousness of the complexity of colonisation, its processes and hegemonic forms and the challenge to what is considered valid knowledge via curriculum construction and research activity. Our project was designed to move beyond notions of inclusivity as captured within ideas of multiculturalism to engage directly in the history and politics of the Indigenous struggle with colonialism – a struggle that encompasses our epistemological authority as partners in conversations and actions (conversations) on other ways of thinking, speaking and writing the world.

In 1995 a review of the Indigenous education centre made a number of recommendations. These recommendations were targeted structural responses aimed at building collaborative and coordinated engagement of Indigenous staff and resources to enhance growth for Indigenous academic staff through the development of Indigenous courses and knowledge within targeted departments/schools and contribute to Indigenous community affairs and development.

The profile and expertise of staff in Yunggoendi determined that one area of focus was teacher education. This situation is not surprising given that most of us emerged as graduates from the era in which the NAEC had set the higher education agenda with its focus in teacher education. So in 1996 Yunggoendi staff taught, for the first time, a topic in the Bachelor of Education degree programs at Flinders University. This topic was inherited from a member of staff from the School of Education. One of the first tasks of the all Indigenous Yunggoendi academic teaching team was to rewrite the topic with a focus on Indigenous students and education. In 1997 the topic became a compulsory core topic for the Bachelor of Education degree programs.

The next section of the paper will frame the theoretical positioning of the core Indigenous topic developed by Yunggoendi First Nations Centre, drawing upon the

works of Seddon, Darling-Hammond and key authors in transformative pedagogy. Specific reference will be made to the Education for Social Justice group (1994) teaching for resistance model. The following section will outline the three phases for teaching for resistance which have been renamed Reconciling History, Reconciling Self and Reconciling Australia.

Moving Forward: Yunggorendi and the Pre-Service Teacher Education Curriculum at Flinders University

There currently exists a vast array of literature pertaining to the politics of schooling, professional teaching standards and training of teachers (see Apple 1996; Boston 1999; Seddon 1996, 1997, 1999; Connell 1996; Connell, White and Johnston 1991; Giddens 1994; Entwistle, Skinner, Entwistle and Orr 2000). The theoretical positioning in this paper draws on some of the ideas of Seddon (1996, 1997, 1999) through notions of what she calls 'commitment to capacity building' for social practice, and the 'remaking of educational space' in reworking relationships between teachers and external communities (1999:25-26) and Darling-Hammond (1999:30), who asks 'what do teachers need to know to teach all students?' with respect to pedagogical content knowledge. These writings are read from the context of seeking pedagogical practices in Indigenous education that contribute to the needed structural and political reforms in education. Repositioning Reconciliation² within the core ideals in the discipline of education, specifically teacher training, enables teachers to analyse and reflect on their practice in schools and their relationship to the Indigenous child and their communities. Such ideals should provide the foundation for academic teaching practice and curriculum in faculties of universities. Flinders University recently surveyed its academic staff with respect to issues of teaching and learning (Cooper, Lawson and Orrell 1997). Issues identified as problematic were 'curriculum planning issues', in particular awards, and that 'vocational objectives' (employment outcomes) are seen as one of the highest priorities of higher education (Cooper, Lawson and Orrell 1997:39). We believe that the University pursuit of knowledge and teacher training must engage curricula that equips the pre-service teacher for personal and societal transformation of inequality as well as vocational objectives. We argue in this paper that if Reconciliation is a critical social and political objective, then implementation of Reconciliation pedagogies are fundamental to teacher training to support new standards of teaching practice.

Reconciliation Pedagogy – [The Resistance Model]

Our curriculum has been built on the theoretical foundations of the work undertaken by the Education for Social Justice Research Group, University of South Australia as described in the 1994 text 'Teaching for Resistance'³. Their project sought to develop and research a model for teaching which engaged participants in the struggle for

² We believe that Reconciliation for legislative, legal, structural and constitutional change is a rarer commodity in education than the pursuits for tolerance and cultural understanding promoted by past and present government agencies for reconciliation. We use upper case 'R' for our concept of Reconciliation to define the structural and political reforms needed in education; and to distinguish this from the populist government definitions of reconciliation that in the main advocate for tolerance via education.

³ We note that each year since 1995 the national conference of the Australian Studies Curriculum Association presents the Garth Boomer Memorial Award in honour of his contribution to Australian Education. It is appropriate therefore to also note that Garth Boomer in 1991 was involved in the negotiations of the foundations of the project of the Education for Social Justice Research Group for a more pro-active approach to social justice in education.

social justice in education and society. The utilisation of a Gramscian approach to resistance⁴ informed the project team as it sought to actively engage participants as 'agents in the struggle' against injustice (Education for Social Justice Research Group 1994:26).

In educating for social justice, the project team placed emphasis on the need for an examination of schools and their contribution to social and political change by being active in social issues and developing the skills of critical thinking, social negotiation and organisation of action. As a teaching tool the model seeks to name the social justice issue, explain the struggle for justice and tackle the injustice, thereby providing a process with which to raise consciousness, make contact and take action.

Educators need to link up with other social and political movements in order to form broad alliances that confront inequalities at their structural and cultural sources. Within the education system we need to identify and work to change the structures and ideologies which create unequal educational outcomes in education now, and which will, therefore, inhibit the role that schools might play in a broader political struggle (Teaching for Resistance, 1994:14).

What was significant about the Resistance Model for our teaching team was its process for unmasking power, language, culture and history to the practice of education and the 'knowing' that arose from engagement in the education 'system'. Issues of power, language, culture and history were also part of a broader national agenda as framed by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR), 1991-2001 (see Commonwealth of Australia 1994, 1995). Australia and its education was quite literally in a reconciliation historical moment and it is this that we addressed in our teaching by reshaping the resistance model and naming the phases as Reconciling History and Education, Reconciling Self and Reconciling Australia.

Our political project is, therefore, concerned with developing a culture of Reconciliation with the pre-service teachers. We strategically set out to speak to the political history of Indigenous education, a history that is often rendered invisible to pre-service teachers, so that what seems to lie on the surface, that is, an education for tolerance and 'cultural' inclusion, is exposed as something that is not neutral and given but is in fact a highly politicised process between the competing interest groups of state, dominant non-Indigenous interests and subordinate(d) Indigenous interests (see Smith, 1997).

Phase One: Reconciling History and Education – [Raising Consciousness]

Phase one 'Reconciling History and Education' draws the teaching model from the Education for Social Justice Group research report titled 'Teaching for Resistance' (1994:71). This phase also draws on the work of Kevin Keefe (1992:68-96) titled

⁴ Resistance here means those confrontations with oppression that are aimed at achieving social and political transformations which will contribute towards realising the goals of human freedom. Resistance is thus not simply opposition. It has a crucial moral dimension. Anti-sexist, anti-racist and anti-poverty movements are thus key instances of resistance.

From the Centre to the City: Aboriginal Education, Culture and Power'. The purpose of this phase is to deepen the understanding of the role education plays within the colonisation of Indigenous Australia through analysis of the principles of social justice. The awareness of the pre-service teacher is extended towards understanding the rise of Reconciliation as a social and political movement that is a product of history. Reconciliation and its impact on education are presented in the context that it was informed by the resistance struggle of Indigenous peoples. The necessary starting point for understanding in this phase is charting the historical emergence of 'race' and its construction of what Keefe (1992:84) calls 'Aboriginality as ideology'.

This phase asks some fundamental questions:

- As teachers, how do we know what we know about Indigenous Australians ('Aboriginality') and from where does this knowledge emerge? How can we be certain that our knowledge of 'Aboriginality' is accurate and inclusive of Indigenous views?
- How has the social construction of 'race' contributed to teachers' understanding of 'Aboriginality'?
- Can a shared understanding and ownership of history through education contribute to teaching for Reconciliation?

How do we know what we know about 'Aboriginality'?

If teaching for Reconciliation is to be understood we need to be clear to pre-service teachers of the underlying points of conflict and hostility that work against mutual collaboration. To teach for Reconciliation it is necessary to examine the current conscious frameworks of ethnicity, 'race' and identity that shape pre-service teachers' ideas of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. Due to the small Indigenous population, many pre-service teachers have little contact with Indigenous peoples and their communities. Understanding who are Indigenous people and their culture is fundamental to this phase.

It is also made implicit that in history representations of Indigenous identities were constructed mainly through the eyes of the European settler society. The consciousness of the pre-service teacher is raised by highlighting that the Indigenous understandings of identities are very different from the hegemonic European assumption about them and that stereotypes still permeate the teaching fraternity. Pre-service teachers are given theoretical tools from post-colonialism and critical theory to negotiate these stereotypes. The question of how do we know what we know, is crucial to this phase and is intended to reconcile the orthodox assumptions and stereotypes of Indigenous Australian identities through charting the historical moments that led to their rise. Our argument here is that before pre-service teachers can understand the need for Reconciliation it is important in this phase to name the injustice about 'race' stereotypes and their structural practices.

How has the social construction of 'race' contributed to teachers' understanding of 'Aboriginality'?

In this phase there is a need to be clear and implicit in what is meant by injustice in order to construct Reconciliatory solutions through education. **Reconciliation** is not a politically neutral term and therefore needs clarity by definition. In this sense, pre-service teachers are familiar with mechanisms like dialogue, conflict resolution, partnership building, mediation, legal negotiation and arbitration. However, Reconciliation in definition and its frameworks for implementation are little understood outside the corpus of government advocacy.

We made a conscious pedagogical decision to chart 'race' theory and its impact on Indigenous identity and the provision of education. 'Race' theory, 'othering' and the 'problem' of difference are used to highlight that the history of Indigenous representations through education is a history of mis-representation. Imperialism and colonialism through the construction of 'race' have developed many inaccuracies and myths about 'Aboriginality' (see Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1992; Banton 1979; Benedict 1983; Miles 1989; Montagu 1974; Stepan 1982)⁵. 'Race' theory enables the recognition that throughout Australian history Indigenous people have been excluded and marginalised from all levels of education including schooling, universities and education administration/policy enterprise (see Reynolds 1987; Lippmann 1994; Miller 1985; Bin-Sallik 1989; Mattingley and Hampton 1988; McConnochie, Hollinsworth and Pettman 1988; Hollinsworth 1997). There exists a vast literature on 'race' and racism in education and the impact on minorities. Indigenous scholar Bin-Sallik (1989:1) argues that 'the denial of education to Aborigines [sic] is a legacy of the colonial past and subsequent policies and practices that did not abate until the beginning of the 1970s'. Educating 'Aborigines' [sic] out of their 'Aboriginality' has an overwhelming legislative history. McCorquodale (1987) recounts over seven hundred pieces of Commonwealth and State legislation regarding Aboriginal people. Similarly, Nettheim (1991:39) records sixty-seven definitions of 'Aboriginality' used by State and Federal governments that draw upon 'biological', 'social' and 'cultural' descriptions. Hegemonic versions of 'Aboriginality' are part of the history of Australian education history. The view made apparent here is that in the past, education marginalised Indigenous interests while imposing the non-Indigenous agendas, concerns and interests through school curricula. Teaching for Reconciliation is an intervention in education for teacher agency and schooling transformation.

Subjugated and orthodox educational interests are highlighted through analysis of the nexus between power and knowledge. The complex nexus between power, representation, knowledge and education as elucidated by Apple (1996) and Hall (1997) are highlighted. Such nexus is made apparent in early anthropological research about Indigenous Australians that was dominant up to until the late 1970s (see Taplin 1879, Tindale 1938, Berndt & Berndt 1992). The theoretical descriptions and definitions of Indigenous Australians by early anthropological researchers scientifically manufactured 'nativism' and the discursive narratives of the 'archetypal Aborigine' [sic] and the orthodoxy of the 'civilised and the uncivilised' (Langford 1983, Langton

⁵ These writers chart the ideology of 'race' and racism and its distinctive scientific, social and political histories.

1981). The power of these assumptions and their definitions are firmly rooted into the discourses of public institutions including universities, education departments and their academic disciplines. Put simply, 'Aboriginality' as an intellectual, social and political category has been a controversial discourse upheld in school curricula (Keefe 1992:65-68). However, Indigenous resistance to identity politics and their ideologies are focused within this phase to recognise and celebrate the Indigenous struggle for recognition and self-determination. Exposing racialised dichotomies of the real/unreal, traditional/non-traditional, civilised/uncivilised is a sufficient condition to teaching for Reconciliation. Equally important is the focus on the Indigenous and non-Indigenous struggle for mutual solutions to the problems that cause the conflict. This is teaching for Reconciliation.

Can a shared understanding and ownership of history through education contribute to teaching for Reconciliation?

Keefe (1992:69), states 'that there are important repercussions for educational practice in an understanding of 'Aboriginality', especially when the attitudes expressed in the curriculum are recognised as being based on stereotypes about it'. He goes on to suggest that 'teachers know that students resort to the use of stereotypes when they fail to understand a concept' (defining a stereotype as an indicator of a misunderstood concept). The prime focus of this phase, Reconciling History, is the overt study of the politics of education for Indigenous peoples. The politics of education and teaching is informed by the scientific politics of 'Aboriginality' constructed by settler society that impacts on the politics of Indigenous self-determination and Reconciliation. We believe that education for Reconciliation cannot be separated or understood outside this relationship. A shared understanding of Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories moves beyond the major silences in Australia's history. Debunking myths and stereotypes about Indigenous realities, histories and cultures are fundamental to reconciling history, reconciling education, reconciling teaching and reconciling Australianness.

Phase Two: Reconciling Self – [Making Contact]

Phase two, Reconciling Self, stems from the Making Contact phase of the teaching model from 'Teaching for Resistance', the intent being

for students to become aware of the range of groups in the community engaged in resisting the injustice, of their understanding of its nature and causes and of the strategies they employ in resisting it. Its purpose is also, through more direct contact with community groups, to develop social and political skills to secure support for their own activities (1994:73).

It is within this motivation that Reconciling Self is grounded. As articulated within the previous sections, pre-service teachers enter the topic with mixed positions. Reconciling History facilitates increased knowledge in relation to Australia's Indigenous history and the provision of education to Indigenous students. These feelings of unrest are further complicated in that the majority of pre-service teachers have not met an Indigenous person(s) or community with only a small percentage having engaged in a teaching practicum within an Aboriginal school or schools with a significant Aboriginal student population. The teaching team

enters this topic knowing that there may be resistance due to the fact that *Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students* is a core topic and the way in which they (pre-service teachers) perceive their world is disrupted. In order to meet the requirements of the degree program students must pass this topic.

Reconciling Self takes place within the topic at many sites. These include:

- between the student and Indigenous academics
- between the student and non-Indigenous academics
- between the University and Indigenous communities
- the Department of Education-Aboriginal Education Unit
- Anangu Education Services
- the pre-service teacher reconciling their own world-views and assumptions that they bring to teaching.

Anecdotal evidence and seven years of experience within the topic suggest that for 80% of the cohort (that is the majority) the issues presented are not perceived as directly affecting or impacting on the pre-service teacher's life and students ponder on the relevance of the topic to their teaching. Of the remaining 20%, 10% are anti-Indigenous education and position themselves strongly in relation to this while the other 10% are active supporters of Indigenous education and see themselves as critical to educating for social justice and culturally responsive pedagogy. It is within this profile of the pre-service teacher that we commence the topic.

Context to the Topic

The topic provides and teaches the tools for Reconciliation Education – this is clearly a position of strength. The topic is a personal and an educational investment in making contact with pre-service teachers. The Indigenous lecturing and tutoring team voice and intellectualise Indigenous histories and education as a struggle. Theory and practice come together – academic analysis and personal stories 'give life' to the topic themes. Indigenous ideologies are privileged and reconciling space and self is part of the journey. The delivery of the topic is grounded in an act of Reconciliation – a pivotal feature is the sharing of community contexts as a process of privileging Indigenous ideologies providing a lived experience to text. Indigenous academics teach through multiple literacies and genres. Song, story-telling and personal journeys are shared - this being an educational investment in the phase of Reconciling Self. To facilitate change the Indigenous academic has to invest self. Knowledge is power and with this acquisition comes responsibility. In Making Contact and facilitating Reconciling Self the pre-service teacher is asked key questions. Where do you sit in relation to Indigenous education? What is your role in Indigenous education? As an educator will you reproduce and maintain the status quo and as a consequence contribute to the comparatively lower outcomes Indigenous students are currently obtaining? Will you 'sit on the fence' and, as a consequence, position yourself? What assumptions do you have about Indigenous peoples, histories and provision of Indigenous education? How have racialised structures (see Moore 1993a) colonised your understanding of Indigenous peoples? Reconciling Self is a complex mixture of personal, intellectual, practical and theoretical engagement.

Reconciling Self compels an individual to consciously elicit their personal and educational position.

The pre-service teacher is asked to consider: What do reconciled acts look like? How does dominant privilege impact on this engagement? What journey does each individual pre-service teacher need to undertake with respect to facilitating the role of curriculum in creating a new Australia? It is within the latter that I would like to begin this dialogue. In many instances the type of contact experienced by pre-service teachers within the topic with Indigenous peoples has been based on negative experiences (real or imagined). For the majority a 'text' understanding of what it means to be Indigenous, up until recently a dominant and privileged representation, has held captive colonial ideologies of Indigenous people(s) and histories. 'History is written by the victor should be kept in mind when understanding the representations of Aboriginal people in Australia's history' (Hemming 1994:24).

Clearly education as a racialised site that is not neutral or free from bias must be critiqued in-order for 'genuine' contact to be facilitated.

Education is deeply implicated in the politics of culture. The curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, some-how appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation. It is always part of a selective tradition, someone's selection, some group's vision of legitimated knowledge (Apple 1996:22).

It is within this shedding of colonial understandings of Indigenous peoples and histories, through raising students' consciousness as articulated in phase one, that pre-service teachers can begin to make contact based on an informed understanding of Indigenous Australia and the provision of education to Indigenous children.

Reconciling Self is a central element to this journey. Reconciling Self requires a space within the curriculum for voicing one's opinions, feelings and perspectives. The pre-service teacher's journey of Reconciling Self is facilitated in a framework which encourages their agency. It is within this shared dialogue (between the tutor and student) that they can begin to make contact through an intellectual 'reconciled space' – a journal. A fundamental element of Reconciling Self is providing the pre-service teacher with a 'culturally safe space'. Students need to be able to engage in the topic and deconstruct and reconstruct how they perceive Australia's Indigenous history, Indigenous peoples and the provision of education to Indigenous students and communities. They (pre-service teachers) can begin to engage with the topic and the historical and contemporary analysis of Indigenous histories, Indigenous education, the construction of knowledge and theoretical underpinnings. The journal provides the forum for pre-service teachers to translate or apply the range of conceptual and theoretical features in relation to education and Indigenous education by a clarification of meaning(s); a conscious searching for educational, political and moral significance; and a dialogue, via the written word, between student and tutor. Self-reflection is an important aspect to this.

Holly and Smyth (1989:2) articulate that the journal is a way of theorising teaching; a way of supporting a self-searching self-critique along the road to making sense of teachers' work. In addition, however, 'keeping a journal is not only a way of pondering upon questions, patterns and themes in one's work, but it is a way of uncovering dilemmas, paradoxes and contradictions so as to begin to resolve them'. Holly and Smyth further illustrate how much a reflective journal can help educators to locate their contemporary practices historically and politically:

With the kind of awareness that journal keeping produces, teachers move to more conscious control of what they do - what were automatic responses to normal events in teaching become problematised, analysed and used as the basis for dialogue and debate with other teachers (1989:2)

Smyth (1991:116) raises questions to prompt the thinking of the pre-service teacher and their writings, including:

- What do my practices say about my assumptions, values and beliefs about teaching?
- What social practices are expressed in these ideas?
- What is it that causes me to maintain my theories?
- What views of power do they embody?
- Whose interests seemed to be served by my practices?
- What is it that acts to constrain my views of what is possible in teaching?

The journal as a reconciled space fosters a relationship between the tutor and lecturer that is intimate, engaging and facilitates a 'learning moment' in relation to the topic themes. For the teaching team the shared conversation is often the most rewarding and challenging aspect of the topic. It is challenging because for many of the lecturers the motivation of topic is grounded within a struggle and Indigenous Australian activism. The way pre-service teachers perceive, commit and 'own' Indigenous education and improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students has impact on our families, extended kinships and communities. By teaching and equipping pre-service teachers with methodologies and inclusive strategies that promote and facilitate teaching for Reconciliation, the seed for transformation is placed within the pre-service teachers' psyches.

Reconciling Self as stated previously occurs at many sites within the topic. For the purpose of this paper reference is made to Making Contact with Indigenous Educators/Intellectuals, Indigenous literature, the Department of Education, Training and Employment - Aboriginal Education Unit, Anangu Education Services and Reconciliation Education (Indigenous and non-Indigenous teaching staff).

Indigenous Educators/Intellectuals

In Reconciliation Education, having Indigenous academics (who are teacher trained) as lecturers and tutors within the topic is a central element to educating for a Reconciled Australia. In the articulation of theoretical frameworks, constructions of education and the anti-racist education strategies a clear motivation is evident. That is a struggle. The emic perspective 'gives life' to these underpinnings where the Indigenous intellectual voice is transformed and empowered education emerges for Indigenous students.

Reconciling space and self is not an easy process. Indigenous academics making contact wear their struggle on their body. By voicing – rewriting and re-righting history as Linda Tuhiwai-Smith articulates – the scars of Australia’s Indigenous history and the provision of education to Indigenous peoples is reconstructed from an Indigenous perspective.

A critical aspect of the struggle for self-determination has involved questions relating to our history as indigenous peoples and critique of how we, as the Other, have been represented or excluded from various accounts. Every issue has been approached by indigenous peoples with a view to *rewriting* and *re-righting* our position in history. (Smith 1999:28)

Therefore teaching in a core Indigenous education topic is a complex process for the Indigenous academic. Questions posed include: Where do I invest my time as an Indigenous academic, within our own Indigenous communities or with a predominantly non-Indigenous audience? How much do I invest of ‘my story’ to demonstrate the impact of policies in relation to Australia’s Indigenous history and provision of education?

Indigenous literature

An empowering aspect to the topic is the shifting of the power base where historically, and in many contemporary contexts, dominant world-views, ideologies and social systems are privileged and therefore validated. Indigenous voices and intellectual thinking become the dominant text and at the initial making contact experience this premise is clearly articulated. The rewriting, positioning and talking back to power are grounded at the first lecture. There is no apology for this voiced position – it is a liberatory space where the pre-service teacher is challenged.

Department of Education, Training and Employment - Aboriginal Education Unit /Anangu Education Services

Reconciling Self is facilitated by providing the pre-service teacher with current policy and thinking in relation to Indigenous education and facilitating professional networks within the Department of Education, Training and Employment. The pre-service teacher is acknowledged for their intellectual and professional engagement by receiving a certificate of attainment.

In addition, the topic structure demonstrates acts of Reconciliation Education. The teaching involves both an Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturing and tutoring team. This collective action highlights that, for improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students, shared ownership is critical for transformative pedagogy. The pre-service teacher is asked to analyse dominant privilege and the implications for Indigenous students and education more broadly.

Education should provide the tools to engage in society and empower students to reconcile their worldviews. By educational providers developing an understanding of the worlds Indigenous students live in, and the multiple voices and ‘truths’ they are hearing, students can be empowered in the educational process. Educators engaging in teaching alternative discourse and presenting Aboriginal thinking in the broadest

sense, and cultural perspectives, should foster critical analysis and emancipatory educational practices.

Phase Three: Reconciling Australia - [Taking Action]

Phase three, *Reconciling Australia*, builds from *Reconciling History and Education* and *Reconciling Self*, where we positioned colonisation as identity, colonisation as ideology and colonisation as an institution. In making the case for colonisation as a process of privileging the identity, values, beliefs and institutions of a state dominant non-Indigenous culture, we ask the pre-service teachers to make a decision as to whether they believe schools can and/or should contribute to social and political change or whether schools can do nothing or little about structural inequality and should focus on minimising unequal educational outcomes (Education for Social Justice Research Group 1994:14).

This question is posed rhetorically and often leads us to ponder to what extent has our struggle as Indigenous academics to articulate a space in schools which moves beyond access, participation and equity been realised?

A number of other questions that get asked of ourselves include: How do we know when education is doing justice to Reconciliation? How do we know when education has caught up to social movements? What performance indicators can we engage with to know whether we are teaching for Reconciliation? The answer at this point in time is that the degree to which the largely non-Indigenous pre-service teachers have been informed by the arguments put forward by our teaching team in their education theorising and curriculum practice is yet to be examined.

What we do know is that each of us can tell many stories of teachers who have shared the dialogue and space in our classroom and have made contact with us to share their experiences, joys and frustrations and seek further thoughts from us for contributing to an education for Reconciliation.

While these recounts are valuable to us and indeed may be of particular value to Indigenous students, parents and communities, a key point that is being constantly made is that 'colonisation does not cease, there are no "safe havens"' (Smith 1994:50). *Reconciling Australia* within existing educational institutions is constrained and limited by the nature of the institution. *Reconciling Education and History*, or conscientisation in Freirian terms, remains elusive in schooling systems across the world. Freire's value to Maori education according to Smith (1994:160) 'has been in his exploration of the idea of education for critical consciousness' where 'critical consciousness involves providing political literacy through learning the politics of society.'

The role of curriculum in the provision of a political literacy has important implications for the Yunggorendi teaching team, the pre-service teacher and their future students –Indigenous and non-Indigenous. It has an importance which addresses the capacity to raise consciousness and name injustice, the capacity to critically evaluate how one's own traditions can impinge on another (Indigenous

peoples) and the capacity to identify strategies and engage in processes that foster political action to address injustice.

Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1997:360) in his thesis 'The development of Kaupapa Maori: Theory and Praxis' makes the case that one measure of conscientisation, resistance and transformative action is structural change to areas that non-Indigenous, dominant states have been unable to or unwilling to achieve. He lists some of these as:

- Controlling knowledge where Indigenous parents are given increased control over the curriculum and schooling environment – what should be taught, how should it be taught, whose interests are served
- Asserting the validity and legitimacy of Maori [Indigenous] knowledge, language, culture and pedagogy as commonsense and taken for granted
- Assuming power and control over key educational decision making so that parents are more able to successfully negotiate the societal context of unequal power relations
- Restoring status and power to the Maori [Indigenous] learner where Indigenous cultural values are central
- The total commitment and support of parents to being involved in the education of their children.

These measures are deep structural changes to existing power relations in schooling. Other incremental measures as to the extent to which our program has impacted upon the pre-service teacher educators can be adapted and developed from the Alaska Native Knowledge Network's⁶ (ANKN) work at University of Alaska Fairbanks on culturally responsive accreditation standards for:

- Program Graduate Indicators
- Instructional Practice Indicators
- Curriculum Design Indicators
- Operational Characteristic Indicators
- Community Involvement Indicators.

Each set of indicators and the standards articulated within seeks to position Indigenous peoples and their knowledge and cultures into the planning, delivery, assessment and reflection agenda. By advocating radical action to address the crisis in Australian schooling and education as it relates to Indigenous children, adolescents, adults and communities around key questions,⁷ we set an agenda for the topic and position the interventions so as to teach for Reconciliation.

⁶ See <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/> which links to a series of publications by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network designed to offer guidelines and assistance to develop culturally-based curriculum resources and indicators to teachers and students in terms of knowledge, skills and cultural standards for teaching/learning.

⁷ Key questions include: How do we know what we now about Aboriginality? How has constructions of 'race' shaped the knowledge produced about Aboriginality? Social and education policy reform for whom and in whose interests? What counts as legitimate policy reform and who decides this? What is your role as a professional educator in Indigenous education? How do we know when education is doing justice to Reconciliation? What performance indicators can we engage with to know whether we are teaching for Reconciliation?

In this context perhaps the most telling impact of the topic for Reconciling Australia lies in the effect of dialogue and collaboration with Indigenous groups in the construction of effective action and creating the presence of a 'critical mass' of pre-service teachers that commit to act as a group of teachers who self-reflect and share expertise and commitments to building Indigenous responsive schools, Indigenous responsive curricula and Indigenous responsive institutions.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to show the potential for a pre-service teacher education topic to engage pre-service teacher educators in a framework for intervention in Indigenous educational, social and political crisis – in particular, the topic's potential to teach for Reconciliation. This entails Reconciliation which does more than merely respond to conservative and/or liberal culturalist intervention strategies such as:

- adding Indigenous perspectives to existing courses
- 'modifying academic' curricula to match the capacities or indeed the apparent learning styles of Indigenous students
- introducing intervention programs to facilitate the building of cultural experiences and 'cultural capital' which are apparently absent from the home environments of many Indigenous families, and
- privileging 'Aboriginal Studies' under the banner of multi-cultural education as an affirmative action strategy.

Teaching for Reconciliation in the pre-service teacher education topic speaks instead to structural transformation. It does so by engaging in understandings of impediments or inherent inequities associated with the control of knowledge, the validity of knowledge and the social and political history of racism in the struggle by Indigenous peoples to intercede in powerlessness and create 'authentic space' for Indigenous peoples to be Indigenous (Smith 1992).

That the topic sets out to disrupt hegemonic educational and political understandings by intensifying political consciousness among the almost exclusively non-Indigenous pre-service teacher education group is important. The challenge of addressing cultural diversity in education is critical for us because most Indigenous people have little choice but to operate in dominant educational discourse. That people are produced by cultures and communities is axiomatic and decisive in the intellectual development of Indigenous peoples' subjectivities. The capacity to create the educational, social and political space for the advancement of Indigenous peoples as Indigenous peoples is fundamental to a strengthening of Indigenous identity. We assert that, where attention is paid to the need for Indigenous history, testimony and memory, we have the foundation for a resource, a political literacy if you will, for the stabilisation of the Indigenous present and the securing of an Indigenous future. From our perspective this is one of the most critical roles of curriculum if we are to create a new Australia.

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