

Indigenous Voices

Indigenous Global Leadership



WINHEC Journal 2013



World • Indigenous • Nations • Higher • Education • Consortium

Indigenous Voices Indigenous Global Leadership

World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium

WINHEC Journal 2013

World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC)

WINHEC International Head Quarters, C/-Peter Hanohano Capacity Building Program Hi`ilei Aloha LLC, 711 Kapiolani Blvd, Suite 1430, Honolulu, HI 96813, Tel: (808) 596-8990, extension 1005, Email: peterh@hiilei.org

Copyright © 2013

Copyright to the articles in this Journal reside at all times with the named author/s and if noted their community/family/society. By submission the author/s assign to WINHEC a non-exclusive license to publish their article. This Journal is also published in full at www.win-hec.org.au. Use of the articles shall be restricted to personal use and in courses of instruction provided that it is referenced or used in full and this copyright statement is-reproduced. Any other usage is prohibited, without the express permission of the authors.

ISSN: 1177 - 1364

ON-LINE ISSN: 1177 - 6641

Editor

Veronica Arbon

Associate Professor and Director

Wirltu Yarlū

The University of Adelaide

veronica.arbon@adelaide.edu.au

Art Work

The cover of this WINHEC Journal includes the artwork of Arabana woman Kathleen Arbon.

Printing

As the WINHEC Journal can be directly downloaded from www.win-hec.org only limited copies of the WINHEC Journal 2013 are printed.

Table of Contents

Contents

Prologue	5
Aboriginal leadership – Resilience as a key ingredient to social mobility for minority groups in colonial Australia. <i>Lock, M., & Holt, L.,</i>	7
An Almost Competent look at Cultural Competency <i>Rose, M.</i>	21
Protocols of engagement with Indigenous communities to address postgraduate enrolments <i>Speechley-Golden, Vicki-Ann</i>	33
An organisational analysis of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium <i>Jacob, W., Lee, C-W., Wehrheim, N., Gökbel, V., Dumba J, C., and Yin, S.</i>	40

Prologue

Global Indigenous Leadership, the theme of this journal, has always been and always will be a central and critical feature of Indigenous peoples' societies. This Indigenous leadership is in one sense individual for each person takes on this role within the context of their local community but it is also global as without such individuals, society would not be sustainable nor would the struggles on the international stage occur. Leaders can be a parent, a woman, men or youth or various combinations of all of these. Additionally in certain contexts there are Indigenous leaders born to take particular responsibilities as ceremonial leaders and community leaders. With the invasion of nations across the world, Indigenous leadership has come to straddle multiple worlds to lead organisations and communities and to advocate globally on behalf of their people in Australia, Canada, Africa or numerous other nations. Further Indigenous global leadership as in advocacy has been undertaken within families, communities and through the United Nations or the work of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium to address common threads of colonialism.

The Global Indigenous leadership displayed is most always informed from within the knowledges, approaches and practices of those Indigenous peoples involved and their societies along with the broader physical, political, social and economic environment within which each person resides and works. Global Indigenous leadership must inform our peoples' sustainability and the ongoing resolution of the many complexities that colonialism has created for our people locally and across the world. This speaks to the importance of the leadership that is actually occurring locally and within one's own culture, language and knowledge and the need for deep recognition and subsequent documentation and analysis of this leadership.

Leadership is inter-connected in numerous ways and has relevance in the context it operates. It is important therefore for Indigenous peoples to document their leadership; including where it derives its authority, how does it manifest, how is it represented, how is it measured, why do we need it and how can it positively or negatively change situations and lives. Also of interest is how does Global leadership arise from and maintains local responsibility? Further, how is Indigenous leadership practiced in families, communities and nations? These are all important aspects now beginning to be explored. The articles within this Journal add to this research work on Indigenous leadership.

The first article flags leadership areas displayed by Indigenous Australians to strategically steer clear of or to confront entrenched western constructs and myths of equity and individuality. The article moves from an Aboriginal position predicated clearly and distinctly on values and the deep resilience of Indigenous people. Another feature of the work that may or may not have been intended is embedded in the twenty-three dimensions that bring a somewhat historical chronicle of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander struggle and, deeper again, some salient indigenous leadership lessons for the future are also revealed.

The second article is a complex analysis and discussion around the words *cultural competence* which warns against accepting such new English language terminology without an Aboriginal critique. The paper also argues for a more complex understanding of learning. This article specifically speaks against the adoption of words as panacea to resolve very deeply embedded and complex matters within Australian Universities and in fact society.

The third article seeks to identify and address 'systemic barriers that have historically isolated communities from enjoying the fruits of ... relationship'. This is the relationship between Indigenous students and Elders. This article is concerned with specific engagement of Indigenous postgraduate students including their enrolment and progression which could be improved it is argued, through such relationships. The article identifies several possible avenues for action and the importance of Elders as the knowledge holders within Indigenous societies along with emerging developments within the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC).

The final article although previously published in an extended form adds to this broad debate of obtaining outcomes at numerous levels for Indigenous peoples through Indigenous leadership and Global Indigenous leadership in particular. This article is a direct, timely and valuable analysis of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) purpose, activities and outcomes across the world over the past ten years. WINHEC was formed in 2002 after a meeting of Indigenous people from Aotearoa (New Zealand), Canada, United States of America and Australia among others. The articles identifies areas of WINHEC strength and areas for improvement that relate back to fundamental importance of leadership, vision and the structures to achieve the work this organization has set itself.

In summary, this WINHEC Journal 2013 adds to a much needed discussion of Global Indigenous leadership. Each article in this volume points to a number of important areas for consideration in our nations, our organisations and our leadership. This ranges from the documentation of leadership types, deep consideration of the limited nature of adopting new words, the need to ensure support of and growth in the Indigenous post-graduate area through relationships with Elders and an analysis of WINHEC's purpose and outcomes after ten years of operation.

Finally, I thank all who have contributed in the spirit of their ancestors to make these articles available.

Aboriginal leadership – Resilience as a key ingredient to social mobility for minority groups in colonial Australia.

Lock, M., & Holt, L.,

Abstract

This paper provides an Aboriginal perspective of the multi-dimensional nature of resilience as derived within the complex inter-cultural space of between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. We derive twenty-nine dimensions which range from racial resilience to trailblazer resilience, all of which Aboriginal leaders need in order to overcome the structural barriers preventing Aboriginal people from achieving equity in Australia. Our perspective adds to the resilience literature by shifting the discourse away from an individualist perspective to one which privileges the cultural, social and emotional structures that underpin Aboriginal values and philosophies.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore some principles of resilience as related to Aboriginal leadership in Australia. The concept of resilience (from the field of psychiatry) is defined as ‘a personality characteristic that moderates the negative effects of stress and promotes adaptation’ (Wagnild & Young, 1993; Ahern, Kiehl, Sole, & Byers, 2006). This definition positions the individual as the focal point for analysis, and partitions resilience as a fixed entity of the mind. There is much argument against this individualistic approach which from an Aboriginal perspective negates the social, cultural, spiritual and environmental considerations necessary to individual resilience (Humphery, 2001; Lutschini, 2005).¹ Furthermore, there is no recognition of how resilience is constructed in the complex inter-cultural space of settler colonial societies. In order to further this line of thinking we chose a collection of literature that, in our own lived experiences, struck a meaningful tone within our spirits.

Australia as a settler colonial state has a particular developmental history which for the first century and a half (1788 to 1938) is characterised as a ‘period of dispossession, physical ill-treatment, social disruption, population decline, economic exploitation, codified discrimination, and cultural devastation’ (Gardiner-Garden, 1999). The effects of this past are evident in broad ranging socio-economic disadvantage (Shepherd, Li, & Zubrick, 2012). However, the current efforts to ‘close the gap’ (Brien & Hoy, 2009) in Indigenous disadvantage still privilege an individual and biomedical approach based on indicators that reinforce deficit instead of an approach that values Aboriginal epistemology. From our perspective more important indicators should be based on the social, cultural, spiritual and environmental considerations building an equilibrium of power and control to achieve outcomes. Indeed, as Marmot et al. (2008) state health inequity is a ‘result of a combination of poor social policies and programmes, unfair economic arrangements, and bad politics’ (Marmot, Friel, Bell, Houweling, & Taylor, 2008, p.1661). These ‘structural

¹ The term Aboriginal refers to Australia’s first nations peoples’ of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

determinants' have hindered the mobility of Aboriginal people who strive to achieve equity in all spheres of Australian society.

And there is no one road or easy answer through which to achieve improved social mobility for a number of complicated reasons as set out in key references that discuss Australian federalism (Thorlakson, 2003), the ongoing debates of the interpretation of Australian history (Parkes, 2007), a comparison of Australian Aboriginal health with other nations (King, Smith, & Gracey, 2009a, 2009b), and debates about identity (Paradies, 2006). It should then be of little surprise that to be an Aboriginal leader means grappling with a number of shifting complexities, as we outline below.

Resilience as a Collective Concept

Aboriginal leaders throughout Australia's colonial history have *collectively* built resilience in many forms, continually responding to changing political environments, challenges and social movements. In this article we point to different forms as a checklist for entering the political super market of Aboriginal affairs. While space limitations restrict extensive discussion of each point in order to draw-out the 'how-to' gain resilience, we rhetorically ask can the written English form of communication convey the richly grained and textured fabric of Aboriginal peoples' collective cultural values? Therefore, gaining the forms of resilience inherently rests with aspiring Aboriginal leaders interactions with one another, their communities, and current Aboriginal leaders.

Racial Resilience

Being Aboriginal Australian means having *racial resilience* because underpinning the settlement of Australia was the value of racial superiority which 'played a defining role in the foundation of the nation' (Day, 1996, p. 2). When Australia federated in 1901 (prior to this being separately governed colonies) the first law passed by the new federal parliament (the Federal or Commonwealth Government is based on a combination of the Westminster system of England and the Washington system of the United States) was the Immigration Restriction Act, which evolved to be a series of rules, resources and structures termed the 'white Australia policy' lasting from 1901 to 1973 (Day, 1996). This did not officially end until the introduction of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Grassby, 1976). The extent of race-based notions in Australia should not be under-estimated as public acts and discourse surfaces on regular occasion to highlight the embedded nature of this value (Jackman, 1998). As such an Aboriginal leader needs to be resilient against racial prejudice, but also sensitive to how governance processes can explicitly - and implicitly - reflect such values.

Pattern Resilience

The racial value was codified into every piece of legislation (the legal instrument through which Australian government allocates resources), through different governments, in different sectors of society (health, education, justice, etc.) and through different times. Many publications provide detail about the historically located social values and their reflection in the 'race clauses' of the Australian Constitution (1901) and as expressed in legislation and practice of every aspect of Australian society (Broome, 2001; Chesterman & Galligan, 1997; Eckermann et al., 2006; Keen, 1994; Kidd, 1997; Reid & Tromph, 1991; Reynolds, 1999; Siggers & Gray, 1991). It is claimed that 'every act imposed on Aboriginal people between the 1890s and the 1960s can be classified as an example of institutional racism' (Eckermann et al., 1992, p.

34). Aboriginal leaders need to be aware of the patterns in governance process – from policy to strategy to program implementation – and through this awareness build *pattern resilience*.

Accountability resilience

Being aware of patterns means that one can ask for the architects of policy, be held accountable for its implementation which requires *accountability resilience*. A perhaps infamous example is the finding that the 1989 National Aboriginal Health Strategy (the first Aboriginal-led strategy development process) was ‘never effectively implemented’ (National Aboriginal Health Strategy Evaluation Committee & Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, 1994). In contrast a review of the National Aboriginal Education Policy (also in 1994) found that whilst overall it was a successful and positive policy, some weaknesses could be addressed (Yunupingu, et al., 1994). Importantly, accountability meant that the subsequent forty-four recommendations served to guide future developments in Aboriginal education. A key theme driving the recommendations was ‘Equity and Reconciliation’:

‘Equity is the yet-to-be-finished business of the twentieth century. Much still needs to be done. And there is a sense of urgency – both to fulfil Australia’s promise of providing a fair go for all and to complete the work of this century before the end of the decade. Time is critical.’ (Yunupingu, et al, 1994, p. 2-3).

Inter-cultural resilience

The value of equity is one in which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people can bond through and develop *inter-cultural resilience*. Many non-Aboriginal people were outspoken about the poor treatment of Aboriginal people since European-Australian settlement (officially commemorated as 1788) (Attwood & Markus, 1999; Kidd, 1997; Reynolds, 1999), as well as before the separate Australian colonies federated in 1901 (Brown, 2004) both from individuals and humanitarian societies (Foxcroft, 1941). Unfortunately these voices were not influentially placed to alter the formation of the Australian nation, as the discussions and debates informing the writing of the Australian Constitution (1901) did not include Indigenous people (Anderson, 2001).

Democratic resilience

That the ‘dominant’ values of a social time period affect official policy points to an inherent issue of democratic process not being equated to equity of voice. Australia is overly governed for a country of 23 million people, with a Federal (also called ‘Commonwealth’ or ‘national’) Government, six states and two territories, and more than eight hundred and fifty local government areas (Anderson & Sanders, 1996). In this system, achieving equity requires playing-off against competing political demands presented by thousands of single issue lobby groups (Hendriks, 2002). As such the development and implementation of policy involves negotiating with many different political stakeholders (who may change every three years in Australia’s electoral system). Therefore, for *democratic resilience* an Aboriginal leader needs to understand not only the value preferences of different political parties, but how democratic processes operate.

Vision resilience

One of the important factors serving as a foil against changing political values is to have shared *vision resilience*. In 1989 the Aboriginal Education Policy Taskforce (AEPT, chaired by Paul Hughes) undertook extensive consultations with Aboriginal people throughout Australia who reinforced the priorities of: Aboriginal community involvement, increasing participation, positive educational outcomes, improving local provision, and strategies for schooling in all sectors of education including early childhood, primary and secondary, tertiary education and higher education. These priorities formed the basis of the 1990 National Aboriginal Education Policy (NAEP) which was to guide the progress of Aboriginal education for the next two decades (Hughes, et al., 1988, p 4-5). The extensive consultations, Aboriginal leadership and an Aboriginal process resulted in a strong shared vision which ripples through time.

Participatory resilience

The AEPT was a mechanism which allowed the embedding and transmission of Aboriginal values which can then be (to some extent) codified into law which thus influences bureaucratic processes. For example, with Aboriginal people officially excluded from consideration in the Australian Constitution (1901), we were ‘talked-about’ rather than ‘talked-with’ in discussions and debates that would shape our lives through the adoption of various policy stances. In 1937 a Commonwealth-State Native Welfare Conference a policy of ‘absorption’ was adopted for ‘natives of aboriginal origin, but not of the full bloods, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth’ (National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, 1997). The term ‘absorption’ refers to the loss of physical characteristics through interracial relationships (Ellinghaus, 2003). The policy of ‘assimilation’ was adopted at the third conference in 1951, and again in 1961 and 1965 (National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, 1997) . This refers to ‘cultural assimilation’ where it was believed that Indigenous people could be taught how to live as non-Indigenous people (Ellinghaus, 2003). The lesson for Aboriginal leaders is to have *participation resilience* in advocating for Aboriginal voices to be heard in formal committees and consultation processes.

Cultural integrity resilience

Having a ‘voice’ means giving due consideration for cultural integrity to be allowed in policy processes but this requires *cultural integrity resilience*. In contrast to the assimilation policies of non-Aboriginal people in native welfare conferences, in 1999 a Taskforce on Indigenous Education (Aboriginal members) advised Australian government education ministers that educational equality for Aboriginal people should be under-girded by a clear focus on cultural inclusion (MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education, 2000). A cultural respect framework also informs the Australian government’s approach to Aboriginal health (AHMAC, 2004) and Aboriginal cultural awareness training is a standard program in many sectors of society (Downing & Kowal, 2011; Westwood & Westwood, 2010). The usage of the phrase ‘cultural respect’ in policy documents signals the recognition of Aboriginal collective values.

Advocacy resilience

The emphasis on culture is driven by Aboriginal peoples’ participation in formal policy processes, though this did not occur until after 1967. Prior to that Aboriginal influence was achieved through social networks and interest groups (Anderson, 2003; Attwood & Markus, 1999; Summers, 2000) which set the basis for *advocacy resilience*. The first political advocacy organisation (with operations limited to South-Eastern Australia) was the Australian Aboriginal Progress Association (AAPA) established in 1925 by Fred Maynard and Tom Lacey along the lines of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (Foley, 2013).

However, the first *national* advocacy body was the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines (later the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders - FCAATSI, 1958 to 1972). It was a multicultural organisation whose leadership included many non-Aboriginal people (Attwood & Markus, 1999) and it initially focussed on promoting citizenship and civic rights (the right to vote, access to welfare or employment) (Anderson, 2003). One of its non-Aboriginal co-founders, Gordon Bryant, later became the first Aboriginal Affairs Minister in the Gough Whitlam Labor Government (1972-1975), which highlights the need for an inter-cultural resilience (above).

Political activity resilience

Such advocacy groups served to generate a head of steam to drive Aboriginal issues into the consciousness of mainstream Australian society. In order to do so requires *political activity resilience* because it is necessary to seek publicity so as to crystallise interest and stimulate debate. For example in 1965 the Student Action for Aborigines group, lead by Aboriginal activist Charles Perkins (also a member of FCAATSI), organised the Freedom Rides (Attwood & Markus, 1999). This activity generated wide debate in society and served to highlight the segregation activities (such as separate toilets for 'whites' and 'blacks') in Australian towns.

Rights resilience

The Freedom Rides, as the name partly implies, highlighted how inalienable rights were being violated, which means an Aboriginal leader needs to have *rights resilience*. The central issue of land rights became a significant campaign issue for the FCAATSI and many other pressure groups after a strike of Aboriginal stock workers in 1966 lead to the Gurindji land claim (Attwood & Markus, 1999). In 1969 the Yolgnu on Gove Peninsula land rights case challenged the doctrine of 'terra nullius' (that prior to European settlement in 1788 the land belonged to no one), and whilst the bid failed at the time it stimulated the establishment (1972) of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy on the lawns of Australia's Old Parliament House (Dow, 2000). The doctrine of 'terra nullius' was not overturned until the Mabo decision in 1992 (Attwood & Markus, 1999).

Sustained pressure resilience

In noting the shift of time in the dates above brings forward the need for *sustained pressure resilience*. The FCAATSI led a decade-long campaign to change the discriminatory sections (51 and 127) of the Australian Constitution (Anderson, 2003). The social attitudes of ministers from the Australian and state governments at the time was evident in the 1965 Native Welfare Conference (National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, 1997) [even though Australia was one of the eight nations involved in drafting the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The Ministers reaffirmed the policy of assimilation (Coombs, 1976, p. 3):

'The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent *will choose* [emphasis ours] to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community-enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities and influenced by the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians'

Nevertheless there was the positive result of the 1967 referendum which is seen as a watershed in Indigenous affairs policy due to its symbolism and its head of power for legislative changes (Gardiner-

Garden, 1996). For example, the Australian Government could fund Aboriginal programs and ‘develop a lead role in national health policy and strategy’ (Anderson & Whyte, 2006, p. 10). Thereafter, Aboriginal participation shifted from being solely through social networks and interest groups and into formal processes and structures. New aspects of resilience were required by Aboriginal leaders in order to deal with the administrative structures of a Western democratic state.

Power/control resilience

Underlying the intent of the advocacy for the 1967 referendum was the need to redress the disempowering effects of past policies by achieving equilibrium through *power/control resilience*. One of the key ways to empowerment is through educational attainment such as framed by the 2010 – 2014 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (MCEECDYA, 2010) which provides a clear rhetoric around cultural principles and values, however the outcomes are yet to be seen. This action plan ‘sits’ within an inter-government National Integrated Strategy for Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage (known as Close the Gap) (Council of Australian Governments, 2009). Pholi, et al (2009) identifies two main criticisms of the ‘Close the Gap’ initiative, a ‘predominately individualistic focus, which fails to account for an imbalanced distribution of power and a limited degree of control exercised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians’ and secondly ‘a distinct ideological heritage, reflecting certain trends in social policy and public health more broadly.’ (Pholi, Black, & Richards, 2009, p. 11). Although the ‘Close the Gap’ campaign has obvious good intentions it is questionable to whether the idea is an approach based on a deficit model with an underlying assimilative tone, with a power imbalance rather than one based on true self-determination.

Political change resilience

Campaigns such as Close the Gap are subject to three-year election cycles (in Australia as in the United States there are federal and state level elections) often resulting in changes to political parties and thus alterations in the governance processes. In this society an Aboriginal leader needs to have *political change resilience*, for each Australian political party that wins office re-organises governance process to do with Aboriginal participation (Weaver, 1983a, 1983b). For example after the 1967 referendum the then right-wing Liberal-Country Party government established an *advisory* Council for Aboriginal Affairs (CAA, 1967-1976) (Coombs, 1976). This institutional development marked a continuous cycle of ‘experiments’ by governments to gain Aboriginal peoples’ perspectives on social policy (Weaver, 1983a, 1983b). As we noted earlier, a shared vision and pattern resilience serve as bulwarks against political expediencies.

Social change resilience

Though the cyclical nature of political change reflects sentimentalities in Australian society for the decade after 1967, as rapid changes were occurring in Aboriginal affairs policy, the dominant social values were altering to be of more socialist in intent. The left-wing Whitlam Labor Government (1972-1975) was elected after twenty-three years of right-wing Liberal government (1949-1972). This era saw the rise of community participation and consumer involvement in mainstream health care, a period of social revolution (environment movement, women’s movement, anti-Vietnam war protests) (Baum, 2002). There were ‘New Left’ policies of self-management and participatory democracy, with strong links to human rights (Carter & O’Connor, 2003; NRCCPH, 2004). Aboriginal affairs moved into a new era from one dominated by assimilationist values to another of self-determination. Aboriginal leaders need to gain *social change resilience* in order to leverage political change.

Adversity resilience

Being aware of broader social change also means that there is strength to be gained by looking through the 'here-and-now' to the potential for future change, which requires *adversity resilience*. In 1972 the Whitlam Government introduced the policy of self-determination (a markedly different value basis to that of assimilation), which marked the beginning of a new journey for Aboriginal people (Kowal, 2011). The policy instated Aboriginal people with the right to promote and control their own culture, heritage and language, prompting the Commonwealth Government to establish processes to enable effective consultation and advice from Aboriginal peoples. However, adversity was faced in the purely advisory role of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC, 1973-1977) and its successor the National Aboriginal Committee (NAC) (Coombs, 1994). As Weaver (1983a, b) notes governments wanted advice whilst Aboriginal people sought greater control and power.

Socio-political resilience

In combating adversity there is a need to shift the nature of a political messages which indicates *socio-political resilience*. By 1972 the focus shifted from 'land rights' to gaining autonomy through principles such as sovereignty, self-determination, and community control (Anderson, 2003). In 1970 a group within FCAATSI formed a separate organisation (National Tribal Council) to better reflect the value of Aboriginal autonomy (Attwood & Markus, 1999) by having Aboriginal-only members. This separatist movement meant that the FCAATSI 'became a pale shadow of its former self' (Attwood & Markus, 1999, p. 21). However, the Aboriginal community controlled health services (run by Aboriginal only, community elected, board of directors) is regarded as the institutional embodiment of self-determination (Bell et al., 2000). Autonomy and self-determination are principles underpinning socio-political resilience to non-Aboriginal politics, but also to the politics of different interests of Australia's First Peoples.

Cultural diversity resilience

Aboriginal health services cater to the needs of local communities which points to the incredibly diverse nations of Australia's First Peoples (King et al., 2009a). Thus an Aboriginal leader needs to develop *cultural diversity resilience*. As a consequence of diversity the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1975 is a law which allows the direct allocation of resources to thousands of Aboriginal organisations (Corrs Chambers Westgarth Lawyers, Anthropos Consulting, Dodson, M., Mantziaris, C., & Rashid, B. 2002) with their own forms of governance thus giving rise to a distinct Aboriginal service delivery sector (Sanders, 2002). This has created administrative complexity because the Australian Government's bureaucracy in effect deals not with Aboriginal people but with many Nations with differing interests (HRSCATSIA, 2004).

Self-determination resilience

Nevertheless, the diversity of Aboriginal cultures underscores the value of self-determination and the requirement for policy processes to be structured appropriately to cater for difference and diversity. *Self-determination resilience* should drive an Aboriginal leaders' engagement with the Australian State. For example the Aboriginal Consultative Groups' (ACG) 1975 report to the Commonwealth Schools Commission (in Australia, the term Commonwealth means 'federal') provided the vision that:

'we see education as the most important strategy for achieving realistic self-determination for the Aboriginal people of Australia. We do not see education as a method of producing an

anglicised Aborigine but rather as an instrument for creating an informed community with intellectual and technological skills. We wish to be Aboriginal citizens in a changing Australia' (Aboriginal Consultative Group, 1975, p.3)

Importantly the ACG consulted with Aboriginal peoples across Australia relating to the education of Aboriginal children, with a major recommendation for the establishment of a 'statutory funding body called the National Aboriginal Education Commission'. The recommendations were listed in categories which consisted of Aboriginal involvement and appointment of positions that would influence high level decision making; developing professionals that will meet the needs of Aboriginal education; providing appropriate programs and resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within all modes of education; and providing opportunities for Aboriginal people to re-engage in education in an appropriate setting. Clearly, education and self-determination are inter-twined in Australia.

Consultation resilience

One of the key ways to achieve self-determination is for Aboriginal people to participate in the processes that influence resource allocation. An Aboriginal leader spends much time providing advice to bureaucratic officials and government departments and thus develops *consultation resilience*. Being 'consulted' may not directly translate into actions as Sally Weaver (1983a,b) noted in her examination of Australian governments' attempts to gain Aboriginal peoples 'advice', although Aboriginal people were consulted the policy, strategy drafting and decision making were done by executive government members. Furthermore, as with all policy decisions in Western democracies, it is the politically elected party official as a 'Minister' who has ultimate decision making authority in Cabinet deliberations and debates.

System design resilience

This was no more evident than in the establishment (1990) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), a statutory authority (non-government organisation funded to act autonomously, through an act of the Australian Parliament) (Hand, 1987). The intent behind ATSIC was apparently 'to ensure the maximum participation of Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders in the formulation and implementation of programs' (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, 2001) however its role was 'subject to the powers of the Minister' (referring to the Australian Government minister of Aboriginal affairs) (Keen, 1993, p.34). In spite of this governance arrangement, ATSIC made deliberate attempts at advocacy rather than advice, and sought to distance itself from the 'advisory role' to government (Sanders, 2002). The lesson from this is the need for *system design resilience* for Aboriginal leaders to be knowledgeable of the intricacies of Western institutions (legal, political and judicial).

Tribal rivalry resilience

Another factor in the ATSIC organisation was the role of *tribal rivalry resilience*. In the early 1990's Aboriginal controlled health organisations successfully advocated for 'health' programs to be the remit of the Australian government because there was 'resentment' that the majority of resources for the health were directed – through ATSIC – outside of the health sector (Anderson & Sanders, 1996), and that there were 'unwanted competition for resources with other Aboriginal community controlled organisations' (ANAO, 1998, p. 126). Thus, an Aboriginal leader needs the skills to negotiate different tribal politics, just as a Australian politicians negotiate in Australian society. Changes in the experiments in Aboriginal affairs, such as ATSIC, are often justified by financial restrictions, there always are ample resources available to fund the cycle of bureaucratic changes in Australian governments.

Reform resilience

Bureaucracy is a term referring the institutionalised administrative processes through which political parties deliver their Australian governments 'reforms'. For example, in 2004 the then right-wing Howard Liberal/National Coalition Government (1996-2007) proposed New Arrangements in Indigenous Affairs (Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, 2006) predicated on the principles of 'shared responsibility' and 'mutual obligation' (Anderson, 2006). Such reform processes are referred to as 'innovation without change' (Gardiner-Garden, 1994) and occur without any discussion of costs of doing so, in line with this, Aboriginal leaders then need to develop *reform resilience*.

Navigation resilience

Understanding the past reform processes builds the capacity for re-navigating changing reform and an Aboriginal leader has to develop *navigation resilience*. Aboriginal education has seen many reports over the decades such as: Education for Aborigines: Report to the Schools Commission (Aboriginal Consultative Group, 1975); Report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Taskforce (Hughes, 1988); National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Yunupingu, 1994); and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010 – 2014 (MCEETYA, 2010). The knowledge gained from these reports *guide and inform* the progress of Aboriginal education in Australia. However, the repetitive publication of statistical-based reports is met with cynicism (not another report!) especially when resource allocation is argued not to meet the vertical equity considerations to address the high level of need (Mooney, Jan, & Wiseman, 2002; Wiseman & Jan, 2000).

Expertise resilience

Furthermore, a degree of animosity exists in regards to the methods and processes used to collect statistics and generate reports about Aboriginal people, especially through western research methods (Humphery, 2001). Subsequently Aboriginal people advocated for unique ethical processes in the development and conduct of Aboriginal research (Johnstone, 2007; Monk, Rowley, & Anderson, 2009). However, such ethical standards are not followed in the political appointments of non-Aboriginal 'experts' to advise on government reform processes in Aboriginal affairs (Weaver, 1983a, 1983b). Therefore an Aboriginal leader needs to have *expertise resilience*. The experts can have enormous influence in Aboriginal affairs especially medical professionals (Anderson, 2001), health researchers (Humphery, 2001) and anthropologists (Langton, 2011). Notwithstanding the positive contributions that experts have and do make to Aboriginal affairs, there is always the inherent question of their cultural authority.

Trust resilience

Nevertheless, the maintenance of healthy relationships within Aboriginal communities and external stakeholders can translate into a *trust resilience* which enables an increased social mobility and influence in policy development processes. In 1977 the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) was appointed by the left-wing Labor government originally in an *advisory* capacity and later as *principal advisors*, increasing their level of influence on government policy development and funding allocations (Ohlsson, 1977). Furthermore, state Aboriginal education advisory groups were introduced and played a vital role in bringing the Aboriginal community together collaborating with the NAEC to ensure all Aboriginal communities were given a voice in developing a federal education agenda (Parbury, 2005). Trust is perhaps the critical inter-cultural value through which equity may be achieved (Tait, 2011).

Negotiation resilience

The concept of voice highlights the need to develop due processes through which Aboriginal oral knowledge is collected and coded into written English. The integrity of the knowledge translation process is important because of the codification of values into the various instruments of policy such as 'agreements' and 'treaties', which then set-out the conditions by which a government will provide resources to Aboriginal organisations (Langton, Tehan, Palmer, & Shain, 2004). Thus, the need for *negotiation resilience* is another requirement for an Aboriginal leader. They will be required to consider sector-specific (health, education, welfare) agreements (Leeder, 2003) as well as high-level inter-governmental agreements between the different states that form the Commonwealth of Australia (Sullivan, 2011).

Empowerment resilience

The attainment of education is an important ingredient for Aboriginal professionals to lead negotiations through *empowerment resilience*. Achievements in Aboriginal education were framed by the NAEC (1977 to 1989) and outcomes such as the '1,000 Teachers by 1990' program which had a flow on effect resulting in Aboriginal enclaves being introduced in universities and Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE). The enclaves are the foundations of the now established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centres at all public universities in Australia, though progress has not materialised to the extent originally envisioned (CSHE, 2008). Therefore, the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSI) (2012) revitalises the '1,000 Teachers by 1990' program, aiming to continue to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and additionally contribute to the professional development and potential of these students (Hughes and Willmot, 2012). Education empowers Aboriginal leaders to effectively re-shape governance process so that Aboriginal people are better placed to overcome the historical rooted structural determinants to social equality in Australia.

Trailblazer resilience

Underlying this narrative is the collective strength of generations of Aboriginal leaders, strength which is embedded within us through sharing and storytelling. For example, the MATSI is led by Professor Peter Buckskin, Dr Kaye Price and Conjoint Professor Paul Hughes who exemplify Aboriginal leadership in education. Further acknowledgement needs to be given to all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have made a significant contribution to the journey of improving Aboriginal social mobility over the past forty years. Aboriginal people are now prominent in all areas of Australian society and are role models for the leaders of the future. Indeed they empower us because of their *trailblazer resilience*.

Conclusion

Aboriginal people have been constantly challenged throughout history and continue to overcome diversity, moving forward with powerful motivation and determination. Resilience literature from a western perspective promotes an individual's strength to recover from experiences of adverse circumstance and move forward. This paper has provided testimony to the fact that from an Aboriginal leadership perspective resilience is evident as a collective, communal force that is founded on the cultural, social and emotional structures that underpin Aboriginal values and philosophies.

References

- Aboriginal Consultative Group (1975) *Education for Aborigines: Report to the Schools Commission*. Commonwealth Schools Commission, Aboriginal Research Institute at The University of South Australia.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. (2001). *ATSIC Health Policy*. Canberra: ATSIC.
- Ahern, N. R., Kiehl, E. M., Sole, M. Lou, & Byers, J. (2006). A review of instruments measuring resilience. *Issues in comprehensive pediatric nursing, 29*(2), 103–25. doi:10.1080/01460860600677643
- Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC). (2004). *Cultural respect framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health 2004 - 2009*. Canberra. Retrieved from <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/health-oatsih-pubs-crf.htm>
- Anderson, I. (2001). Aboriginal Society and Health: Critical Issues Demand What from Sociologists? *Health Sociology Review, 10*(2), 5–20.
- Anderson, I. (2003). Aboriginal Australians, Governments, and Participation in Health Systems. In P. Liamputtong & H. Gardner (Eds.), *Health, Social Change and Communities* (pp. 224–240). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, I. P. S. (2006). Mutual obligation, shared responsibility agreements & indigenous health strategy. *Australia and New Zealand health policy, 3*(10), 10. doi:10.1186/1743-8462-3-10
- Anderson, I. P., & Whyte, J. D. (2006). Australian Federalism and Aboriginal Health. *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, no. 2, pp. 5–16.
- Anderson, I., & Sanders, W. (1996). Aboriginal Health and Institutional Reform within Australian Federalism. *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 117/1996*. Canberra: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University.
- Attwood, B., & Markus, A. (1999). *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights: A Documentary History*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.
- Australian National Audit Office (ANAO). (1998). *Audit Report No.13 - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program, Department of Health and Aged Care*. Canberra: Australian National Audit Office.
- Baum, F. (2002). *The New Public Health: Second Edition*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, K., Couzos, S., Daniels, J., Hunter, P., Mayers, N., & Murray, R. (2000). Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services. In *General Practice in Australia: 2000*. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.
- Brien, O., & Hoy, W. E. (2009). "Closing the gap " by 2030 : aspiration versus reality in Indigenous health. *Medical Journal of Australia, 190*(10), 542–544.
- Broome, R. (2001). *Aboriginal Australians: Black Responses to White Dominance 1788-2001* (3rd edition). Sydney: Allen and Unwin
- Brown, A. J. (2004). One continent, two federalisms: rediscovering the original meanings of Australian federal ideas. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 39*(3), 485–504. doi:10.1080/103614042000295093
- Carter, M., & O'Connor, D. (2003). Consumers and Health Policy Reform. *Health, Social Change and Communities*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Chesterman, J., & Galligan, B. (1997). *Citizens Without Rights: Aborigines and Australian Citizenship*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Coombs, H. C. (1976). Aboriginal Australians 1967-1976 A Decade of Progress? *The Third Walter Murdoch Lecture*. Perth: Murdoch University.
- Coombs, H. C. (1994). *Aboriginal Autonomy: Issues and Strategies*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Corrs Chambers Westgarth Lawyers, Anthropol Consulting, Dodson, M., Mantziaris, C. & Rashid, B. (2002). *A Modern Statute of Indigenous Corporations: Reforming the Aboriginal Council and Associations Act*. Final Report of the Review of the Aboriginal Councils & Associations Act 1976 (Cth). Canberra: Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations.
- Council of Australian Governments. (2009). *National Integrated Strategy for Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage*. Canberra: Council. Retrieved from http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2009-07-02/docs/NIS_closing_the_gap.pdf

- Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE). (2008). Participation and equity: a review of the participation in higher education of people from low socioeconomic backgrounds and Indigenous people. The University of Melbourne. Retrieved from <http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/page/submissions---reports/commissioned-studies/participation-and-equity/>
- Day, D. (1996). *Claiming a Continent - A New History of Australia*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.
- Dow, C. (2000). *Aboriginal Tent Embassy: Icon or Eyesore?* Canberra: Department of the Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia.
- Downing, R., & Kowal, E. (2011). A postcolonial analysis of Indigenous cultural awareness training for health workers. *Health Sociology Review*, 20(1), 5–15.
- Eckermann, A., Dowd, T., Martin, M., Nixon, L., Gray, R., & Chong, E. (1992). *Binan Goonj: Bridging Cultures in Aboriginal Health*. Armidale: University of New England Press.
- Eckermann, A-K., Dowd, T., Chong, E., Nixon, L., Gray, R., & Johnson, S. (2006). *Binan Goonj: Bridging Cultures in Aboriginal Health (Second Edition)*. Sydney: Elsevier Australia.
- Ellinghaus, K. (2003). Absorbing the 'Aboriginal problem': controlling interracial marriage in Australia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. *Aboriginal History*. vol. 27, pp. 183-207.
- Foley, G. (2013). The Koori History Website. Retrieved October 29, 2013, from <http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/timeline/histimeline.html>
- Foxcroft, E. J. B. (1941). *Australian Native Policy: Its History, Especially in Victoria*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press & Oxford University Press.
- Gardiner-Garden, J. (1994). *Innovation Without Change? Commonwealth Involvement in Aboriginal Health Policy*. Current Issues Brief No. 12 1994. Parliamentary Research Service Current Issues Brief No. 12 (. Canberra: Department of the Parliamentary Library, Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/1996-97/97rp11.htm>.
- Gardiner-Garden, J. (1996). *Background Paper 11 1996-97 - The Origin of Commonwealth Involvement in Indigenous Affairs and the 1967 Referendum*. Canberra: Department of the Parliamentary Library, Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fprspub%2FU7E30%22>
- Gardiner-Garden, J. (1999). *From Dispossession to Reconciliation*. Research Paper 27, 1998-1999. Canberra: Parliament of Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/1998-99/99rp27.htm>
- Grassby, A. J. (1976). *Commissioner for Community Relations First Annual Report 1976*. Canberra: Office of the Commissioner for Community Relations. Retrieved from [http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2208739?lookfor=author:"Australia. Office of the Commissioner for Community Relations"&offset=5&max=30](http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2208739?lookfor=author:)
- Hand, G. (1987). *Foundations for the Future: Policy Statement*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from <http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/45844062>
- Hendriks, C. (2002). Institutions of Deliberative Democratic Processes and Interest Groups: Roles, Tensions and Incentives. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 61(1), 64–75. doi:10.1111/1467-8500.00259
- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (HRSCATSIA). (2004). *Many Ways Forward: Report of the Inquiry into Capacity Building and Service Delivery in Indigenous Communities*. Canberra: The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.
- Hughes, P., and Australian Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force (AAEPT). (1988). *Report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force*.
- Hughes, P. & Willmot, E. (2012). *1000 Aboriginal Teachers by 1990 Revisited, More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSI)*. The University of South Australia. Retrieved from <http://matsiti.edu.au/1000-teachers-by-1990/>, accessed 2/10/2013.
- Humphery, K. (2001). Dirty Questions: Indigenous Health and "Western Research." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. Jun; 25(3): 197-201.

- Jackman, S. (1998). Pauline Hanson, the Mainstream, and Political Elites: The Place of Race in Australian Political Ideology. *Australian Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 33(2): 167-186, DOI: 10.1080/10361149850598
- Johnstone, M.-J. (2007). Research ethics, reconciliation, and strengthening the research relationship in Indigenous health domains: An Australian perspective. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31(3), 391–406. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.09.003
- Keen, I. (1993). *Aborigines and Islanders in Australian Society. A Sociology of Australian Society (2nd Edition)*. Melbourne: Macmillan Education Australia Pty Ltd.
- Keen, I. (1994). *Being Black: Aboriginal Cultures in "Settled" Australia*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Kidd, R. (1997). *The Way We Civilise*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.
- King, M., Smith, A., & Gracey, M. (2009a). Indigenous health part 1 : determinants and disease patterns. *The Lancet*, 374(9683), 65–75. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60914-4
- King, M., Smith, A., & Gracey, M. (2009b). Indigenous health part 2 : the underlying causes of the health gap. *The Lancet*, 374(9683), 76–85. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60827-8
- Kowal, E. (2011). The Stigma of White Privilege - Australian anti-racists and Indigenous improvement. *Cultural Studies*, 25(3), 313–333. doi:10.1080/09502386.2010.491159
- Langton, M. (2011). Anthropology, Politics and the Changing World of Aboriginal Australians. *Anthropological Forum*, 21(1), 1–22. doi:10.1080/00664677.2011.549447
- Langton, M., Tehan, M., Palmer, L., & Shain, K. (2004). *Honour Among Nations? Treaties and Agreements with Indigenous Peoples*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Leeder, S. R. (2003). Achieving equity in the Australian healthcare system. *The Medical journal of Australia*, 179(9), 475–8. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14583078>
- Lutschini, M. (2005). Engaging with holism in Australian Aboriginal health policy--a review. *Australia and New Zealand health policy*, 2(15), 15. doi:10.1186/1743-8462-2-15
- Marmot, M., Friel, S., Bell, R., Houweling, T. a J., & Taylor, S. (2008). Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health. *Lancet*, 372(9650), 1661–9. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(08)61690-6
- Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), (2010), *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010 – 2014*, MCEECDYA, Carlton South, Victoria
- MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education. (2000). *Achieving Educational Equality for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. Canberra.
- Monk, J. M., Rowley, K. G., & Anderson, I. P. (2009). Setting and meeting priorities in Indigenous health research in Australia and its application in the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health. *Health research policy and systems*, 7(25), 25.
- Mooney, G., Jan, S., & Wiseman, V. (2002). Staking a claim for claims : a case study of resource allocation in Australian Aboriginal health care. *Social Science & Medicine*, 54, 1657–1667.
- National Aboriginal Health Strategy Evaluation Committee, & Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. (1994). *The National Aboriginal Health Strategy: An Evaluation*. Canberra: ATSIC.
- National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. (1997). *Bringing Them Home: the Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*. Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).
- National Resource Centre for Consumer Participation in Health (NRCCPH). (2004). *Consumer Participation in Australian Primary Care: A Literature Review*. Melbourne.
- Ohlsson, T. (1977). One People, One Voice, Stephen Albert and the National Aboriginal Education Committee, *Education News*, Vol.16 (7).
- Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination. (2006). *Indigenous Affairs Arrangements*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Retrieved from http://www.oipc.gov.au/About_OIPC/new_arrangements/default.asp, accession date 21 March 2005

- Paradies, Y. C. (2006). Beyond Black and White: Essentialism, Hybridity and Indigeneity. *Journal of Sociology*. Vol 42(4): 355-367. doi: 10.1177/1440783306069993
- Parkes, R. J. (2007). Reading History Curriculum as Postcolonial Text: Towards a Curricular Response to the History Wars in Australia and Beyond. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 37(4), 383–400. doi:10.1111/j.1467-873X.2007.00392.x
- Parbury, N. (2005). *Survival, A History of Aboriginal Life in New South Wales*. New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Surry Hills:Sydney.
- Pholi, K., Black, D., & Richards, C. (2009). Is “ Close the Gap ” a useful approach to improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians ? *Australian Review of Public Affairs*, Vol. 9(2), 1–13.
- Reid, J., & Tromph, P. (1991). *The Health of Aboriginal Australia*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Reynolds, H. (1999). *Why Weren't We Told? A Personal Search for the Truth about our History*. Ringwood: Penguin Books Australia.
- Saggers, S., & Gray, D. (1991). *Aboriginal Health and Society - The Traditional and Contemporary Aboriginal Struggle for Better Health*. St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd.
- Sanders, W. (2002). Towards an Indigenous Australian Order of Australian Government: Rethinking Self-determination as Indigenous Affairs Policy. *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 230/2002*. Canberra: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University.
- Shepherd, C. C. J., Li, J., & Zubrick, S. R. (2012). Social gradients in the health of Indigenous Australians. *American journal of public health*, 102(1), 107–17. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2011.300354
- Sullivan, P. (2011). The policy goal of normalisation, the National Indigenous Reform Agreement and Indigenous National Partnership Agreements (Vol. 76). DKCRC Working Paper.
- Summers, J. (2000). The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia and Indigenous Peoples 1901-1967. In *The Vision in Hindsight: Parliament and the Constitution: Paper No. 10*. Canberra: Department of the Parliamentary Library.
- Tait, P. W. (2011). How can Australia do better for Indigenous health ? *Medical Journal of Australia*, 194(10), 501–502.
- Thorlakson, L. (2003). Comparing federal institutions: Power and representation in six federations. *West European Politics*, 26(2), 1–22. doi:10.1080/01402380512331341081
- Wagnild, G. M., & Young, H. M. (1993). Development and psychometric evaluation of the Resilience Scale. *Journal of nursing measurement*, 1(2), 165–78. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7850498>
- Weaver, S. M. (1983a). Australian Aboriginal Policy: Aboriginal Pressure Groups or Government Advisory Bodies? Part I. *Oceania*, 54(1), 1–22.
- Weaver, S. M. (1983b). Australian Aboriginal Policy: Aboriginal Pressure Groups or Government Advisory Bodies? Part II. *Oceania*, 54(2), 85–108. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40332274>
- Westwood, B., & Westwood, G. (2010). Aboriginal cultural awareness training: policy v. accountability - failure in reality. *Australian Health Review*, 34(4), 423–9. doi:10.1071/AH09546
- Wiseman, V., & Jan, S. (2000). Resource allocation within Australian indigenous communities: a program for implementing vertical equity. *Health Care Analysis* 8(3), 217–233. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11186023>
- Yunupingu, M. et al. (1994), *National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

An Almost Competent look at Cultural Competency

Rose, M.



source: www.lonerangerfanclub.com

Introduction

It seems that everywhere we look at the moment in Aboriginal Affairs the term ‘cultural competency’ is popping up. ‘Cultural competency is an area of study that is gaining prominence as we encounter more human diversity in our work and our lives’ (Valaskakis, Stout, & Guimand, 2009, p.237). The concept certainly in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spectrum seems to have gained a life of its own without ever having gone through any semblance of a vigorous intellectual interrogation. Like many concepts that lay lifeless on the policy landscape in the past, cultural competency in the form it has surfaced does on closer examination present as barely more than a number of half thought out generalities. The greater danger of this is that in pursuit of such conceptual ubiquities like ‘cultural competency’ there is often massive time, effort and focus that are distracted from real goals in Aboriginal affairs. It is like pursuing a mere mirage. Currently ‘cultural competency’ has vicariously gathered gravitas in terms of profile and status way beyond its means and certainly below any real substance. Simply put ‘cultural competency’ in its current incarnation is not the panacea that it is being purported to be in universities, professions and in government who translate it into an ever growing feeding frenzy for training programs. This paper only intends to pose some critical questions around the inadequacies around the intellectual architecture of ‘cultural competency’ as it is currently being espoused and in doing so to send up something of a timely admonitory flare.

There is a place

In 2005 having co-chaired the Victorian whole of government Implementation Review of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 2005 I was privy to a whole range of services both general and those specifically targeting Indigenous people that fell well short of the mark in terms of service delivery. In fact it was the original Royal Commission that referred to a notion of 'underlying issues' that permeated service delivery. Translated this refers to a more general paradigm and mindset in the broader population that was fed by a chronic ignorance around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. This led me in 2006 to say in the paper 'The Great Silent Apartheid' that 'It (cultural awareness) can be quantified as a competency and immersed industrially as a requirement and an ongoing KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for systems, schools and teachers'(Rose, 2006, p.1). My reference was driven by the sheer frustration of what I saw over eighteen months during the review where time and time again professional decisions and practice were inappropriately deployed from intellectually and conceptually stunted positions, driven from the core of the central ignorance of the 'silent apartheid'. The downstream result of this professional ineptitude can be measured in many ways but none as poignant as incarcerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who found the surrealism of the criminal justice system more attractive than the realism of their life.

My further frustration was also driven by the plethora of cultural awareness exercises that take place on a daily basis around the nation. These are delivered by passionate people and attended by genuine people some albeit with a 'cucumber sandwich' dependency and who are entertained and taken on what can be a virtual cultural '*Contiki*' tour. These programs focus on 'explicit knowledge' rather than 'tacit knowledge' or the base assumption that underpin them. Failures of the general education system render generations after generations palpably ignorant about the land that they live on. They rarely embark on the next stage to challenge or translate their new found insights in viable workplace practise? The reason why cultural awareness exercises are necessary is because of the societal ramification of where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders knowledge is positioned in the national consciousness.

"Australian education systems and sectors placement of culture and tradition on the fringe has dispossessed and stunted the intellectual capacity and the national psyche of this country. For the field of education the Silent Apartheid and the range of by-products that it has developed has drastically impeded engagement and the ability of educators, schools and systems to deliver on their mandate to teach all. With this they as educators, schools and systems must seek to break the corrupted and jaundiced cycle of knowledge transfer. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders should have more confidence if it were to become industrially prescribed as a competency as opposed to relying on the mere chance of cultural conversion through awareness training" (Rose, 2006, p.3).

The need for breaking the corrupted and jaundiced cycle of knowledge transfer is as relevant now as it ever has been. There still exists, an abyss in the national psyche, that rich in the Jungian tradition an ever consuming unconsciousness. This abyss that is the 'great silent apartheid' is a gaping hole in the nation's narrative which in the absence of reality is filled with half-truths, mythologies and stereotypes that distort, and "Unfortunately contemporary culture regards truth as a subject worthy of fiction rather than intellectual pursuit" (Furedi, 2006,p.8)

Evidence abounds just in social indicators alone for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and while it would be easy to mount a statistical 'big picture' account of the effect of the continuing 'silent apartheid' a seminal representation can just as easily be drawn in the specific.

April's Story.

My cousin April lost her mother in 2008. Being referred by the Aboriginal Health Service and admitted to hospital she would have access to the cumulative assets both physical and professional of a modern well equipped hospital. Over the matters of weeks her condition deteriorated and then got the better of her and she passed. April told me of a counselling conversation that a nurse had with her directly after. The nurse obviously a skilled practitioner empathically offered rationales on how to accept her loss and high on her list was that 'your mother was Aboriginal and Aboriginal people die earlier'.

April's mum was not Aboriginal, her father is. The nurse's rationale was way beyond a moot point or simple mistake. What needs to be asked is how that single notion that 'Aboriginal people die early' was subliminally and effectively translated into her workplace practise? How many times did her and her colleagues walk rather than run in response to her bell? Also how from the very basic tasks to the more highly sophisticated nursing activities influenced from a clouded and jaundiced praxis because of a misinformed notions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and an ongoing position of cultural ignorance?

I do believe that there is a place for and a strong argument to progress and exhort for higher standards of professional delivery which of late has somehow been surreptitiously coupled to what is being tagged as 'cultural competency' by way of panacea. However, I also feel that there is clearly a compelling disconnect between the need for programmatic delivery of superior standard and the miraculous medicinal cure of what is being touted around as 'cultural competency'.

Back in 2005 I was unashamedly was one of the proponents for 'cultural competency' and for a demonstrable level of industrial translation for the workplace. However nearly a decade years down the track I am not convinced that cultural competency as it is being packaged has the capacity to deliver. What have surfaced generally over this time seems to just semantically camouflaged cultural awareness programs or 'cultural awareness plus one' devoid of the very essential element that actually relates to the given notion of competency and that is workplace translation.

"The term cultural competency first emerged in the health care literature in a 1989 article by Cross, Bazron, Dennis" (Grote, 2008, p.14). It has since migrated across three disciplines that contest ownership. This conceptual battle has created a programmatic fog over who can claim the term 'competency'. There seems to be three separate pulls competing for conceptual probity and custodianship around 'competency' and these proponents include the disciplines of management, adult education and (VET) Vocational and Educational Training.

A Conceptual Tug of War

"Over the past decade, there has been increasing interest worldwide in the concept of cultural competence (sometimes called cultural competency), and this interest seems to be increasing" (Ranzin, McConnochie, Nolan, 2010, p.3). The first pull comes from the Vocational and Educational Training sector where the educational philosophy that defines the domain that it operates in is driven by measurement, 'It is therefore important to analyse training and development needs in the business unit to make sure business units are at the right competency level' (Miller, Brautigan, and Gerlach, 2006, p.72). The sector rightfully claims that a competency is something that can be measured and modules from this particular educational congregation are refaced by the term 'by the end of this module the student will be able to'. In

Australia VET (Vocational and Educational Training) comes under the jurisdiction of the state and all basically concur on what Queensland purports below as the frame that is competency based training,

“Competency based training (CBT) is an approach to vocational education and training that places emphasis on what a person can do in the workplace as a result of completing a program of training.

Competency based training programs are often comprised of modules broken into segments called learning outcomes. These modules are based on standards set by industry, and assessment is designed to ensure each student has achieved all the outcomes (skills and knowledge) required by each module.

Progress within a competency based training program is not based on time. As soon as students have achieved or demonstrated the outcomes required in a module, they can move to the next module. In this way, students may be able to complete a program of study much faster”

(http://www.tafe.qld.gov.au/courses/flexible_study/competency.html)

A senior public servant who had Koorie education as part of his purview once asked how he might go about doing a VET course on cultural competency. His request was possibly the clearest indicator that he was far from any semblance of cultural competency. In fact a credentialed certificate in cultural competency would be akin to a certificate in creativity – the very fact that you had one is an illuminated sign that you were not creative.

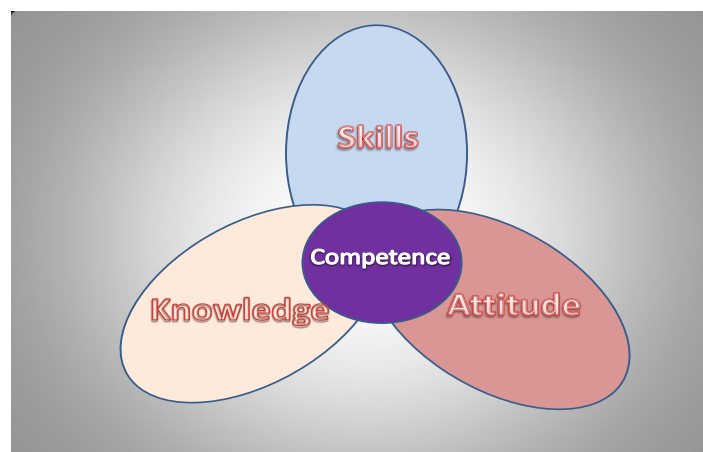
The right of VET (Vocational and Educational Training) to make a claim on cultural competency goes far beyond the basic cringe factor. As a central plank in VET (Vocational and Educational Training) philosophy is that competence is a measured phenomenon and it is this notion that congers a justifiable trepidation in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community for if it is to be measured then who will does the measuring?, ‘What cultural knowledge then becomes the core competence of the educated individuals?’ (Magnala, 2005, p.85). At the core of this concern also resides an equal concern about content and how this will be measured. Much more significantly in the VET (Vocational and Educational Training) zone and in particular for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is that a measured competency will mean an abandoned commodity. This would allow others to become static experts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and business effectively refuting the notion that, ‘people are not passive carriers of cultural meanings; they express their agency via culture and participate actively in culture’ (Elliot, 2005, p.491). The longitudinal danger in VET (Vocational and Educational Training) cultural competency program would bestow ownership away from the community and this raises significant concerns. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community will not ever abrogate culture and knowledge to an educational stream.

Likewise with all due respect to the VET (Vocational and Educational Training) sector who have for decades provided pathways for thousands of Australians through its specialised educational platform the philosophy that is enshrined in the sector does not in all balance attract critique. One such criticism is that which Hatch and Cunliffe (2006, p.261) refer to as the competency trap, “Competency traps can lead to improvements in procedures that have limited or no competitive advantage” which is further echoed in Bolman and Deal (2003, p 30) quoting the likes of ‘Argyris and Schon [who] believe that the actions we take to promote productive organisational learning actually inhibit deeper learning’. This concept simply put refers that achievement of a designated VET level can lead to person being encrusted in a shell fed by the

misconception that all the learning required has been achieved. This can freeze the desire to drill further once one has reached the credentialed level and once you are there 'reducing motivation to search for better procedures double loop sacrificed to single looped learning' (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006, p.261).

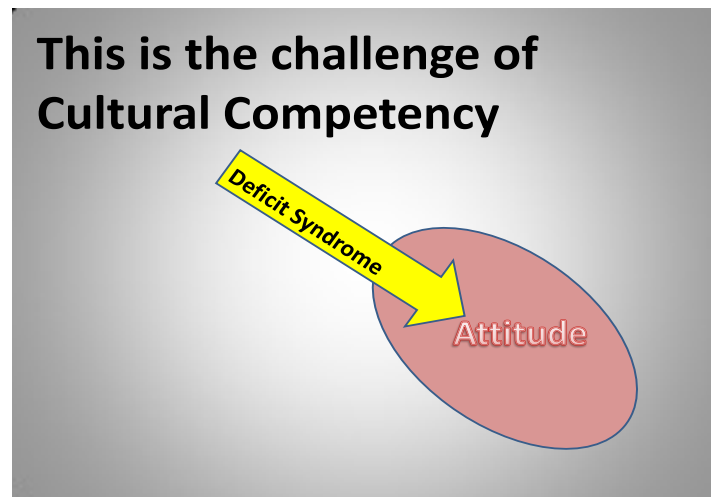
The other perspective about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency within a VET (Vocational and Educational Training) relates to the very nature of culture itself. Elliot captures the ever shifting nature of culture, 'A different view of culture, which emphasises the dynamic and agentic aspects of culture and behaviour, is assumed in our conceptualisation of cultural competence. In this view, culture consists of a network of knowledge and practices that is produced, distributed and reproduced among a collection of interconnected people (Elliot, 2005, p.490). Capturing, reproducing the natural evolution of culture of not one but almost five hundred Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations would challenge the VET (Vocational and Educational Training) sector.

The VET (Vocational and Educational Training) claim can be juxtaposed to the dual counter claim that adult education and management has to the term competency. Here where the two paradigms of adult education and management merge with less distinction and measurement is abjured in favour of a more intangible but richer school of thought, 'Managerialism involves a framework of values and beliefs about social arrangements and the distribution and ordering of resources' (Becher and Trowler, 2001, p.10). This connection is often represented in terms of tacit and explicit knowledge and their processing as single loop learning being translated into double loop learning in an endless swirl of self-discovery. It is in this domain the process of learning is placed as being more important than the end point destination. Adult education and management often draw from the same pool of literature and demonstrate consensus on many points of competency, 'a competency can be thought as the ability to do something at some level of proficiency that is usually composed of some combination of knowledge, understanding, skill, attitude and values' (Knowles and Malcolm, 2005, p.267). Bakarman conveniently reduces these components into a simpler acronym ASK (Attitude, Skills and Knowledge), 'The ingredients of ASK came from Vinke's (2002) definition of competency as the ability of an individual to select and use the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary for effective behaviour in a specific professional, social and learning situation' (Bakarman, Pg 2).



To accept skills, knowledge and attitude are the central planks derived from the dual paradigms of adult education and management then examination of all that is on offer at the moment in the world of cultural competency around Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander issues surfaces a significant flaw. There seems to be a curriculum bias towards knowledge at the expense of skills and attitude. In the very broad raft offerings

that are flooding the training landscape currently claiming to be cultural competency programs fail to recognise the centrality of competency theory. This stance projects that all three elements being skills, knowledge and attitude need to demonstrate synchronicity and that the absence of just one will result in incompetence. Possibly the hardest to influence of the skills, knowledge and attitude is the 'attitude' frame. Knowledge and skills in certain workplace settings, particularly those that are human intensive including education, health and the law are somewhat regulated by the profession however attitude is more longitudinal input and a derivative of both nature and nurture informed by the personal psyche. The attitude frame is an agnatic flavouring that one brings to skills and knowledge and is projected both intra-personally and interpersonally and is less subject to workplace regulation.



With the NTEU about to launch a 'Cultural Competency' package there are markers along the way of attempts to define the space over time. From the IHEAC (Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council) paper which was virtually an elongated literature review to a publication from the former Stronger/Smarter Institute whose authors seem to have sourced theory from that part of the library that if it were a supermarket would house 'end of run' and 'out of date' product. It was bereft of the nuances of competency theory and simply are just rebranded rhetoric from any baseline 1980 MBA (Masters of Business Administration).

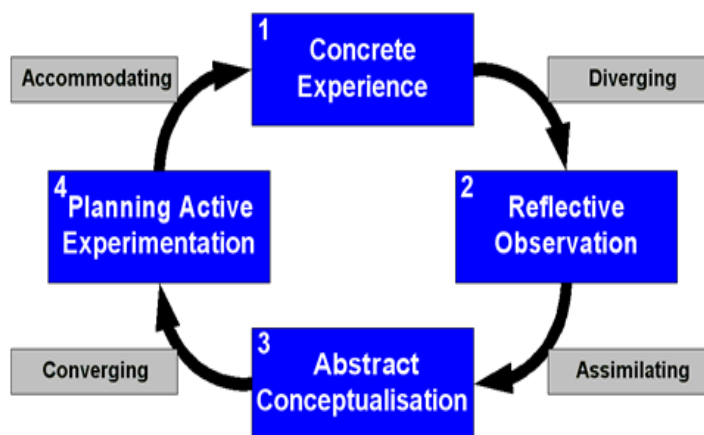
Most of the language and intent of many current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency programs seems to be locked in the same conceptual and intellectual time warp. In these programs the inputs and references consistent with contemporary 'competency theory' seem absent. This very clearly highlighted in the launch of Universities Australia National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities. The package while comprehensive could be mistaken for a raft of 'best practise' meshed with cultural awareness, 'It is about, or appears to be about, ensuring that all Australian students possess indigenous(sic) cultural competency and that all academics possess the competence to incorporate indigenous(sic) elements into their teaching and research (The Australian 2012, p.10). As succinct as this descriptor may be, the package negates any semblance of competency theory which makes it intellectually and functionally vulnerable. It is of little wonder that on its launch it immediately drew criticism from many quarters including the accusation of social engineering, 'There are those, of course, who would use universities for purposes other than criticism. They believe that universities can be used for the purposes of social engineering, to make a certain type of person, hence a "better world" (The Australian 2012, p.10). Likewise the central element in it the National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency, as part of the Universities Australia response struggles for credibility in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where the perception is held that it

was conceived without substantive community consultation. If this is the case the irony is that the ‘cultural competency’ national frame could have been conceived in a ‘culturally incompetent manner? Missing from all of the current offerings is firstly the translation into workplace practise as the essence of ‘competency theory as well as the theoretical augmentation by leading writers in the field such the likes of Marzano (2012) and Sternberg (2007) among others?

This serious omission bolsters the claim that many so-called cultural competency programs are rarely more than cultural awareness exercises and as such fall short of authentic conceptual understanding yet alone delivering any form of competence at all. They seem to be submerged in the thick murkiness of a conceptual schizophrenic soup that emanates from the three paradigmatic pulls without any real competency that actually understands competence itself, ‘Cross cultural competence cannot be reduced to a crash course in doing business with non-western partners’ (Magnala, 2005, p.204). What they lack is the transformative process that should be emblematic of competency training which tactically takes salient lessons and insights and translates them into workplace praxis. This gives rise to skills such as, ‘Cultural frame switching which is a good example of flexible and discriminative use of cultural knowledge to grasp experiences in a changing sociocultural milieu. The reflectivity, sensitivity and flexibility that define the cultural core of cultural competence are epitomised in the following reflection of Susanna Harrington’. Harrington in Sparrow (2000) talks further of the skill when in different cultural environments of embracing convergent and divergent strategies depending on the situation. Cultural frame switching is central to the transformative process leading to the new sophisticated and informed praxis.

The Transformative Process

One of the earliest writers of transformative learning comes from the work of David Kolb (1984, p.38) whereby he saw the drive towards competence is inextricably linked to experientialism or as he would have it ‘ the process is whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience’. While also from the eighties the Kolb Learning Cycle draws on both converging and diverging skills of thinking and is used extensively still today. This is an essentially simple tool that processes any concrete experience through a filter deeper reflection to a richer level of thinking. From this abstract conceptualisations or new ideas are formed and surfaced that then lead to workplace translation through active experimentation that then leads to the next concrete experience. The new concrete experience then tests out of the abstract concept and the cycle then moves into a double cycle that is often referred and represented in organisational learning as ‘double loop’ learning.



Source: <http://www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk/kolb>

The application and relevance of this model should be translated to the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency. If the myriad of so called Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency programs were faithful to the essence of 'competency theory' then the end product would be such that it had a specific and clear 'workplace' implication. The specific ramification for the nation's professionals whether they are from education, health or the law is not the acquisition of a new competency called 'cultural competency' but rather how they use their professional skills and competencies more strategically.

This in many ways has been the basis for the development La Trobe University Melbourne response in the space. Accepting that cultural competency 'can't be taught', La Trobe University prefers to engage in the domain of 'cultural literacy' through the Wominjeka La Trobe. Thus each La Trobe University student from 2014 will undertake a base online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture program designed to equip them with authentic concepts or a literacy that equips them for their desired professions to make suitable strategic and tactical decisions in the workplace. It targets and encourages them to test basic assumptions of their tacit knowledge base and in doing so presents as a giant leap in what the earliest proponents of cultural competence sought to do. In other words how from anyone's portfolio of skills might they arrange their professional skills to better engage their client? This argument if extended may infer that there may be no such thing as 'cultural competency', just competence.

The natural extension brings into contention that cultural knowledge is part of the process towards competence and not the end product, for only in very unique situations could someone be culturally competent and certainly not anyone that is outside that particular cultural group. It is basically a matter of semantics that one can be competent in a cross cultural setting. The end product is professional competence and standard and not cultural competence. For it is difficult to fathom how accelerated 'dot paintings' or 'making meaningful damper' might influence on the ground programmatic delivery? The term cultural competency should be split and the nexus between the two words is the immutable translation process. Certainly at the core of competence is a desire for lifting your craft from proficiency to mastery and this would include knowing the client culturally through a cultural literacy, 'the justification for the pedagogy of the oppressed: the contradiction between the oppressor and the oppressed and how to overcome oppression and oppressors. Liberation is not a gift, not self-achievement but a mutual process' (Friere, 1970, p.71). There are even more obstacles in the way.

The Lone Ranger Complex

Compounding the challenge of cultural competency is the ignominious existence of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fit in the broader Australia paradigmatic landscape. Driven by over two centuries of societal marginalisation the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is in almost every representation, from the arts to economics, on the fringe. This has seeped into the national psyche that fuelled by the great silent apartheid, 'The silent apartheid as a detrimental phenomenon is bolstered not by the vacuum that it creates through the sustenance of ignorance, but by the raft of inappropriate by-products it produces in order to fill void. These by-products are themselves often covert and present not as racism but as an 'ignorance' that elicits professional practise that is derisive and harmful to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the general population.' (Rose, 2006, p.3). As an authentic contributor to national psyche it is essentially, 'How we view humanity really matters. If we insist on seeing humans as morally degraded

parasites then every significant technical problem from the millennium bug to the avian flu will be feared as a potential catastrophe beyond our control. Today's intellectual persuasion and cultural distortion distracts all humans from confronting challenges that lie ahead.' (Donnelly, 2007, p.40).

The image used at the start of this paper is that of the iconic and enigmatic personality of the Lone Ranger. As one of America's earliest fabled super heroes donning a tight fitting body suit, a mask and an obsequious Indigenous sidekick was all he needed to assume legendary status of a bygone era. The series migrated from radio to television with very few fans ever knowing the real significance of his sidekick called Tonto. Tonto always took a subservient role with the only expertise that he offered the Lone Ranger was the mysterious and exotic peripheral 'native' wisdom all the time supporting the western dominance and reinforcing stereotypes. A deeper understanding and greater transparency lies however in Tonto's name, Tonto is a Spanish word that translated into English roughly means 'stupid or dim witted'.

Since the 1960's dedicated Lone Ranger fans around the world were subliminally bombarded with negativity about Indigenous people. As subtle and remote as it may seem in this country it did feed along with both overt and covert inputs dating as far back as Darwin's measuring skulls to some of the more recent rhetoric surrounding notion of 'closing the gap' an insatiable appetite; a deficit syndrome that has been hard to satisfy. The original Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in its reference to 'underlying issues' in service delivery to communities fell short of naming the phenomena. Professionally it is reaching for the 'ill-informed' psychologically default button that is at arm's length. The phenomenon which is the deficit syndrome can surface in a classroom numerous times a day. It is whenever a classroom teacher inadvertently ethnically profiles a student by mistaking the soft bigotry of low expectation with meeting a perceived need of the student. This is when a professional educator who sees an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student would rather do something other than invest in his/her dreams, relegates and determines their future to sport, art or a trade without investing in the child's dreams. Or when an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is incarcerated not because of criminality but because every other option in their life has evaporated and the pathology of the criminal justice system was for them the option of last resort. And it seemed to be there that night April's mother died.

How then in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency programs will any program be so intrusive that it will crack the 'Lone Ranger Complex' deeply set in the tacit knowledge domain and influence the 'attitudinal frame' that resides so deeply in both the personal and the national psyche. True competency around culture will only be possible once the great collective unconsciousness is addressed and a new grand narrative falls in place. I personally struggle to see how the current offerings in cultural awareness or cultural competency alone ever permeate it but, I do have faith in the more realistic notion of 'cultural literacy'. Certainly very few cultural competency programs that I have seen provide the potential to challenge the national deficit syndrome or the Lone Ranger Complex.

The Complexity of Cultural Competency Myth

A range of mythologies circle the concept of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency. With the anticipation of the Australian Curriculum that will from the early years to the end of the compulsory years carry Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and simultaneously the Universities Australia developed the National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency out of trial sites exploring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency on the horizon. These

drivers may certainly bring a level of optimism but again has the necessary intellectual interrogation been done?

Certain significant contradiction exists. While most cultural competency programs deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture the irony is that at the seat of anything that resembles cultural competency is something that has nothing to do with Aboriginal culture itself, 'In moving towards cultural competency or awareness of self and others the caregiver explores his or her own culture and traditions to understand self, personal values, assumptions and beliefs'. (Valaskakis, Stout and Guimand, 2009, p.247). Competent professional behaviour must include the ability not to deconstruct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, but to deconstruct your own worldview. This can be initiated by cultural awareness of the other cultural state but then must be drilled into further, 'By the same argument, laypeople may also become aware of the culturocentric nature of their own cultural beliefs as they expose to ideas from foreign cultures'(Elliot, 2005, p.500). Therefore any semblance of cultural competence is vested not in understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, but understanding your own cultural setting and worldview.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is merely the trigger and not the end product. This aspect seems to be rarely evident in the current offerings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural offerings. This is part of the processing and translating work practice consistent with Kolb.

Also within the mythological window frame of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency is the proposition that 'cultural competency' is a single competency. Previously put in this paper is the concept that to be competent in service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is contingent on the appropriate deployment of professional competencies. Therefore a significant danger exists if one presumes that at the conclusion of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency program that they are in fact competent and this runs the risk of a of creating false expectations both on the part the professional and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Compounding the danger further is the possibility that as a result of the very best intentions counter intuition with the opposite result of the intention can result, 'However under some circumstances, cultural contacts may also promote culturocentrism and intercultural animosity' (Elliot, 2005, p.500).

Conclusion

As a community Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are exceptionally well endowed with thinkers from our Elders to those connected to community and family and the emerging second generation of academics. Before Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency becomes the new platform of 'political correctness' there are some questions and understandings that need to take place.

Firstly the terms culture and competency must be separated and interrogated. As the western academy has created a conceptual fog around the tripartite term competency, then what version is what we want and need? Excessive promulgation of cultural awareness programs as thinly disguised cultural awareness programs will only divert focus and resources from the greater need of higher standards in service and

operational delivery. The conceptual mire first needs to be filtered but most of all we need to understand it both from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldview and from competency theory.

We also need to be louder and more vigilant about the 'Lone Ranger Complex' for the deficit syndrome is so insidious that it can penetrate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews and that any semblance cultural competency should not be understood as a mere standalone competency.

And certainly new contested concepts such as 'cultural literacy' as embedded in Wominjeka La Trobe better define the pursuit needed to be considered.

As tomorrow dawns and across the nation literally thousands of people both Indigenous and non-Indigenous will partake in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness/cultural competency exercises. When the last cucumber sandwich has been consumed along with the last gulp of filtered conference coffee what will be taken back to and what will change in the workplace the next day?

References

- Bakarman, A. Attitude, Skills and Knowledge: (ASK) A new model for Design Education. King Saud University, Saudi Arabia. <http://faculty.ksu.edu.sa/10177/Documents/ASK>. sourced 01.10.2010.
- Becher, T & Trowler, P. (2001) *Academic Tribes and Territories: intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines* (2nd edition), Open University Press/SRHE, Buckingham, UK
- Bolman, L & Deal, T. (2003), *Reframing Organisations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership*, Jossey-Bass. San Francisco, USA
- Donnelly, K. (2007) *Dumbing Down: Outcome based and politically correct – the impact of the culture wars on our schools* Hardie Grant Books, Prahran.
- Elliot, A. (2005), *Handbook of Competence and Motivation*, Guilford Press, New York.
- Furedi, F. (2006), *Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?: Confronting 21st Century Philistinism*, Continuum Press, London
- Grote, E. (2008), 'Principles and Practices of Cultural Competency: A Review of Literature', *Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC)*, Canberra.
- Hatch, M. & Cunliffe, A. (2006), *A Organisational Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, United Kingdom
- Friere, P. (1970), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum International Publishing. New York. USA
- Queensland Government, TAFE Queensland.
http://www.tafe.qld.gov.au/courses/flexible_study/competency Sourced 15.10.2010
- Hofstede, G. (2001), *Cultural Consequences*, Sage Press, California, USA.
- Knowles, M. & Malcolm, S. (2005), *The Adult Learner*, Butterworth-Heinemann Press, Burlington, USA.
- Kolb, D. (1984), *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, USA.
- Leavitt, R. (2010), *Cultural Competency – A Lifelong Journey to Cultural Proficiency*, Slack Incorporated Press, New Jersey. USA.
- Magnala, S. (2005), *Cross Cultural Competence*, Routledge Press, New York, USA
- Marzano, R. and Yanoski, D. 2012, *Using Common Core Standards to Enhance Classroom Instruction & Assessment*, Solution Tree Press, USA
- Miller, G. Brautigan, D. & Gerlach, S. (2006), *Business Intelligence competency Centers: A team approach maximising competitive advantage*, John Wiley and Son, New Jersey, USA

- Pollock, M. (2008), *Everyday Racism*, New Press, New York, USA.
- Ranzin, R., McConnochie, K. and Nolan, W. (2010), *Psychology and Indigenous Australians: Foundations of Cultural Competence*, Palgrave-Macmillan Press. South Yarra Australia.
- Rose, M. (2006), *The Great Silent Apartheid*. Centre for Strategic Education,
file:///C:/Users/a1013316/AppData/Local/Temp/Mark_Rose_community_development_11Oct07.pdf
- Sparrow, L. (2000), Beyond Multicultural Man: Complexities of Identity, *International Journal of Multicultural Relations*, N24: p.173-202
- Sternberg, R.J. 2007, *Wisdom, Intelligence, and Creativity Synthesized*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Teel, K. and Obidah, J. (2008), *Building Racial and Cultural Competence in the Classroom*, Teachers College Press, New York, USA.
- The Australian, Tuesday, January 17th 2012. "Universities are not social engineering schools". Greg Melleuish, Page 10
- Universities Australia, (2011), National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities, Canberra ACT.
- Valaskakis, G., Stout, M and Guimand, E. (2009), *Restoring the Balance- First Nations Women, Community and Culture*, University of Manitoba Press, Canada.
- Yukl, G. (1981), *Leadership in Organizations*, Prentice Hall Publishers, New Jersey, USA.
- Zapf, P. and Roesch, R. (2008), *Evaluation of Competence to Stand Trial*, OUP Oxford, Oxford, UK

Protocols of engagement with Indigenous communities to address postgraduate enrolments

Speechley-Golden, Vicki-Ann

Abstract

The commitment by universities to foster a collegial and mutually respectful collaboration with Indigenous communities has been seen as a major step forward in addressing systemic barriers that have historically isolated communities from enjoying the fruits of such a relationship. To enable this commitment to build long-term benefits that are mutually sustainable, cultural protocols and ethical standards must be adopted to ensure outcomes are both systemically and culturally acceptable for Indigenous communities and the university sector. Such standards must provide opportunities for Indigenous people to be involved in the development and implementation of policies and practices designed to guide and inform programs around research, teaching, support and governance initiatives. This is particularly important to the engagement of Indigenous postgraduate students. This paper will address the development of a national and international Indigenous postgraduate forum and global Elders alliance, which is being proposed by World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) to address these and other issues as they pertain to the enrolment and progression of Indigenous students at the postgraduate level.

For ease of reading, the use of the term Indigenous (unless otherwise noted) will refer to Global Indigenous peoples.

Introduction

Indigenous Elders are our book of knowledge. The emerging global Indigenous academy must, in the future, guide members of the western academy on how to utilise these books in meaningful and respectful ways. Indigenous academics must also be prepared to work with Elders in culturally and academically mentoring Indigenous postgraduate students as part of their commitment to providing leadership within their families and tribes. These leaders will help to address the absence of cultural protocols in the development of academic programs and research, which have for too long helped to isolate our people from self-determining our own interest (Indigenous Elder, 2012).

In the absence of a significant cohort of Indigenous cultural supervisors, the move by WINHEC to establish a global network of Indigenous postgraduates, students and Elders will be integral to the development and implementation of the Global Indigenous Academy and the provision of emerging leaders within the sector and the community who are intellectually and culturally astute. The integrity and scholarship of Elders and Indigenous academics currently excluded from the supervision of Indigenous postgraduate students and research will become more accessible as the Global Indigenous Academy, under WINHEC, develops. This move by WINHEC to grow the Global Indigenous Academy will provide a cultural alternative to build upon the plethora of reports produced by non-Indigenous researchers who, for too long, used Indigenous voices to legitimise their work without due recognition being given to the Elders and academics as their source. The development of a national and international Indigenous postgraduate forum and a global Elders alliance through WINHEC will therefore profile the voices of Indigenous academics, researchers, and Elders in addressing these issues.

Carjuzaa and Fenimore-Smith (n.d.) succinctly place contemporary Indigenous research, stating that:

Although Indigenous peoples continue to be the most researched peoples worldwide, research in Indigenous communities is becoming more politicized as tribal [Indigenous] communities voice their desire to maintain control over their knowledge and resources.

The panoply of Indigenous research voices are slowly breaking free from the Western paradigm of research, establishing a place for themselves and their research within the academy. Kuokkanen (2000) positions Indigenous 'epistemological truth' [by stating it] is created and restored by storytelling, discussions, evaluation of previous activities, memorized experiences and phenomena as well as through intuition."

On the other hand the Western research paradigm is sterile and devoid of an 'authoritative' voice on cultural issues, the participants are silent observers and the cultural authority often relegated to a position of insignificance or that of a minor role. Maracle (1992 cited in Kuokkanen, 2000) notes that:

Academics waste a great deal of effort deleting character, plot, and story from theoretical arguments. By referring to instances and examples, previous human interaction, and social events, academics convince themselves of their own objectivity and persuade us that the story is no longer a story... It takes a lot of work to delete the emotional and passionate self from story, to de-humanize story into "theory". So we [Indigenous peoples] don't do it. We humanize theory by fusing humanity's need for common direction-theory-with story.

The visionary Crow Chief Plenty Coups understood the implications and importance of education stating: "Education is your most powerful weapon. With education, you are the white man's [sic] equal; without education, you are his [sic] victim, and so shall remain all your lives" (Little Big Horn College, 2009) The Elders give us the knowledge to ensure that we are no longer victims, and the current Indigenous global academy will give us the tools to ensure we can use this knowledge so we remain equals.

Indigenous Elders hold the cultural authority for Indigenous peoples and often ask the difficult questions of universities on behalf of their people and are then engaged to instruct the sector as to how to address them here in Australia. By encouraging partnerships that develop Indigenous postgraduates within the Indigenous academy, the Elders are ensuring that the future of the Indigenous academy is culturally competent to undertake such rigorous research. Global Elders, through their guidance, encouragement, and support ensure that both the current and future Indigenous academics hold true the ideals of cultural integrity, accuracy, and sustainability.

Equally important is the role of Indigenous postgraduates for without these aspiring academics, the future lifeblood of the Indigenous academy and the future leadership of communities would be severely limited. With this in mind Indigenous postgraduate students look to the Elders and the Indigenous academics to help them become culturally competent to undertake the arduous research that they will need to engage in to bring about change within the lives of their communities in the future. They aspire, through the guidance, encouragement, and support of the Elders, to hold true the ideals of cultural accountability, accuracy, and sustainability.

Even though limited in numbers, it is the global Indigenous academy, that currently attempts to ensure that Indigenous research and researchers adopt the skills required to pass the rigorous conventions of the contemporary global western academy. This cohort of academics should be the guiding link between the Elders, the western academy, and the Indigenous researchers both early career and postgraduate. It is their role to transcribe the Elders' wishes/community needs, into achievable academic research with meaningful outcomes for both the researchers' and communities. Academia is a contrary society that can be difficult to negotiate successfully, however, like all societies it is easier to negotiate when guided by someone from within that society. However, the role of Indigenous academics within the sector is often limited because the systems' historical incapacity to adopt a framework that promotes and links the inclusion of Indigenous postgraduate students and leadership.

The commitment by universities to increase Indigenous involvement in the development and implementation of policies and practices designed to guide and inform programs around research, teaching, support and governance initiatives will be limited while cultural barriers continue to exist. This will continue to effect the engagement of Indigenous Elders, academics and students at the postgraduate level while the scholarship of cultural protocols and ethical standards continue to be negated. The development and adoption of such policies, protocols, and practices is of paramount importance if the sector is serious about the engagement of Indigenous people within the Higher Education sector both nationally and internationally, particularly at the postgraduate level (Robertson, 2012).

There is no one Indigenous cohort within the Higher Education sector that can develop such policies, protocols, and practices on behalf of the entire Indigenous sector. It needs the wisdom and guidance of the Elders to ensure the cultural integrity is addressed locally. Such an initiative will fail without the backing, guidance, and input of Elders working in collaboration with the Indigenous academics within the contemporary Indigenous academy. This will profile the value of cultural scholarship within the western academy whilst also ensuring that the initiative surpasses the conventions of the present-day academy both globally and within their nation-states. Nonetheless, such a process also needs to be inclusive of the Indigenous postgraduates as they are the future academics, the researchers and those who will be equipped to more readily support the development of the next generation of postgraduates. If they are not considered as, serious stakeholders they will not take ownership of it and therefore it is unlikely to have currency for them. Consequently, it is unlikely that during the evolution of these postgraduates becoming the new academy these policies, protocols and practices will be in danger of being discarded and the academy will continue to be culturally sterile and outdated.

It is increasingly recognised that there must be a knowledge transition plan between Elders, Indigenous academics, and postgraduate students in order to retain the historical and corporate knowledge within the business, political and historical sectors of universities and nation-states. Individual businesses and corporations ensure the retention of their corporate knowledge is protected through transition plans. Nation-states keep their historical knowledge cohesively, while both correcting and adding historical knowledge to build upon and protect the knowledge of previous historians. Similarly, families ensure the preservation of their history through knowledge transition from one generation to the next. This is a knowledge transition plan in action in its most basic form. While knowledge transition holds a unique position in the lives of Indigenous people, it is important that such a process be included in the development of Indigenous postgraduate students.

It is imperative that Indigenous peoples' knowledge, culture, histories, and protocols are preserved for future generations. The most astute way in which to achieve this is through knowledge transition. Within the academic sphere, this knowledge transition must be the realm of Indigenous academics and Elders. The adoption of a knowledge transition plan within Indigenous postgraduate enrolment would also incorporate processes around cultural competencies, graduate attributes, and responsive community research. As generations of Indigenous families unfold, and Elders with cultural knowledge pass on at a concerning rate, the synergy between Indigenous postgraduate progression, higher education and cultural heritage and protection becomes all the more important.

The time of the Pharaoh's has passed and the Pharaoh culture is extinct. However, the knowledge of its existence, customs, laws, and belief exist in the pictographs/hieroglyphics. Nevertheless, these stories are still in the process of being understood with the de-codifying of the messages/lessons within the hieroglyphics. Notwithstanding this, there is no guarantee that we have deciphered the code correctly and are in fact reading the correct story. The knowledge transition of the time of the Pharaohs was broken and all direct knowledge lost.

If contemporary Indigenous cultures do not want to have the same fate befall them as the Pharaohs, they need to actively ensure the lineation of the knowledge transition is unbroken from one generation to the

next. Within academia, it is especially important that this knowledge transition be maintained in culturally appropriate ways that retain its integrity whilst surpassing the scrutiny and rigors that are often imposed within the Western academy.

This creates a difficult cultural/research paradigm for experienced Indigenous academics and a cultural and academic minefield for inexperienced Indigenous early career academics and postgraduates. Successfully navigating these minefields can be achieved through accessing the cultural integrity of the Elders and the guidance of the Indigenous academics within the academy.

The Indigenous Elders forum proposed by WINHEC will prove to be a unique forum through which the corporate knowledge of their nation-states can be included in global initiatives of interest. It has taken the western education system an enormous amount of time to come to some recognition that this knowledge is important, needs preservation and elevating to an equal status to their own Western canon. Predominantly it is in first world nations where this recognition has begun. Although this is in itself, a huge step there is a considerable way to go before there is an equally significant recognition of the meritorious value of cultural knowledge in the western system. The academy is not yet at a point where Indigenous knowledge is given a platform of acceptance equal to that of non-Indigenous knowledge and it is in the area of postgraduate supervision where this cultural anomaly is most obvious (Robertson, 2012).

It is a devastating fact that many of the global esteemed Indigenous Elders, 'the cultural states men and women' are passing before they have had a chance to add to the Indigenous knowledge reservoir profiled within the sector. Another distressing fact is that while Indigenous knowledge is not given rightful recognition within the sector, many of the future global Indigenous academy leaders (Indigenous postgraduates) are not able to interact with the Elders as cultural supervisors within their studies. Their only recourse is to rely on the present Indigenous academy to pass on the teachings and guidance that they received from these Elders. However, the Indigenous academics are not positioned within the sector as supervisors they are not in a position to pass this knowledge on as postgraduate supervisors themselves and the transition of that knowledge is therefore impeded.

Established partnership links between the Elders and the current Indigenous academics within the academy will ensure that the Elders knowledge, protocols and guidance is passed on. It will also ensure that the localised research needs of Indigenous peoples' are highlighted and undertaken in a manner that produces meaningful outcomes for these communities. "It is important for Indigenous researchers to share stories in ways which are culturally relevant and useful" (Rose et.al, n.d.).

Researchers are too much humbug; we don't get to do any work, too many coming, all the time. Who sent you and what is this for? We have been researched to death! You mob want to come and talk, talk but it doesn't help us much. We get nothing out of this; we never see anything, just humbug! (Cited in Sithole et al., 2009)

Some (outside researchers) you are happy and you like them but you not sure what they are doing, no one really explains about this 'research' thing my dear. Yeah I have worked with them mob, many times but only helping like. I work with different mob, but never feel I was like them mob (Cited in Sithole et al., 2009).

There are many stories like these and the researchers are not always non-Indigenous. The only way to ensure these sorts of stories do not keep being perpetuated is through 'proper mentoring cultural way' through the Elders and current Indigenous academy. There is a need to saturate the research market with appropriate culturally trained Indigenous researchers to ensure that any research concerning Indigenous peoples cannot claim that there is a lack of suitably qualified Indigenous researchers available.

The Elders are the conduits between Indigenous communities and the Indigenous academy. They bind the two together in addition to ensuring that the right research is undertaken in a manner that is culturally

sensitive, ensuring that the cultural protocols and ethical standards are systemically and culturally acceptable (Robertson, 2012).

By forming partnerships with Elders, the western academy will ensure it has credibility within the community. It will also ensure that the research has the best chance of success of engaging Indigenous communities, as they are more likely to make themselves available to be involved in research if it has Elder involvement and endorsement. The community is also more likely to be involved and have genuine interaction with the research if they can see meaningful outcomes for the community and that their Elders are participating.

In the early 1990s, a group of Indigenous Australian postgraduates undertook a research project culminating in the report *Research Project into the Barriers which Indigenous Students must Overcome in Undertaking Postgraduate Studies: Indigenous Perspectives of Postgraduate Education* (CAPA, 1997). The key barrier to Indigenous-Australian postgraduate study identified in this report almost 20 years ago are unfortunately still barriers today: Supervision, Mentoring and Support, Raising Expectations, and Cultural Differences, to name a few. More recently, the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) also found the same issues as barriers to Indigenous postgraduate studies (IHEAC, 2006, 2008, 2010).

Although for different reasons, appropriate postgraduate supervision is still a key issue. In the 90s, Indigenous-Australian postgraduates called for access to Indigenous-Australian co-supervisors, often Elders or other esteemed knowledgeable people, as they recognized that this would be a critical way in which to address the concerns they were experiencing with their studies. Initially this was a difficult task to achieve, as there was institutional resistance. (CAPA, 1997)

Through the student's insistence, there are an increasing number of Indigenous-Australians students demanding access to Indigenous-Australian supervisors. Whilst there are some examples of Elders being engaged as cultural supervisors, access to cultural supervisors is something that is yet to be formally recognized and adhered to by a large percentage of universities across the sector. The high ratio of Indigenous postgraduates to the availability of Indigenous supervisors continues to impede many Indigenous postgraduates from accessing culturally astute supervisors. This can have serious implications for their postgraduate progress and for their research. It is difficult to maintain research and/or postgraduate benchmarks if you are constantly having to 'teach the teacher' cultural aspects of your research and/or the reasons why they are included in your postgraduate work. Having an Indigenous academic as a supervisor eliminates the 'teach the teachers' aspect of the work and having an Elder ensures the cultural content is both accurate and presented in a culturally credible manner.

Currently there are few among the Australian Indigenous academies that take on the role of mentoring Indigenous postgraduates. This may mean they handpick particular ones to succeed and nurture and at the other end of the spectrum, they simply do not engage with Indigenous postgraduates. It is very hard to find Indigenous academics willing to supervise Indigenous postgraduates although all claim they are willing. The reality (as National Indigenous Postgraduate Association Aboriginal Corporation (NIPAAC) has found) is this is not always the case.

So how can the continuity of cultural integrity be assured. WINHEC has the capacity to ensure this continuity through the development of a Global Indigenous Postgraduate Network/Alliance/Consortium, similar to the Global Indigenous Elder Alliance, by making this network/alliance/consortium a formal organisation under WINHEC's stewardship. Exactly what this network/alliance/consortium would resemble has yet to be determined. However, it is imperative that Indigenous Postgraduates develop this conception in consultation with WINHEC and the Global Indigenous Elders Alliance.

As Rose states,

“contemporary” Indigenous research demands dual currencies. If research is truly aimed at bringing about significant paradigm shifts, then it needs to be read and interpreted by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. ... Research which crosses the bridge in multiple ways of knowing and being has the potential to foster the development and expression of authentic identity and to make a rich contribution to our collective knowing and wisdom. (Rose, et.al, n.d.)

Paton adds Indigenous people “look at everything in an inter-related and inter-connected way. [They] don’t see things in isolation” (Rose, et.al, n.d.). Therefore, Indigenous research needs to be conducted from an Indigenous paradigm with Indigenous cultural integrity. This integrity can only be guaranteed by the participation of Elders and the Indigenous academy. This will enable research to be conducted in a way that meets both cultural and institutional standards and ensure that a knowledge transition plan is in place.

In concluding this paper was developed to raise concerns around Indigenous postgraduate students, the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and knowledge transitions plans and the responsibility of Indigenous academics to take on a more rigorous mentoring role for Indigenous students engaging in postgraduate studies within the sector. The concerns outlined in this paper will hopefully act to encourage the current global Indigenous academy to be more responsive to the needs of the up and coming Indigenous academy. Indigenous postgraduate students have a critical role to play in the debate about cultural progression and protection and research the world over. “Every society needs educated people, but the primary responsibility of educated people is to bring wisdom back into the community and make it available to others so that the lives they are leading make sense” (Deloria cited in Carjuzaa and Fenimore-Smith, n.d.). Indigenous communities are no exception to this situation.

References

- Carjuzaa, J., & Fenimore-Smith, K. (un). The Give Away Spirit: Reaching a Shared Vision of Ethical Indigenous Research Relationships, *Journal of Educational Controversy*, Retrieved from <http://cedar.wvu.edu/jec/>
- Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations Inc. (CAPA), (1997), Research project into the barriers which Indigenous students must overcome in undertaking postgraduate studies: Indigenous perspectives of postgraduate education. (pp. 101): The Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations Inc. (CAPA). Retrieved from <http://www.capa.edu.au>
- Indigenous Elder, (2012), [Private Conversation]
- Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC), (2006), Improving Indigenous outcomes and enhancing culture and knowledge in Australian higher education. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC), (2008), Supplementary Submission to the Review of Australian Higher Education Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC), (2010), Submission to consultation paper: meeting Australia's' research workforce needs: a consultation paper to inform the development of the Australian Government's research workforce strategy. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Kuokkanen, R. (2000), Towards an "Indigenous paradigm" from a Sami perspective, *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, XX(2), 411-436 Retrieved from http://www2.brandonu.ca/library/cjns/20.2/cjnsv20n1_pg411-436.pdf
- Little Big Horn College, (2009), Apsáalooke writing tribal histories project: Apsáalooke Crow Indians of Montana Tribal Histories. Retrieved from <http://lib.lbhc.cc.mt.us/history/3.09.php>
- Robertson, B. (2012). [Private Conversation.].
- Rose, M., Bamblett, E., & Paton, D. (n.d.), Indigenous research Methodologies, Retrieved from <http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID+9w7oiwn1qrp4>
- Sithole, B., Hunter-Xenie, H., & Dunnett, D. (2009). Research as opportunities for Aboriginal engagement: a case study of the Aboriginal research practitioners' network. *Learning Communities: International Journal of Learning in Social Contexts* (Indigenous Community Engagement Edition), 62-85 Retrieved from http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/spill/journal/IJLSC_5_Dec2009.pdf

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the listening assistance of colleagues and friends who either listened to me or gave me guidance on aspects of this paper during its conceptual stages, Mr Gavin Klibbe, Ms Michaela Costigan. The latter gave invaluable feedback on the draft paper. Furthermore, without the financial support of the ICEPP Office and the Griffith University Council of Elders, I would not have been able to present this paper at the 2012 WINHEC Indigenous Research Conference in Taiwan. Thank you to all, I greatly appreciate it.

An organisational analysis of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium²

Jacob, W., Lee, C-W., Wehrheim, N., Gökbel, V., Dumba J, C., and Yin, S

Abstract

In this paper, we offer an organisational analysis of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC), aiming especially at achieving nation-building and self-determination for indigenised higher education efforts. We use a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges approach to examine WINHEC's organisational contributions, effectiveness, unique aspects, and challenges. Our findings carry some important implications to further the indigenous engagement and governance within indigenous higher education worldwide.

Background

Although indigenous academia has existed in certain forms and at various levels for millennia, it has only recently entered mainstream awareness, motivating diverse researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to acknowledge its importance in societies and to the histories of people worldwide. This significance needs both mainstream and indigenous-oriented higher education to preserve indigenous values, knowledge systems, philosophies, and wisdom production (Chilisa, 2012; Dei, 2011; Denzin, Lincoln, & Tuhiwai, 2008; Kovach, 2009; McGovern, 1999; Memmi, 2006; Mutua & Swadener, 2004; Reagan, 2010; Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Smith, 2012; Teasdale & Rhea, 2000). During the development of indigenous higher education worldwide from 1900 to the present, old issues and new directions emerge as a result of dynamic relationship efforts between indigenous organisations and among diverse groups. Regarding indigenous education efforts, several scholars argue that the central topic debated by all kinds of international organisations is the general lack of educational success among the peoples (Abu-Saad & Champagne, 2006; Brayboy, et al. 2012; Huffman, 2008, 2010). In addition, over the past few decades, indigenous peoples around the world have confronted various developments that often complicate the issue of their educational achievement. Two of the developments are of particular importance: (1) the dynamic relationships between indigenous populations and the state; and (2) the definition and recognition of indigenous peoples' ownership, use, and management of language, identity, culture, land, and other resources. Struggles regarding nation-building, sovereignty, universal education, land recognition, and language, culture, and identity preservation are common among indigenous peoples globally.

The first development has led to a tide of political organising efforts (or at times, reorganising) within indigenous communities. Inter-communal and local organisations, national and regional confederations, and international linkages have risen rapidly across five continents. Sometimes these organising efforts encounter great resistance from nation states and are carried out in locations where indigenous populations comprise only a fraction of the current population. The second development extends in the aftermath of World War II, where we have witnessed a dramatic proliferation and involvement of pivotal international organisations and actors. Regardless of their various specific organisational objectives, multilateral organisations (e.g., UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, and OECD), bilateral donor agencies (e.g., SIDA and USAID), nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and regional agencies (e.g., the regional development banks and the European Union) have come forward with pioneering declarations, political leverage, financial support, and developmental agendas in support of indigenous peoples.

² This paper was first presented at the Annual General Meeting of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC), National Dong Hwa University, Hualien, Taiwan, September 20, 2012, and published in the *Taiwan Journal of Indigenous Studies* in 2013. After substantial revisions and updates, portions of the original paper have been reprinted here with permission from the authors and *TJIS*.

Although the current outcomes fail to meet certain standards and the expectations of all stakeholders, many advances have occurred. Furthermore, the United Nations has built the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as an advisory body to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (DESA) Economic and Social Council. This forum was established with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues with respect to "economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights" (UNPFII, n.d.). This multi-mission focus limits DESA to have enough international influence to significantly affect indigenous higher education at the global level. Undoubtedly, the aforementioned organisations have made great progress regarding the development of indigenous education on national, regional, and global education policies and practices, albeit mostly at primary- and secondary-education levels. However, they did not provide globally articulated, indigenous-oriented or indigenous-based organisations for postsecondary education with an active, professional, ethical, culturally responsive, and accountable mandate. Thus, the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (hereafter WINHEC) emerged as a product of, and in response to, this history of inequity within higher education.

WINHEC rose after decades of institutional-, local-, state-, national-, and global-level initiatives to facilitate tribal nation building, self-determination, sovereignty, indigenous knowledge systems, and culturally responsive education through indigenous control of higher education. Both resulted from the drive for indigenised academic identity. The Consortium emerged as an indigenous-generated academic player to embody a set of ideas, knowledge, and innovations unique to indigenous peoples, either from times past, present, or in the process of development. According to the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2003), the term *indigenise* means "to cause to have indigenous characteristics or personnel" (p. 634). Extending this definition, the Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice (2004) contends that indigenising the academy is to make it "both responsive and responsible to First Nations goals of self-determination and well-being" (p. 113). Likewise, we further see indigenising the academy as a critically indigenous-generated praxis that involves various indigenous populations across the world. WINHEC represents a population that has suffered a history of exclusion in mainstream academia and whose members are generally economically poorer than people from mainstream societies, and strives to gain academic recognition for indigenous epistemology.

Since the beginning of the international indigenous-rights movement in the latter half of the 20th century, indigenous scholars have been obliged to balance individual rights with collective rights through international initiatives. Indigenous nations had found themselves divided by newly-imposed international borders or lumped together with other groups entirely. It became particularly challenging to find a forum that would deal with their demands instead of eschewing responsibility. Consequently, indigenous leaders began to unite with other Aboriginal groups to increase their effectiveness in fighting for their rights. Since the 1970s, increasing numbers of indigenous peoples have formed organisations across geographic and political borders, which bring international attention to their common struggles, despite their vastly different cultures and locations. These organisations vary—from global ones, such as the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, to the smaller ones, such as the Coast Salish Gathering—and reunite cultural groups divided by political borders. Various international indigenous organisations began to rise in the 1960s, initiated by indigenous scholars and non-indigenous professionals that became more aware of the need to unify the strengths of all indigenous peoples around the world and establish a sustainable development institution for their advancement.

We are careful not to over-generalise indigenous education issues in the arguments and findings sections of this study noting how each indigenous group, language, culture, and identity is in many ways unique. These unique attributes need to be recognized, and even celebrated as a best practice to help indigenous institutions realize sustained growth. Indigenous-generated priorities and subjectivities with regard to education are the key components to achieve the ideals of WINHEC. In response to globalising challenges and opportunities, we should promote universal approaches to knowledge and understanding. Rather than forcing indigenous languages, cultures, and identities to conform to one education path or another, we support a path toward indigenous sovereignty—where indigenous peoples have the ability to choose for themselves the best education solutions for their unique and often complex circumstances.

An Overview of WINHEC

Established in August 2002 in Canada, the founding nation members present at the launch of the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education were Australia, the states of Hawai'i and Alaska, and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) of the United States, Canada, the Wānanga of Aotearoa (New Zealand), and Saamiland (North Norway). WINHEC is the first global organisation to provide a forum for exchange and cooperation in improving indigenous higher education. Its principal mission is to create “a multi-nation effort to accredit, empower[,] and thus affirm native control of indigenous higher learning” (Meyer, 2005, p. 1). The Consortium works with indigenous peoples to share their vision and protect their rights, particularly with regard to preserving languages, cultures, and traditions through higher education. An indigenous-based organisation should be founded to resist the negative impact of academic neo- and post-colonialism. To construct an *indigenous subjectivity* in education, indigenising the academy, establishing a recognised accreditation mechanism, and forming indigenous knowledge systems are increasingly necessary transformations. All three indicators provide multiple platforms for indigenous sustainable development. Hence, indigenous subjectivity can wield critical ethnic consciousness and power substantially, and to express indigeneity effectively through, for instance, indigenous peoples' ethnic languages and traditional knowledge (Jacob, Liu, & Lee, 2014).

It is necessary to perceive WINHEC both as an international organisation and as a movement since it seeks to facilitate cultural exchange and academic dialogue through international cooperation. To achieve global targets, the Consortium uses a particular global strategy framework (see Figure 1), which provides a common strategic approach that includes founding principles, objectives, and a rationale to establish working groups. WINHEC believes that indigenous peoples have the right to determine their way of life and their relationship with governments. In its accreditation handbook (3rd edition) approved on 25 August 2010, the Consortium adopted its founding principles on Articles 12, 13, 14, and 15, after the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in 2007 (WINHEC 2010, p. 2).

Many indigenous populations share a similar historical fate: their languages, cultures, social systems, and values have been neglected and oppressed by waves of colonisation for centuries (UNESCO, 2006). Alongside the gradual rise of human-rights awareness, indigenous peoples' desire for educational equity has increased. As part of this trend, some indigenous education leaders and scholars launched WINHEC to create an organisation strong enough to influence the future course of history: “when a dozen education leaders met in Alberta, Canada, in August 2002, [to establish WINHEC] they felt the familiar thrill of history being made” (Ambler, 2005, p. 18). “Creating an accreditation body for indigenous education initiatives and systems that identify common criteria, practices and principles by which indigenous peoples live” became one of the Consortium's essential goals (WINHEC, 2010, p. 3). Due to the uniqueness and rapidly evolving nature of the WINHEC accreditation process, it becomes a complex phenomenon to study. This inherent difficulty is also compounded by the lack of scholarly literature available about quality assurance for indigenous higher education institutions (hereafter HEIs). We particularly use the WINHEC accreditation issues in this study to suggest how its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges influence non-indigenous and indigenous peoples.

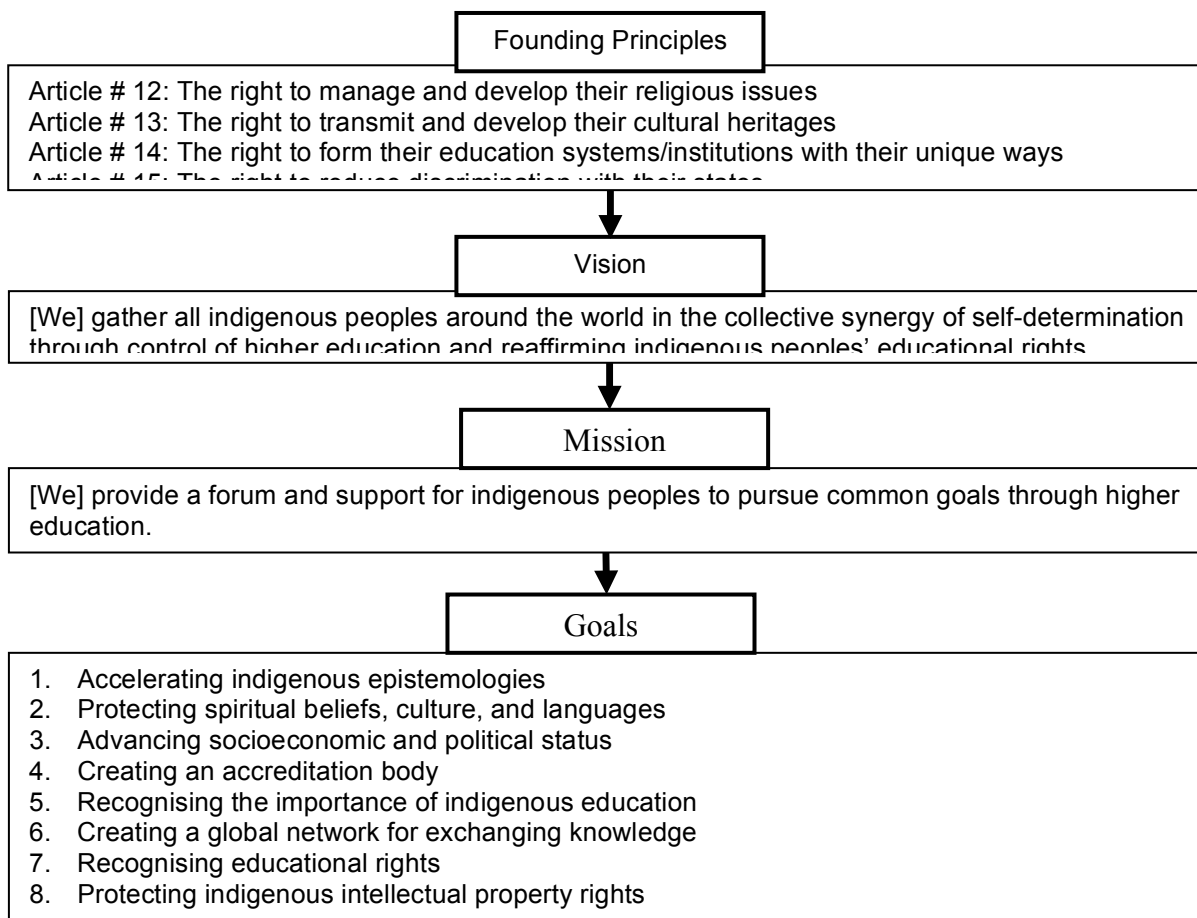


Figure 1. WINHEC's Global Strategic Framework
 Source: Created by the authors based on WINHEC (2010).

Using an organisational analysis approach, this article examines the role that WINHEC plays in the development of indigenous higher education worldwide. We are particularly interested in exploring WINHEC's contribution to indigenous engagement initiatives and comparing the nature of the Consortium's operations to those of other international organisations in the development of indigenous higher education. Research on the evaluation of indigenous organisations, especially international ones, is relatively scarce since focused scholarship related to WINHEC is a relatively new development in higher education studies. This study points out potential and generative lines of enquiry already underway, as well as some questions that are critical for researchers interested in WINHEC.

The description of the methods we used for this review is followed by brief overviews of each of the four aspects of a *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges* (SWOC) analysis. In that section, we present the features that define the nature of WINHEC. The concluding section considers the implications of this study for indigenous higher educational development practice, further research, and the continuing definition on the field of indigenous higher education development.

Methods

Resources for this study included archival documents from the existing literature and discourses (e.g., public statements documented on websites, online newspapers, blogs, social media, etc.) that are not yet published in the academic literature but are available primarily through the internet. The organizational analysis of the documents was carried out through a four-step process. First, we formed a team to examine the status of indigenous organisation studies and determined our topic as an organisational analysis employed by WINHEC, while compiling sources that were helpful to formulate the research questions. Second, we conducted a thorough literature review with a particular focus on the primary and secondary sources to support our examination of WINHEC. Third, we identified the historical data available via the official WINHEC website (www.win-hec.org), mainly targeting journal articles, meeting minutes, annual

conferences and agendas, and the organisational constitution. Fourth, we established inclusion criteria to evaluate the quality of our assembled data. For instance, we used keywords relevant to the development of WINHEC (e.g., mission and accreditation) to select documents for analysis.

This study was conducted over a one-year period from January to December 2012. It included four phases: 1) defining the research questions; 2) conducting the literature review; 3) performing the SWOC analysis; and 4) write ups for publication (Jacob, et al., 2013). All team members had a good working knowledge of the literature and experience in the field of educational organisational development. Our analytical framework identified internal and external factors that favoured and hindered the achievement of organisational goals and objectives, both explicitly stated and implicit.

Findings and Discussion

International accreditation is currently developing as one of WINHEC’s core directions, and it is worth asking whether WINHEC’s objectives and methods can meet the indigenous and non-indigenous needs recognised by its indigenised accreditation framework. To dissect the contributions, effectiveness, potentials, and challenges of WINHEC’s role in the multisectoral approach outlined by the indigenous accreditation mechanism, we employed a SWOC analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of WINHEC’s services and programmes. Figure 2 summarises the four key aspects of WINHEC’s accreditation operation.

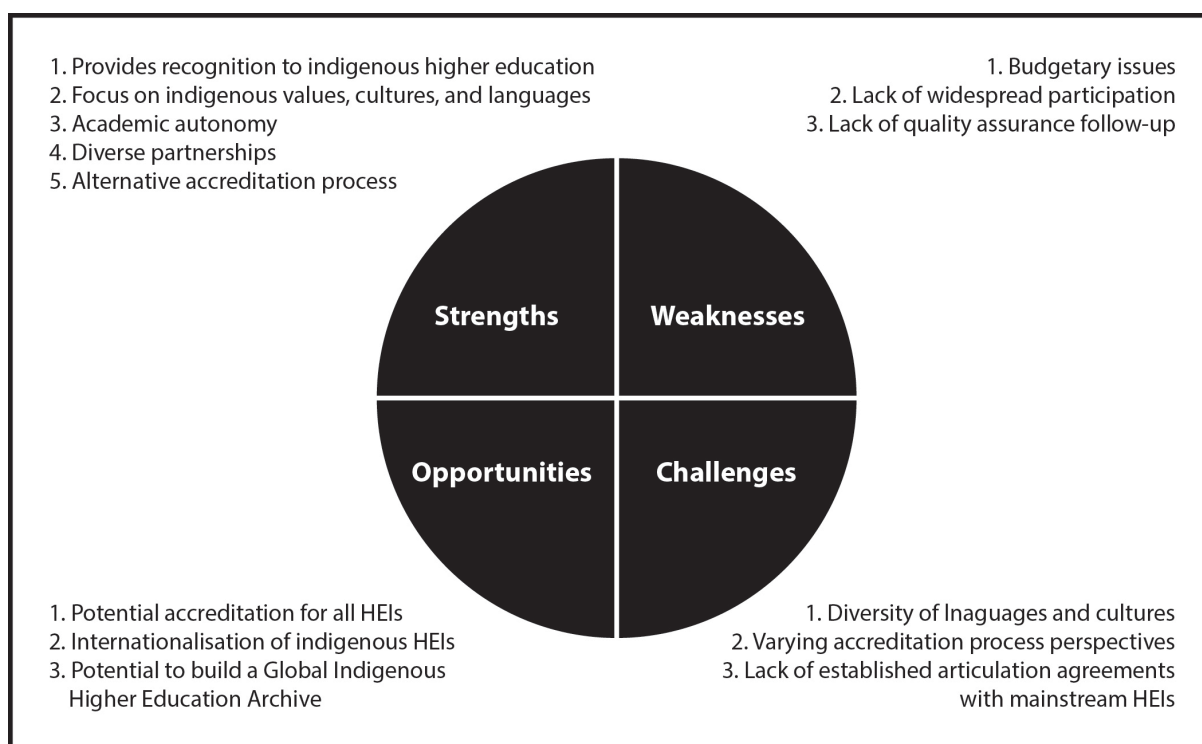


Figure 2. SWOC analysis summary of WINHEC
 Source: Adapted from Jacob and colleagues (2013, p. 37).

Strengths

Recognition. Over the past few decades, a primary reason that indigenous education reforms efforts fail in many countries has been the absence of indigenous engagement and the loss of indigenous identity within mainstream education systems. When indigenous higher education is officially recognised and accredited, it is helpful to overcome the inequalities and injustices that inevitably occur from these fail education reform efforts. Recognising and accrediting indigenous higher education institutions and programmes becomes a positive symbol around which to reconstruct indigenous subjectivity and value human rights in the formal higher education system. Moreover, recognised accreditation is a practical step to transforming indigenous

peoples' endangered status and marginalised condition. The advantage of official recognition is obtaining identity from diverse indigenous and non-indigenous peoples publicly, legitimately, and internationally.

Indigenous values, cultures, and languages. A unique element of WINHEC accreditation as compared to non-indigenous-based accreditation bodies is its focus on indigenous values, cultures, and languages. Therefore, indigenous and non-indigenous peoples are encouraged to pay more attention to their worldviews, cultures, and dialects. Through the accreditation process, indigenous people can develop a positive identity and have more willingness to use their previously disregarded cultural capital. WINHEC recognises three elements that are essential to the protection and enhancement of indigenous subjectivity: language, culture, and spiritual beliefs. Meyer (2005, p. 4) claims that the priority placed upon language by WINHEC "is itself a reminder that what has birthed our worldview is held in ancient symbols, codes and energies that we are returning to for meaning and joy." WINHEC encourages the use of indigenous languages in all facets of programming.

Additionally, a focus on cultural preservation is considered to be the best and one practice that WINHEC aims to support at the higher-education level. Indigenous cultures have survived the on-going societal bombardment of the belief that the dominant or global way of thinking is better than traditional indigenous ways. Pursuing its wider goal to consolidate the integrity of indigenous cultures with healthy ethnic/cultural identity through education, WINHEC perceives that quality assurance is achieved when culture is preserved and celebrated within higher education systems.

WINHEC also supports spiritual beliefs and practices found in indigenous centres of higher learning. According to Meyer, "WINHEC encourages both process and product of accreditation efforts that are accomplished and supported within a framework that honors all spiritual beliefs, practices and expressions" (2005, p. 6).

An additional organisational strength of WINHEC is that it emphasises creative cultural expression as an intrinsic part of self-identity. WINHEC as an organisation is able to provide a higher education venue that encourages the expression and shift of a one-sided paradigm for indigenous learners. This could be realised through, for instance, an expression of a physics problem using *kapa haka*—*kapa* meaning rank or row, and *haka* referring to a Māori dance. It aims at creating an arena that, when indigenous people enrol in higher education, they would often secure a creative affinity and credibility that their cultures express.

Since its establishment, WINHEC has recognised the important role elders play in indigenous education. Elders are considered culture bearers who shoulder great responsibility in the preservation of indigenous knowledge, languages, and traditions. In the process of building connections between HEIs and indigenous communities, elders play a significant part in terms of transition and interpretation of indigenous knowledge (Ilokepa-Guerrero, Carlson, Railton, Pettigrew, Locust, & Mia, 2011).

Academic autonomy. Through the WINHEC accreditation process, indigenous peoples have more power to decide on curriculum content, design, and language(s) of instruction. Thus, they have some quiet control over academic programmes and the ability to employ the faculty members they need. The WINHEC accreditation process represents academic autonomy and is its recognised strength that should be further developed and expanded.

Diverse partnerships. The accreditation review team comprises both community members and indigenous higher-education members (WINHEC, 2010). In other words, the community is considered a key stakeholder group in the accreditation process. Consequently, indigenous HEIs can be significantly supported by community members and in turn, members of local communities gain a sense of ownership and contribution because they are able to participate in the process.

HEIs are also starting to pay attention to indigenous programmes, departments, and colleges and are becoming aware that they should apply for WINHEC accreditation to obtain the identification certification as bicultural institutions. As Walter Fleming (Staff Reports, 2009) points out that "By being accredited by

WINHEC, potential students and indigenous communities can be assured that [Montana State University's] Native American Studies department has met both academic and cultural standards of excellence." Further, since "institutions rarely assess, or even identify, their institutional values," the WINHEC accreditation process gave the Montana State University's Native American Studies Department the opportunity to identify a "value system upon which it has always operated but never articulated" (Ibid.).

Alternative accreditation framework and process. Figure 3 shows the framework and process of WINHEC institutional/programme accreditation. On behalf of WINHEC, the Accreditation Authority was established in 2003 to implement the idea of academic accreditation for indigenous HEIs and programmes. To the best of our understanding and based on our document analysis, the WINHEC review team members and other consultants involved in the accreditation process do not have any set of criteria derived from the principles of general higher education accreditation. Meyer argues that "we did not offer templates of comparison or review aggregated data, rather questions probed into understanding how language, culture and belief systems were strengthened with coursework, community and collaborations with global cousins" (2005, p. 4). The accreditation process assigns a central role to the natural formation of indigenous performance. Meyer further notes that "indigenous accreditation then is no longer about overseeing well-intentioned ideals, but rather it became a way to bear witness" (p. 4).

WINHEC provides different kinds of indigenous knowledge the opportunity to exist, which are also valued and used in many academic pursuits. When undergoing the WINHEC accreditation process, HEIs and/or indigenous higher-education programmes have the opportunity to enhance the preservation of indigenous cultures, traditions, and values.

The *WINHEC Accreditation Handbook* (2010) states that the accreditation process focuses on educational institutions' "performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the cultural and educational community being served" (p. 4). The *Accreditation Handbook* also recognises the importance of including "participation by indigenous peoples to be served through the respective institution/programme, including responsibility for establishing review criteria and participating in the self-study and review process" (p. 4).

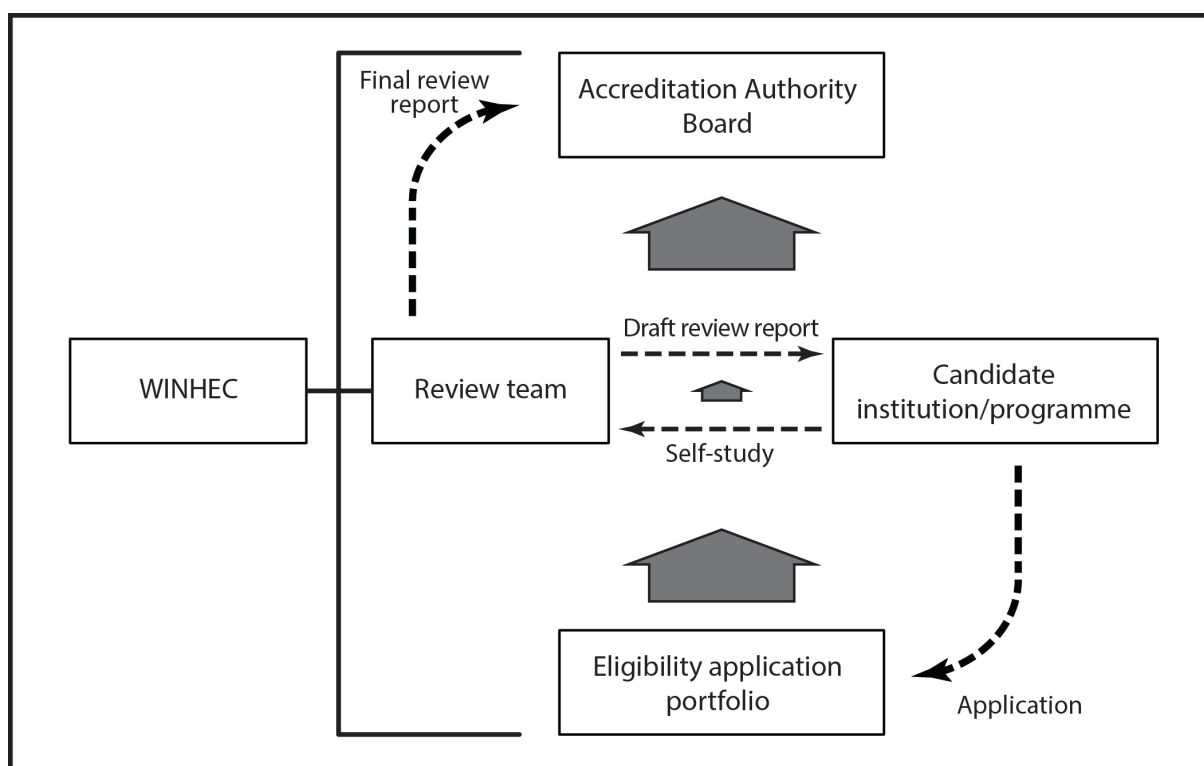


Figure 3. WINHEC institutional/programme accreditation framework and process

Two points in the accreditation process are worth to note. First, candidate HEIs or programmes can undergo a self-study process through which they critically examine themselves in terms of educational structure and funding, academic achievement, and their service to indigenous communities. Considering the effort and time constraints involved, members of the review team prefer to receive a completed self-study in advance of their visit. In addition, at least one “Elder who has been associated with a member program or institution” (WINHEC, 2010, p. 11) tends to enhance the quality and effectiveness of each review team visit, and also reflects the importance of elders in taking an active role to improve indigenous higher education.

Weaknesses

Budgetary issues. At the AIHEC meeting in 2002, all of WINHEC’s founders gathered and mentioned their institutions’ financial sustainability crises. Turoa Royal and Trevor Moeke (both Maori) from New Zealand noted that efforts to help achieve WINHEC’s goals had cost the Maori approximately NZ\$250,000 (US\$182,000) a year (Ambler, 2005, p. 20). Moreover, they stated that this amount was clearly insufficient for WINHEC to fulfil its mission, leading to a continual need to raise funds. One way that the Maori might consider to overcome this weakness is to seek more stable funding sources, including potential endowment donors. Our other potential critique regards financial transparency: prospective members may need to understand the flow, management, and status of the funding, and be reassured that the Consortium utilises substantial, effective, and accountable business practices. Although WINHEC publishes journals, little is known about how many or whether they are profitable. Additionally, similar to non-indigenous organizations, WINHEC faces uncertainty in issuing memberships to groups or to individuals, or whether such memberships are increasing, declining, or remaining flat. These budgetary issues make it difficult for WINHEC to determine the status of its sustainable management and operation.

Lack of widespread participation. Although WINHEC (2010, p. 3) proclaims that part of its purpose “is to provide an international forum and support for indigenous peoples to pursue common goals through higher education,” most of the HEIs that have received WINHEC accreditation are located in English-speaking countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States), with Norway providing the lone exception. In other words, having positioned itself as an international leader that attends to global concerns surrounding indigenous higher education, the Consortium should increase the efforts to incorporate institutions in more countries outside the former British Empire to other parts of the world, such as Africa, Latin America, South Asia, Oceania, and other Pacific Islands.

Lack of quality assurance follow-up. If the accreditation review process is positive, the WINHEC Accreditation Authority Board approves a HEI for a 10-year period. However, that accreditation window is perhaps too long, due to the relative newness of the programmes and institutions seeking accreditation. There is no clear process to assure that, once accredited, institutions or programmes can maintain their quality. This may prevent indigenous peoples from receiving the best possible learning opportunities. Nonetheless, several efforts could be done to help strengthen institutional quality assurance capacity building, especially after WINHEC accreditation is first received.

From 2005 to the present, the majority of articles in WINHEC-sponsored journals have been written by authors from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, which creates an imbalance of focus on worldwide indigenous higher education portrayed in the academic literature. WINHEC’s goal of becoming a leading organisation representing indigenous peoples and societies from around the world is hampered when its major publication outlets have such a dearth of contributors from outside former British colonies of settlement. This imbalance may be a consequence of the small number of country representations sitting in the WINHEC executive board members and founding members.

Although WINHEC provides various routes for creative expression in indigenous arts, it has not made parallel efforts to encourage quantitative content areas in higher education. Consequently, various indigenous learners, especially creative ones, may be prevented from accessing such content areas.

Opportunities

Through conferences, publications, and advocacy, WINHEC is an ideal hub within which indigenous people and their non-indigenous allies can meet, collaborate, and work toward shared goals. It provides opportunities for indigenous students with common perspectives “to draw strength from each other” (Ambler, 2005, p. 20).

Potential accreditation for all HEIs. The WINHEC accreditation process is not limited to indigenous-oriented HEIs; it also welcomes mainstream institutional applications, giving it (potentially) a broad influence upon HEIs throughout the world. It also provides an arena in which institutions and programmes seeking to become more involved with indigenous issues can do so.

Internationalisation of local indigenous HEIs. Accreditation promotes cooperation between local indigenous HEIs and other HEIs worldwide. This international synergy approach enables WINHEC to help HEIs preserve and promote indigenous academia. Table 1 shows the WINHEC Annual General Meeting as an example of WINHEC branching out to additional locations. The Consortium could continue to hold its meetings in an even wider variety of countries to help spread its influence and outreach potential beyond the former British colonies of settlement.

Table 1. Locations of WINHEC Annual General Meetings, 2003-2013

Year	Institution	City/Country
2013	Navajo Technical University	Crownpoint, NM, USA
2012	National Dong Hwa University	Hualien, Taiwan
2011	Sonesta Cusco Hotel	Cuzco, Peru
2010	Sámi University College	Kautokeino, Norway
2009	First Nations Technical Institute	Brighton, ON, Canada
2008	La Trobe University	Melbourne, Australia
2007	Chaminade University	Honolulu, HI, USA
2006	Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College	St. Cloquet, MN, USA
2005	Glenview International Hotel and Conference Centre	Hamilton, New Zealand
2004	Griffiths University	Brisbane, Australia
2003	University of Hawai‘i – Manoa	Honolulu, HI, USA

Sources: Adapted by the authors from the WINHEC Archive of Annual General Meetings (2012) and *Tribal College Journal* (2013).

WINHEC has a unique and potentially important opportunity to advocate on behalf of many indigenous peoples worldwide. It is already able to reach out to local and national governments with regard to indigenous higher-education issues, and thus potentially to other matters of indigenous interest as well. Articles 12, 13, 14, and 15 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* emphasise that states should acknowledge and protect the rights of indigenous peoples in preserving and fostering their languages, cultures, and worldviews (United Nations, 2007). Since the legitimacy and formal recognition of indigeneity often emanates from governmental policy, WINHEC should take into consideration the roles that governments and policymakers play. Furthermore, indigenous peoples should be actively engaged in policymaking processes, especially but not exclusively, where the policies in question are being established to serve them.

Another viable area for expansion is the development of a higher-education network linking employers with indigenous students. WINHEC could also consider developing an internship programme involving its accredited HEIs, partner industries, and government agencies. It could also establish an international

scholarly exchange programme, with the long-range aim of creating or becoming the world's premier archive and/or digital library of indigenous writings, scholarship, and media.

Challenges

Diversity of languages and cultures. Regarding the question of language accessibility for the rising indigenous generation, Meyer (2005, p. 5) notes that WINHEC's accreditation reviewers "want to hear what has inspired students, in whatever language they choose." The WINHEC accreditation process is an indigenous ideal whereby indigenous cultures, languages, and traditions can be recognised and promoted; the challenge is how best to preserve and promote this ideal. While in theory WINHEC supports advocacy and preservation of all indigenous languages, it is very costly to include an indigenous language in the accreditation process. It takes a great deal of time, money, and energy to select qualified review-team members who have the contextual language fluency and who are also familiar with the local cultures. As a result, there are only relatively few indigenous languages that have been examined by WINHEC during the accreditation processes to date.

Varying legitimacy perspectives on the WINHEC accreditation process. Because higher-education accreditation is well-developed in many countries, some scholars and peoples may view the WINHEC process as too non-traditional, even to the point of questioning its legitimacy. Such criticisms come from both internal and external sources, and will be a continuing challenge.

Articulation agreements. One of the challenges that WINHEC-accredited HEIs face is making articulation agreements with other, predominantly mainstream, HEIs. As a result, there is a possibility that some courses taken by students at an indigenous HEI may not transfer to other HEIs internationally, or even within the same country. WINHEC does not currently deal with this issue in its accreditation process.

No single institution serves as a global higher-education reservoir of indigenous knowledge; and WINHEC has the unique challenge as well as potential opportunity that accompany this important leadership role. Information is essential to conduct quality research on, and disseminating accurate information about, indigenous peoples' languages, cultures, and traditions. How and where to house this information reservoir is a challenge that needs to be addressed. It is possible for WINHEC to further expand the publications section on its website to include an archive of indigenous education research based on thematic topics of interest that serves higher-education stakeholders. Such an indigenous archive would prove valuable to students, faculty members, policymakers, and indigenous-education advocates worldwide. This recommendation is closely aligned with several of WINHEC's goals, especially Goal 6, to "create a global network for sharing knowledge through exchange forums and state of the art technology" (WINHEC, 2012).

Conclusion

The results of our SWOC analysis suggest that the primary advantages of WINHEC include its ability to promote self-determination of indigenous higher education, the reconstruction of indigenous subjectivity, and indigenous higher education sustainability. Yet, we also found out that the lack of any figures on how many accreditations have occurred, or what percentage of indigenous HEIs this number of accreditation represents, could be seen as a flaw in the SWOC analysis. Additionally, the accreditation process is threatened by a lack of sufficient financial resources, transparency, and on-going quality assurance, especially after accreditation is granted. WINHEC's membership is drawn from relatively few countries, possibly as a result of linguistic barriers. However, the many possibilities that exist seem to outweigh the Consortium's weaknesses and challenges. WINHEC members are faced with both the challenge and opportunity of building a worldwide indigenous network capable of boosting indigenous peoples' causes through higher education channels to many diverse nations. This outreach potential is especially important when the application of the Consortium's accreditation addresses institutions and programmes within countries that have many indigenous groups and peoples. Within this framework, WINHEC would be better positioned to address difficulties in seeing how to best work in countries like Guatemala that have many indigenous languages, all of which are not recognized within the formal education system. Although

encountering these difficulties, it is fair enough for us to argue that the WINHEC accreditation is a successful and legitimate process that is imperative for the development of indigenous higher education at local, national, and international levels.

In this article, we have ascertained that WINHEC helps fill a tremendous organisational gap in promoting indigenous higher education throughout the world. It is especially relevant in advocating the cause of indigenous peoples within higher-education systems, from which they have been traditionally excluded. In its attempts to preserve and promote indigenous cultures, languages, identities, and knowledge systems, WINHEC can energise and enliven almost any field of endeavour in which an indigenous or non-indigenous person may be interested. Our SWOC analysis points to several recommendations for WINHEC leaders to consider as they expand their organisation's higher education outreach and influence potential among all human beings. Additionally, WINHEC can minimise or overcome the weaknesses and challenges that it currently faces and will undoubtedly face in the future. The SWOC analysis has outlined multiple areas for improvement and change. Despite its already impressive successes, WINHEC is a relatively new organisation. It will take time until it realises its full potential.

References

- Abu-Saad, I., & Champagne, D. W. (Eds.). (2006). *Indigenous education and empowerment: International perspectives*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Ambler, M. (2005). Embracing the world: Indigenous educators join hands to share gifts. *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, 16(4), 18-20.
- Brayboy, B. M. J., Fann, A. J., Castagno, A. E., and Solyom, J. A. (2012). *Postsecondary education for American Indian and Alaska Natives: Higher education for nation building and self-determination*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous research methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dei, G. J. S., ed. (2011). *Indigenous philosophies and critical education: A reader*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., & Tuhiwai Smith, L. (Eds.). (2008). *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Huffman, T. E. (2008). *American Indian higher educational experiences: Cultural visions and personal journeys*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Huffman, T. E. (2010). *Theoretical perspectives on American Indian education: Taking a new look at academic success and the achievement gap*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira.
- Jacob, W. J., Lee, C.-W., Wehrheim, N., Gökbel, V., Dumba, J. D. C., Lu, X. L., & Yin, S. J. (2013). Mapping Indigenous Paradigms, Research, and Practice in the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium. *Taiwan Journal of Indigenous Studies*, 6(1), 1-64.
- Jacob, W. J., Liu, J., & Lee, C.-W. (2014). Policy debates and indigenous education: The trialectic of language, culture, and identity. In W. J. Jacob, S. Y. Cheng, & M. K. Porter (Eds.), *Indigenous education: Language, culture, and identity*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Justice, D. H. (2004). Seeing (and reading) red: Indian outlaws in the ivory tower. In Mihesuah D. Abbott & A.C. Wilson (Eds.), *Indigenizing the academy: transforming scholarship and empowering communities* (pp. 100–123). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska.
- Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto.
- lokepa-Guerrero, N., Carlson, B., Railton, R., Pettigrew, D., Locust, E., & Mia, T. (2011). The need for elders in education: Five indigenous perspectives from around the world. *Journal of World Indigenous Higher Education Consortium*, 2011, 15-26.
- McGovern, S. (1999). *Education, modern development, and indigenous knowledge: An analysis of academic knowledge production*. New York, NY and London, UK: Garland.
- Memmi, A. (2006). *Decolonization and the decolonized* (R. Bononno Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota (Original work published 1965).
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003).
- Meyer, M. A. (2005). Remembering our future: Higher education quality assurance and indigenous epistemology. *Journal of World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium*, 2005, 1-5.
- Staff Reports. (2009). Montana State University Native American Studies setting standard. New York, NY: Indian Country Today Media Network, February 28. Retrieved from <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com>, May 15, 2013.
- Mutua, K., & Swadener, B. B. (Eds.). (2004). *Decolonizing research in cross-cultural contexts: Critical personal narratives*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Reagan, T. (2010). *Non-Western educational traditions: Indigenous approaches to educational thought and practice* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Semali, L. M., & Kincheloe, J. L. (Eds.). (1999). *What is indigenous knowledge? Voices from the academy*. New York, NY: Falmer Press.
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). London, UK and New York, NY: Zed Books.
- Teasdale, G. R., & Rhea, Z. M. (Eds.). (2000). *Local knowledge and wisdom in higher education*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.
- Tribal College Journal*. (2013). *WINU confers first Ph.D.'s at NTU*. Mancos, CO: *Tribal College Journal* Website. Retrieved from <https://www.tribalcollegejournal.org/archives/27523>, August 23, 2013.
- United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2006). *UNESCO and indigenous peoples: Partnership to promote cultural diversity*. Paris, France: UNESCO.
- United Nations General Assembly. (2007). *United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples*. New York, NY: United Nations. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf, March 12, 2012.
- WINHEC. (2005). *Vision*. Honolulu, HI: WINHEC. Retrieved from <http://www.win-hec.org/?q=node/3>, March 14, 2012.
- WINHEC. (2010). *WINHEC accreditation handbook: Higher education* (3rd ed.). Guovdageaidnu, Norway: Sami University College.
- [WINHEC. \(2012\). WINHEC Website. Honolulu, HI: WINHEC. Retrieved from http://www.win-hec.org, March 14, 2012.](http://www.win-hec.org)

Author Biography

Mark Lock is descended from the Waanguybuwan tribe of New South Wales, from Scottish convicts of the First Fleet, from a Latvian immigrant, and from English people. Since 1995 my work experience in the Indigenous health sector includes positions of a non-influential nature in health promotion, project management, policy advice and lecturing. These occurred in a variety of organisations—an Aboriginal Medical Service, Commonwealth and state governments, and universities. The PhD thesis (University of Melbourne) is the last in a series of qualifications from a BSc in Biochemistry, Honours in Nutrition, and a Master of Public Health degree from the Menzies School of Health Research. I use social network analysis methods and structuration theory to investigate sticky policy concepts such as holistic health. I am employed at the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, The University of Newcastle, Australia. mark.lock@newcastle.edu.au

Leanne Holt is a Worimi woman, from Port Stephens, New South Wales, Australia however has spent most of her life in Darkinjung country. Leanne has worked at the University of Newcastle for 16 years and is currently a Director of The Wollotuka Institute, The University of Newcastle. Her educational history began in human resources and with a completed Masters of Management she is now completing a Phd (Education). Leanne is currently an executive member of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium, an Executive member of regional Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), member of University Council and is a member of a number of other educational and community Boards and advisory groups. leanne.holt@newcastle.edu.au

Mark Rose is traditionally linked to the Gunditjmarra Nation of western Victoria. With a thirty-year career in education Mark has contributed to a broad range of educational settings within the State, nationally and internationally. Mark has consulted regularly with Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations both nationally and internationally. For over a decade Mark taught in predominantly postgraduate programs at RMIT University's Faculty of Business here in Australia as well as in Beijing, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. Professor Rose is Executive Director, Indigenous Strategy & Education, Division of the DVC (Academic) at La Trobe University. At a state and national level and with community endorsement Mark has sat on five ministerial advisory committees. In 2003 – 2005 Mark co-chaired the Victorian Implementation Review of Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. In 2008 Mark moved to VAEAI as General Manager during the WIPC-E Conference and assumed the position of Chair of Indigenous Knowledge Systems at Deakin University in 2008. Mark holds a Doctor of Philosophy, Masters of Educational Administration, Bachelor of Arts (Social Science) and a Diploma of Teaching. Mark.Rose@latrobe.edu.au

Vicki-Ann Speechley-Golden is a Wandandian Woman of the Yuin Nation, she is a qualified Middle Years teacher, and has been in Higher Education for over 25 years. Vicki-Ann was a Past President of the National Indigenous Postgraduate Aboriginal Corporation (NIPAAAC) resigning in 2005 and she has since re-joined NIPAAAC and is now a Co-President. Vicki-Ann works at Griffith University in the Office of Indigenous Community Engagement, Policy, and Partnerships and has been an active support member of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) since 2010; where she first mooted the concept of a Global Indigenous Student Body. Ms Speechley-Golden is a proud Grandmother of 9 and mother of 5 and whilst not doing child minding duties is undertaking her PhD. Vicki-Ann is also the Griffith University National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) Branch President. v.speechley-golden@griffith.edu.au

W. JAMES JACOB is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. His research interests include higher education management; HIV/AIDS multisectoral prevention, capacity building, and principles of good governance; indigenous education issues of culture, language, and identity

as they relate to post-secondary education; quality assurance; organizational development; higher education strategic planning; and organizational effectiveness. He is the co-editor of two book series related to the development of comparative, international, and development education scholarship: *International and Development Education* (Palgrave Macmillan) and *Pittsburgh Studies in Comparative and International Education* (Sense Publishers). His most recent books include *Policy Debates in Comparative, International, and Development Education* (with John Hawkins, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), *Beyond the Comparative: Advancing Theory and Its Application to Practice* (with John Weidman, Sense Publishers, 2011), and *Inequality in Education: Comparative and International Perspectives* (with Donald B. Holsinger, Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong and Springer, 2008). Jacob received his PhD in Education from the Graduate School of Education and Information Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles in 2004 and a Master's of Organizational Behavior and MA in International Development from Brigham Young University in 2001. Since 2007, Jacob has served as the Director of the Institute for International Studies in Education at the University of Pittsburgh. wjacob@pitt.edu

CHE-WEI LEE (Paljaljim Rusagasag) is a descendant of the *Paiwan* tribe from one of the 14 Taiwan Aborigines. He currently serves as a Program Coordinator at the Institute for International Studies in Education at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Education, and is a doctoral student in the Social and Comparative Analysis in Education Program in the Department of Administrative and Policy Studies. His research interests include indigenous higher education, indigenous research paradigms, comparative education, international organization and development education, anthropology of education, and cultural anthropology. He also recently co-authored a book chapter titled "Policy Debates and Indigenous Education: The Trialectic of Language, Culture, and Identity" (with W. James Jacob and Jing Liu), published by Springer in 2014 in a book titled *Indigenous Education: Language, Culture, and Identity*. ch1138@pitt.edu

NANCY WEHRHEIM lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where she currently teaches at La Roche College, a small liberal arts school. She grew up in a Greek-American family and received a BA from Thiel College, obtaining a Masters in Reading and Language Arts from Duquesne University. Wehrheim is certified as a Reading Specialist, working in that capacity for ten years in public schools, taking some time out along the way to raise her two children, who are now young adults. In 2000, she decided to continue working on a doctorate degree, with an emphasis on reading, at the University of Pittsburgh and Liberty University and began teaching at LaRoche College while completing her coursework. She also started coursework in the ESL Program at Duquesne University and Social and Comparative Analysis in Education Program at the University of Pittsburgh, hoping to help the work she and her family are doing in East Africa. In Kenya, they are helping to establish a school that is called Toumaini, meaning "hope" in Swahili. She continues working for educational concerns in global arenas. wehrhen1@laroche.edu

VEYSEL GÖKBEL is currently a PhD Candidate in the Social and Comparative Analysis in Education (SCAE) Program at the University of Pittsburgh. Gökbel completed his Master of Education at the University of Pittsburgh and received his BA in Education from Istanbul University. His research interests lie in the intersection of political, economic, and social perspective of education at large. Specifically, he is focusing on academic freedom, skills gap, brain drain, student consumerism, higher education, and social and political effects of education. He is currently pursuing a graduate certificate with a specific focus on the Middle East, offered by the Global Studies Center at the University of Pittsburgh. Gökbel is a Project Associate at the Institute for International Studies in Education. He also serves as a reviewer for the *Excellence in Higher Education* Journal since November 2013. Gökbel is also a member of the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh. During his graduate studies, he has been actively involved in projects that a recent finance in higher education book editing project, and more recently a USAID-funded education project in Zambia. veg9@pitt.edu

JOEL DUMBA CHRISPO DUMBA was born in South Sudan. His parents, who were subsistence farmers, died when he was six years old, and survived the turmoils of the civil war that ravaged Sudan for over two decades. He holds a Master of Education degree from the University of Pittsburgh, and a Bachelor's degree and a diploma in Social Work from the Uganda Christian University. Dumba is an expert consultant and has held leadership positions with government and nongovernmental organizations, and managed funds from various multilateral organizations (e.g., UNDP, IGAD/UNHCR, UNICEF, USAID, UNFPA, and multi-donor trust funds) during his tenure as an administrator within the South Sudan AIDS Commission. Dumba

has experience in the management of organizations, health education, project design, and implementation with monitoring and evaluation and research on behavior change communication strategies. Dumba was a national consultant on the establishment of the National HIV/AIDS Policy and National Strategic Framework for the South Sudan AIDS Commission. He has led successful conferences/symposiums at the national and international levels. Dumba's interests are on integration of HIV/AIDS into education, capacity building, good governance, conflict amelioration, indigenous education, cultural development, public relations, organizational development, policy efficiency, and higher education strategic planning. jcd55@pitt.edu

XIAOLIN LU currently is a Training Program Specialist at the U.S.-China Business Training Center (UCBTC). Her work focuses on adult education and comparative education for inbound training programs serving adult groups from China. Lu works with teams to design customized curriculum, coordinate with higher education institutions to develop academic seminars and assess the outcome of projects. The programs she has worked on relate primarily to the topics of higher education management, healthcare, and public administrations. Prior to joining UCBTC, Lu worked as a Curriculum Consultant at PRGI, Inc. in Florida part-time in the summer of 2013, where she performed a variety of training consultation related activities. When she was in China, Lu worked as an Assistant Training Manager at Shanghai Dynamic Consulting Co., Ltd. (2007-2009), advising and consulting Chinese professionals. She was an Assistant Executive in Linksus Communication Group (2009-2010), performing a key role in promoting PR plans and developing customer relations. Lu obtained a Master of Education degree from the University of Pittsburgh, concentrated on Social and Comparative Analysis in Education. Her research interests include indigenous education, higher education, organizational development, and anthropology and education. She holds a BA from Huaqiao University, Quanzhou, China. xil96@pitt.edu

SHENGJUN YIN is currently a doctoral student in the Social and Comparative Analysis in Education (SCAE) Program at the University of Pittsburgh. She earned a Master of Education degree at the University of Pittsburgh in 2013. During her undergraduate studies in Shanghai, she worked as a piano tutor to K-12 students in the community musical school. In the summer and winter terms, she actively volunteered in Project HOPE (a non-profit organization that provides health care to people around the globe), coordinating the health care education efforts related to HIV/AIDS, diabetes, and nurse education programs in China. In 2008, she successfully worked as a coordinator to process health education to children who were negatively effected and affected by the earthquake in the Sichuan earthquake. After beginning her study at the University of Pittsburgh in Spring 2012, she remains active in exploring potential projects related to her interests. shy32@pitt.edu

ISSN: 1177 - 1364
ON-LINE ISSN: 1177 - 6641