

Bringing it home: an Indigenous research model that supports Indigenous researchers' aspirations

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Introduction

This paper articulates those conceptual and enacting notions of research excellence from within a framework of Aboriginal Terms of Reference (ATR). It will reflect those methodologies that incorporate Indigenous 'ways of knowing' within a proposed Indigenous Research Model. Indigenous 'ways of knowing', not only identify ATR principles but they also communicate an Indigenous position toward a way forward.

The heritage of Aboriginal peoples spans eons back in history, time, space and place. It is fair to suggest that Indigenous Australians practiced 'ways of knowing', conceptualised and enacted notions of excellence within knowledge frameworks that were culturally contextualised and culturally transferable across the diverse tribal groups. Their creaturely existence ensured their connectedness to the past and their connectedness to a role in the present. How did the first producers of the boomerang and didgeridoo or other instruments for survival discover aeronautics, medicine, nutrition, spiritual practices, socio-economics, education, art and law? How did this knowledge and these 'ways of knowing' transfer across a continent that can fit the first non-Indigenous researcher's countries into its heartland? How did Aboriginal peoples develop complex relationship systems such as kin, skin and blood relations and how were these systems able to maintain a spiritual understanding?

What Indigenous researchers are saying is that it is time for them to find 'ways of knowing' that articulate ATR for the purpose of cultural integrity and cultural valuing in the research they do on behalf of their peoples. To date, Indigenous researchers continue to use the historical models that have existed for the last two hundred years. Are there alternatives?

Indigenous academics in the 21st century recognise the significance of developing 'ways of knowing' or what is identified as methodologies and/or a research model/s. It is critical that these 'ways of knowing' resonate within an ATR framework. The wealth of Indigenous knowledge about Aboriginal Australia must be channelled or directed into research studies by contemporary Indigenous academics. In this way, the research of Indigenous academics will articulate cultural wisdom, knowledge and value, which will "Bring it Home" to the Indigenous peoples.

In making our self-representations public, we are aware that our different voices may be heard once again only in the language of the alien tongue.... that we risk their appropriation and abuse, and the danger that a selection of our representations will be to once again fix Aboriginality in absolute and inflexible terms. ... without our own voices, Aboriginality will continue to be a creation for and about us.... all the more reason to insist that we have control over both the form and content of representations of our Aboriginalities.... that the voices speak our languages [and] resist translation into the languages and categories of the dominant culture (Dodson 1994, p. 39).

In deconstructing Western paradigms Aboriginal Australian scholars are articulating and constructing Indigenous distinct paradigms based upon Aboriginal epistemologies that encompass Aboriginal or Indigenous Terms of Reference (ATR). Kickett (1992 cited in NHMRC, 1997) proposed ATR as:

...a necessary paradigm for the future of Aboriginal people and, ultimately, of this country. “One of the key factors which needs to be properly considered when operating in a cross-cultural setting is values...[Researchers] will not deal effectively with Aboriginal realities if they do not incorporate processes which enable Aboriginal participants...to come to terms with their own value system...an opportunity to systematically explore options...

Research about Aboriginal Australians by non-Indigenous peoples began before 1788. Non-Aboriginal researchers have used their terms, and interpreted their research about Indigenous Australians in their own cultural contexts. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2004, p. 128) states, “In our engagement with white Australian society, Indigenous people have learnt to create meaning, knowledge and living traditions under conditions not of our choosing...”. Dodson’s (1994) ‘alien tongue’ reinforces what Moreton-Robertson (2004) suggests about how the power of the colonial empirical studies formed the base by which colonial language and cultural processes interpreted Aboriginal Australian’s cultures and lived experiences. Throughout this paper the terms ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Indigenous’ will be used interchangeably.

Porsanger (2002, p.112) suggests:

...the most important issues for indigenous methodologies may be itemized as follows: defining the indigenous agenda for research projects; looking at research and theory from an indigenous perspective; including or consulting indigenous peoples, not as objects but rather as participants, to predict possible negative outcomes, to share and protect knowledge, to use appropriate language and form in order to communicate research back to the people...

Cook-Lynn (1997, p. 21) also advocates, “Indigenous ways of thinking, understanding and approaching knowledge have long been dismissed by the academic world because they have been considered not to belong to any existing theory.” Tuhiwai-Smith (1999, p. 14) surmises that, “often, they [Indigenous methodologies - Kaupapa Maori Framework, Critical Theory] have been reduced to some nativist or even illogical and contradictory discourse”. Our theoretical approach maintains Aboriginal cultural integrity in the development of a proposed Indigenous Research model that encompasses elements of Western and Indigenous research methodologies that resonate within an ATR framework.

Working within ATR requires rethinking about thinking and re-examining the processes of examining whilst reconstructing intellectual traditions, (Romero-Little, 2006) from within a cultural knowledge base. It also requires re-evaluating and reproducing the values implicitly

held within the processes of a research methodology. Furthermore, as Kahakalau Hulili suggests it is imperative that Indigenous researchers, “look critically at existing methodologies and ‘tweak’ them until...create truly indigenous research methodologies frame worked entirely from a native perspective” (2004, p. 20)

The ‘tweaking’ is necessary to substantiate cultural integrity without misrepresenting cultural context in research. ‘Tweaking’ implicitly integrates Indigenous worldviews, ways of ‘being’, sense of ‘knowingness’ and ‘spiritualities’ when an Indigenous research model is used.

Other Indigenous researchers, (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999; Kahakalau Hulili 2004) began their search for a model that expressed their Indigenity and their own peoples’ aspirations. This was a move away from the use of non-Indigenous models in research about Indigenous people. The current work builds on these and the historical studies of Indigenous Australian researchers such as Humphreys (1991 cited in NHMRC 2002; Morton-Robertson 2004; Oates 2002; Dudgeon, Garvey & Pickett 2000; Brady 1997; Dodson 1994; Kickett 1992 cited in HMRC, 1997; Brady 1992a). The proposed Indigenous Research Model has fluidity, incorporates notions of time and space and the core value of Aboriginal spirituality.

In this paper Aboriginal Spirituality means, “Creator Spirit created Creator Beings and ancestors out of the land thus ensuring the land’s ownership of the people and the people’s custodian relationship with the land. Creator Beings taught ancestors the ‘ways of being’ custodians and significantly, our Spirit and the Spirit of our Sacred Land is One” (Yavu-Kama-Harathunian & Tomlin, 2007).

The Indigenous Research Model introduces a theory – Cultural Philosophical Ethos Theory (CPE) – that allows the authentic voices of the Indigenous peoples experience to be heard. When researching Indigenous peoples CPE repositions researcher and ‘subject’ relationships. Aboriginal cultures, values, beliefs and mores are respected. Further, Indigenous worldviews can be more accurately interpreted by the use of non-Indigenous language that emphasises Indigenous meaning and context based upon the Aboriginal cultural core values of spirituality, morality, cultural context and life systems. These form the essential ‘knowingness’ of Aboriginal identity ‘ways of being’ and ‘ways of doing’ (Yavu-Kama-Harathunian & Tomlin 2007).

What is Aboriginal Terms of Reference (ATR)?

Kickett’s (1992 cited in NHMRC, 1997 p.20) paradigm, proposed a generalist meaning of ATR.

ATR encompasses the cultural knowledge, understanding and experiences that are associated with a commitment to Aboriginal ways of thinking, working and reflecting. ATR incorporates specific and implicit cultural values, beliefs and priorities from which Aboriginal standards are derived, validated and practised. These standards vary according to the diverse range of cultural values, beliefs and priorities from within local settings and specific context..., which is important to their own lives.

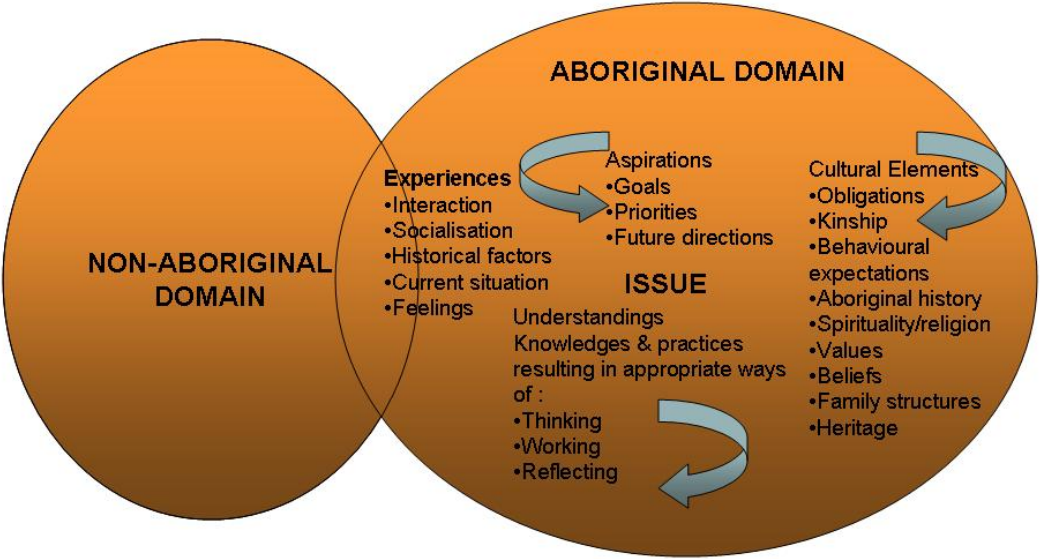
Aboriginal society is not homogenous and the principles of ATR espouse an appreciation of Aboriginal diversity. The way in which the researcher works with Aboriginal groups will differ. ATR positions a cultural framework whereby the researcher empowers the ‘subjects’ by working in ways that confirm the ‘subject’s’ Aboriginality. ATR assists the researcher to

recognise historical, cultural, political and economical realities of Aboriginal people. Kickett (1992) further suggests that:

ATR is the space where equity and equality between the subjects and the researchers is formed. Both parties working together can identify from a cultural analysis, the issues from the picture that the subjects paint. The process also gives room for the voices of the subjects to articulate their cultural assessment of the researcher’s values towards the available resources within the group and those the group do not have” (cited in NHMRC 1997, p. 20).

What is critical for developing an Indigenous Research Model is defining the interpretations, translations, meanings, understandings and recommendations from a cultural base and an Aboriginal ontology. Whilst developing an Indigenous theory to accommodate ATR principles it became quite clear to Yavu-Kama-Harathunian (1998) that the ‘alien’ language of the non-Indigenous researcher dominated. Minimal space was given for articulating meaning and understanding of the Aboriginal English language. ATR assists researchers to investigate, examine, explore and articulate findings, results, recommendations, and outcomes from within an Indigenous (Aboriginal) cultural context. The diagram below demonstrates these essential elements.

Aboriginal terms of reference conceptual framework



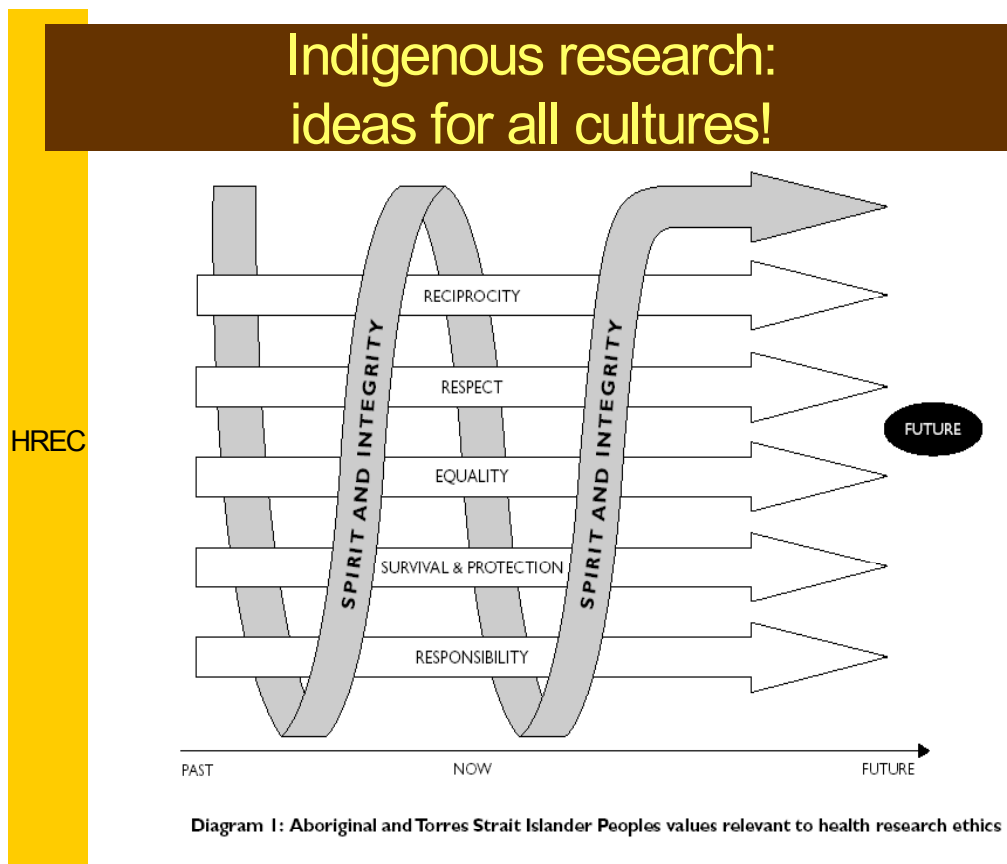
Replicated from Aboriginal Community Management and Development Workbook, Workshop 2: Aboriginal Ways of 1, 1996, p. 28.

The diagram shows the non-Aboriginal Domain (NID) overlapping into the Aboriginal Domain (AD) and research principles and processes therefore, overlap into the domain of the Aboriginal worldview. The overlap does not give Aboriginal meaning and interpretation to what the non-Aboriginal researchers explore. Historical research methods focusing on the Aboriginal worldview have been the domain of Anglo - ethnic male researchers. This dominance left little room for feminist (Lather: 1991; Bowles & Klein: 1983; Stanley & Wise: 1983) or Indigenous researchers to articulate their own methodologies.

Literature Review

The Literature Review is based upon the studies of Indigenous researchers who have searched for Indigenous research methodologies (Nakata 2007; Dodson 1994; Rigney 1997; Langton 1993; Brady 1992; Oates 2000; Humphreys 2000; Wanganeen 1987; Kickett cited in NHMRC 1997; Dudgeon, Garvey & Pickett 2000; Morton-Robertson 2004; Ku Kahakalau 2004; Tuhiwai-Smith 1999). Non-Indigenous methodologies with principles that resonated with an ATR framework were also examined (Connell 2007; Johnstone 1991; Boer et al 2003; Ritzer 1996; Battiste 2000, 2001, 1987). Feminist ideology was considered (Stanley & Wise 1983; Mies 1983; Lather 1987), but feminist perspectives differed from Australian Aboriginal ontology. Feminism is not inclusive of the Aboriginal male and female duality of power and authority.

Ethnography, Action Research and Phenomenography were found to resonate with Aboriginal Terms of Reference. They are also congruent with a Cultural Philosophical Ethos Theory. Synergistically, principles and elements of these three methods could be transferred, yet in their transference, maintain the integrity of Aboriginal ways of 'being' researchers and non-Indigenous ways of 'doing' research. Authentic cultural elements critical to the formulation of an Australian Indigenous theory were identified by Humphreys (2000) providing the framework for validating the core value of Aboriginal spirituality in research. See diagram below.



Humphreys (2000) pioneered the notions of maintaining cultural integrity and cultural respect, strongly promoting Aboriginal core values of spirituality, morality, cultural context and life systems.

Yavu-Kama-Harathunian and Tomlin (2007) suggest non-Aboriginal studies have ignored the significant meanings of Aboriginal values and ethics imposing their own non-Aboriginal meanings on Aboriginal people as 'subjects'. Aboriginal people associated these '*alien*' meanings as being the cultural context of Aboriginal values and ethics (Dodson 1994) and that these imposed meanings articulated Aboriginal ways of 'being' and Aboriginal ways of 'doing'. Humphrey's studies (2000) contextualised an Aboriginal understanding of Aboriginal people's values which then formed the emergence of the embryonic-Cultural Philosophical Ethos Theory.

WHAT IS A CULTURAL PHILOSOPHICAL ETHOS (CPE) THEORY?

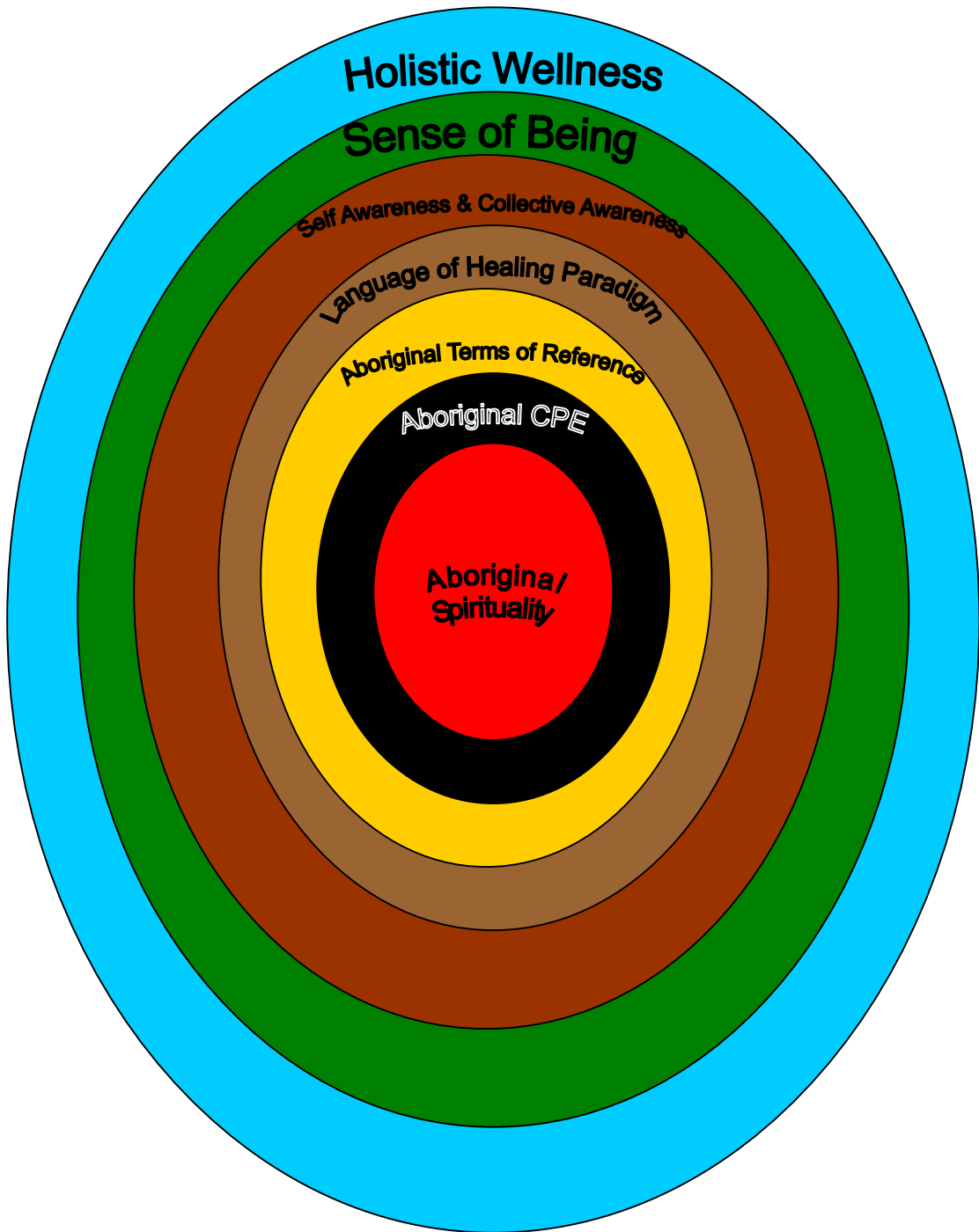
Yavu-Kama-Harathunian (1998) explored Kickett's principles of ATR (1992 cited in NHMRC, 1997). His framework highlighted how process work, treatment theories, and principles were viewed by Aboriginal people. The foundation for the proposed Indigenous Research Model developed by Yavu-Kama-Harathunian and Tomlin (2007) needed to reflect ATR and CPE's validation of the integrity of Aboriginal knowledge and wisdom about researching non-Aboriginal research methods.

Gibson, Smith and Yavu-Kama-Harathunian (2003), took the work of Yavu-Kama-Harathunian and together they articulated a diagrammatical representation of the notion as an Aboriginal theory. Yavu-Kama-Harathunian (1998) suggested that,

CPE is that essential spiritual sense of knowing, that underpins all that evolves from an individual's layers of understanding, histories, life experiences, knowledge, learning processes, beliefs, values, attitudes, motivations, awareness and sense of self as a human being who belongs to a particular cultural group. It is the storehouse that houses an individual's human experiences, everything that gives him/her recognition for their sense of belonging and being part of a cultural group. It connects the individual's internal and external human experiences to their spiritual and cultural identity.

CPE theory provides researchers with a tool to 'decolonise' Aboriginal meanings and understandings in research traditionally articulated in the 'alien tongue'. It's synergistic aspects: Aboriginal Spirituality, Cultural Philosophical Ethos, Aboriginal Terms of Reference, Language of a Healing Paradigm, Sense of Being and Holistic Wellness, assists in identifying the cultural identity of the 'subjects' under investigation. See diagram.

**Healing Circles, Healing Ways:
Creating an Alternative Healing Paradigm for Treatment Programmes**
(Yavu-Kama-Harathunian, original 1998-2003)



Any research about Aboriginal people that is conducted in the language of the ‘alien’ tongue (Dodson 1994) silences the Aboriginal voice and the Aboriginal cultural meanings necessary to decolonise (Moreton-Robinson 2004) the language of the research process. Gibson (2003, p. 25) stated that:

With the support of many Aboriginal people from around Australia, including Smith (2003), Yavu-Kama-Harathunian (1998), has conceptualised a theory....that is best suited to the spiritual, emotional, psychological, and physical needs of Aboriginal people”. CPE validates metaphorically the imagery Aboriginal people have developed for themselves because it is derived from values articulated within an Aboriginal culture context. At its core the Theory acknowledges the essence of Aboriginal identity as being intrinsically woven into Aboriginal Spirituality because of the Aboriginal understanding of their connection to land and the concept of the land owning the people. It is Aboriginal Spirituality that pervades the Indigenous diversity and complexity of their own cultural context. This cultural context is congruent with an Aboriginal worldview that underpins CPE.

THE VALUE OF ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITY IN THE PROPOSED MODEL

Aboriginal spirituality culturally respects the secret and sacred nature of Aboriginal men’s business and Aboriginal women’s business. Aboriginal people throughout Australia have their own explanations, definitions, views, opinions and interpretations of this phenomenon. Aboriginal spirituality is not based within a religious conceptualisation. It is the core value of CPE Theory and understanding its importance is critical. As Yavu-Kama-Harathunian (1998) suggests there are seven generalist layers defined within Aboriginal cultural perspectives and maintain cultural integrity and fluidity. The seven layers are: reflection (deep insightful meditation); *recherché* (transcendence-the ability to bring the Spiritual world into the language of the human realm); refulgence (illumination of humanness into the Spiritual world); ‘Corpo santo’ (acceptance that the human body is holy); reverent obeisance (inner prostration that hallows Creator Spirit); synergistic cosmology (spirit of the earth and the spirit of the universe flows from and into the Source of ‘All’ Spirit) and, omniscience (spiritually enables the human to integrate into the ‘All’ ‘knowingness’ of Creator Spirit’s ‘Oneness’).

THE PROPOSED INDIGENOUS RESEARCH MODEL: METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

An Indigenous Research Model incorporating both an ATR framework and CPE Theory is proposed. These Indigenous research instruments permit the research projects’ methodological, analytical, and interpretative processes together with the outcomes to remain within an Indigenous world-view. The principles and elements of an ATR framework, underpinned by the CPE Theory, will synergistically integrate the NID methodologies of phenomenography, ethnography and action research.

CPE validates the wisdoms of researchers’ abilities to identify researchable phenomena from within the culture and processes of ‘Aboriginal Business’. They constructively gain insight into ‘others’ experiences using their own language styles (Babbie 2004; Richardson 1999; Seidman 1991; Marshall & Rossman 1998; Patton 1980) and the validity of the data is maintained (Lincoln & Guba 1985). It is also essential that the natural style of language is not eliminated or over paraphrased (Tharenou, Donohue & Cooper 2007; Babbie 2004). Musson (1998) suggests that the ‘subjects’ language gives researchers a tool to access a peoples sense of reality about their own world thus attempting to give ‘voice’ to that reality. A ‘subjects’

language recognises that there is a collusion of cultures in the research process (Mc Neill 1995; Symon & Cassell 1998; Denzin 1989). This is critical in that research is most commonly interpreted by the researcher's language and their perspective.

Musson (1994) and Newman (2000) infer that the researchers' assumptions are taken for granted within the research. Through the process of identifying assumptions within an ATR framework, researchers are given a space to allow the voices of Aboriginal 'subjects' to be validated and heard. Researchers, using an ATR framework have the capacity to tell the Aboriginal 'subjects' story contextualising it within the 'subjects' culture whilst fitting the information into an NID theoretical framework (Symon & Cassell 1998; Polgar & Thomas 1995).

WESTERN METHODOLOGIES THAT FIT ATR AND CPE

Phenomenography is consistent with an empirical approach that investigates a limited number of qualitative ways in which phenomena can be understood. It emphasises individuals and cultural group experiences (Richardson 1999; Marton 1986). Research exploration focuses on the nature of social phenomena rather than hypothesising (Richardson 1999; Svensson & Theman 1983). "Unstructured" data-data which has not been coded at the point of collection in terms of analytic categories-is investigated (Sarantakos 2005; Richardson 1999; Marton 1986). Analysis of data involves interpreting meanings and functions of human actions resulting in verbal descriptions and explanations (Sarantakos 2005; Richardson 1999; Ashworth & Lucas 1998). Statistical analysis is of little relevance (Creswell 1994; Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Neuman 2000) because the interpretations rely upon the researchers' immersion in social settings (Reinharz 1992; Richardson 1999; Ashworth & Lucas 2000). Cross-culturally, the research requires understanding between researchers and 'subjects' (Miller & Brewer 2003; Richardson 1999) and this is consistent with ATR principles.

ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography is "the art and science of describing a group or culture" (Tharenou, Donohue & Cooper 2007, p. 135; Babbie 2004, p. 289; Neuman 2000, pp. 347-348; Fetterman 1989, p. 11; Maanen 1983, pp. 19-35). A clear focus on social research methods (Miller & Brewer 2003) incorporating ethnographic principles congruently articulate within an ATR framework.

Tuhiwai-Smith's (1999) research demonstrated that ethnography is useful for Indigenous research. Ethnography is qualitative and subjective in nature (Sarantakos 2005) and trustworthiness of the researcher is judged when qualitative research is advocated for. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four attributes constituting research standards: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. They and others argue that credibility arises through prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation [cross-checking] of sources and methods, participant observation, interviews and archival data (Polgar & Thomas 1995). Transferability (Hughes 1997) cannot be judged by the researcher without providing a description of the research context and the issue under investigation. Hughes (1997) states that, an audit trail allows for assessment of dependability and conformability by keeping copies and transcripts of raw data and research notes. He also suggests that, 'the credibility, transferability, dependability and the conformability principles' are used to guide the researcher's audit trail - a necessity of the research-if it is to maintain cultural integrity. Ethnographic principles that are applicable can be articulated within the Aboriginal worldview of ATR.

ACTION RESEARCH

Action research (Berg 2007, p. 224) “methodologically creates a positive social change predominantly driving the investigator and the research”. There are a number of assumptions including: democratisation of knowledge production and use; beneficial knowledge generation processes aligned with ethical fairness; ecological views of society and nature; recognition and valuing human abilities to reflect, learn and change; and commitment to social change without violence (Berg 2007). He suggests two key responsibilities:

1. Disclose or produce information and knowledge useful to a group of people through research, education and socio-political action, group cohesiveness and capacity building.
2. Inform and empower the average person in the group, motivating individuals to utilise information gathered in the research (Berg 2007; Babbie 2004; Miller & Brewer 2003; Reason 1994; Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991).

Within an ATR framework, Action Research focuses on investigating the ‘subject’ population’s history, culture, interactive activities, and emotional lives (Berg 2007). It brings Aboriginal accounts of the phenomena under investigation to the forefront.

A DIAGRAMMATICAL ILLUSTRATION OF THE INDIGENOUS RESEARCH MODEL

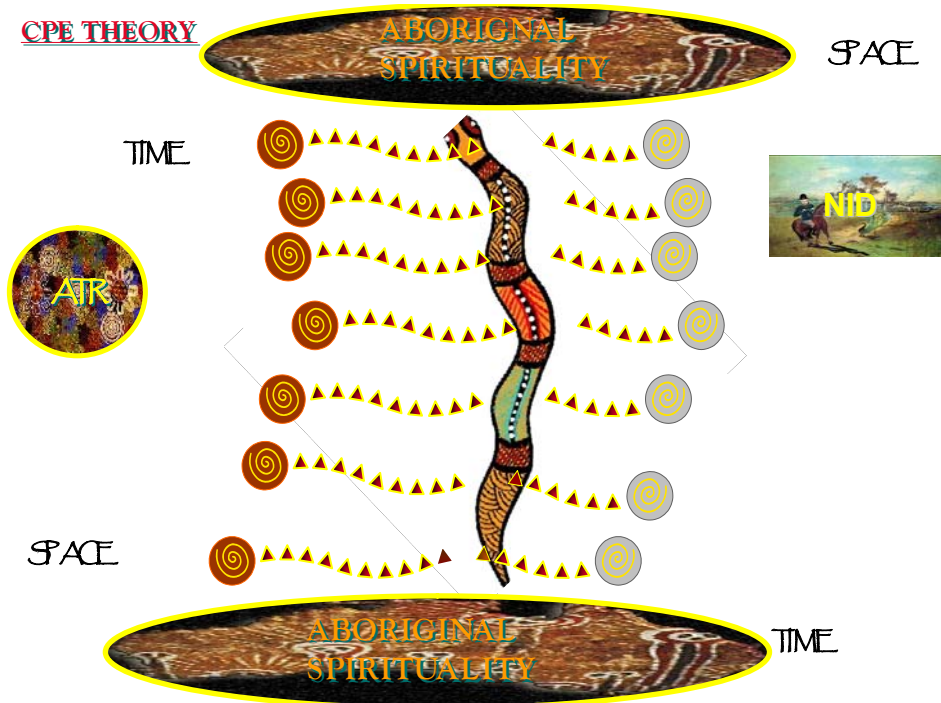
The two-dimensional illustration below, articulates the Indigenous Research Models’ portrayal of the dynamic interactions between ATR, NID and CPE. CPE Theory is centred in Aboriginal Spirituality and moves the integrating essential principles and elements of ATR and NID continuously in time and space creating new information, new knowledge and new wisdoms. The ATR framework and the NID principles and elements fluidly move across and through CPE depicting how information, knowledge and wisdom are transformed into the ‘new’ and transference of the ‘new’ in time and space is also occurring.

From a three-dimensional perspective, the principles of ATR and the elements of NID revolve and evolve into the ‘new’ through CPE Theory. The Indigenous Research Model has elements and principles of ATR and NID that are filtered through layers of CPE Theory whilst continuously revolving around the central point of CPE Theory’s connection to Aboriginal Spirituality in time and space. The revolutions take information, knowledge, understandings, meanings and wisdoms fluidly between ATR and NID across CPE Theory which is centred in Aboriginal Spirituality thus continuously changing there dynamic.

Just as DNA distributes throughout the human body the elements of life source, so too CPE Theory through time and space distributes from ATR notions of Aboriginal cultural ethnicity into the NID. Just as DNA distributes life source throughout the systems of the human body so too CPE Theory through time and space distributes Aboriginal Spirituality between ATR and NID connecting Aboriginal ‘ways of doing’ and ‘being’ with those principles and elements in the NID that will maintain cultural integrity within the research processes.

Aboriginal Spirituality will always impact on ATR, NID and CPE whenever the research phenomenon is within the Aboriginal domain. ATR takes those elements and principles of the NID through CPE Theory. The NID takes those ATR elements and principles through CPE Theory so as to ensure that the Aboriginal ‘voice’ is what is articulated in the research.

The model ensures that the researcher and the researched will be compelled to maintain an Aboriginal ontology accountable to the Aboriginal people. See diagram below.

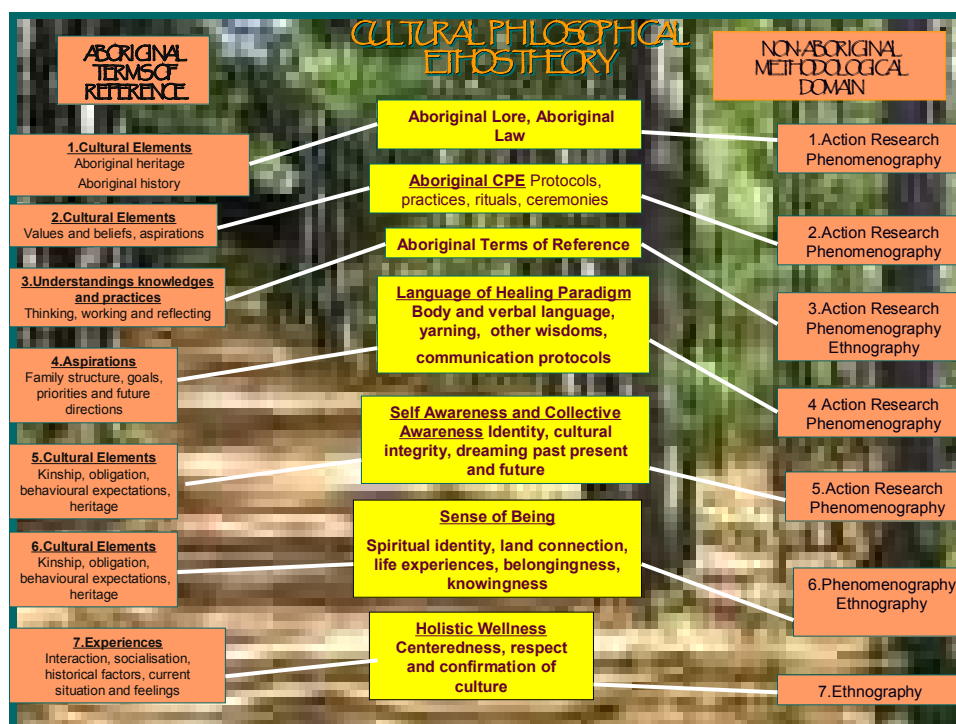


(Source: Created from the 3D DNA Double Helix Models, Indigo Instruments)

The core essence of Aboriginal Spirituality is the enigmatic ‘I am’ of the Aboriginal ‘voice’. It is imperative that researchers consider Aboriginal Spirituality’s significance in CPE Theory because if not, then as Dodson (1994, p. 39) clearly stated, “... our different voices may be heard once again only in the language of the alien tongue...”

The Indigenous Research Model is a dynamic research tool. Over time and space ATR and the NID will change just as cultures and societies change the inter-relationships ATR and NID have with the CPE Theory. Aboriginal Spirituality’s timelessness does not change over time and space but when CPE Theory is applied the dynamics of ATR and NID will also change. See diagram below.

The Inter and Intra- connectedness of ATR to CPE and NID to CPE



Changes will occur as researchers credentialise their research with Aboriginal meaning, wisdom and knowledge through CPE Theory. This illustration demonstrates how the principles and elements of an ATR framework and principles and elements of the methodologies of the NID interconnect with CPE Theory. Neither remains static particularly when researching to articulate the very essence of Aboriginal Australia's living experience.

Phenomenography principles when incorporated within an ATR framework focuses upon the participation of the researcher and the 'subject' and what the 'subject' population has to say and do. Both become stakeholders thus sharing the analysis of data, interpretation of the meanings, functions of human actions, the verbal descriptions and explanations of what is being researched (Sarantakos 2005; Richardson 1999; Ashworth & Lucas 1998).

Ethnographically the elements of an ATR framework ensures that the researcher enables the 'subjects' to define the 'subjects' phenomenon for the researcher, inclusive of the 'subjects' cultural nuances within the groups' 'ways of doing and being'. Therefore, the principles that are espoused as characteristics of ethnography are also implicitly identified within an ATR framework underpinned by CPE.

Action research has been successful when applied to Indigenous community development initiatives. For example, the Bundaberg and Burnett Region Community Development Aboriginal Corporation implemented their plan to establish an Indigenous Wellbeing Centre (IWC) (2007) through the use of Action Research. What this community needed was a process whereby services that addressed critical health needs could be realised. Action Research found that the needs involved accessing, and utilising primary health care services.

When IWC considered the 'needs' within an ATR framework they determined that local cultural practices had deep spiritual significance with regard to health services. Aboriginal

men would not attend general practice services for fear of being seen by their peers or because they would be taken to the hospital. To be seen by peers was a 'big shame' issue and to be taken to hospital when unwell, in these Aboriginal peoples minds, meant that the person was about to die. Acknowledgement of the spirituality and the Aboriginal 'way of doing and being' - 'Murrie-Way' - which included beliefs, mores, and values of the Aboriginal community and their cultural heritage had previously been overlooked. When an Action Research methodological approach was applied to the communities' identified critical needs, community empowerment, individual commitments and organisational planning all synergised.

Therefore, Action Research when underpinned by CPE Theory integrates the CPE Theory's elements of self-awareness and collective awareness, sense of being and a language of a healing paradigm. This was articulated in the research conducted by the IWC.

CONCLUSION

Research undertaken within the Aboriginal Australian arena utilising the Indigenous Research Model will 'bring home' results that articulate Aboriginal meanings, understandings, conceptualising, knowings, wisdoms, and language. The voicelessness of the historical Aboriginal 'subjects' will have the capacity 'to speak' and 'to be heard' within their own ATR.

Using an Indigenous developed Research Model allows the researcher to value the cultural integrity of the Aboriginal peoples who are being researched. The researchers' moral and ethical integrity to "bring it home to Aboriginal peoples" will be realised. This paper has discussed and explained the proposed Indigenous Research Model based upon an ATR framework and CPE theory and how it works with NID principles and elements whilst maintaining the integrity of an Aboriginal worldview. Over time and space new information, new knowledge and new wisdoms will continue to evolve.

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“Junjarin-nga dhar’guna yau’eembai’ya ngoolam’bula dhar’kun yar war gow” These words are from a 40,000 year old blessing and they mean: “May the spiritual forces of Mother Earth guide and protect your inner self and truth”. These words are spoken in the traditional language of the authors.