



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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Editorial

Indigenous education is expanding beyond trying to adapt Western models to fit Indigenous needs. Whereas in the past, the majority of Indigenous education programs involved indiginisation of curriculae and pedagogy, current Indigenous educational programs around the world are based on Indigenous epistemologies.

This issue features a range of experiences of Indigenous Knowledge approaches to university education. The articles focus primarily on Indigenous pedagogical experiences within the University of Queensland.

Liz Mackinlay's paper challenges the authority of Western knowledge by addressing shifting power relations as teacher, Indigenous performers and students explore new learning paradigms. She explores cultural rules around the transmission of knowledge. Mackinlay explores the importance of incorporating Indigenous women with status, authority and knowledge not always recognised within Western universities. Mackinlay also emphasises the importance of experiential learning and embodied knowledge in university education programs. This article provides a fresh look at disrupting the hegemony of Western paradigms in higher education.

Gina Whap shares her experience of planning and teaching a university course on Torres Strait Islander Studies. She emphasises the importance of oral transmission of knowledge and the incorporation of Indigenous elders as guest lecturers, examining the ways in which university courses can facilitate the transmission of Indigenous oral knowledge. She explores story as epistemology, stressing the role of respect in deep listening and understanding of Indigenous use of story.

Michael Red Shirt Semchison, Native American Elder and scholar, writes of his experience of Indigenous pedagogies as a student at the University of Queensland.

Polly Walker explores the ways in which dominant Western research paradigms silence the sacred aspects of experience as well as ways in which Indigenous Knowledge Research respects and incorporates the sacred. Walker shares part of her journey through PhD research, describing the use of story as a methodological approach that naturally incorporates the spiritual aspects of life. She also describes the methodology she used, based on the American Indian Medicine Wheel, which incorporates spiritual aspects as one of the four integral aspects of human experience.

Norm Sheehan and Polly Walker describe the Purga Project, an example of Indigenous Knowledge Research (IKR). This methodology aims to ensure that research in Indigenous communities directly serves the needs of these communities. The focus of IKR is on communities defining their own objectives, methodologies and pathways to development. Indigenous Knowledge Research is authentic and vital to accurate understandings and directions within Indigenous communities because it is not research **about** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; it is research **from** an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander standpoint.

Indigenous scholars are *researching back*, positioning their ways of knowing as central to tertiary education. This approach aims to redress the inequalities established and continued through colonization and neo-colonial policy directions.

Morgan Brigg reviews *Waking Up to Dreamtime: The Illusion of Aboriginal Self-Determination*. Westernist academic approaches to the Indigenous 'problem' have become very prolific in the last decade. Morgan Brigg's critical view of this text exposes the shallowness of many of these views. Implicit in Brigg's review is the concept of Western entitlement, the belief of Westernism that it must hold and maintain the authority to define others and their needs.

Please feel free to send copies of your work to the *Journal* for consideration for publication. We encourage you to do so. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education deserves comprehensive discussion to enable a more equitable experience for students. Your assistance and guidance would be appreciated. We remain committed and eager to receive prospective authors' and commentators' works.

Michael Williams
Editor

Polly Walker
Guest Editor