



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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Editorial

The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education in the next two editions will feature specialised subjects in matters of teaching and learning in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. This edition is featuring music – a rich and vital component of Indigenous cultures around the world.

Peter Dunbar-Hall's paper proposes the use of the contexts of music as the bases of pedagogic models. Using the Kimberley region of north-west Australia examples, ways of studying Indigenous music are explored. While these contexts provide relatively simple ways of structuring pedagogies for Indigenous music, their potential to represent the symbolic levels of music as expression of culture concerns may be their real significance in the attempt to utilise Indigenous music in music education.

Dr Elizabeth Mackinlay focuses on the effectiveness of performance in pedagogy, performative pedagogy and the pedagogical as performance practice (Giroux, 1997: 3) in teaching Indigenous women's music and dance. In Giroux's terms her classroom could be viewed as a space which allows for performative practice in the sense that the discourse about Indigenous women's performance in this space, aims to not only contextualise and contest dominant forms but to view cultural texts as exemplars of a broader set of theoretical and political considerations. Here, texts become not merely serious objects of struggle over how meaning is constituted, but also practical sites that register how power operates so as to make some representations under certain political conditions more valuable as representations of reality than others (Giroux, 1997: 7).

Dr Fiona Magowan's work begins with a re-evaluation of the human-ancestor-land complex, focusing in particular theorists. She argues that ancestral power inheres in both topography and oceanography, through its own natural movements and the actions of others upon it, and that the associations between people-as-ancestors and people-as-places in Yolngu thought are based on kinesis as a transformative agency, where each transformation has its own dynamic and interactive agency arising from particular movement forms in the landscape and seascape. By examining the words of ritual songs in which such transformations occur, the connection between human and ancestral characteristics is shown to be kinetically determined. What follows are some fascinating insights.

Herb Patten and Robin Ryan presented their paper on a workshop on the politics and practice of research at the Macquarie University, Sydney. The work outlines the history of the Reconciliation Movement in Australia. From the authors' disciplinary stance, the common factor linking research with Reconciliation has been music's inherent potential and demonstrated capacity for bridging cultural divides. A main feature is the author's music study, for example, proactively affirmed the instrument's Indigenous cultural status, with Herb and others reshaping a unique fringe musical practice - a window of opportunity for elements far larger than musical repertoire to be shared.

Dr Robin Ryan provides a most comprehensive book review to conclude this edition. Her "*Educational Perspectives on Indigenous Country Music: Review Article of Clinton Walker's 'Buried Country: The Story of Aboriginal Country Music'*" is an engaging read. In line with her previous article she believes that this book contributes to the dialogue and debate on Reconciliation. The book is about storytelling, a documentation of a musical genre, and a history of a struggle for justice. Many artists feature in this beautifully designed book.

In conclusion we would like to thank Dr Elizabeth Mackinlay and Vivien Royle for their fine efforts in bringing this music edition into print.

Michael Williams
Editor

Jackie Huggins
Guest Editor