

Texts, voices and stories: Indigenous education futures are Blak and bright

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Indigenous education futures require the prioritising of Indigenous voices. We need to ensure educators are engaging in deep listening, critical self-reflection and learning to develop necessary understandings. This paper will explore the urgency of prioritising Blak voices in all classrooms, emphasising the role of Indigenous-authored texts through a reflection on my doctoral research journey. This exploration stems from the absence of Indigenous representation in my own schooling, loving reading and literature, and never experiencing my own literary histories. Through considerations of Indigenous research methods and positionality, this paper will look to the future of text selection and fostering a pathway forward that places Blak voices at the forefront in all learning settings. Our Indigenous futures require non-Indigenous peoples to strip away their fears and apprehension when engaging with our knowledges and histories, and for our voices to be amplified and at the forefront.

Keywords: Indigenous futures, Indigenous education, Aboriginal education, Indigenous perspective, Indigenous English, English curriculum

Positioning and worldview

My name is Tamika Worrell, I am the youngest of five siblings brought earthside by a staunch Blak matriarch. We are from Gamilaroi Country, and we have been birthed and raised on Dharug Ngurra, western Sydney. My mum, who is no longer with us, was a resilient fighter and warrior. She is my inspiration and why I can dream of Indigenous education futures. Her influence and care for me and my siblings continues to inform the way I view and navigate the world. I think of her every single day, and miss her terribly. As a person impacted by past government policies and practices, and the trauma and intergenerational trauma those experiences entail, she fought hard to shield her children from that pain. Although the grief of losing her is immeasurable, it is through her strength that I persist. I acknowledge Dharug Ngurra as the Country which I live and learn on, and I pay my respects to all Dharug peoples and their ancestors.

I was accepted into university through an Indigenous alternative pathway, led by Indigenous peoples working in the Indigenous student centre on campus at Macquarie University. I grappled with feeling like an imposter, waiting for someone to tell me, "Sorry we made a mistake; we didn't mean to let you in". I would not be where I am without the support of Walanga Muru¹. I completed my studies with an intended pathway to be an English and Society & Culture teacher in New South Wales (NSW); however,

¹ Walanga Muru is the name of the Indigenous student engagement centre at Macquarie University. "Walanga Muru" is a Dharug Dhalang phrase meaning "Follow your path".

I quickly found passion working in Indigenous student engagement in higher education. This offered a professional experience that enabled me to foster opportunities for Indigenous students and mentorship for the next generation of Indigenous students. It allowed me to reciprocate the care I received as a student. It was during my time at Walanga Muru that I birthed an interest and trajectory to engage in research that benefits Indigenous students engaging in higher education (Worrell & Holt, 2021).

Currently, I work in the Department of Critical Indigenous Studies at Macquarie University. As of December 2023, we are the only academic department of Indigenous Studies in so-called Australia (Carlson & Farrelly, 2023; Day, 2021; Moreton-Robinson, 2023). As a department, we focus on working together in good relations and building a sense of community for emerging Indigenous scholars who are undertaking their research journeys. In the academy, I have been cared for by Indigenous women and Indigenous queer and non-binary scholars. This care is something I learned to articulate and understand by having conversations with these colleagues and also learning from my colleague Madi Day. Day (2020) acknowledges that Indigenous scholars add to the development of communities of care; in describing Bronwyn Carlson, they state, “She is one of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics continuing a tradition in Indigenous Studies of working for Indigenous communities from within settler-colonial institutions” (pp. 371–372). Both Day and Carlson have cared for me within the institution of the academy for many years. I honour and reciprocate this care by contributing to opening doors for the next generation of Indigenous scholars, showing the same care.

This care extends further to the whole department, whether through engaging in laughter together, experiencing joy or presenting a united front towards grief. I am nourished by fellow education scholar Noeleen Lumby (2024), who inspires me and encourages me, constantly. I think of the ways Sandy O’Sullivan (2021; 2022; 2023) always affirms my understanding, and enables my growth. I learn deeply from our global Indigenous relatives, including my colleague Innez Haua, who explores what it means to be a settler on other people’s lands as an Indigenous person (2023). I aspire to carry myself with the humility and care that she does. Through collaborations across the network established by the Centre for Global Indigenous Futures (CGIF)², shared learning across many Indigenous communities is thriving. It is through care of these scholars I have been able to survive and indeed thrive in the academy.

Standing on the shoulders of giants

Like those who have guided me, I ensure what I do benefits the next generation. This reciprocity has been demonstrated frequently for me, completely shaping my worldview as a scholar and Indigenous person. It is through belonging, care and community that I persist as a scholar. The settler-colonial violence present in these spaces is made bearable by kin and community, as we shield and protect each other.

As an Indigenous scholar, I have been shaped by the exceptional scholarship produced by Indigenous people across academia and beyond, particularly regarding theory and methodology. This includes the “Big Playas” of Indigenous scholarship: Jackie Huggins (1993), Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2000), Martin Nakata (2007a; 2007b), Lester Irabinna Rigney (1999), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), Maggie Walter (2018) and many more. Carlson and Day define a “Big Playa” as “a person who is considered one of the seminal thinkers in Indigenous Studies and who is highly respected for their contribution to the academy”

² The Centre for Global Indigenous Futures (globalindigenousfutures.com/about) is based in the Department of Critical Indigenous Studies and located in the Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University on the lands of the Wallumattagal people of the Dharug nation. It has grown from the success of the Forum for Indigenous Research Excellence (FIRE), which was established in 2015 by Distinguished Professor Bronwyn Carlson.

(2023, p. 1). Engaging in the work of these Indigenous scholars honours our intellectual genealogy; it is a gift they have made available to us all (Carlson & Day, 2023).

The following presents a snapshot into my doctoral research findings. I have woven my knowledges and learning throughout this, reflecting on my journey. Lauren Tynan and Michelle Bishop (2019) position the importance of Indigenous autoethnography, noting how it “operates as a decolonising methodology, a distinctness in process and purpose that sets it apart from autoethnography” (p. 222). I use this as a guiding framework within this paper.

Origins of my research

In undertaking my doctoral investigation, I was able to draw on the learnings from my masters research to shape its direction. My masters research highlighted distinct experiences of fear from non-Indigenous teachers relating to “doing the wrong thing” and a fear of being tokenistic (Worrell, 2022). My doctoral research explored the research question: “How do NSW English teachers represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in Stages 4 and 5 through their text choices and pedagogical approaches to these texts?”.

This question was developed through thoughtful consideration of the following four aims:

1. To gain an understanding of the process by which teachers select texts for students that “give insights into Aboriginal experiences in Australia” (New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA), 2012, p. 22).
2. To identify and assess the nature of the text choices made by NSW English teachers to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in subject English.
3. To understand, through a series of teacher profiles, how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented to students in the English classroom.
4. To recommend from these findings a framework that would support English teachers to reflect and evaluate their representational practice of including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their classes, through texts and beyond.

The origins of wanting to explore this research stem from being a student in primary school and high school and loving learning, yet never being able to experience a text by an Indigenous person. Storying, storytelling and storykeeping are integral for our Indigenous futures. As a child, reading books offered an escape from a reality that was not always kind. So where were all the Indigenous authors, poets, artists, illustrators, musicians and filmmakers? The realisation of this gaping hole in my schooling was clear when I began my own teacher training.

Both the Australian Curriculum and the New South Wales Syllabus documents attempt to cement the role of Indigenous perspectives, histories and cultures in all key learning areas. It is important that all students learn about Indigenous peoples, histories and cultures through the prioritisation of Indigenous voices (ACARA, 2022; NESA, 2012). Indigenous students should see themselves mirrored in the texts they are taught in the English classroom. Non-Indigenous students must also experience texts that enable them to “see” into Indigenous worlds and develop an understanding of Indigenous worlds. This research is timely and has been reinforced through the introduction of the 2024 New South Wales updated English

Curriculum. This document includes new text requirements that incorporate the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authorship in text selection (NESA, 2023a; 2023b).

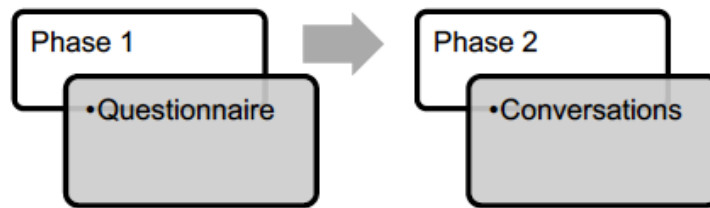
This study provided insight into the nature and practice of representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives through the text choices NSW secondary English teachers make. As Heiss (2014) states, “Australian educators in primary and secondary schools work to embed Indigenous perspectives into the classroom, children’s literature provides the most accessible resource to achieve that goal” (p. 8). This affirms the importance of text choice as an integral point of inquiry.

There is minimal literature that integrates the processes and pedagogical considerations of the inclusion of texts to meet Indigenous curriculum requirements. Scarcella (2021) notes the importance of texts being a pathway to wider conversations and understanding of Indigenous cultures for all students. Further, Scarcella and Burgess (2019) identified tokenistic and shallow engagement through an inquiry into six commonly used texts in NSW English classrooms. Bacalja and Bliss (2019) identified a lack of Indigenous representation across text lists in Victoria (Bliss & Bacalja, 2021). These studies continue to align with Langton’s (1993) assertion that non-Indigenous people continue to represent stories of Indigeneity, something that has continued well into the 21st century.

My thesis is titled *Prioritising Blak Voices: Representing Indigenous Perspectives in the English Classroom* (Worrell, 2023b). This speaks back to the colonising language of English (Hogarth, 2019a; Phillips et al., 2022). The phrase “prioritising Blak voices” is a version of a response from an Aboriginal English teacher to my questionnaire (originally, “priority that ‘Blak’ voices are important”). The term Blak can be attributed to Erub/Mer and K’ua K’ua artist Destiny Deacon, who utilised the term in 1994 in an art exhibition titled “Blakness: Blak City Culture” (Munro, 2022). Deacon described this as a purposeful flipping of the coloniser language, and something to reflect an urban Indigenous identity (Deacon quoted in Munro, 2022). In utilising the term “Blak”, purposefully capitalised, I too am speaking back to the language of the coloniser.

Research design

In approaching this problem, I drew on Indigenous standpoints and Indigenist research paradigms (Moreton-Robinson, 2013; Nakata, 2007a; Rigney, 1999). Relationality is also key to my approach; as Indigenous peoples, we exist in the world, we exist in relation to all other things (Kwaymullina & Kwaymullina, 2010). When considering schools and educational settings for Indigenous students, I am aware that relationality is unique and nuanced for each context, based on country and community. In situating relationality, I constantly draw on three key terms: respect, reciprocity and country. Relationality to community is a key component of who I am and how I navigate this world; while being essential in global Indigenous cultures, it is also evidenced in scholarship through various standpoints and paradigms (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Kovach, 2009; Martin/Mirraboopa, 2003; Wilson, 2008). The methodology I used, see Figure 1, included a mixed-method questionnaire (Phase 1) and two-part conversations with seven English teachers (Phase 2), comprising of one Indigenous teacher and six non-Indigenous teachers.

Figure 1: Overview of project phases

The Phase 1 questionnaire asked teachers what texts they use to teach in years 7 to 10 that include Indigenous perspectives. It also asked teachers to reflect on both the benefits and challenges of these texts, as well as consider the joys in what they love to teach, and what they feel their students love. An inductive approach was utilised to create relationality with the data and draw out the themes, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis and Saldana's (2016) structural coding.

Phase 2 conversations drew on Indigenous yarning and conversation methodologies (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010; Dean, 2010; Fredericks et al., 2011; Kovach, 2009; Shay & Wickes, 2017). Utilising a case study approach, I applied the term "profiles of practice" to the teacher case studies, which attempted to honour the participants as individuals (Stake, 1995; 2006; Worrell, 2022; Yin, 2018). These profiles are representations of English teachers with varied lives, histories and experiences who have generously shared their stories. I also drew on the notion of "agency in the everyday", as utilised by Roberts (2023, p. 2), to apply the scholarship of Smith (1987). This prioritisation of agency within the contexts of profiles of practice enabled "exploring and explicating the relations in which our everyday worlds are embedded" from the participants' perspectives (Smith, 1987, p. 111). Drawing on this process, as a method, involved telling a story from the story that had been gifted to me by the participants.

Profiles were built upon relationality, yarning and storying. Prioritising the role of stories and storying, as a relational and cultural practice that can be embedded within research contexts, strengthened the research (Bunda & Phillips, 2023). In practice, this created two-way sharing and storying with the seven teachers involved in Phase 2. This is distinctively different to narrative inquiry, as storying as inquiry is "theorising, as sharing/presenting research" (Phillips & Bunda, 2018, p. 5). In this research, storying contributed to building relationality with participants, transcending any extractive or transactional experiences. It is important to understand this educational landscape of representational practice, as it is non-Indigenous teachers who are largely responsible for representing Indigenous voices to their students (Stern & Burgess, 2021). My thesis addresses the professional concerns of authenticity, positionality and fear that educators experience when embedding Indigenous perspectives (Worrell, 2019; 2022).

Mirrors and windows

Sims-Bishop (1990) utilises the metaphor of mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors to understand the power of representation through children's literature. She identifies the repercussions from a lack of representation:

When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. (Sims-Bishop, 1990, para 4)

This is a crucial point that underpins the urgency of this study, as it highlights the consequences of inaccurate representations. I draw on this foundational conceptualisation of “mirrors and windows” (Sims-Bishop, 1990) to build a new conceptual framework to understand Indigenous representation through texts. Through the consideration of texts as mirrors and windows, Indigenous-authored texts have the power to mirror identities for Indigenous students and provide a window for non-Indigenous students to see into a world different from their own (Price, 2019; Sims-Bishop, 1990). It is also crucial to understand the ways texts are utilised in the classroom to represent Indigenous peoples to all students.

Findings

The findings of my doctoral investigation overwhelmingly identified the essential need for English teachers to understand the power they hold when introducing a text or resource to the classroom. In examining the perceived benefits, teachers noted that Indigenous texts can foster understanding, empathy, compassion and inclusion for Indigenous students in the classroom. However, they also recognised several key challenges, including issues with texts and resources, student resistance and oversaturation, concerns about authenticity and positionality, and their own fears. This fear of saying or doing the wrong thing is inherent to the position these teachers occupy as non-Indigenous people. However, education of and about Indigenous peoples has been, and continues to be, largely controlled by non-Indigenous people, so the urgency to address this challenge remains (Stern & Burgess, 2021). Non-Indigenous teachers must engage with critical self-reflection to represent Indigenous peoples to their students. The question is, how do we then support educators to feel confident that, as teachers, they are the right people to ensure windows and mirrors are being created?

Presented below is a snapshot into more extensive findings. Highlighted here are salient insights that inform and contribute to future practice.

Phase 1

The questionnaire distributed widely to English teachers in NSW received 82 complete responses. Results, see Table 1, demonstrate that English teachers continue to draw on non-Indigenous-authored texts to include Indigenous perspectives.

Table 1: Overview of texts being taught, organised by year groups

Year Group	Indigenous authored texts	Frequency of respondents	Non-Indigenous authored texts	Frequency of respondents
7	36 (64%)	59 (63%)	20 (36%)	35 (37%)
8	35 (65%)	45 (56%)	19 (35%)	36 (44%)
9	52 (81%)	66 (81%)	12 (19%)	30 (31%)
10	47 (76%)	60 (76%)	15 (24%)	28 (32%)
Mean	43 (72%)	58 (64%)	17 (28%)	32 (36%)

These findings underscore a noticeable distinction between Stage 4 (years 7 and 8) and Stage 5 (years 9 and 10), with Stage 5 showing a higher percentage and frequency of Indigenous-authored texts. Notably, when these figures are averaged across the year groups, there is a significant difference between the frequency at which texts were mentioned (64%) and the overall number of Indigenous-authored texts identified (72%).

This amplifies the urgency to bring Indigenous-authored voices directly into the classroom.

Texts were analysed within year groupings, with four texts being named as the most popular for each year group:

1. *Honey Spot*, Jack Davis, 1987 (year 7)
2. *The Rabbits*, John Marsden and Shaun Tan, 1998 (year 8)
3. *Deadly, Unna?*, Phillip Gwynne, 1998 (year 9)
4. *Jasper Jones*, Craig Silvey, 2009 (year 10)

The most popular texts chosen by respondents within each year group can be critiqued due to their publication dates, especially since the most popular texts being taught, such as *The Rabbits* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan, and *Deadly, Unna?* by Phillip Gwynne, are over 20 years old. Both texts have faced criticism for perpetuating a colonial perspective and failing to adequately represent Aboriginal experiences in Australia (Collins-Gearing & Osland, 2010; Scarcella & Burgess, 2019). Furthermore, only one Indigenous-authored text, Jack Davis's *Honey Spot*, is identified as the most popular text for a specific year group. In contrast the most popular texts in years 8, 9 and 10, *The Rabbits* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan, *Deadly, Unna?* by Phillip Gwynne, and *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey, are by non-Indigenous authors. This highlights a concerning reliance on non-Indigenous-authored texts to teach Indigenous perspectives in English.

Teachers also named authors and poets, as opposed to naming a particular text. It is notable that Oodgeroo Noonuccal is identified as the most frequently chosen text/author across all year groups. Despite the many years since her works were published, Oodgeroo Noonuccal continues to be a significant and accessible author for English educators to engage with and teach.

Phase 2

Yarning conversations with participants resulted in the creation of seven distinct and in-depth profiles of teaching practice. The summative image of these seven profiles is captured in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of profiles of practice

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Qualification	Experience	School Type	Role/s	Region	Indigenous
Frankie	31-40	Masters	6-10	Gov	Classroom teacher, Year advisor	North Coast	No
Yannha	21-30	Bachelors	2-5	Gov	Classroom teacher	New England	Yes, Aboriginal
Danielle	41-50	Bachelors	16-20	Independent	Classroom teacher	Sydney	No
Elisabeth	41-50	Masters	6-10	Independent	Classroom teacher	Illawarra and South East	No
Kathryn	51-60	Masters	16-20	Gov	Head teacher	Sydney	No
Roslyn	51-60	Bachelors	11-15	Gov	Classroom teacher, Cultural coordinator	Hunter/Central Coast	No
Scarlett	21-30	Bachelors	2-5	NA	Casual teacher	Riverina	No

These profiles of practice showcased a wide range of English teaching practices from a diverse group of teachers. These profiles revealed how personal contexts, relationships, and an understanding of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives shape representational practice. When encouraged to reflect, teachers demonstrated an awareness of the complexity and significance of selecting texts for the English classroom. The profiles identified common approaches and understandings, with the most compelling examples illustrating a deep comprehension of the complexities involved in representing Indigenous peoples and the importance of community in classroom engagement.

In both phases, there was clear tension and apprehension. One of the participants, Roslyn, observed, “If you’re becoming defensive, that must mean you’re afraid of something, so what are you afraid of? What is the fear?” Stripping back this fear becomes important as teachers work through an uncertainty and apprehension to engage deeply and meaningfully in Indigenous perspectives and authorship.

Importantly, Yannha, an Aboriginal teacher of English, is working to correct the lack of Indigenous representation in her own schooling experience. She commented on bringing up this issue in a professional learning circle, wanting to address a book room that did not reflect Indigenous authorship sufficiently: “I was a little annoyed that our book room has lots of Aboriginal-centred texts, and are not actually by Aboriginal authors” (Worrell, 2023a, p. 171).

These profiles highlight the significant strength of teachers who embrace discomfort in their positionality. By engaging in reflexivity and actively unlearning and relearning, teachers are better equipped to integrate Indigenous perspectives for all students (Phillips, 2012). Moreover, fostering environments where students can critically examine their worldviews and understand their influences facilitates this process of unlearning and relearning (Phillips, 2012). It is essential to model this approach and create a safe classroom environment for such exploration. When considering the desire to incorporate windows, which is the right course of action, we observe teachers acting as agents of social change (Kickett-Tucker, 2021). We also see these actions as expressions of solidarity, with the intention of standing alongside Indigenous peoples.

Ultimately, these profiles are unique and shaped by the specific school environments and the life experiences and insights of the teachers. They represent different levels of engagement with texts, grounded in varying degrees of understanding of Indigenous knowledges, as well as ways of doing and being. The differences between conversations and real-time reflections highlight that these positions are fluid, not fixed. Learning is an ongoing process, and it is essential for teachers to continue both learning and unlearning as they deepen their understanding and actively work against reinforcing settler-colonial norms.

Presenting a representational framework

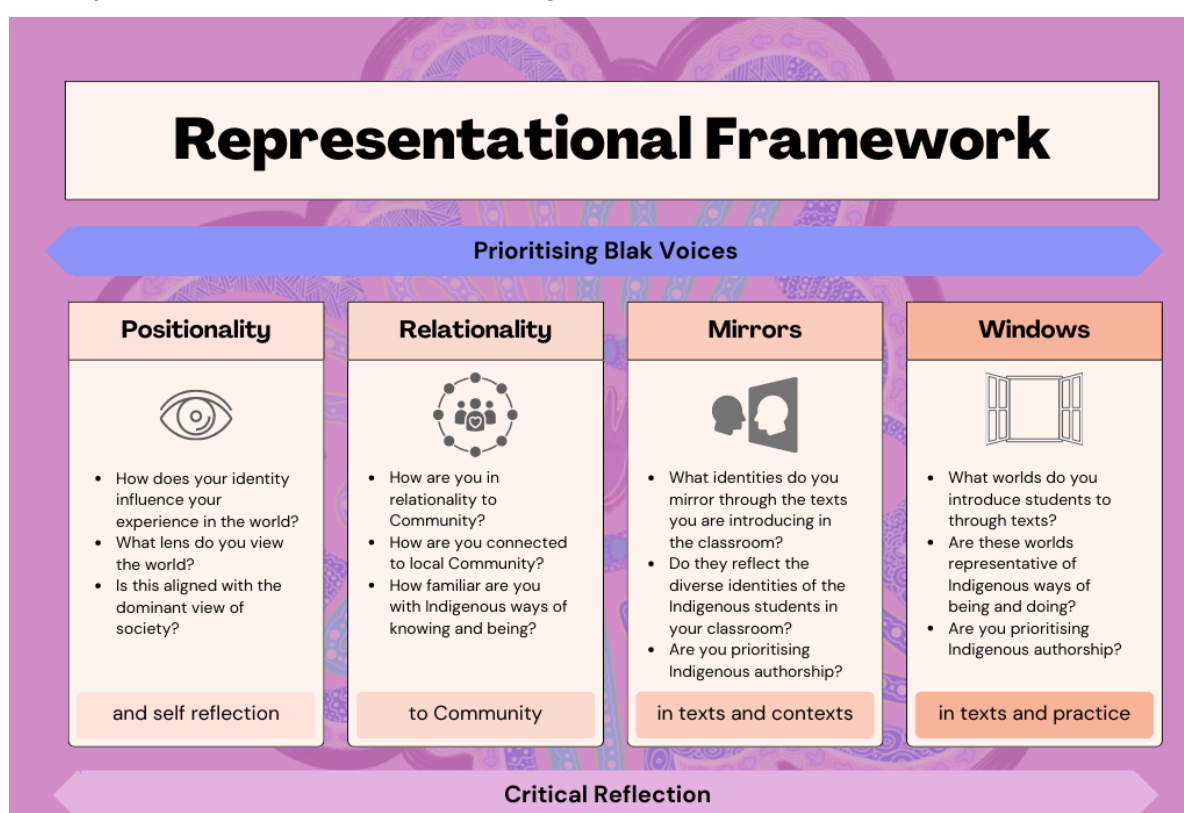
As a primary outcome of my doctoral research, I created a representational framework for secondary English teachers to utilise within their practice, see Figure 2. This framework builds on the conceptual framework of mirrors, windows and relationality to community as theorised in my thesis (Worrell, 2023b). It offers a way forward for secondary English teachers, and beyond, to engage in a future that prioritises self-reflection, positionality, relationality and Indigenous voices. It draws on the learnings from both phases of the research, and is responsive to concerns, challenges and the benefits that English teachers foresee. This critical engagement and reflection are integral for Indigenous futures in the subject of English to enable Indigenous students to be seen, Indigenous voices to be heard, and deeper, meaningful understandings to be developed.

This framework draws on a range of key documents which are currently available to educators to critically reflect on and evaluate resources. These documents include:

- *AIATSIS Guide to Evaluating and Selecting Education Resources* (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2022)
- *Selecting and Evaluating Resources* guide (Queensland Studies Authority, 2007)
- YARNS First Nations Resource Evaluation Tool (Madsen et al., 2021)
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's *Building a Culturally Responsive Australian Teaching Workforce* (AITSL, 2022) and Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Self-Reflection Tool (AITSL, 2023)
- McLean Davies's (2012) "Auditing text selection practices in subject English: A step-by-step, do-it-yourself in-service kit".

This framework aims to provide English educators with a way to engage in reflective practice as they move to consider how they include and teach Indigenous-authored texts in the classroom. By encouraging purposeful reflective practice to explore their representational practice when it comes to the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the subject English, the learning experiences of all students can be strengthened.

Figure 2: Representational framework for English teachers



This framework presents four points of engagement for English teachers to engage with: positionality, relationality, mirrors and windows. It is framed by two key considerations: prioritising Blak voices and critical reflection.

Positionality requires teachers to self-reflect on the lens they use to view the world and the role of identity in viewing the world.

Relationality requires teachers to actively consider their relationships with community and their understanding of Indigenous knowledges.

Mirrors requires teachers to reflect and analyse what identities and diversities they are including through texts, as well as the explicit consideration of Indigenous authorship.

Windows requires teachers to consider their practice of introducing worlds to students through texts.

Through this framework, educational stakeholders can be supported to influence and develop their practice by prioritising Blak voices. The guiding questions in the framework are designed to be read and understood in relationality with the documents that inform it. While this has been developed in the context of secondary English teachers, the basis of this framework offers avenues for future engagement across a range of subject areas and levels of study. This framework is designed to be utilised by teachers and educational stakeholders to understand the act of representation for their educational practice. We see this affirmed by Madsen, Perkins and Shay (2021), who state: “Educators need to ensure that the resources that they select are appropriate, meaningful and that they represent the stories, knowledges, lived experiences and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (p. 142).

Indigenous education futures

While this research has demonstrated teachers are still engaging in non-Indigenous representations (36%), it is worth celebrating the majority (64%) who are drawing on Indigenous authorship. The more the next generation can experience the texts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the stronger our Indigenous futures are. Through this, Indigenous students will be able to see their identities mirrored in the classroom, and non-Indigenous students can be welcomed through a window into our contemporary worlds.

I am excited to see the incredible work being done in schools and community. The next generation of Indigenous education scholars coming through is a cohort that I am proud to belong to. It is particularly exciting to see the work of Amy Thomson, who also explores the deeply colonial history of the English subject (2024). I am grateful to draw on the scholarship of those more experienced (Hogarth, 2019a; 2019b; Shipp, 2012; 2013), as well as those doing the important critique within literature, voice and representation, such as Leane (2010; 2014; 2016).

I am inspired by Michelle Bishop’s research on educational sovereignty, which highlights an urgent directional change that is much needed to disrupt the settler-colonial education machine (2022). Further, the exciting research that engages in ways to *beat* the current education system, a reality that many are grappling with and working against. With the gift of the scholarship of the “Big Playas” (Carlson & Day, 2023), and the scholarship of emerging and established Indigenous scholars, as well as the work taking place on the ground in classrooms by Indigenous teachers and community members, we are well served to thrive.

As Bronwyn Carlson states, “The future is definitely Indigenous. Settlers have told their stories and have shown that they may not have the ability to imagine a world where relationality, or indeed, responsibility, is at the centre of thinking” (2023, p. 22). Our knowledges affirm us in a position to engage

deeply in futurisms, futurisms where we are thriving (Department of Indigenous Studies, Macquarie University, 2023).

Through Indigenous voices and texts, the future of Indigenous education is Blak and bright.

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