



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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EDITORIAL

This volume of *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* presents 11 papers which circle in and around appropriate, progressive and transformative pedagogies for teaching and learning Indigenous peoples across all levels of education in Australian and international contexts. The lead paper by Neil Harrison provocatively suggests that research in Indigenous Australian education is at a “dead end” and asks us as researchers to engage in new ways of thinking, researching and practicing education to address the unequal nature of power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The papers by Robyn Hewitson and Anne Thwaite which follow provide exemplars of such transforming practice, first in the context of secondary education in the remote Indigenous community education centre at Kalkaringi in the Northern Territory, and second in an early childhood educational setting in Western Australia.

The next set of papers seem to flow on naturally from those of Harrison, Hewitson and Thwaite to examine the importance of the relationship of teaching and learning settings to Indigenous communities in order to achieve optimal education experiences and pathways for Indigenous Australian students. The jointly authored paper by Libby Lee and Andrew Thompson provides an example of what can happen when parents from an Indigenous community become involved as teachers in the early childhood education of their children. Andrew Gunstone turns our attention to the broader community to examine closely the educational goals of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in Australia and assesses the role that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples have played in the attainment or failing of these objectives. The paper by Susan Gair looks even more closely at the role of non-Indigenous Australians in the education of Indigenous Australian students by focusing her analytical gaze on herself to ask questions about the part that she plays in developing an inclusive curriculum in the context of social work in higher education. Like Gair, Stella Coram’s paper draws further awareness to the notion of action and performance as integral to educational practice and takes us into the world of Australian Rules Football, the recruitment of Indigenous Australians to this popular sport, and promotion of the athlete role model at the expense of educational achievement.

Four international papers make up the next set in this volume and we begin with the work of Angus

Macfarlane, Ted Glynn, Tom Cavanagh and Sonja Bateman in relation to Māori education in New Zealand. Macfarlane et al. examine the deficit model of education so often used in colonial contexts and suggest that a teaching and learning approach based on the Māori Educultural wheel and Hikairo Rationale provide positive frameworks for creating culturally-safe schools. Although in a different context, Michelle Beatch and Lucy Le Mare’s discussion of Aboriginal parents’ involvement in preschool education of their children similarly suggests ways that early childhood programmes can become more culturally-appropriate and nurturing for parents and children alike. Oloo’s paper examines closely the educational experiences of Canadian tertiary students and, in contrast to the work by Macfarlane et al. and Beatch and Le Mare, his findings demonstrate how solutions to high dropout rates and low completion and success rates have failed Aboriginal students. The final paper in this volume by Kirk Anderson presents the context of Inuit education in the self-governing territory of Nunatsiavut. His discussion shows what can be achieved when Indigenous peoples take ownership and can enact their own educational paradigms with authority and power.

The papers in this volume then examine both the successes of Indigenous education globally and those areas where work still needs to be done to improve the experiences of Indigenous students in our classrooms and their educational achievements, the teaching and learning strategies we enact, and the pedagogical processes which create the possibility of something different – something engaging, empowering and transforming – for Indigenous students in Australia and abroad. The change in political climate in Australia brings cause for hope and our continued discussions, engagement as teachers, learners, researchers and parents in Indigenous education is central to ensuring that the dead end Harrison speaks of is becomes a thing of the past.

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Editors