

Getting it Right

Creating Partnerships for Change.
Integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
knowledges in social work education and practice.

TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK 2014



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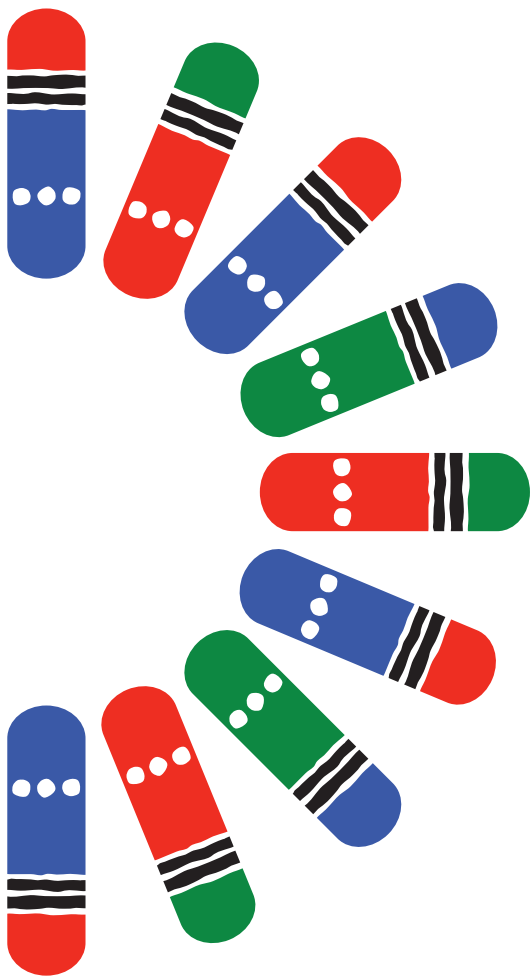
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We acknowledge the traditional custodians and their continuing connection to land and community.
We pay our respects to them and their culture, and to the Elders both past and present.





CONTENTS

FORWARD - DR TOM CALMA	1	National Roundtable	13
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2	Framework structure	14
Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Country	2	SECTION 1 - THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	15
Recognition of the achievements and contributions of others	2	1.1 Introduction	16
Getting it Right Project Reference Group	2	1.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-centred social work	17
Getting it Right Pilot Schools of Social Work	2	1.2.1 Epistemological equality	17
International peer reviewers	3	1.2.2 3rd Cultural space	19
Use of language and glossary of terms	4	1.2.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies	20
Acronyms	4	1.2.4 Putting it all together – cultural responsiveness	21
Glossary of other terms	4	1.3 Graduate capabilities, attributes and outcomes	25
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5	1.4 Conclusion	25
INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORK AND ITS SECTIONS	6	SECTION 2 - EMBEDDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES IN THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM	26
The context for change	6	2.1 Introduction	27
The Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (2012)	7	2.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and knowledge systems	27
AASW Initiatives in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work	7	2.3 Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems	28
The Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework overview	8	2.4 Importance of Indigenous Knowledges (IK)	29
The objectives of the Framework	8	2.4.1 What are Indigenous Knowledges?	29
Why the Framework is important for the profession	9	2.5 Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge in the Social Work curriculum	30
Who might find the Framework useful?	10	2.6 Delivering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum	30
When might the Framework be useful?	10	2.7 Protocols for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges	32
AASW Accreditation Processes	10	SECTION 3 - TEACHING AND LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES	33
Internal University course reviews	10	3.1 Introduction	34
Preparation of individual units	10	3.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies	34
How applicable is the Framework to all social work courses?	11	3.2.1 Culturally responsive learning processes	35
Evidence informing the Framework - Getting it Right project data	11	3.3 Who teaches?	35
The research process	11	3.3.1 Non-Indigenous staff	37
Research questions	11	3.3.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	37
Data collection methods	11	3.3.3 Teaching in partnership	38
Literature review	12	3.3.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lecturers	38
On-line survey	12		
Engaging educators in the Framework development	13		
Two day Cultural Responsiveness workshops in 7 Pilot Schools of Social Work	13		



3.3.5	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	39
3.4	Who is taught ?	39
3.4.1	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student-only small group work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander units.	39
3.4.2	How is this done?	39
3.5	Where should the teaching/learning take place?	40
3.5.1	Learning in communities	40
3.5.2	Learning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies	41
3.5.3	Distance learning and education contexts	41
3.6	How should the teaching/learning be constructed?	41
3.6.1	Other learning modalities	43
3.7	How should student learning be assessed, and by whom?	44
3.8	Conclusion	44

SECTION 4 - FIELD EDUCATION THAT IS INFORMED BY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES

4.1	Introduction	46
4.2	Moving Forward	47
4.2.1	Use of field education terms	47
4.3	Field Education Stakeholders	48
4.3.1	Planning	49
4.3.2	Developing a plan in partnership with community and field educators	49
4.4	AASW Field Education Standards	49
4.5	Developing enhanced learning environments	50
4.5.1	Developing learning opportunities in non-Indigenous agencies	50
4.5.2	Learning about social, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing (SESWB)	51
4.6	Learning outcomes and assessment	51
4.6.1	Exploring alternative assessment processes	52
4.7	Supporting field educators, cultural supervision and mentoring	53
4.7.1	How can culturally responsive supervision happen?	53
4.8	Placement preparation for students	55
4.9	Conclusion	55

SECTION 5 - RECRUITING, SUPPORTING AND RETAINING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS

5.1	Introduction	57
5.2	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work student population	57
5.3	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work population	58
5.4	The role of the AASW in addressing the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	58
5.5.	Recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students	59
5.6	Retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students	63
5.6.1	Building cultural safety	63
5.6.2	Learning about lateral violence	64
5.7	Conclusion	64

SECTION 6 - RECRUITING, SUPPORTING AND RETAINING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ABORIGINAL STAFF

6.1	Introduction	66
6.2	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university staff	66
6.3	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work academic staff	67
6.3.1	The recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work staff	67
6.3.2	Retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work staff	69
6.4	The provision of training and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work teaching staff	70
6.5	Conclusion	70



SECTION 7 - GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP 71

7.1	Introduction	72
7.2	The development of a whole-of-School ethos and culture that reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing	72
7.2.1	Developing consultative relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	73
7.2.2	School Advisory Group membership	73
7.2.3	Developing working relationships with University-based Aboriginal units	74
7.2.4	Developing Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP)	74
7.3	Role modelling respectful adherence to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols	74
7.4	Addressing the professional development and support needs of staff	76
7.5	Creating cultural safety for educators	76
7.6	Engaging the whole of staff group in curriculum development and change processes	77
7.6.1	Acknowledging and addressing staff responses	77
7.6.2	Addressing concerns about workload implications and the 'crowded curriculum'	78
7.7	Developing opportunities to engage upper level management	78
7.8	Developing evaluative mechanisms for documenting and measuring change	80
7.9	Developing mechanisms for evaluating the quality of the teaching and learning experience	80
7.10	Mobilising student engagement	81
7.11	Address funding and resource issues	81

SECTION 8 - STRATEGIES FOR EMBEDDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES AND PRACTICES IN THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM 82



FORWARD

DR TOM CALMA

From 1978, being a social worker has helped to shape my life. Social work is about how we empower people, help them create control in their lives and create the futures they want. The *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework* provides us with some guidance to assist us to do that in relation to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Australian Association of Social Workers has provided the context in which this teaching and learning can occur with the new AASW Code of Ethics (2010), their Reconciliation Action Plan, and the revised Education Standards (2012). These are all documents that recognise the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing as among the four essential areas of curriculum content that must be included in all Australian accredited social work programs. This requirement asserts that social workers need to be informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in all of areas of practice. But it does raise challenges, which are clearly articulated in the *Getting it Right Framework*.

One of the greatest challenges is how to create cultural safety in the classroom, in the field, in the academy – and for students, staff, clients and practitioners. Social work education has an already crowded curriculum, and there are those who ask how to make this work relevant? It is relevant as social workers work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and we are over-represented in all areas of social disadvantage. A key challenge is around the question of what are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges. This is a challenge for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as non-Indigenous people to understand!

A related challenge is the question of who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – we are diverse and we are heterogeneous. There remains a challenge for those who influence governance and leadership, about how to bring staff and colleagues along this learning journey. Social work is not alone amongst the professional disciplines in facing these challenges.

The *Getting it Right Framework* offers social work both conceptual and very tangible real strategies to implement. The Framework highlights the importance of developing relationships and engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the process – without burdening them with an expectation of expertise by virtue of their Indigeneity¹. There is the new and confronting understanding of the issue of Whiteness: it is talked about well in the Framework to help us begin to understand it. It relates strongly to issues of racism and its impact on individuals and society. The authors have treated such issues with great respect.

The Framework itself represents an example of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous social workers can collaborate. I lend my endorsement to the *Getting it Right Framework* and congratulate the authors, Reference Group, and Pilot Schools. They have laid an excellent foundation for teaching, learning and further development within the social work fraternity and in other disciplines. I believe the Framework has the potential to contribute to both attitudinal and behavioral changes with good, clear, well-researched work that is developmental, and treats people with dignity.

I encourage you to use it in collaboration with other resources and other conversations.

¹ <http://johansandbergmcguinne.wordpress.com/official-definitions-of-indigeneity/>



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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Country

As social workers we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities (Adapted from the Code of Ethics Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010).

Recognition of the achievements and contributions of others

The Getting it Right project team wish to pay tribute to all the people who before us, have contributed (often dedicating their professional and personal lives) towards embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in social work practice and education. These people have laid the foundations for the work that we have undertaken during this project and which is now presented in this framework. Frequently these people worked in isolation with little or no support and were often confronted with denial and racism. Many of the people who have campaigned for this cause have been Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Their struggle to progress social work practice and education must never be overlooked, as they came from a position of relative powerlessness and yet fought on. We also wish to acknowledge the many non-Indigenous peoples who stood beside, supported and fought with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues.

This work has occurred over a long period of time and engaged numerous individuals. Whilst it is important to acknowledge all of these people, we have decided not to name individuals in order to avoid offence by inadvertently leaving out someone's name. This document is a testimony to the work that they have done and without their support this project would not have been possible.

We recognise and pay our respects to all of those whose work and dedication has contributed to the finalisation of this important framework.

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USE OF LANGUAGE AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

In the development of this document there was considerable discussion within the Project Team about the use of language with advice sought from a range of stakeholders and reference to key documents, for example the NSW Health publication *Communicating positively – Guide to appropriate Aboriginal terminology* (Centre for Aboriginal Health, 20 04). This consultation process revealed tensions and sensitivities around the use of different terminologies that refer to Indigenous, First Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Australian literature in this area indicates that these terms are generally used interchangeably with often little discussion of what this might mean in practice.

In this document the following language conventions have been adopted:

- The term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' will be used interchangeably with the term 'First Australians'. The use of the plural acknowledges the diversity within this population group.
- The term 'non-Indigenous' will be used to refer to those peoples who are not First Australians.
- The term 'Indigenous' will be used to refer to international Indigenous peoples.

ACRONYMS

AASW – Australian Association of Social Workers

ALTC – Australian Learning and Teaching Council, now known as the Office of Learning and Teaching

ASWEAS – Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards. This refers to two integrally related AASW documents. One contains curriculum content guidelines and requirements, where part four covers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander required content (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a). The other contains overarching education and accreditation standards (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012b).

GLOSSARY OF OTHER TERMS

Aboriginal Centres in Universities /Indigenous studies centres – These University-based facilities are usually known as Aboriginal units or Indigenous studies centres. Torres Strait is not usually included in their titles.

Educators/academic staff – Staff employed to teach social work students are variously referred to throughout the Framework as educators or/and academic staff.

OLT – Office of Learning and Teaching within the Australian Government Department of Education

Getting it Right – This term refers to either the Getting it Right project and/or this document, the *Getting it Right. Creating Partnerships for Change. Integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in social work education and practice: Teaching and Learning Framework*

School/s of Social Work – This is the term adopted in the *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework* to refer to all Australian AASW-accredited social work programs that offer Bachelor and Masters level qualifying social work degrees via a range of modes of delivery such as face to face, distance learning, on-line and residential programs. These may be based in urban, regional and rural areas. The project acknowledges that these courses are often provided in academic units which are also regarded as Disciplines or Departments.

Social work course/s and program/s – These terms are used interchangeably throughout the Framework to refer to all of the current AASW-accredited social work qualifying programs that are offered in Australia.

Social work subjects and social work units – These terms are used interchangeably throughout the Framework to refer to individual units of study (subjects) that are taught to students throughout the degree.

The Framework – This term is used to refer to the Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework

Vertical and horizontal integration – Vertical integration provides students with an opportunity to focus in depth, in one unit of study or subject. Horizontal integration refers to the incorporation of aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content across the entire social work program.

3rd Space – Throughout the Framework the terms 3rd Space and 3rd cultural or intercultural Space are used to refer to Bhabha's concept.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2012 Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) state that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing are one of four essential core curriculum content areas alongside Mental Health, Child Wellbeing and Protection and Cross-cultural knowledge and skills, that must now be included in all Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)-accredited social work programs (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a). By articulating this new requirement, the AASW is asserting that social workers need to be informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in all areas of practice.

In order to achieve this goal, this area of new curriculum content will need to be effectively embedded throughout social work programs. This will require consideration of a range of issues including: the ownership and definitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, the promotion of cultural safety in the classroom, field and within the academy, and the need to address anxiety from social work educators about a crowded curriculum. These and a range of other pedagogical and practice issues are addressed in this document.

This *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework* (the Framework) is an evidence-informed road map for the development and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in Australian social work curricula. The culmination of extensive consultation, research and engagement with Schools of Social Work, the Framework has been developed with leadership from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous social work academics and practitioners. A conceptual framework underpins consideration of all aspects of the teaching and learning environment including: field education, governance and leadership and the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. In the final section (Section 8), examples of how different strategies can be achieved with a range of teaching and learning contexts are presented.

Fundamentally this Framework is about getting it right. Social work professionals are located within environments and communities where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are still amongst the most disadvantaged and marginalised. By stating that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are now core to the knowing, being and doing of social work, the AASW has provided all Australian social work educators, practitioners and students with a clear opportunity to develop culturally responsive social work practices. The adoption of this Framework by social work programs will be the practical expression of this objective.



INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORK AND ITS SECTIONS

THE CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

In 2011 a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work academics and practitioners (the *Getting it Right* project team) successfully applied for funding to develop the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Teaching and Learning Framework for social work education. The Australian Learning and Teaching Council – ALTC (now known as the Office of Learning and Teaching – OLT) funded this two-year national project.

The timing of the funding application was directly linked to the imminent publication by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) of the *Statement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Curriculum Content* (July 2011) which was produced in consultation with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous social work reference group. A year later (July 2012) this Statement was included in the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) as one of four essential core curriculum content areas that must be included in all AASW accredited social work programs (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a, 2012b). The ASWEAS document establishes the national professional benchmarks for social work education, specifying the graduate attributes of social workers and articulating a range of course requirements and processes in areas such as field education.

The *Getting it Right* project team recognised that the publication of a Statement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Curriculum Content as a significant development in Australian social work education. A clear imperative now existed to provide guidance to social work educators on how to best to respond to these new areas of teaching and learning.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE PROFESSION, SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS, STUDENTS AND GRADUATES ARE REQUIRED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY ARE INFORMED BY THE KNOWLEDGE, VALUES AND PRACTICES OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES.

Given the ongoing legacies of Australia's colonial history and the historical and contemporary roles that the social work profession has in the provision of human services to First Australians, this development has the potential to lead to profound changes in Australian social work practices.

The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum in social work education can also lead to increased recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students and academic staff. Achieving such outcomes is well documented in other areas of Australian professional education such as medicine. An initiative led by the Australian Medical Deans (Phillips, 2004) to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content across Australian medical curriculum resulted in increased numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students graduating with medical degrees and teaching in universities (Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand & Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, 2012).



THE REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS AND OUTCOMES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES (2012)

In 2012 the Australian Government review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education (Behrendt, Larkin, Griew, & Kelly, 2012) endorsed the need for curriculum reform and provided the context for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in social work education. The Behrendt report (2012) asserts that the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in the academy has two main goals: the achievement of equality in participation and outcomes in higher education between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians, and the achievement of recognition and equivalence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in the higher education sector. These goals have particular relevance to professions such as social work:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges, translated into curriculum, teaching practices and graduate attributes, can make important contributions to helping professionals meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. (Behrendt et al., 2012,)

The report goes on to recommend that universities develop 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teaching and Learning Frameworks that reflect the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge within curriculums, graduate attributes and teaching practices' (Behrendt et al., 2012, p.xiv). In this context

THE GETTING IT RIGHT TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK SHOULD BE REGARDED AS A ROAD MAP FOR HOW AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION CAN BECOME COMPREHENSIVELY INFORMED BY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES AND VALUES IN ORDER TO MORE EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES.

AASW INITIATIVES IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK

The development of the *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework* also builds on a range of other initiatives and publications by the AASW that have, since 2010, increased the profession's focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews and practices. This includes the publication of a revised *Code of Ethics* (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010) and *Practice Standards* (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013a).

The revised *Code of Ethics* acknowledges in its Preamble that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Australians and asserts that 'Social workers commit to acknowledge and understand the historical and contemporary disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the implications of this for social work practice' (AASW, 2010, p.5). Throughout the document stronger consideration is given to the development of ethical social work practices that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews.

The recently revised AASW Practice Standards (AASW, 2013a) also address in more detail social work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A critical development is that

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK NEEDS TO BE RECOGNISED IN ITS OWN RIGHT AND NOT CONFLATED INTO THE CATEGORY OF CROSS CULTURAL PRACTICE.

Standard (3.2) asserts the need for social workers to 'Respect and strive to understand and promote the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures' (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013a, p.11).



A strong theme to emerge from each of these AASW documents is the need for

THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION NEEDS TO CRITICALLY REFLECT ON HOW IT CONTINUES TO CONTRIBUTE TO ONGOING COLONISING PRACTICES AND THE ROLE OF WHITENESS IN CONFERRING PRIVILEGES.

In other words, developing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and worldviews such as those articulated by Martin and Mirraboopu (2003) as ways of knowing, being and doing, need to be coupled with the development of social work practices. These social work practices, in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, address pervasive issues such as racism and the under-utilisation of health and social services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Herring, Spangaro, Lauw and McNamara (2013) conceptualise this approach as social workers becoming informed, taking a stance and reaching out.

In this context,

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GETTING IT RIGHT TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK REFLECTS NOT ONLY NEW AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS BUT ALSO A BROADER AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AGENDA.

The next steps for the AASW in its quest for the greater recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in social work practice and education are firstly, to align the ASWEAS graduate attributes (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012b) with the graduate attributes presented in Section 2 of this Framework. Secondly, the AASW needs to consider during accreditation whether Schools of Social Work meet the ASWEAS requirements (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a, 2012b). In this way the professional body which accredits all social work courses, will be able to comprehensively and unequivocally demonstrate that its social justice imperatives are reflected in both theory and practice.

THE GETTING IT RIGHT TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

The Framework seeks to build on current successful initiatives in Australian social work education as well as to address gaps in education and practice by presenting a range of evidence informed principles and strategies. Given the contextual nature of social work practice and education, the Framework's principles and strategies will need to be variously applied and translated into local contexts.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE FRAMEWORK

The goal of the Framework is to facilitate the effective integration of this new area of curriculum content in ways that meet the requirements set out in the AASW Education and Accreditation Standards (AASW, 2012a), and which uphold the principles of the *AASW Code of Ethics* (AASW, 2010) and the *AASW Practice Standards* (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013a). In particular the Framework provides critical guidance about how educators in social work programs can achieve the following broad objectives:

- Embed horizontally and vertically Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing across the social work curriculum and pedagogy
- Move Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges from the margins to the centre of social work education
- Co-construct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Develop learning and teaching practices that are informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. This includes developing partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that will inform all dimensions of social work practice
- Assess the capacity of all social work students to be culturally responsive in all areas of practice.

Develop strategies which support the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work staff and students.



WHY THE FRAMEWORK IS IMPORTANT FOR THE PROFESSION

SOCIAL WORK IS A HUMAN RIGHTS PROFESSION (SEE FOR EXAMPLE CALMA & PRIDAY, 2011, IFE 2010) WHICH ASSERTS AS ITS THREE CORE VALUES; RESPECT FOR PERSONS, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY (REFER CODE OF ETHICS, AASW, 2010). THE GETTING IT RIGHT TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK INTEGRATES THESE VALUES INTO THE THEORY AND PRACTICES OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION.

By conceptualising the vertical and horizontal embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, the Framework provides educators with guidance about what it means to be informed by these knowledges in practice. This objective reflects a new way of being, knowing and doing in Australian social work education. In order for this to be effective, evidence-informed guidance is required.

For example, the new national requirement to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges to social work students requires thoughtful consideration of complex issues such as the definition and ownership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges (this is covered in Section 2 of the Framework). This means that distinction will need to be made between teaching students practical and substantive knowledge such as 'Knowledge of key organisations that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' and traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges such as 'Knowledge of the importance of Aboriginal worldviews, terms of reference and meaning' (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a, pp. 22-23).

In this context Schools of Social Work will need to consider questions such as: Who develops and teaches this curriculum? What values, skills, knowledge and support do educators need in order to effectively undertake these tasks (see Sections 3, 6 and 7 for consideration of these questions). The ways in which content is developed, taught and presented to students is a powerful and influential dimension of professional socialisation. In other words how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content is embedded throughout the curriculum (Sections 2 & 3), including the field education program (Section 4), has the capacity to influence the ways in which students and graduates work with and deliver social work services to and in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Failure to respond sensitively and appropriately to these issues may further harm relationships between the social work profession and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Social work is also one of the key human service professions developing and providing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. It therefore matters how well prepared social workers are to practice in these areas (see Section 1 for graduate attributes and model of *cultural responsiveness*). The high representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families in the child protection, youth and adult correction systems (see, for example, Cunneen & Libesman, 2000; Tilbury, 2009), coupled with an under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the health system, are all practice issues which need to be addressed by skilled social workers in collaboration with other professions. This means that social workers not only need to have the values, knowledge and skills to work culturally responsively with these communities, but an increased number of well-prepared and supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers are required to undertake this work in collaboration with non-Indigenous colleagues (see Section 5). The development of a social work curriculum, which is informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, is pivotal to the achievement of these objectives (see Sections 1, 2 and 3).

The substantial data gathered by the *Getting it Right* project (referred to throughout the Framework as the project data), clearly identifies that while there are exceptions, this area of Australian social work education is underdeveloped.



WHO MIGHT FIND THE FRAMEWORK USEFUL?

THE INTENDED AUDIENCE ARE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS TEACHING IN AASW ACCREDITED SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING UNDERGRADUATE AND MASTER'S QUALIFYING COURSES.

This includes field education staff, especially those located in the field who may seek further guidance regarding the impact of this new area of essential core curriculum on the field education learning environment. Social work educators, who are new to Australian social work, are particularly encouraged to draw on the Framework to support the development of their knowledge about the context of Australian social work education and practice.

Members of Course/School/Discipline Advisory Committees might also find the Framework informative, as they consider the implications and possibilities that stem from the integration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing into local social work courses.

Similarly, social work students may wish to refer to the Framework, especially those who seek more in-depth knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work.

WHEN MIGHT THE FRAMEWORK BE USEFUL?

AASW Accreditation Processes

The Framework will be particularly valuable for Heads of School and educators as they review and prepare existing and new programs for AASW accreditation and re-accreditation. The Framework can also inform the work of AASW-appointed Accreditation panel members as they prepare to accredit courses as well as AASW-appointed consultants who provide guidance on the development of new social work programs. While the Framework has been developed with close attention to the ASWEAS (AASW, 2012) guidelines, it also articulates new concepts and ideas that are aspirational. In this way the Framework provides strategic direction for what Australian social work education can become as well as identifying areas that require change and development. The concepts and strategies presented can inform critical debate and discussion within Schools and the professional body.

THE FRAMEWORK WILL BE PARTICULARLY VALUABLE FOR HEADS OF SCHOOL AND EDUCATORS AS THEY REVIEW AND PREPARE EXISTING AND NEW PROGRAMS FOR AASW ACCREDITATION AND RE-ACCREDITATION.

The Framework could be a valuable resource for AASW Accreditation Panel members as they determine the extent to which Schools have effectively embedded this new area of essential content into their courses. Panel members may also draw on the strategies presented in the Framework as recommendations for how Schools can engage more actively and appropriately with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content.

Internal University course reviews

Given the higher education context in which the Framework has been developed (refer to earlier discussion), the concepts and strategies presented in this document could generate strong and positive interest and attention more broadly within universities.

IF ADOPTED, A NUMBER OF THE FRAMEWORK CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO PLACE SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK AS LEADERS IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVES WITHIN THEIR INSTITUTIONS.

Preparation of individual subjects

FUNDAMENTALLY THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK IS TO RESOURCE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS IN THEIR DAY TO DAY TEACHING.

As such, educators will find that familiarity with the Framework in its entirety should significantly enhance their capacity to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content in ways that can address concerns about a crowded curriculum.



How applicable is the Framework to all social work courses?

The ideas and strategies presented in the Framework are applicable to all AASW-accredited social work programs, including undergraduate and master's qualifying courses.

All modes of delivery have also been addressed, including face to face, on-line and distance learning. Given the contextual nature of social work practice, it is critical that the content presented in the Framework is adapted to local contexts, and that this adaptation occurs in consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

EVIDENCE INFORMING THE FRAMEWORK - GETTING IT RIGHT PROJECT DATA

A critical project objective has been the development of a Teaching and Learning Framework that is evidence-informed. Meeting this objective provided an opportunity to gather, for the first time, comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data about the teaching and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process was guided by a commitment to the co-construction of knowledge within the 3rd Space or Intercultural Space (see Sections 1 and 2 for more discussion of this concept) in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous perspectives came together in order to create new understandings and meanings. This meant that Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous members of the project team jointly participated in all stages of data collection and analysis. Guidance regarding different aspects of the research process, such as the on-line survey and the development of Pilot School selection criteria, was also sought from the project Reference Group (see Section 7 for further discussion of the project's leadership and governance).

Research questions

The key research questions guiding all aspects of the data collection were:

- What is the current national experience of teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in social work education?
- How do Schools of Social Work respond to the need to increase their focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges?
- What are some of the challenges and opportunities confronting social work academic staff?
- What support and guidance is required?

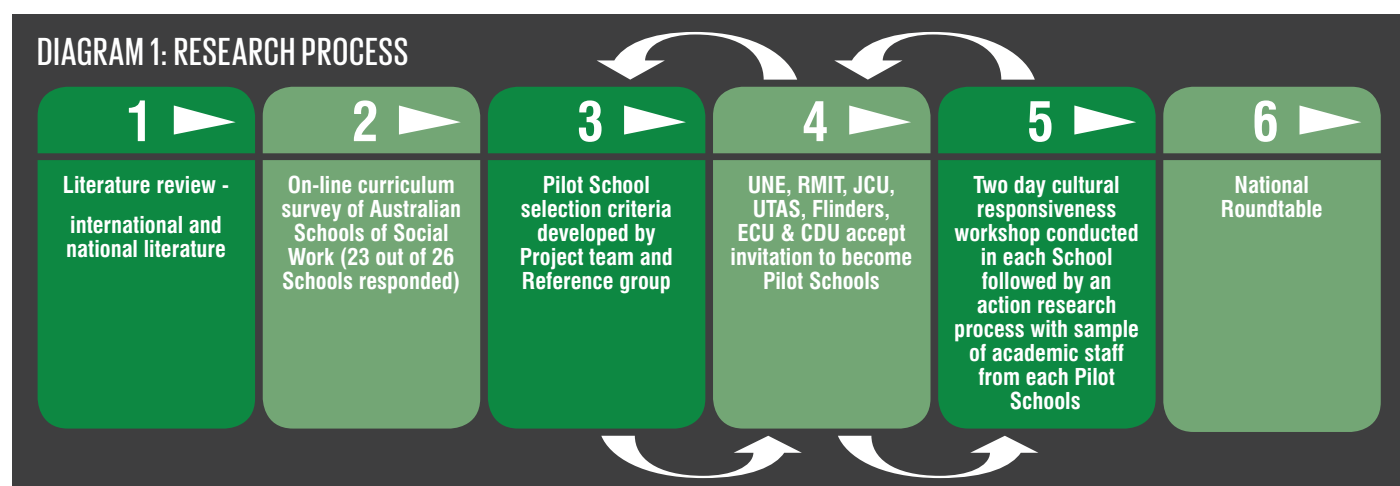
Data collection methods

The project adopted three data collection methods:

- Literature review;
- On-line curriculum survey; and
- Action Research (AR) process with:
 - All six project team members
 - Seventeen (N=17) social work academics from 7 Pilot Schools of Social Work; James Cook University, University of New England, RMIT, University of Tasmania, Flinders University, Edith Cowan University and Charles Darwin University.

Full ethics approval for the collection of project data was provided by the Australian Catholic University.

Data analysis was undertaken utilising a range of methods including some descriptive quantitative analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and thematic analysis and synthesis, supported by the data storage software NVivo.





Literature review

An extensive literature review (146 articles) was conducted in the first year of the Project, systematically seeking material from the 'sister' disciplines to social work. This included Education, the broad Allied Health area, including Medicine, Nursing, Psychology, and the other disciplines from the Social Sciences such as Anthropology and Sociology. Literature was sourced from countries which had colonial histories with their Indigenous populations. These were primarily Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific Islands and the United States of America, although there was some literature from some African and Asian countries.

The literature review has been published in the journal *Ethnic and Cultural Diversity and Social Work* (Young et al., 2013).

On-line survey

In 2012 a detailed on-line survey was conducted with all 26 Australian Schools of Social Work. The achievement of a high response rate (over 80% -- 23 out of 26 Schools) demonstrated strong interest in the project. A range of 49 closed and open questions covered the following areas:

- Demographic data including type of course, numbers of staff and students and how many of these were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in 2011
- How this content was taught and by whom
- Where it was positioned in the curriculum
- What was included
- Staff knowledges and skills in this area of teaching and learning
- Student needs in field placements
- Field placement concerns and remedies
- Policies and processes for the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students

Assessment of how well prepared educators considered their students to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on graduation.

Overall,

THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY CONTRIBUTED TO A GROWING AWARENESS AMONG THE PROJECT TEAM AND REFERENCE GROUP THAT A DIFFERENT WAY OF APPROACHING THE INTEGRATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES INTO THE CURRICULUM WAS NEEDED.

Rather than necessarily *more* content, the view was the need for a *different* way of approaching curriculum development and integration. The project's conceptual framework (see Sections 1 – 4 in particular) provides the theoretical underpinnings of what this *difference* means and looks like in practice.

Action research

In order to address the key research questions, Action Research (AR) methods were also adopted. The advantage of utilising AR was that qualitative data could be gathered from a range of participants over time, in this way capturing deeper reflections on the process of knowledge development and curriculum change. The two groups of participants were the Getting it Right project team and a sample of social work educators from seven Schools of Social Work, referred to in the project as the Pilot Schools.

Project team – Over a two year period project team members participated in a number of action research processes and cycles. This method of data collection was premised on the assumption that developing knowledge about how to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in social work education could also be generated from participating in and actively reflecting on various project activities.

Pilot School participants – Seventeen social work educators participated over a six month period in an action research data collection process. The data collection focussed on their experiences of engaging with the new AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content. By sharing these experiences and insights, the Pilot School participants have made an invaluable contribution to the project.

Project Team members conducted individual and focus group interviews with this cohort of educators which explored and gathered data about course and School leadership and governance, teaching and learning, field education and community engagement.



ENGAGING EDUCATORS IN THE FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

A range of Project activities were undertaken in order to engage as many social work educators as possible with the Framework's development.

Two day Cultural Responsiveness workshops in 7 Pilot Schools of Social Work

From the 23 Schools of Social Work that responded to the on-line survey, the Reference Group and Project Team developed a set of criteria for the selection of seven Schools of Social Work that would be invited to engage more actively in the Project. The selection criteria aimed to achieve some level of representation of the diversity of Social Work teaching and learning throughout Australia. Thus, regional and urban settings, BSW and MSW courses, those providing on-campus and distance education courses all informed the selection of seven Pilot Schools of Social Work.

In each Pilot School (James Cook University, University of New England, RMIT, University of Tasmania, Flinders, Edith Cowan University and Charles Darwin University), social work academic staff engaged in two day staff development workshop activities. These were jointly facilitated by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous project team and/or reference group member.

PRIOR TO EACH WORKSHOP, THE PROJECT TEAM MADE CONTACT WITH LOCAL UNIVERSITY BASED ABORIGINAL CENTRES¹. MAKING THESE CONNECTIONS ENSURED THAT CULTURAL PROTOCOLS WERE ADDRESSED AND THAT THE ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAFF WITH THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES COULD BE EXPLORED.

The staff development workshops, facilitated jointly by project and/or reference group member were designed to present in-depth information deriving from the literature review and on-line survey. Staff were invited to explore a range of teaching and learning concepts and material that might be suited to and could be adapted for local use.

These workshops did not form part of the data collection for the Project, but were rather a way of engaging with and resourcing participating Schools with a range of learning and teaching processes and materials.

National Roundtable

The National Roundtable was designed as the project's final large forum and source of materials which could contribute to the development of the National Teaching and Learning Framework. Forty social work educators representing 17 Schools of Social Work across Australia gathered for a day to explore a range of issues that need to be addressed in the teaching and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges. Professor Pat Dudgeon, an eminent Aboriginal Psychologist, gave a powerful keynote address.

THE PROJECT TEAM PRESENTED KEY CONCEPTS AND INVITED PARTICIPANTS TO EXPLORE EXAMPLES OF 'WHAT WORKS' AND WHAT IS STILL NEEDED IN ORDER TO EMBED ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES AND PROCESSES IN THEIR CURRICULUM.

These discussions added to the shape and content of the Framework.

The responses from the Roundtable participants were both positive and informative. The conceptual framework used to guide the development of the Project was embellished to add greater depth and intricacy. This conceptual framework, however, demonstrated its usefulness and appropriateness as a guiding map for the production and implementation of teaching and learning processes with colleagues and students. With the addition of details, such as the need to include racism and decolonisation as specific topics, and the expansion of some ideas, such as including discussion of 'domination' along with Whiteness, a more nuanced conceptual framework has emerged.

¹ These University based facilities are usually known as Aboriginal units or Indigenous studies centres. Torres Strait is not usually included in their titles.



FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE

SECTION 1	Introduces the reader to the 4 key concepts that underpin the Framework. Achieving the objective of vertical and horizontal integration of the AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges is discussed in some detail.
SECTION 2	Focuses in depth on defining and analysing the meanings and interpretations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous knowledges.
SECTION 3	Explores Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies. Consideration of a range of social work teaching and learning principles and processes are presented.
SECTION 4	Addresses the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in field education. A range of field education issues are considered including preparation of students and supervision.
SECTION 5	Presents some of the implications of this curriculum change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The key issue of addressing cultural safety and the learning needs of this student group are considered.
SECTION 6	Builds on the above discussion and considers these implications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
SECTION 7	Introduces the reader to a whole-of-School approach to this area of curriculum change and development. Highlighting the opportunities for creative change, a range of strategies are presented.
SECTION 8	Is a comprehensive selection of practical examples and resources that cover areas of curriculum development, teaching strategy, student assessment and staff and student support.

SECTION 1

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

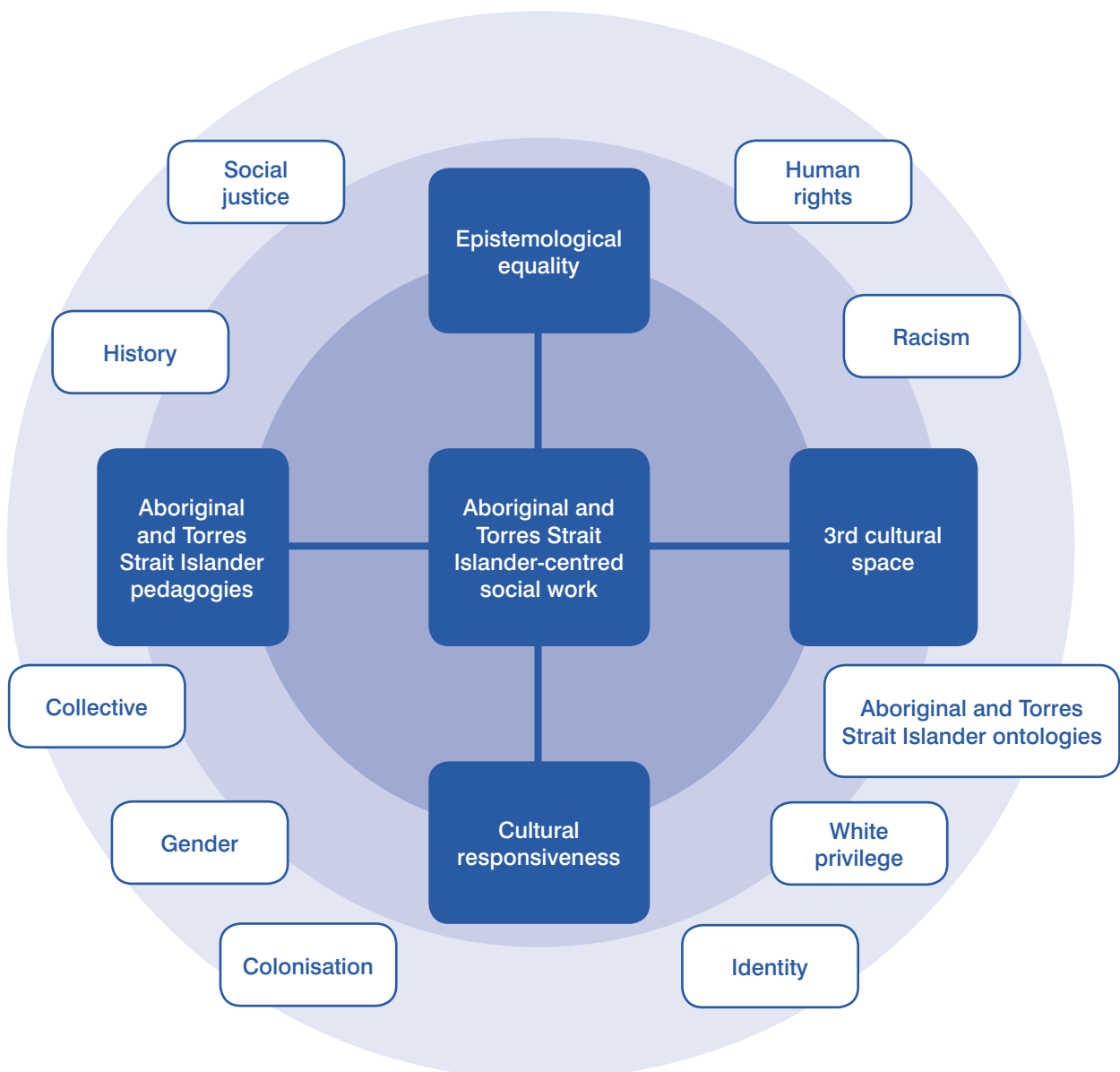




1.1 INTRODUCTION

The conceptual framework that informs this Teaching and Learning Framework challenges Australian social work by positioning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, values and skills at the centre of the learning and teaching process. This re-positioning is fundamental to the successful and effective inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing that are presented in the ASWEAS document (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a).

DIAGRAM 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK





The objective is to change the social work curricula in order to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-centred social work and, in doing so, achieve change with cultural integrity.

FOUR KEY CONCEPTS ARE FOUNDATIONAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER-CENTRED SOCIAL WORK; EPISTEMOLOGICAL EQUALITY, 3RD CULTURAL SPACE (3RD SPACE), ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEDAGOGIES AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS. THE LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES PRESENTED THROUGHOUT EACH SECTION OF THE FRAMEWORK ARE THE PRACTICAL EXPRESSION OF THESE CONCEPTS.

Educators can use them to guide theory-practice integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being.

Introducing social work students to these four concepts will be an important dimension of articulating the conceptual foundations of the social work curriculum and therefore demonstrating the centring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples knowledges.

1.2 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER-CENTRED SOCIAL WORK

The AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Curriculum Standards found in ASWEAS (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a) provide social work educators and students with a comprehensive list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. If adopted in practice, these values, knowledges and skills can form the foundation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-centred social work. What this means in practice is that Australian social work will shift from being a profession that has in the past been primarily informed by Western ways of knowing to one that is also informed by First Australian epistemologies.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CENTRED SOCIAL WORK RECOGNISES THE DIVERSITY OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES AND DRAWS ON LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PRACTICES AND KNOWLEDGES.

It also informs and is informed by international Indigenous perspectives. It is not essentialist but adopts best practice from a range of social work practice methodologies, frameworks and interventions. Examples are narrative,

relationship based practice, group work, community development and human rights perspectives. The characteristics of this new way of conceptualising Australian social work as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander centred, is that this is a way of being and doing social work which fundamentally integrates First Australian social work perspectives and modalities alongside other social work practices. This creates a way of being a social worker that is applicable to all population groups and all forms of practice. It is a way of understanding social work as being a profession that not only has the capacity, but also the professional imperative to combine different knowledges, values and skills into a cohesive whole for the benefit of the profession and the community. *Epistemological equality* is one of the four central organising concepts in the *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework*.

1.2.1. Epistemological equality

Australian social work as an academic and practice discipline is embedded in and infused with Western epistemologies. This perspective has resulted in Western thought occupying a central position in all areas of social work theory and practice. Situating Western knowledges as central in social work education supports the view that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing need to compete for space in an already crowded curriculum. Adopting such a perspective leads to decisions about where and how to incorporate this new curriculum content as open to choice and/or rejection and therefore vulnerable to individual academic interest, commitment and expertise.

However the publication of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Curriculum Statement (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a) means that it is not acceptable in social work education to 'add on' or treat as 'alternate' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges. What will be necessary is recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, while different, have equal value and status as systems of knowledges and thus deserve *epistemological equality*.

ASSERTING THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL EQUALITY OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGE RESISTS THE PRACTICE OF INCLUDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES AS ALTERNATE AND THEREFORE MARGINAL.



Fundamentally, the *epistemological equality* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges redresses the prominence of Western models of social work practice and requires the curriculum development process to occur in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Such processes enable the co-authoring and co-teaching of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander models of practice and facilitate the development of potentially enduring community and university partnerships. These collaborations can lead to a range of education, practice, research and community outcomes.

1.2.1.1 Horizontal and vertical integration

Asserting the principle of *epistemological equality* means that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges need to be infused vertically (as a single unit of study or subject) and horizontally (embedded in all units) throughout the social work curriculum (see Section 8 for practical examples). Briefly,

VERTICAL INTEGRATION PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS IN DEPTH, IN ONE UNIT OF STUDY OR SUBJECT.

The learning objectives in such a unit would clearly articulate an expectation that students would be able to demonstrate theory and practice integration in a range of content areas such as Knowing, Being and Doing (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a). There may for example be some merit in scheduling such a unit following the successful completion of the first Field Education placement when students may have a clearer understanding of the practice context and are also able to scaffold this more intense learning upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content already presented in other units.

Achieving epistemological equality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content through horizontal integration is also an important goal.

HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION REFERS TO THE INCORPORATION OF ASPECTS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CURRICULUM CONTENT ACROSS THE ENTIRE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM.

A social work curriculum that reflects horizontal integration puts into practice *epistemological equality* and would demonstrate clearly to students that, no matter what the subject matter, there exists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and responses which can inform practice. Additionally these Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are readily transferable to other areas of practice and in this way can be regarded as integral to the development of an effective and inclusive Australian social work.

Achieving this objective also has the promise of providing social work students with an additional dimension to their learning. It is envisaged that by the time they graduate, the cohorts of social work students who have been immersed in this new curriculum will be informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all areas of practice.

THE INTENDED OUTCOME FOR THE PROFESSION AND THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES IS A SHIFT AWAY FROM THE MARGINS TO THE LOCATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PERSPECTIVES AS CENTRAL AND EQUAL, THUS POTENTIALLY REDRESSING POWER IMBALANCES AND HISTORICAL INJUSTICES.

Achieving effective learning in this area does, however, require students to reflect actively on their personal and in particular their racial and cultural identities and how and in what ways their identities and positioning might reflect the dominance of whiteness in Australian society. Developing this level of racial cognisance is an essential aspect of the ability to be culturally responsive in practice.



1.2.1.2 The importance of whiteness

Acknowledging how whiteness informs Australian social work practice is integral to achieving *epistemological equality*, changing the power balance and working differently. Whiteness theorising (Kowal, 2011; Walter, Taylor, & Habibis, 2011; Young & Zubrzycki, 2011) is one way of making sense of racial hierarchies, privilege and dominance. Whiteness is a concept that refers to the advantages and benefits that accrue to 'white' people by virtue of a system normed on their experiences and values. These privileges are deeply embedded in the structural, systemic and cultural workings of our society. In Australia, being white, or adopting the practices and privileges of the white race, automatically confers dominance whilst subordinating groups of colour in a descending relational hierarchy (Walter & Butler, 2013).

How does race inform what we do and who we are? Race and culture play an integral role in the construction of our personal and professional identities. They define who we are, what we do and how we do it, how people respond to us and where we locate ourselves in the social structure.

EXPOSING STUDENTS TO WHITENESS THEORISING GIVES THEM NOT ONLY THE CAPACITY TO INTERROGATE RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION, BUT IT IS ALSO A THEORY THAT PROVIDES GUIDANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AND NON-ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES PEOPLE.

As such it is a powerful and significant dimension in the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander-centred social work.

1.2.2 3rd Cultural space

Aboriginal scholar Pat Dudgeon and her colleague John Fielder (2006) adopt Bhabha's (1994) concept of the 3rd space to highlight the importance of developing a productive and process-oriented perspective on cross-cultural collaboration (Zubrzycki & Crawford, 2012). Bhabha's theory of culture (1994) asserts that the 3rd space is the in-between space between the coloniser and the colonised. It is in this space that new knowledge, insights and understandings about identity and positioning emerge. A defining feature of the 3rd space is tension and uncertainty. It is a contested space in which previous ways of knowing and doing are challenged and changed, where differences need to be understood in order that new understandings and ways of doing can emerge. 'Cultural knowledge and awareness cannot be imposed, for the process of attitude change is delicate, piecemeal and formative' (Dudgeon & Fielder as cited in Zubrzycki & Crawford, 2012, pp.194-195).

In the *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework*, the concept of the 3rd cultural space (3rd space) has been adopted because it provides a way of naming a process of co-creation of new and different ways of knowing, doing and being (Bhabha, 1994; Dudgeon & Fielder, 2006; Zubrzycki & Crawford, 2012). For example,

3RD SPACES WILL EMERGE WHEN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS CO-CREATE CURRICULUM WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES. EDUCATOR'S ROLE MODELLING THIS PROCESS OF COLLABORATIVE KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT AND DEALING WITH THE UNCERTAINTIES AND TENSIONS THAT ARE INHERENT IN THIS PROCESS CREATES POWERFUL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS.

Such a process also reflects a pedagogy, a philosophy and practice of teaching and learning, which takes place in all educational and practice contexts including field education.



1.2.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies is the third key concept which informs the Getting it Right teaching and learning framework. Focussing on how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing are taught to students needs to be equally considered alongside the development of and familiarity with these new areas of curriculum content. In other words, whilst acknowledging that content is important, the way it is learned is probably more so. In other words one must walk the talk (Young et al., 2013).

Throughout the Framework, examples are provided of teaching and learning practices that are informed by *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies* (see for example Sections 4 and 8). Sinclair (2004) suggests that asserting Indigenous pedagogies is critical because 'both the educator and student must involve themselves in the process of healing, learning and developing along a path guided by Aboriginal epistemology' (Sinclair as cited in Young et al., 2013, p.192).

Briefly,

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE'S PEDAGOGIES ACKNOWLEDGES THE IMPORTANCE OF A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT LEARNING PROCESSES. THESE INCLUDE: YARNING, DADIRRI (DEEP LISTENING), CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION, COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND THE SKILLS OF CRITICAL ANALYSIS.

The objective is to develop learning methods which create opportunities for students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to understand and respond appropriately to what are often regarded as the hard issues (Green & Baldry, 2013). Examples are white guilt, resistance, racism, lateral violence, fear and immobilisation. Unless educators have the skills to respond actively and appropriately to the presentation of these issues, graduates will struggle to know how to manage the same issues in practice. The goal is to know how and why to create culturally safe learning environments.

The fundamental assertion here is the need to develop learning environments which promote and support the decolonisation of the social work profession. Decolonisation requires educators and students (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous) to consider their own histories in terms of who they are in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Green & Baldry, 2013). This is a particularly important process for educators, given their central influence in all areas of teaching and learning. It demands attention to and a critical appraisal of the history and contemporary practices of the social work profession.

Decolonising the teaching and learning processes requires attention to questions such as:

- Who should develop and teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content?
- What type of training and professional development of educators is needed?
- How should the content be delivered?
- What type of student assessment reflects this pedagogy?
- How can the learning environment be culturally safe and secure for all students and staff?

More focussed consideration of these issues is presented in Sections 3, 6, 7 and 8.

For non-Indigenous social work students, engaging in a process of decolonisation provides critical foundations upon which to work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is fundamentally a process of deep reflection and a willingness to develop cultural and political awareness. This is particularly important given Australia's colonial history, the history of the social work profession and the continued dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as reflected in high levels of racism and low levels of life expectancy.

BY PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE IN THE PROCESSES OF DECOLONISATION, WE ARE DEMONSTRATING A COMMITMENT TO BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION TO ADDRESS THESE PROFOUND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students the decolonisation process is equally fundamental for their developing professional identity. Many of these students will have experienced the legacy of the Stolen Generations and know only too well the reputation of the social work profession in the communities. These students may, however, have varying levels of knowledge about their own history and culture and need to be provided with the opportunity to reflect deeply on their own positioning and identities. These issues are addressed in more depth in Section 5.



1.2.4 Putting it all together – cultural responsiveness

Given the above concepts of *epistemological equality*, *the 3rd space* and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies*,

WHAT DO WE WANT ALL SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR RACIAL BACKGROUNDS, TO DEMONSTRATE IN PRACTICE? WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES AND CAPACITIES THAT NEED TO EMERGE IN SOCIAL WORK GRADUATES AS OUTCOMES OF THIS NEW AREA OF ESSENTIAL CURRICULUM?

An Australian model of *cultural responsiveness* has been developed by the Getting it Right project and is articulated as one of the requirements for social workers in the AASW Practice Standards (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013a).

1.2.4.1 An Australian model of cultural responsiveness

Cultural responsiveness is the fourth key concept that is foundational to the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-centred social work.

The concept of *cultural responsiveness* was first developed in North America with the adoption of a multicultural focus in service delivery (Williams, 2007). In Australia, the model has been used by organisations such as the Victorian Department of Health (2009) in order to provide guidance to staff in the delivery of health services to a multiculturally diverse community.

According to the Victorian Department of Health (Vic Health) the term *cultural responsiveness*:

refers to health services that are respectful of, and relevant to, the health beliefs, health practices, culture and linguistic needs of diverse consumer/patient populations and communities. That is, communities whose members identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home. (Victorian Department of Health, 2009, p. 12)

The term *cultural responsiveness* is used by Vic Health in preference to cultural competence for the following reasons:

- 'A lack of consensus as to the precise definition of cultural competence, despite a proliferation of cultural competence frameworks, tools and assessments' and
- 'Consistency with government and departmental language in policy and legislative frameworks which specify the need for responsive service delivery and that services should be responsive to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities' (Victorian Department of Health, 2009, p. 12).

The social work profession has adopted a range of concepts and models, including cultural competence, in order to promote culturally sensitive, aware and skilful cross-cultural practices. However, while each model has its strengths, the adoption of a generic cross-cultural focus does not take into consideration the influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and historical contexts in which social work is practised. The need to contextualise this area of social work is supported by a growing body of evidence about the experiences of practitioners working in this field (Bennett, Zubrzycki, & Bacon, 2011; Herring et al., 2013).

In an Australian social work,

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS REFERS TO THE CAPACITY OF SOCIAL WORKERS TO DEVELOP COLLABORATIVE AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES IN ORDER TO RESPOND TO THE ISSUES AND NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES IN WAYS THAT PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS.

Being culturally responsive requires the social worker to critically reflect on their own identity in relation to others and to have the knowledge and skills to practice culturally responsively in all areas and contexts of practice.

The AASW Practice Standards (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013a) now require all social workers to demonstrate *cultural responsiveness* in practice.



An Australian model of *cultural responsiveness* therefore, reflects, in an aspirational sense, what we want our practice to be when we provide social work services to and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As stated above,

IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT AN AUSTRALIAN MODEL OF CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS FOCUSES ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK, BECAUSE WHILE MANY ASPECTS OF THIS PRACTICE ARE TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER POPULATION GROUPS, UNLESS IT IS LINKED TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PRACTICE EXPERIENCES, THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FOCUS BECOMES INVISIBLE.

Another central feature of an Australian model of *cultural responsiveness* is the importance of adapting and creating a model that is relevant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers and social workers who come from diverse cultural backgrounds. By acknowledging the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities, the model of *cultural responsiveness* presented in this Framework recognises that

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORKERS ALSO NEED TO DEVELOP THE SKILLS AND CAPACITIES TO BE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES WITH WHOM THEY ARE UNFAMILIAR.

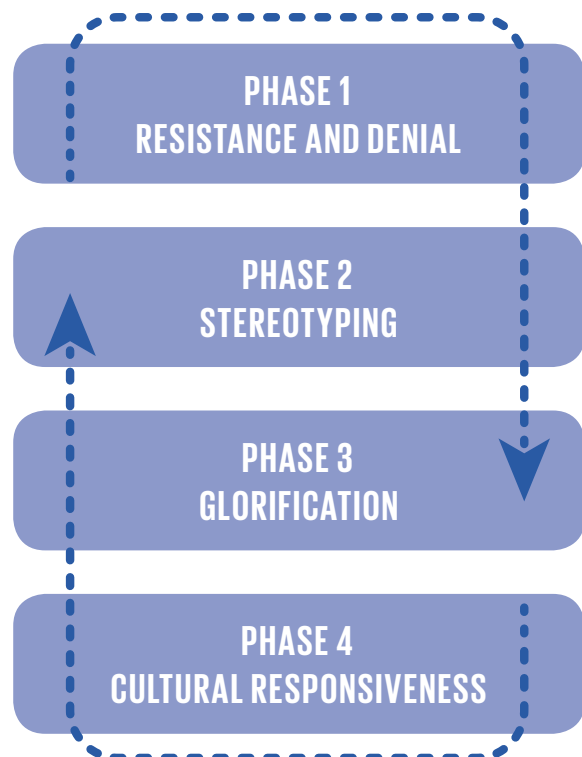
What are the attributes of cultural responsiveness that we are drawn to?

- The model of *cultural responsiveness* focuses on social workers moving through and between different phases and ways of responding in practice
- The processes of developing *cultural responsiveness* are relational. Our practice responses reflect how we relate to others and are influenced by how people respond to us
- Developing the capacity to be culturally responsive requires social workers to examine/reflect upon how their own understandings and lived experiences and how these inform practice
- The model normalises the experiences of social workers who are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Research indicates that feeling immobilised, uncertain and not knowing how, if and when to respond to, and engage with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is very common (Bennett et al., 2011)

- The model reinforces the importance of building and maintaining collaborative relationships in particular with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in order to ensure that social work responses and interventions are timely, respectful, effective and appropriate.

1.2.4.2 Phases of cultural responsiveness

The following four phases, which are adapted from Williams (2007), present a number of attitudes which social workers (students and graduates – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous) and others (colleagues, educators, managers, community members) might have towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These attitudes inform a range of practice responses which can manifest at any levels of practice: micro, meso and macro. They are also reflected in dominant discourses that can be evident in the media and in social and organisational policies and procedures.





A critical feature of this model of *cultural responsiveness* is that individuals, teams and organisations may demonstrate practices that reflect the features of a number of phases at any one time. Movement to Phase 4 will not be linear or orderly. Taking a step backwards into a less culturally responsive phase or straddling the attributes of a number of phases can occur for a range of reasons, such as experiencing difficulties or lacking confidence when engaging with individuals or/and communities. The responses can also be dependent on a student and/or social worker's level of knowledge, skill, experience and familiarity with this practice context and may reflect unspoken and unarticulated assumptions and values.

When presenting this model in teaching, it will be important to encourage students to reflect on their locations and those of others, within and between phases. It will be particularly important that students develop the capacity to recognise the knowledge, values, skills and experiences which promote the development of *cultural responsiveness*. Utilising an action research cycle of reflection which encompasses looking, thinking and acting may promote the development of insight. A particular focus of how this model can inform the assessment of students in field education is discussed in Section 4.

It will also be critical that educators develop learning outcomes that require students to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and values that underpin the development of cultural responsiveness across all social work subjects. Finally, students are likely to be assisted in their learning when educators are open about their own processes of developing cultural responsiveness.

Phase 1: Resistance and Denial

Phase 1 statements reflect attitudes of resistance and denial regarding the history of First Australians and the responsibility of non-Indigenous Australians in relation to this history. Many of these statements promote generic practices and service responses, minimising the influence of cultural differences.

Attitudes of Denial:

- What happened in Australia to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was a long time ago and not relevant to today.
- I was not part of what happened here, so I should not be made to feel guilty.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to stop playing the victim card and stopping blaming the past for all their problems.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to take responsibility for their lives and the decisions they make.

Attitudes of Resistance:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is part of the problem and if they would just live like everyone else then there would be no problems.
- As a social worker I do the right thing by all my clients and thus am not part of the oppression that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience.
- Everyone is the same and should be treated the same.
- I'm not racist, but ...
- Giving special attention to any particular groups detracts from what social workers can give to other clients.
- Difference should be ignored and services directed toward a common concern faced by all people.
- Generic approaches and interventions are the methods of choice.
- I don't experience white privilege and treat everyone the same.
- White privilege is a form of racism against me.

Phase 2: Stereotyping

Phase 2 attitudes reflect a stereotyping of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities. Service responses that are informed by such attitudes tend to generalise the experiences and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- Real Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are dark.
- Aboriginal people with fair skin are "professional Aborigines" and they only claim to be Aboriginal in order to get benefits, scholarships, identified positions and similar.
- Real Aboriginal people live in the bush.
- Real Torres Strait Islander people live in the Torres Strait.
- Real Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples speak their language and practice 'traditional' culture.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples use 'our' welfare system and take benefits provided by 'white' people.
- Only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can work with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples prefer to seek assistance from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.
- Our organisation and workforce do not have the specialised skills, knowledge and resources to provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is not an area of practice that everyone or all organisations should or can take responsibility for.
- Domestic violence is part of Aboriginal culture. This indicates a tendency to use culture as a way of justifying certain behaviours and problems.



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are always getting into trouble. This shows a tendency to attribute an individual and/or family's problematic behaviour and difficulties to the whole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Aboriginal people are different they are not the same as us. This attitude generalises individual behaviours and in doing so can sometimes lead to an acceptance of poor behaviour as a cultural norm. The reasons for the behaviour are not explored in depth.

Phase 3: Glorification

Phase 3 attitudes and responses reflect a glorification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This can lead to the tendency to avoid challenging or engaging with attitudes and practices that require change and development.

- Aboriginal people are very generous and sharing in their ways. This reflects a tendency to stereotype and glorify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This stereotyping can lead to ideas about the 'noble savage, the exotic'.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cannot say no to family because they are a very sharing people. This reflects lack of recognition of how cultures evolve and change over time.
- Because this person is Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait my Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander colleagues should deal with them. Here there is a tendency to refer and defer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues who are then expected to inherently have all of the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander situation and/or issue.

Phase 4: Cultural Responsiveness

Phase 4 statements reflect the attributes of *cultural responsiveness*. These attitudes and responses can be demonstrated by individuals, teams and managers across all practice contexts and can also be reflected in organisational policies and procedures.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a diverse group with different language groups, experiences and backgrounds.
- I always acknowledge and recognise the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in organisational protocols and before commencing a meeting.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait people are not all the same, they have a diversity of lived experience due to colonisation. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may not have community connections or an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.
- There is a possibility that any person I am working with might be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, regardless of their skin colouring, where they live or how they sound.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to be self-determining.
- All social workers have a responsibility to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- I think it is important to continually reflect on practice in order to determine how culture, life experience, attitudes, assumptions and feelings influence decision making.
- As a social worker I recognise the importance of applying my expertise in practice and am also aware of when this needs to be complemented and/or supported by cultural knowledge and resources.
- In my role as a social worker I try to build the capacity of my clients and see myself as both helper and learner in the process and am prepared to appropriately share aspects of my culture and lived experiences and also purposefully apply my knowledge and skills.
- My clients can teach me about their culture and I can share what I know of my social work culture. Together we can find ways to go forward. As social workers we need to be aware of the particular significance of trust and relationship building, in view of Australia's colonial history and the history of the social work profession.



1.3 GRADUATE CAPABILITIES, ATTRIBUTES AND OUTCOMES

While the above model of *cultural responsiveness* describes in some depth the range of attitudes and responses that can be demonstrated by social work students and professionals, the following graduate attributes can be presented in course outlines and other documents as the final expected graduate outcomes.

DEVELOPING CONCEPTUAL SYNERGY BETWEEN THE PRACTICE STANDARDS, NEW ESSENTIAL CONTENT AND THIS FRAMEWORK IS AN IMPORTANT PROFESSIONAL GOAL.

As stated earlier in the Framework, it is critical that these graduate capabilities, attributes and outcomes are also reflected in the ASWEAS document (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012b).

Developing conceptual synergy between the Practice Standards (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013a), new essential content (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a) and this Framework is an important professional goal.

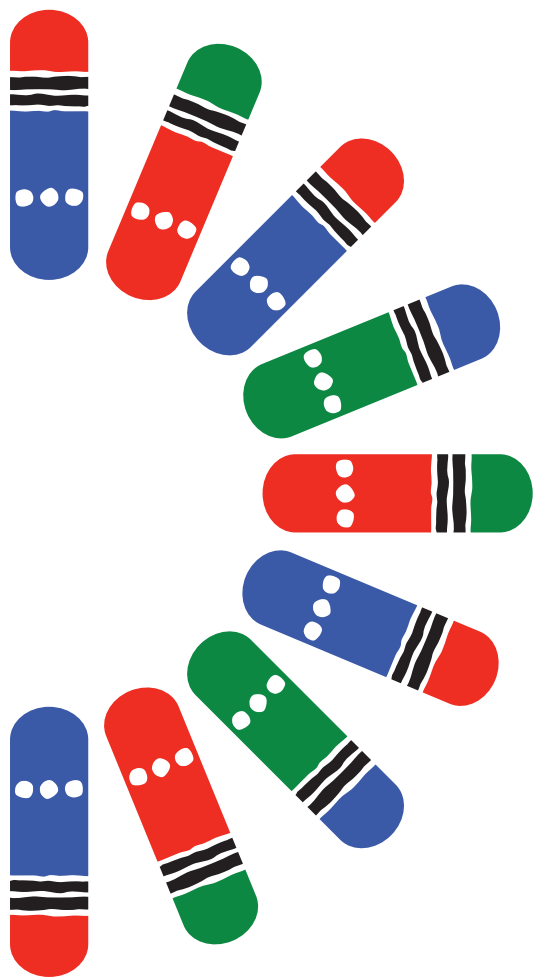
The following table has been adapted from Williamson and Dalal (2007) and includes a set of six social work graduate attributes in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work.

Table 1: Social Work Graduate Attributes

- | |
|---|
| 1. Be critically aware and capable of deconstructing individual cultural situatedness and its relationship to the construction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, peoples, etc. |
| 2. Be critically alert to the complexities of cross-cultural understanding and the acquisition of cross-cultural sensitivity. |
| 3. Value and engage with diverse forms of knowledge, 'Other' ways of knowing, and their pertinent/ related practices. |
| 4. Understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and cultural values including the complexity and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their contemporary concerns. |
| 5. Actively contribute to contemporary debates on the delivery of social justice and human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. |
| 6. Recognise and practice appropriate professional values and skills with respect to social work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. |

1.4 CONCLUSION

This section has presented the conceptual framework which guides all aspects of the Framework. Section 2 presents a critical discussion about defining and understanding what constitutes Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges. Australian and international perspectives are explored.



SECTION 2

EMBEDDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES IN THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM



2.1 INTRODUCTION

As the First Nations people of Australia 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a diverse culture with different experiences, histories and geographical locations. Because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not a homogenous population any attempt to represent them in higher education curricula should reflect this in the 'design, delivery and evaluation of [any social work] curricula' (Phillips, 2004, p.7).

In developing social work curriculum there are two important considerations that academics need to be mindful of. First is the necessity to highlight the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the role of past events in shaping how First Australians are currently seen and understood. The second consideration is the importance for academics to have some understanding of the conceptual differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous knowledge systems (Nakata, 2007).

Nakata (2007) argues that because of these differences 'it is not possible to bring in Indigenous knowledge and plonk it in the curriculum unproblematically as if it is another data set for Western knowledge to discipline and test' (p.8). According to Nakata (2007), the theories of knowledge that make up these two different systems 'frame who can be a knower, what can be known, what constitutes knowledge, sources of evidence for constructing knowledge and how truth is to be verified ...' (p.8). This means that some thought also needs to be given to who is responsible for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content into the social work curriculum in the academy, and the role of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous lecturers and tutors in delivering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content to students. Section 2 draws on national and international literature to explore this complex area.

For the purpose of this Section and consistent with the Framework, the terms Indigenous, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Australians will be used. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and First Australians will be used when referring to the Indigenous people of Australia. Indigenous will be used when referring to systems of knowledge that have been developed by Indigenous groups external to Australia.

2.2 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES, CULTURES AND KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

It is well documented that Aboriginal people have lived on the Australian continent for over 60,000 years. Torres Strait Islander 'first inhabitants ... are believed to have migrated from the Indonesian archipelago 70,000 years ago at a time when New Guinea was still attached to the Australian continent (Australian Broadcasting Commission, 2005). To do this required considerable knowledge and understanding of the environment to enable the First Australians to live in harmony with the land, hunt and gather food to survive and collect, prepare and apply plants and minerals for both ceremonial and healing purposes. During this time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures grew and developed complex kinship and integrated knowledge and spiritual systems which explained the purpose of life, rules of behaviour between clan groups and their role in ensuring continuity of the land and responsibility for taking care of the country in which they were located.

Information in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society was not recorded in books or written down using words but was taught and passed on from generation to generation through a range of different learning modalities such as stories, art, song, dance, tool making and crafts. In the handing down and transfer of knowledge, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples taught successive generations what was important for them to know to maintain and care for the land, protect and feed their families and continue the cycle of life.



Through the different clans or family groups, Elders shared authority and knowledge and were responsible for communicating what they knew. Through ceremony, practice and every day activities, people were taught and reminded of their ceremonial and spiritual responsibilities not only to the land but to each other to ensure the continuation of their spiritual and social connections and their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and health. Welchman and Watson-Gegeo (2001) call this way of being, knowing and doing an 'Indigenous epistemology' in that it is:

A cultural group's ways of thinking and of creating, reformulating, and theorizing about knowledge via traditional discourses and media of communication, anchoring the truth of the discourse in culture (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001, p.58).

Within each clan, and or family group, specific people were recognised as knowledge holders and experts in different areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait societies where they had defined roles for healers, lore men and women, crafts and tools, hunters, artists, dancers, singers and story tellers. Women and men had different roles and responsibilities based on their gender, experience and authority. Elders played an important role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait societies and were the repositories of family and cultural knowledge systems that were passed down to family members. Today, Elders still hold a very important place in Aboriginal and Torres Strait societies.

ELDERS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ABORIGINAL SOCIETY AND WERE THE REPOSITORIES OF FAMILY AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS THAT WERE PASSED DOWN TO FAMILY MEMBERS. TODAY ELDERS STILL HOLD A VERY IMPORTANT PLACE IN ABORIGINAL SOCIETY.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies are grounded in a completely different system to Western culture in that both were oral cultures. According to Nakata (2007) the differences between Indigenous and Western scientific knowledge systems makes them 'so disparate as to be incommensurable or reconcilable on cosmological, epistemological and ontological grounds' (p.8).

2.3 TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Although Torres Strait Islander people together with Aboriginal people are known as the first Australians, Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems are different to Aboriginal knowledge systems and should be acknowledged as such (Shnukal, 2001). Located in the Torres Strait Archipelago which is the northernmost part of Queensland, the islands of the Torres Strait lie between mainland Australia and Papua New Guinea in the Arafura and Coral seas (Morseu-Diop, 2012, p.118). Similar to Aboriginal peoples, asking a Torres Strait Islander person which island they come from, where is their community and which family or clan group they belong to is important in establishing a relationship and finding out who and where the person comes from (Morseu-Diop, 2012, p.119). Suffice to say, Torres Strait Islander peoples are also diverse and come from different islands in the Archipelago. In relation to language differences, 'there are two traditional languages: *Kala Lagaw Ya*, which is spoken in the Western Torres Strait, and *Miriam* or *Merian Mir*, which is spoken predominantly on Mer Island in the Eastern Torres Strait', with English as a fourth language (Morseu-Diop, 2012, p.119).

Torres Strait Islander peoples have different beliefs and traditions to Western Knowledge systems and are guided by different values and principles. According to Morseu-Diop (2012):

Ailan Kastom or Island Custom is a pivotal part of the Torres Strait Islander traditional practices. It is the platform for Torres Strait Islander Knowledge and systems of belief. It espouses the concept of sharing and caring through a system of mutual respect, commonly referred to in Torres Strait Creole as ailan pasin ... which is an integral part of the Torres Strait Islander culture and is deeply embedded in their day-to-day lives. (p.123)

Although always associated with Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islander people do have different ways of knowing, being and doing in the world and this should always be considered when discussing the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in the social work curriculum. The processes and strategies outlined elsewhere in this document can also be applied to Torres Strait Islander peoples.



2.4 IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES (IK)

Since colonisation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems in Australia have been deliberately ignored, denied destroyed and or not recognised (Nakata, 2002). With the removal of families from their traditional homelands and children from their families (Haebich, 2000) Aboriginal peoples' knowledge was lost to many families and communities. This took place through the deaths of key knowledge holders and informants, the separation of children from their families and Elders, removal of people from their country and the cessation of ceremony and use of language in an attempt to assimilate people into Western society.

However, despite the impact of colonisation many communities and families have managed to retain and preserve Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing (Martin, 2008; Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003) and have continued to apply Aboriginal epistemology in their lives while adapting to living in a Western mainstream society. Globally there is now a growing recognition of the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001). Over the last ten years a cultural renaissance and surge in reclamation and remembering (Dudgeon & Fielder, 2006) has resulted in an uptake in the academy both nationally and internationally of Indigenous knowledge systems and the embedding of these systems into the curricula (Nakata, 2007). Much of this work has been carried out by Aboriginal centres in Universities (Dudgeon & Fielder, 2006) as part of their role and in an attempt to interrupt the dominant discourse and claim control of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented by the Western hegemony. Similar attempts by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics in Australia, Maori in Aotearoa New Zealand and First Nations people in Canada and North America demonstrate the significance of this work and the importance in providing students with an understanding and knowledge of how to work more effectively with people from Indigenous cultures.

2.4.1 What are Indigenous Knowledges?

With the resurgence of Indigenous knowledge systems there has been considerable debate and dialogue around what this means. According to Flavie, Jesus, de Navarro and Warren (1995):

Indigenous Knowledge is the information base for a society, which facilitates communication and decision-making. Indigenous information systems are dynamic, and are continually influenced by internal creativity and experimentation as well as by contact with external systems (p. 479).

Whereas, according to Mugabe (as cited in Masango, 2010), Indigenous knowledge:

is that knowledge that is held and used by a people who identify themselves as Indigenous of a place based on a combination of cultural distinctiveness and prior territorial occupancy relative to a more recently-arrived population with its own distinct and subsequently dominant culture (p.74).

Anwar (2010), writing on Indigenous knowledge (IK) systems says that 'IK is also being used erroneously for some categories of information produced Indigenously' (p.1). Hence what constitutes IK will depend on who is doing the defining, translation and interpretation and who has authority or legitimacy in making the definition or claim (Nakata, 2007). Mearns, Du Toit and Mukuka (as cited in Anwar, 2010) have summarised what they see as specific features relating to IK. They are:

No.	Feature
1	IK is local, holistic, and integrative because it is rooted in a particular community and its experiences are situated within broader cultural traditions of the people living in that place.
2	IK is essentially functional and is geared to practical response and performance.
3	IK is experiential rather than theoretical and is reinforced through continuous experience, trial and error.
4	IK is learned through repetition which aids in its retention and reinforcement.
5	IK is constantly changing by way of being produced and reproduced, discovered and lost.
6	IK is characteristically shared to a greater degree than other forms of knowledge, although its distribution is socially differentiated, based on gender and age.
7	The distribution of IK is always fragmented. It does not exist in its totality either in one place or one individual.
8	IK is tacit and cannot easily be codified.
9	IK is transmitted orally or through imitation and demonstration and the process of codification may lead to the loss of some of its properties.

Indigenous knowledge according to Mugabe (1998) is different to traditional knowledge which he defines as being 'held by members of a distinct culture and/or sometimes acquired "by means of inquiry peculiar to that culture, and concerning the culture itself or the local environment in which it exists"' (p.3). He is very clear in asserting that whilst Indigenous knowledge can comprise traditional knowledge, traditional knowledge is not necessarily exclusive to Indigenous systems but can also be found in non-Indigenous systems.



2.5 EMBEDDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGE IN THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

Thinking about how to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content into the social work curriculum requires some thought and consideration around content, whose responsibility it is to do it and how this will be done. Several authors (Dudgeon & Fielder, 2006; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001; Nakata, 2007), writing on Indigenous epistemology, are clear to point out that to date, much of the information and knowledge presented in the academy on Indigenous people has been derived from Anthropological sources which 'are not Indigenous theories of Indigenous culture but are interpreted and reformulated theories based on interviews and observations' (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001, p.58). Hence

HOW KNOWLEDGE IS CONSTRUCTED AND BY WHOM IS INTEGRAL WHEN CONSIDERING WHAT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGE CONTENT WILL BE INSERTED INTO THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM AND WHO WILL BE DELIVERING IT.

Dudgeon and Fielder (2006) writing about Indigenous curriculum in the academy make the point that it is essential that any attempts to do so must take 'an anti-colonial standpoint, [which] involves revealing the structures of oppression, particularly in terms of the subjective and lived experience of Indigenous Australians' (p.398). To do this requires taking a social justice position which means that Aboriginal people are included at the beginning as equal partners in the development and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in the social work curriculum. According to Dudgeon and Fielder (2006), employing 'emancipatory principles ... that are concerned with engaging oppressed groups in theorising experiences of oppression and seeking strategies for empowerment, both at individual and group levels' (p.398) is essential when engaging in this type of curriculum development.

Creating a space in the classroom, to engage in an open exploratory and creative inquiry to interrogate and challenge Western understandings and position in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia is, to take the conversation into what Homi Bhabha calls the 3rd space (Rutherford, 1990), the cultural interface or middle ground (Nakata, 2007; N. M. Nakata, V. Nakata, S. Keech, & R. Bolt, 2012), and/or the intercultural space. Drawing on Bhabha (Rutherford, 1990), this space constitutes an intersection where different cultures meet; it can be a space of tension, contestation and/or collision and a place where it is easy to become trapped in binary and dualistic positions of difference. Bhabha therefore proposes a move away from

the binary towards a more nuanced understanding of how cultural difference and diversity within cultures are constructed from a range 'of different interests, cultural histories, post-colonial lineages and sexual orientations' (Dudgeon & Fielder, 2006, p. 404). Similarly, Nakata (2007) argues that this space provides the opportunity to grow students by developing their ability to critically analyse and question the material with which they are being asked to engage. The aim of social work educators is to facilitate students' learning in this space and to build their capacity to describe and critically analyse the material with which they are engaging to enable the politics of knowledge production to be dismantled and understood from a dialectical position. In doing so, this prevents 'slippage into forms of thinking and critical analysis that are confined within dichotomies between primitivism and modernity' (Nakata, 2007, p. 121). Providing students with the language and tools for critical reflection, skills them to become reflective and critical social workers who are able to identify, name and analyse complex and political situations in their practice with a view towards problem solving.

2.6 DELIVERING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CURRICULUM

When looking at the embedding and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content into the social work curriculum, consideration should be given to

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK'S KEY CONCEPTS OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL EQUALITY, 3RD CULTURAL SPACE (3RD SPACE), CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEDAGOGIES ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO EMBEDDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CONTENT INTO THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM.

Aligned with the four concepts are ten key dimensions: human rights, gender, history, racism, social justice, identity, collectivism, colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ontologies and white privilege. These key dimensions underpin the Framework's concepts and can be used across the social work curriculum to facilitate a discussion.



Metaphorically speaking, placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander centred social work at the centre rather than at the margins can be described through the example of crocheting. For example, the main thread (representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content), is used to create a circle which is the centre of the piece and will hold the pattern. As the centre is increased and the crocheted piece expands, different coloured threads (representing social work content) can be added. This creates layers, with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander coloured threads as the main theme which are integrated with the social work colours woven both horizontally and vertically throughout the crocheted pattern. The pattern and colours then create the opportunity for a discussion.

In moving towards the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content into the social work curriculum, the following principles can assist in guiding and informing the process:

- Undertaking and applying the values of 'reciprocity, respect, equality, survival, protection and responsibility' when negotiating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities (Williamson & Dalal, 2007, p.56)
- Utilising holistic teaching strategies that privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and engage students on an emotional, spiritual and intellectual level (Williamson & Dalal, 2007, p.56)

WHEN DELIVERING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CURRICULUM IT IS INTEGRAL THAT THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE IS NOT OVERSHADOWED BY A NON-INDIGENOUS VOICE CLAIMING TO BE THE EXPERT BUT RATHER FOREGROUNDING AND BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE AS THE EXPERT.

- Applying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and material and inviting guest speakers in developing lectures, course readings and assessments
- Recruiting and employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers as academic partners in developing and delivering social work curriculum and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content
- Conducting a stock take on the skill sets, knowledge and competencies of the academic social work team to develop and deliver Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum and identify further training needs
- Training social work educators, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous, to manage the tensions and challenges that come with the delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum.

- Prioritising active collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and Elders at the local level
- Engaging with Aboriginal centres² in the university and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about the types of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges which are important for social work students to know and understand. This is essential in knowing what is needed to develop and build their skills to work effectively with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Cross referencing with Aboriginal centres in the university and with community Elders to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their history is accurately reflected and represented in the curriculum

² These University based facilities are usually known as Aboriginal units or Indigenous studies centres. Torres Strait is not usually included in their titles.



2.7 PROTOCOLS FOR ENGAGING WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES

Many non-Indigenous teachers often question whether they can and should lecture on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subjects in the classroom and are often fearful of saying the wrong thing (Yunkaporta, 2007). The following protocols identified by Yunkaporta (2007, p.28) can assist social workers lecturers in delivering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum.

Table 2: Protocols for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Knowledges

Cultural Interface Protocols for Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge	
1	Use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander processes (such as yarning, stories, art, music) to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge.
2	Approach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in gradual stages, not all at once.
3	Be grounded in your own cultural identity (not 'colour') with integrity.
4	Bring your highest self to the knowledge and settle your fears and issues.
5	Share your own stories of relatedness and deepest knowledge.
6	See the shape of the knowledge and express it with images and objects.
7	Build your knowledge around real relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
8	Use this knowledge for the benefit of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
9	Bring your familiar understandings, but be willing to grow beyond these.
10	Respect the aspects of spirit and place that the knowledge is grounded in.

Yunkaporta (2007) makes the point that it takes time to grasp Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and that understanding does not always come at once.

AS A SOCIAL WORK LECTURER WHO MAY BE NEW TO THIS SPACE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ALWAYS ENSURE THAT WHEN PRESENTING THIS INFORMATION IT IS DONE IN COLLABORATION WITH AN ABORIGINAL AND OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COLLEAGUE OR COMMUNITY

2.8 CONCLUSION

Section 2 has focussed on exploring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous knowledges. Any teaching and learning process that seeks to develop curriculum in this area needs to be mindful of how these knowledges are understood and defined. Section 3 builds on this discussion by presenting *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies*. All of this content will be critical in ensuring that the integration of First Australian knowledges in social work education occurs with cultural and intellectual integrity.

SECTION 3 TEACHING AND LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES





3.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 3 explores the teaching and learning principles and processes that are informed by the four key concepts articulated at the beginning of the Framework: *epistemological equality*, *3rd cultural space (3rd space)*, *cultural responsiveness* and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies*.

3.2 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEDAGOGIES

Ways of teaching and learning differ across Australia. Pedagogies is the term used in this Section to acknowledge this diversity. Several Indigenous social work academics write about particular pedagogies and how they are used to develop skills and knowledges. For example, a Mi'kmaq social work academic from Canada, Cyndi Baskin (2006), writes:

Teaching and passing on information by Elders to younger generations is an inherent concept of our world views. I seem to always learn best by listening to the stories of my Elders' and Traditional Teachers' personal life experiences.

These are people who know me and with whom I have gradually developed relationships over time. Whatever they choose to teach me at any particular moment is based on our relationships and always takes place in person. (p.2)

A pedagogy based on this worldview, then, would incorporate relationships, generational respect, face to face learning and teaching. Another example from Western NSW describes Aboriginal pedagogies as a set of cultural values that are demonstrated in the learning and teaching environment:

The Aboriginal pedagogies can be summarised as eight general cultural values:

- We connect through the stories we share
- We picture our pathways of knowledge
- We see, think, act, make and share without words
- We keep and share knowledge with art and objects
- We work with lessons from land and nature
- We put different ideas together and create new knowledge
- We work from wholes to parts, watching and then doing
- We bring new knowledge home to help our mob

Yunkaporta 2009 p. 13



Working collaboratively, Bierman and Townsend-Cross (2008) (German and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people respectively), describe the use of Indigenous pedagogies in northern NSW, in social sciences teaching. These pedagogies were developed from their work in the Gribi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples at Southern Cross University. The framework they use to guide teaching and learning incorporates:

- *Identity – learning about oneself as primary to the life-long learning process*
- *Relatedness – belonging – an enlarging of identity through relatedness to people, place, space, flora, fauna, creation, time (history, present and future) – emotional/passionate*
- *Inclusiveness – acknowledgement, attention and consideration of unique identities, experiences and perspectives*
- *Reciprocity – as a process of relatedness – rights and responsibilities; equal exchange; balance in relatedness*
- *Nurturance – caring, generosity (sharing experience and knowing), patience, forgiveness*
- *Respect (acceptance, acknowledgement) (Biermann & Townsend-Cross, 2008, p. 150).*

There are a growing number of publications (for example, Ives, Aitken, Loft, & Phillips, 2007; Nakata, Nakata, Keech, & Bolt, 2012; Sinclair, 2004) offering different pedagogies. A range of pedagogical traditions and practices will be located locally; some may be currently well used and available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to include in their teaching; others may be less evident perhaps through not having local teachers or through the continuing effects of colonial oppressions.

NON-INDIGENOUS EDUCATORS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ENGAGE WITH LOCAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES TO IDENTIFY LOCAL PEDAGOGIES AND INCLUDE THEM IN THE SOCIAL WORK TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES.

Incorporated within different modes of teaching and learning are also differences in learning styles. As Baskin (2006) notes above, she learns best by listening to Elders. Others will learn more through visual media or by shadowing practitioners. The learning space (normatively in academia the classroom) does not only focus on one learning mode. In applying *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies*, attention needs to be paid to individual learning styles. The teaching/learning strategies presented in Section 8 reflect this focus.

3.2.1 Culturally responsive learning processes

These areas of curriculum change provide opportunities to develop culturally responsive learning processes. A range of considerations need to be explored. These relate to past and present historical inequalities in which constructions of deficit and failure have characterised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, resulting in the paradox of being at one and the same time marginalised populations who are also at the centre of dominant attention as clients. An additional paradox is the valuing of the 'exotic', in art, ceremony and culture, while the narrative of despair and oppression is primarily the focus of education and learning, resulting sometimes in a voyeuristic demand for the sharing of life stories. All of these issues are likely to emerge in the classroom and will need to be sensitively addressed.

THE GOAL IS TO ALLOW NON-INDIGENOUS STUDENTS TO DISCUSS ATTITUDES WITHOUT BEING FEARFUL OF BEING CALLED RACIST AND FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS NOT TO FEEL OBLIGED TO BE THE TEACHERS, ESPECIALLY FROM THEIR OWN LIFE EXPERIENCES.

These issues are also discussed in some detail in Sections 5 & 6.

3.3 WHO TEACHES?

The permutations of who teaches and who is the learner and in what configurations, vary across Schools of Social Work. The diagram below summarises these and presents some of the knowledges, skills, preparation and support that educators will need to explore when engaging in this new area of curriculum.



Diagram 3: Considerations: Knowledges, skills, preparation, support

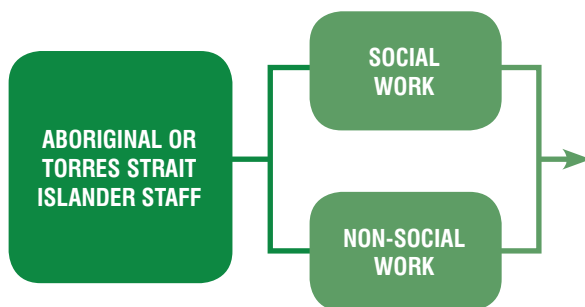
Who Teaches?

Commitment to epistemological equality, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-centred social work, using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogy, and ability in using the skills of cultural responsiveness. This means having an:



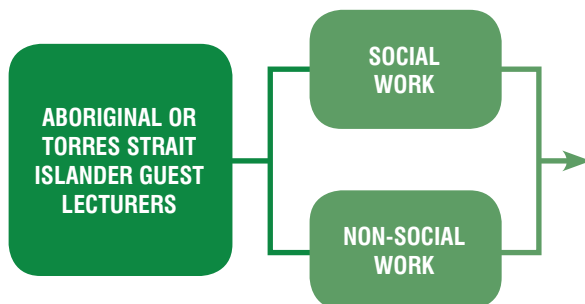
- Commitment to working collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders about the teaching and learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, practices and pedagogies
- Understanding of and ability to use decolonising practices
- Commitment to use Whiteness theorising
- Willingness to develop skills and knowledges to teach this area of curriculum with intellectual and cultural integrity

Characteristics of the academy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff:



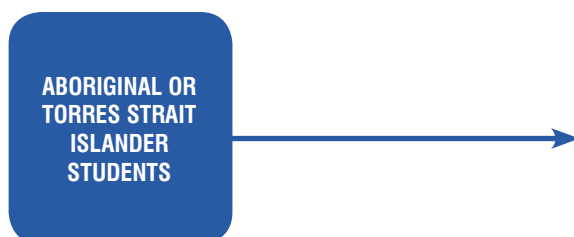
- Be valued for who they are and not expected to be the expert on all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and practices
- Be included in all aspects of the academic work and given support and mentoring when a new academic
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff provided with opportunities to teach across the curriculum
- Not expected to have sole responsibility for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters in the course and academy
- To be included in the career progression processes and supported to do so

Requirements of the academy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lecturers and tutors:



- To be paid appropriate academic rates for lectures and other sessions when they are invited to contribute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and practices
- Develop opportunities to teach in partnership with non-Indigenous colleagues
- Collaborate with non-Indigenous social work colleagues to develop knowledge of social work knowledges and processes

Expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from the academy:



- Students not be expected to provide de facto knowledge and practice in the absence of paid staff or visiting lecturers or to provide their experiences for other students



3.3.1 Non-Indigenous staff

While it may appear to be ideal that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum, project data indicate that the most common practice is that non-Indigenous people are responsible for coordinating, developing and often teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. Social work educators will need to have certain abilities if they are to effectively teach from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander framework. It is not expected that they will do this in the same ways that an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person would, but they will need to demonstrate that they meet the expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders in these tasks. Forming good working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and being willing to both seek permission and cross reference with key knowledge holders any new curriculum content and materials, will be important processes to establish. Further discussion of this area of skill development is located in Section 7.

As discussed in Section 2, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, practices and pedagogies are the domain of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and hence it is important to know what is appropriate for non-Indigenous academics to use and present in their teaching. This may involve spending time in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities developing relationships and becoming known. This investment is worthwhile as the outcome is being accepted and known in the local community as well as developing individual knowledge, understanding and trust with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (see Section 7 for discussion of these issues). Other attributes, such as having a good grasp of the content of decolonising theories and being able to use them in teaching, need to also be considered.

Undertaking critical self-reflective steps in order to understand whiteness theorising and invite active student participation in interrogating what this means in the Australian context will be critical. Conversations of this type can challenge students who may feel alienated and or threatened. Hence it is important that whoever is presenting this material has the skills to guide the student through this experience and to avoid becoming polarised in a 'them and us' discussion.

CONSTRUCTING AND TEACHING IN THE 3RD SPACE, OR INTERCULTURAL SPACE, WILL ALSO BE AN IMPORTANT DIMENSION OF ANY NEW TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

Discussion of this concept is included in Sections 1 & 2 of the Framework. Modelling cross-cultural collaboration in curriculum development and teaching practices is one way to 'teach' this concept. Further discussion of this strategy is provided below.

In effect, these requirements oblige social work staff, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous, to commit to returning to learning; many educators may not have had exposure to the knowledges and practices that are being presented in the classroom. Section 8 includes examples of a range of teaching strategies.

Suggestions for action

- Meet and talk with Aboriginal centres³ in the University to identify appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders
- Form working relationships with the local and appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and key people in order to explore curriculum content, as well as who might be the best person to approach about particular topics.

3.3.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

Project data indicate that few Australian Schools of Social Work have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lecturers or tutors on staff (see section 7 for more details). First Australian social workers are sought after in the public sphere. It is, however, likely that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are located in other areas of the University, in Aboriginal centres or other faculties. These staff can become important allies. While not able to provide a social work perspective, these staff are likely to be able to provide expertise and knowledge of value to students' learning.

SOCIAL WORK STAFF CAN ALSO ASSIST ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER NON-SOCIAL WORK STAFF TO UNDERSTAND SOCIAL WORK SO THAT THEIR INPUT IS TARGETED APPROPRIATELY.

Further discussion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff issues is presented in Sections 6 & 7.

³ These University based facilities are usually known as Aboriginal units or Indigenous studies centres. Torres Strait is not usually included in their titles.



3.3.3 Teaching in partnership

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and non-Indigenous staff co-constructing and presenting curriculum are important teaching and learning processes. Teaching in partnership is one way of modelling active development and engagement in the 3rd Space or intercultural space. Shared negotiation and decision making about content and pedagogy, as well as overtly modelling respectful and robust debates and discussions, have the potential to bring to life the skills, values and knowledges of cultural responsiveness. Consideration can also be given to joint assessment of student learning.

Teaching in partnership requires substantial planning, relationship and trust building. A whole-of-School approach to developing cross-cultural teaching partnerships is one of way of supporting this type of initiative. Having leadership support will be an important consideration. Further discussion of governance and leadership issues is located in Section 7.

3.3.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lecturers

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lecturers are likely to come from local communities or social service agencies. Developing reciprocal relationships with these agencies and communities is integral to forming and building partnerships that can assist Schools of Social Work in their curricula activities. These relationships can also develop pathways to the recruitment and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers as guest lecturers, tutors and or as advisory members in the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum development.

In engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lecturers, consideration needs to be given to compensating them for their time, expertise and knowledge.

What is required of the guest lecturers will be shaped by the curriculum. In the initial stages of developing curriculum, topics may be able to be changed. However, the way they are presented should be given some flexibility and the guest lecturers consulted as to how they would like to present the material. This is discussed more fully in the section on mechanisms for teaching/learning below. Considerations could be given to having the lectures conducted elsewhere, for example, or in a form different from the usual classroom lecture format.

Suggestions for action

- Form working relationships with the University Aboriginal Centre staff to assist in locating lecturers
- Advocate to the Faculty/University for appropriate inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- Non-Indigenous Social Work staff to engage actively in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander continuing professional education
- Non-Indigenous Social Work staff to provide mentoring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Work staff in academic and administrative matters
- Establish University protocols and systems for the development of teaching in partnership which may include payment of guest lecturers. This will often mean representation at the highest levels in the Faculty to have policy validated
- Discuss appropriate location and form of guest lecture format and be prepared for these to differ from the standard University lecture.

THE PRINCIPLE OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL EQUALITY
REQUIRES THAT THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE
WHICH THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
GUEST LECTURER BRINGS TO THE CLASSROOM
IS EQUIVALENT TO THE VALUE OF WESTERN
KNOWLEDGES.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lecturers are often recognised in their communities as senior people, with considerable knowledge and expertise that would be attributed to the equivalent of non-Indigenous professors.



3.3.5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

A common practice in schools where there has been an absence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lecturers or staff, is for the academic staff to call on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student as de facto teachers. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are likely to have in their histories experiences of disadvantage and oppression which are of interest to non-Aboriginal students.

IT IS CRUCIAL THAT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BECOME THE 'ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER' EXPERT IN THE CLASSROOM AND THAT THEY ARE SUPPORTED TO BE A LEARNER.

Further discussion of these important issues is located in Section 5 & 6.

Suggestions for action

- Establish School policies that facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student learning (see also Section 5)
- Ensure all academic staff have access to training or professional development skills to manage classroom incidents (see also Section 7).

3.4 WHO IS TAUGHT?

Mainstream teaching practices generally involve all Social Work students occupying the same classroom. There may be small group learning and even group marking but there has generally been a lack of consideration about having separate group learning on the basis of race or ethnicity. Yet, when it is considered that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are likely to be in the minority and generally their experience of interactions with non-Indigenous people has often been characterised by racism and rejection,

SEPARATING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AND NON-INDIGENOUS STUDENTS FOR SMALL GROUP WORK AT VARIOUS TIMES MAY BE WARRANTED.

3.4.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student-only small group work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander units.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have unique experiences of being first Australians. These experiences can include racism, alienation, exposure to hurtful remarks and stereotypes. In some Social Work courses in Aotearoa New Zealand, where, admittedly the numbers of Indigenous students are proportionally greater, separate small group work in some subjects is provided. In such circumstances, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students have the opportunity to speak freely without criticism or fear of causing offence with statements which may be interpreted as insensitive or challenging. This is not to say that students can exhibit racist behaviour unchecked, but the targets of racism do not have to, yet again, defend themselves. In these contexts lecturers can engage openly and productively with students about the appropriateness of their views and statements.

Constructing separate groups for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may also encourage these students to get on with the business of learning themselves without having to be mindful of being 'on show' or to be expected to be the 'experts'. Additionally some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may have little knowledge of their own cultural locations and belonging, because of past and present histories, and can benefit from learning opportunities that are free from external demands and expectations.

3.4.2 How is this done?

Miller et al. (2004) suggest the optimum class sizes for this work to be no less than one third for 'sub-groups' of students of different racial backgrounds and that this can lead to rich learning opportunities. But in the absence of this number, homogenous sub groups should be separated for discussion and then come back together to share as much or as little as is comfortable. Another alternative is to offer different sections of courses that provide different emphases while offering the same core material. Timing is also crucial, as too early or too late in the curriculum can affect engagement by students. An outline of Miller et al.'s (2004) paper is provided in Section 8.

Simmons et al. (2008) also provide an account of teaching about race or where race is a component of the teaching/learning experience. Again, an outline of their framework is found in Section 8. They, too, refer to what they call a 'partnership' model in which both groups (in their case Pakeha and Maori in Aotearoa New Zealand) 'caucus' separately for parts of the course, predominantly for cultural safety.

'Courageous Conversations about Race' (CCAR) (Singleton & Linton, 2005) is another well known process now adopted by many Australian universities and promoted or presented by Equity and Diversity departments. Examples and video clips are available online, and educators are encouraged



to approach their Equity and Diversity sections to present a CCAR workshop. In some social work schools, a CCAR workshop is presented during orientation to the course as a way of starting the 'conversations' to be had about working with diversity. In several universities the Aboriginal centres are either partners or promoters of these workshops.

3.5 WHERE SHOULD THE TEACHING/LEARNING TAKE PLACE?

Social Work courses have the benefit of having on-campus sites for learning and off-campus, or agency, work-related sites for learning. This duality tends to privilege the knowledge belonging to the University and the skills belonging to the workplace. If the principle of *epistemological equality* is to be upheld, then the location of knowledge should dictate where learning should take place. This does not mean that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and practices should only be learned in their communities, but the communities are where the knowledge holders are and the knowledge is rooted in these places.

A challenge arises because of historical oppression and contemporary discrimination which has left some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people disassociated from their communities, histories and cultural knowledges. As such not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be able to transmit these knowledges. This learning may also be at some emotional cost to them.

SOCIAL WORK ACADEMICS SHOULD TAKE SPECIAL CARE WHEN SEEKING APPROPRIATE KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS AND BE MINDFUL OF THE POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER DISCRIMINATION AND DISASSOCIATION.

In the first instance, Social work academics could work with university Aboriginal centres to ensure the knowledge holders are not further burdened by requests to act as knowledge transmitters with the potential for re-traumatisation. Social work academics also have the potential to 'know' more intellectually than some of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people they will be working with because of their tertiary education. This knowing however is not equal or superior to lived knowledge and cultural being. It is important that this different way of knowing is recognised and validated. Social work academics can also offer to assist as mentors in formal learning processes in the academy where the university Aboriginal centres deem it useful.

3.5.1 Learning in communities

Immersion is a term given to cultural learning, and while it has connotations of the 'exotic' or the 'other', students in some other settings, Canada and Aotearoa/New Zealand for example, learn to work with the Indigenous people by being with and alongside them in their community. They are engaged in their day-to-day activities and are thus taught using the practices of transmitting knowledge of those communities.

WORKING ALONGSIDE PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITY IN STRUCTURED CULTURAL ACTIVITIES HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR DEEP LEARNING.

This experience is present in several related courses, such as teacher education in North America (Sleeter, 2001), social work education in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Walker, 2012), Edmund Rice Centre social justice programs around Australia, Psychology at Charles Sturt University, General Practice Education in the Northern Territory and others. Gair (2007) describes an 'immersion' experience in which she undertook to spend 3 months as a volunteer in an Aboriginal community. Some social work field placements could also be considered to be immersion experiences with social work students living in communities as their field education learning.

Such activities can be time intensive in both implementation and planning. Considerations need to include: the provision of infrastructure to ensure that the learning experience is productive, meets the interests of both the learner and the institution as well as those of the communities, and does not impose an unwarranted burden on the communities who provide the experience. Schools considering an immersion programme should explore where else in the university or local agencies there are previous or planned experiences of immersion programs. This will enable investigation of possibilities for joint activities, and will avoid subjecting communities to multiple requests. Planning and resourcing is critical here. Although focused on language revitalisation in Canadian First Peoples' communities, a useful handbook for planning may be found at the website of First Peoples' Cultural Council (<http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/culture-camps-handbook.pdf>). It can be adapted for other purposes and locations. See Section 7 for further discussion of immersion.



3.5.2 Learning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies

Field Placements (see Section 4) are one of the most important opportunities for knowledge and practice learning for students. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies often embody living in two worlds: the external environment of social service provision adheres to western expectations and structures (legislative requirements, policy) but often the internal or micro/meso environment operates from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldview using cultural constructs and practices. Being located in these agencies can provide students with important learning opportunities. Discussion of these learning contexts is located in Section 4.

Suggestions for action

- Form connections with local communities
- Work closely with the University Aboriginal Centres or equivalent to identify appropriate knowledge holders
- Include community selected representatives in preparing sessions of learning
- Develop a budget for these learning activities.

3.5.3 Distance learning and education contexts

Consideration has been given to distance learning throughout the Framework. The position adopted by the *Getting it Right* project is that while distance education does present some unique teaching and learning challenges and opportunities, the fundamental principles that inform this Framework are also applicable to these learning contexts. For example, *epistemological equality* can be achieved through vertical and horizontal integration of curriculum content in social work degrees that are taught by distance education. However the delivery of content will need to be adapted so that learning environments are culturally safe for all students and staff (see Sections 6 & 7 for further discussion of cultural safety). Educators may, for example, need to provide clear written instructions and guidelines for students about the concept and why it is relevant to social work education and practice.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies can also be active in these learning contexts. Through the use of a range of technologies, students can access visual and audio presentations by First Australian community members, educators and guest lecturers. Yarning, story-telling and even stillness can be demonstrated through visual and audio mediums. Facilitating contact and discussions between students, exploring ways in which students can learn about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, creating opportunities for students to demonstrate their *cultural responsiveness* when undertaking these learning tasks are all areas for exploration and consideration. Further discussion of this area of learning in field placements is also located in Section 4. Section 8 also includes examples of a range of learning strategies in this area as well as lists of resources.

3.6 HOW SHOULD THE TEACHING/LEARNING BE CONSTRUCTED?

THE PRINCIPLE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEDAGOGIES WOULD INFER THAT STRATEGIES FOR TRANSMITTING KNOWLEDGES AND SKILLS WOULD NEED TO BE DRAWN FROM THE WORLDVIEWS OF THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES.

There is an increasing body of literature (for example, Bindi Bennett et al., 2011; Stephanie Gilbert, 2001; Larkin, 2011; Muller, 2007; Walter et al., 2011) describing a range of teaching/learning practices and methods.

There is a widespread agreement of some of the material which needs to be included in students' learning such as: the colonised history of Australia and its effects on the welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; policies which structured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lives; and the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is appropriate for non-Indigenous educators to teach content, especially if supplemented or constructed around, for example, audio-visual material produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

What becomes challenging is how to ensure that knowledge of other important features of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lives, such as cultural knowledge and the experience of the impacts of policies, are transmitted accurately and appropriately. As discussed in Section 2, these areas of knowledge can only be presented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and for some areas of cultural knowledge, by custodians of the local place.

The same difficulties as mentioned above are present here. Not only may local knowledge holders be few and much sought after, potentially over-burdening them, but social work students are likely to work in different locations after graduation and need to have exposure to different cultural knowledge in their new places of work.

GIVEN THIS CONSIDERATION, AN IMPORTANT AREA FOR STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE THE DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN KNOWING HOW TO LOCATE AND ENGAGE APPROPRIATELY THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREERS WITH LOCAL KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS.



This is often an area of greatest demands from students (and other learners, for example, workers in agencies at cultural awareness workshops). It is as though having a checklist of 'what to do and what not to do' is considered sufficient for cultural practice. While this area of knowledge is important,

The Diagram below provides some different suggestions on how students can be supported to develop their cultural responsiveness and learn through working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their agencies and or communities.

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS IS MUCH MORE COMPLEX AND DIVERSE THAN LEARNING SOME INITIAL BEHAVIOURS AND PROTOCOLS

(refer to Section 1 for more details on cultural responsiveness).

Writing from the Canadian experience, Evans et al. (1999) provide accounts of developing curriculum, particularly through using a participatory action research approach. Collaborating on content, processes and teaching enables the local people to identify and direct what content is important to be learned from the local context as well as contributing to ideas for appropriate teaching mechanisms. Additional challenges arise in distance education, and lecturers will need to find alternate ways of identifying the local knowledge holders and forming working relationships. The university Aboriginal centres may have some guidance and information to offer here. The six steps recommended by Evans et al. (1999) are reproduced in Section 8.





3.6.1 Other learning modalities

Other learning modalities that are employed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the teaching/learning space are:

- **Yarning**

Yarning is a form of Aboriginal conversation which can be formal and informal (Bessarab & Ng'andu 2010; Bacon, 2012)

- **Yarning circles**

Yarning circles are another process that has been taken up by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to facilitate a group discussion. They can be organised around community meetings, research projects and using in place of a focus group. A more detailed presentation of yarning circles, including protocols, is included in Section 8.

- **Storytelling or narrative.**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples often use storytelling to pass on information. The story can be serious or/and funny but there will be a purpose to it. Aboriginal societies have used story as a method to teach children and adults and is an age old practice that has been passed down through the generations.

A number of non-Indigenous teaching/learning methods are also potentially useful including:

- **Critical reflexivity** and identifying the non-universality of commonly accepted and interpreted concepts such as the 'self' ('self' determination, 'self' reliance, 'self'-responsibility, 'self'-actualisation), the primacy of the individual (individualisation, individual independence, personal autonomy (and the negative correlate of dependence) and others (can be encapsulated in the term critical auto-ethnography)
- **Exploring own cultural identity.** This is a central tenet of taking a Whiteness-informed stance as well as being an essential part of critical reflexivity. Yunkaporta (2009, p.4) recommends developing an 'authentic cultural standpoint and teaching philosophy' for school teachers, but this could well be equally useful in the tertiary setting:
 - Figure out your ontology (what you believe is real)
 - Figure out your epistemology (way of thinking about that reality)
 - From this develop your methodology (a tool to make your epistemology further inform your ontology)
 - Do these steps within a framework of your axiology (ethics and values).

- **Cultural supervision (see definition and discussion in Section 4).** Cultural supervision is a form of professional supervision where the worker or student is supported to understand and apply a cultural analysis to their work and or studies. It can only be carried out by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander social worker who has the skills to supervise (Bessarab, 2012)
- **The importance of stillness and listening** – listening actively, not speaking/questioning (the informed 'not-knower') (Bacon, 2012; Bennett et al., 2011)
- **Role playing** – a range of scenarios, see Section 8 examples
- **Structural analysis workshop** (Simmons et al., 2008). Related to the Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand, this workshop is facilitated by Maori and non-Maori and draws on work by Māori and non-Maori academics (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2000). It takes a structural analysis for change within an anti-racist training perspective. Importantly the authors note that the workshop 'utilises Maori tikanga [customs] and right brain learning strategies as a way of engaging students in anti-racist training' (Simmons et al., 2008, p. 375). These 'right-brain' activities in art work, which are noted as familiar in social justice and social change education, engage the cognitive, affective, semantic, intuitive traditions in experiential learning and encourage relationship building towards change. This workshop process takes place in the Maori cultural space according to Maori protocols and runs over several weeks. It runs in conjunction with community service work in local agencies. This has the potential to be included in field education.



3.7 HOW SHOULD STUDENT LEARNING BE ASSESSED, AND BY WHOM?

The assessment of student learning also needs to be addressed in order to ensure synergy between new areas of content, teaching processes and assessment practices. One area for exploration and development is the participation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the assessment of student learning. Section 4 explores this strategy in the context of field education.

If we consider Yunkaporta's (2009) pedagogical principles, reproduced below, as an example, then appropriate assessments would need to be developed that reflect these principles. The principles suggest that knowledge and skills are deeply connected to the environment and that the written and, indeed spoken, word are not the main concern. A suitable assessment, designed in association with the knowledge holders of this place (western NSW), might include pictorial representations of learning, perhaps in the form of an on-going story, a poster and so on.

- We connect through the stories we share
- We picture our pathways of knowledge
- We see, think, act, make and share without words
- We keep and share knowledge with art and objects
- We work with lessons from land and nature
- We put different ideas together and create new knowledge
- We work from wholes to parts, watching and then doing
- We bring new knowledge home to help our mob

Alternate assessment principles are provided by Bierman and Townsend (2008):

- 'Identity – learning about oneself as primary to the life-long learning process ;
- Relatedness – belonging – an enlarging of identity through relatedness to people, place, space, flora, fauna, creation, time (history, present and future) – emotional/passionate;
- Inclusiveness – acknowledgement, attention and consideration of unique identities, experiences and perspectives;
- Reciprocity – as a process of relatedness – rights and responsibilities; equal exchange; balance in relatedness;
- Nurturance – caring, generosity (sharing experience and knowing), patience, forgiveness;
- Respect (acceptance, acknowledgement).

A suitable assessment might include: a self-awareness presentation, verbal, pictorial or written; or a group plan for an activity to involve community and agency members in an event to celebrate belonging and provide an equal exchange of benefit to both groups.

Educators are encouraged to investigate the specific pedagogical systems used in the location and, with the knowledge holders, design appropriate assessments as suggested above.

These assessments could then contribute to the overall learning throughout the course. Some specific suggestions for assessments are in Section 8.

Suggestions for action

- Identify local knowledge holders and identify pedagogical approaches. The University Indigenous Centre may be able to assist in putting staff in touch with community members and help develop the relationships necessary to engage in pedagogical partnerships
- Explore a range of assessment processes and requirements that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being
- Build into departmental budgets funds for payment to community members for their partnerships in assessment processes.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This section integrates the *Getting it Right* concepts, particularly of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies*, *3rd Space*, *epistemological equality* and *cultural responsiveness*, to examine teaching and learning principles and processes. Applying these concepts to the learning environment provides unique opportunities for the development of a range of creative and innovative practices. This discussion is continued in Section 4 with a focus on field education.

SECTION 4

FIELD EDUCATION THAT IS INFORMED BY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES





4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework* is to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges into social work curricula. Field education is a core curriculum area and this section draws attention to how this goal can be achieved within this area of student learning. The Section outlines some of the issues, questions, challenges and strategies for developing learning opportunities in Field Education that are informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges. The goal is to assist students to develop practice skills and knowledge about how to work in culturally responsive ways with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, colleagues and communities in all placement contexts.

Data from the *Getting it Right* online curriculum survey demonstrate that Schools of Social Work have struggled to provide non-Indigenous students with opportunities to experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and agencies. It is here that advances can be made in centralising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in social work practice.

The conceptual framework (see Section 1) provides the means to undertake this endeavour.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL EQUALITY CAN BE DEVELOPED IN FIELD EDUCATION THROUGH ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAKEHOLDERS TO PLAN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND STUDENT ASSESSMENT.

Students can strengthen their ability to understand and experience the *3rd cultural space* by adopting this concept as a way of thinking about practice dilemmas and strategies. The inclusion of cultural supervision and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in assessing student learning in field education allows for the integration of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies* and assessment of *cultural responsiveness*.

In order to achieve these changes it is essential that field educators (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous) are supported to understand these concepts. In this Section, placement learning outcomes and experiences are focussed on the AASW Practice Standards (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013a) and in particular on students' ability to demonstrate *cultural responsiveness* in practice. Focussing on *cultural responsiveness* widens the scope in which students can understand, practise and demonstrate this graduate attribute. Opportunities to do so will be different in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous settings, but equally valid. To reiterate, and as outlined in Section 1 of this framework, *cultural responsiveness* is:

The capacity of social workers to develop collaborative and respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in order to respond to the issues and needs of the community in ways that promote social justice and uphold human rights. Being culturally responsive requires the social worker to critically reflect on their own identity in relation to others and to have the knowledge and skills to meet the above goals of practice at different levels of intervention: systemic, organisational, professional and individual.



4.2 MOVING FORWARD

Traditional approaches to field education have had limited success in being able to offer every student opportunities to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, colleagues and clients. According to data from the *Getting it Right* on-line curriculum survey, placements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations are limited, and generally only offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, often at the request of the organisation and/or student. What this means is that

MOST SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS WILL GRADUATE WITH POTENTIALLY LIMITED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE OF HOW TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES, COMMUNITIES AND AGENCIES.

It is, however, not uncommon that social work students may find themselves in agencies where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are significantly over-represented as clients (for example in child protection, health and justice) but the reasons behind this over-representation may be unexplored or unchallenged. In other agency contexts, students may have little or no interaction with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as clients because the service is inaccessible to these client groups. Examples may include disability or aged care services. Likewise, students may have limited experience of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as colleagues, in particular in organisations where field educators and colleagues may be entirely or mostly non-Indigenous. This under-representation may also remain unexplored or unchallenged. Opportunities for cultural supervision and mentoring are likely to be insufficient for student numbers.

Given the above, significant attention needs to be given to developing strategies that will enhance learning opportunities in these areas.

4.2.1 Use of field education terms

A range of generic field education terms have been adopted in this section:

- Field Education Coordinator – The University-based social work academic staff member who manages the field education program
- Field Educator – the social work qualified agency based (or in some cases based off site) person who has agreed to undertake regular (as per AASW requirements) supervision of the student
- Field Education Agencies – those human services agencies and others that have agreed to provide social work students with field education placement learning opportunities
- Learning plan – the School of Social Work-developed learning plan or agreement which provides students with clear learning outcomes and assessment requirements
- Liaison staff – School of Social Work staff who support the student on placement.

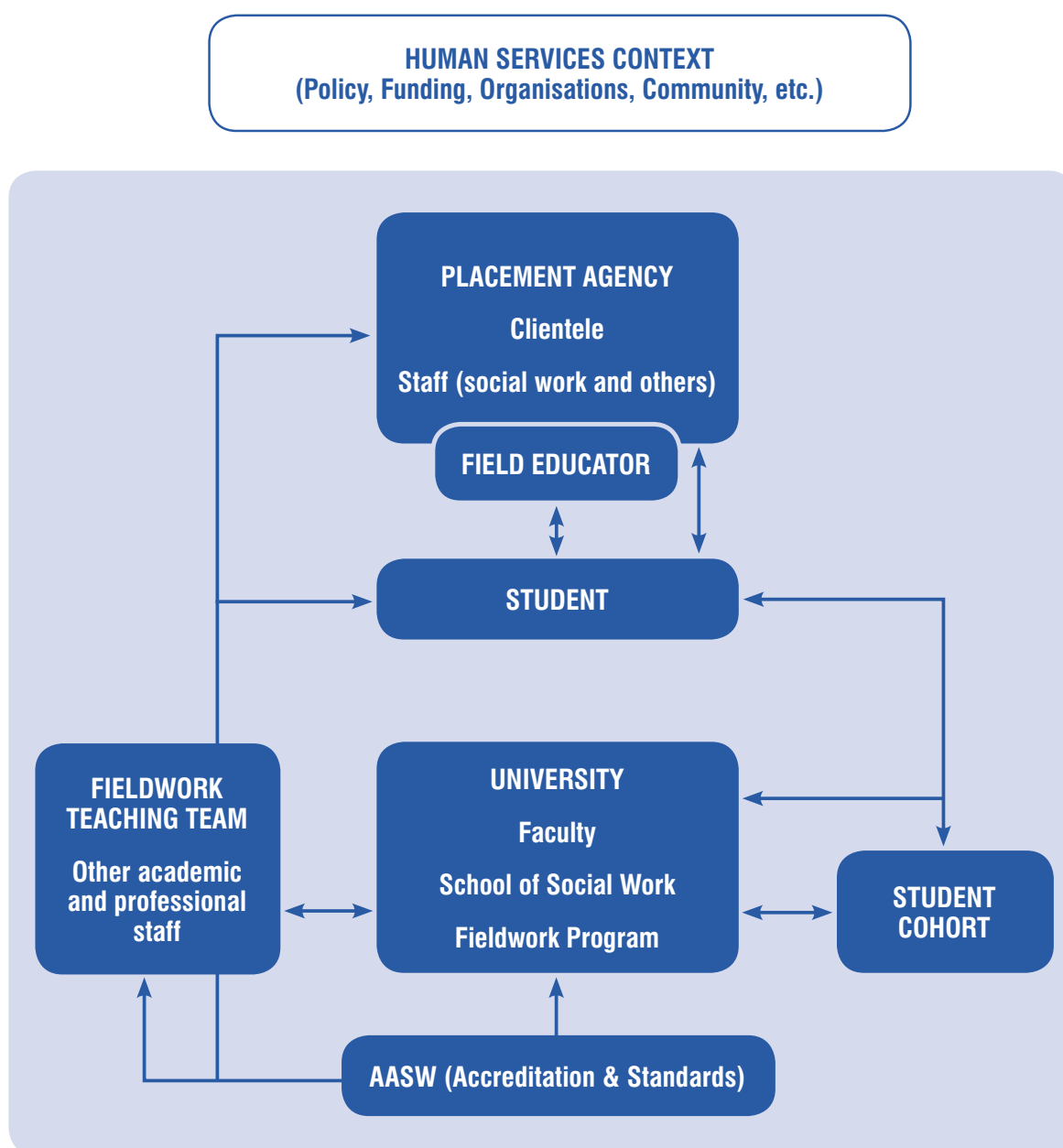
It should also be noted that where the term 'client' is used in this section it may refer to an individual, couple or family including extended kin networks.



4.3 FIELD EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS

There are, of course, multiple stakeholders in field education, both internal and external to the University, as shown in the map below, each with different types and levels of responsibility for ensuring that field education develops the capacity for students to demonstrate cultural responsiveness. Field education staff within the University have varying influence and responsibility, and this Section addresses those that the University is directly responsible for and/or has influence with.

Diagram 5: Field education stakeholders



Adapted from O'Connor, Wilson, and Setterlund (1998).



4.3.1 Planning

Planning for field education is an ongoing and cyclical process, and also needs to be considered in a reflective, critical 'big picture' manner. Considering a range of questions will help ensure that field education is informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges. These questions can include but are not limited to:

- What is the current role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within field education?
- What are the School's aims and objectives in addressing the AASW standards in respect of field education?
- Who needs to be involved in defining and integrating these aims and objectives?
- How and who will know whether these aims and objectives have been met?
- What are the barriers and enablers to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in field education?
- What resources are needed to support these aims and objectives?

For students:

- What outcomes do students need to demonstrate in field education in regards to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – as clients, colleagues and communities?
- How will assessment take place?
- Who will be involved in assessment? Are there ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be meaningfully involved in assessment?
- How will students be prepared to identify and respond to racism in the workplace?
- What particular needs do international students have in learning to work with First Australian clients and colleagues in culturally responsive ways? How will their needs be addressed?

For field education agencies and field educators:

- What opportunities are there for reciprocity when requesting placements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies?
- How will field educators be engaged in this process?
- What is the role of cultural supervision or cultural mentoring and how can it be built into field education?
- How can the capacity for collaborative working relationships between the School and the Human Services agencies (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous) be developed?

- In distance education, how will the School support field educators to develop and enhance collaboration with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities so that students can meet their learning goals?

4.3.2 Developing a plan in partnership with community and field educators

The new AASW Curriculum Standards (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a) provide an opportunity for Schools of Social Work and field education co-ordinators to develop a plan with community to identify, operationalise, monitor and review strategies to ensure that all students graduate with practice experience of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers are likely to be key stakeholders in any planning process. Field education coordinators need to ensure that Field Education is an integral part of the School's community engagement strategy as outlined in Section 7 on Leadership and Governance. Issues of reciprocity are a key consideration. Often a great burden can be placed on a small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, social workers and other colleagues to provide placement opportunities and support for placements.

RECIPROCITY MIGHT INCLUDE PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, FREE LIBRARY ACCESS, PROVIDING CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATING IN ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTING AGENCY RESEARCH.

4.4 AASW FIELD EDUCATION STANDARDS

Developing more substantial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander field education experiences centrally within current AASW Field Education Standards and requirements (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012b) raises some challenges. Field education standards can be prescriptive and this can limit the development of a range of learning opportunities. For example, current placement requirements in terms of hours and blocks of time may limit some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from completing their placement (refer to Section 5 for details). Due to workload pressures, committing a substantial number of hours to placements may also not be feasible for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. Flexible arrangements may assist in the provision of a wider range of placement opportunities. For example, agencies or communities in rural or remote settings, particularly where accommodation and other infrastructure are severely limited, may be willing and able to take a student for 50 or



100 hours but no longer. Schools could consider placements that incorporate a variety of elements, for example students gaining experience in a range of agency contexts, as long as students have a coherent learning plan and access to structured social work supervision.

Additionally, recognition of prior learning does not currently acknowledge Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing, which means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may have difficulty adjusting to learning requirements. There may be a role, therefore, for field education coordinators and others to consider how to make the Standards work in flexible and non-standard ways to ensure a range of experiences for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students and organisations. In addition, they need to monitor the impact of the Standards on the field placement experience and feed this back to the AASW.

4.5 DEVELOPING ENHANCED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Field education coordinators and communities may identify a range of options to ensure all students gain practice experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work in all practice contexts. According to the *Getting it Right* project data, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies and clients report that they suffer from service fatigue because of frequent requests to educate non-Indigenous workers. When developing a plan to increase access to these learning opportunities, Schools need to consider the nature of any agency partnership and mutually explore opportunities for reciprocity – what schools can offer community and First Australian organisations in return for providing student learning experiences. Collaboration across and between universities might also facilitate access to increased numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agency placements.

4.5.1 Developing learning opportunities in non-Indigenous agencies

Students placed in non-Indigenous agencies need to be encouraged to engage in a range of potential learning activities which provide opportunities to put into practice Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Direct practice with a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients (considering individuals, family and community as 'client')
- Accompanying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues to community meetings, or attending local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interagency meetings or forums
- Undertaking community development projects with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (urban, rural, remote)

- Learning about local cultural protocols, see for example the Sector Connect Website http://www.sectorconnect.org.au/assets/pdf/resources/macunity/Aboriginal_protocols.pdf
- Policy development and/or analysis, for example, in the area of service provision to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or examination of relevant Commonwealth and/or State policies. For example, in an aged care or disability focussed placement the student could be examining relevant Commonwealth aged care or disability policies
- Research, for example, learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research protocols and comparing these protocols with others used in the agency. See for example, Australian Health and Medical Research Council guidelines (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007 (updated 2013))
- Where agencies have no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, undertake a critical analysis of what might be barriers to access
- Critical analysis of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in an organisation's client population and/or under-representation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander workers
- Exploring and learning about processes of relationship development and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and organisations

Undertaking a cultural analysis, see for example the work of Tracey Westerman at the website of Indigenous Psychology Services http://www.indigenouspsychservices.com.au/staticpage.php?static_id=15

- Agency visits to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled agencies such as Aboriginal Legal Services
- Examination of organisational Reconciliation Action Plans or Statements
- Compare (evaluate) what an organisation says it does and current practices in the area of providing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Analyse evidence of institutional racism, how does it manifest, what could be possible responses
- Analyse ethical dilemmas and issues according to the AASW Code of Ethics (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010) with particular attention to those areas of the Code that consider the influence of cultural diversity such as 5.1.3 (b).

As long as the points below in the note of caution are taken into consideration, students undertaking any of the above learning opportunities and sharing their learning with their field educator, colleagues and fellow students, could make a valuable contribution to the agency's overall practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



4.5.1.1 A note of caution

It is important to acknowledge the power imbalance inherent for students in their placements.

RAISING QUESTIONS OF CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS WITHIN AN AGENCY OR WITH A SUPERVISOR IS POTENTIALLY CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO OR SOMEONE'S PERCEIVED CAPACITY TO WORK WITH OR/ AND DELIVER SERVICES TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES.

Where open discussion about these issues may not be supported in a placement, it is important that students do not to put themselves at risk. Nevertheless there are still ways that they can demonstrate attributes of *cultural responsiveness*, for example by undertaking a situational analysis of the agency context. This may occur in the University learning context, such as field education seminars and could include Schools asking students:

- What are your observations of 'whiteness' in this agency?
- How is white privilege experienced by clients or colleagues?
- What are the barriers to/facilitators of cultural responsiveness?
- How does an organisation incorporate an understanding of the social, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into their policies, practice and agency infrastructure?

Schools can also consider creating structural supports to ensure that students have allies that are external to the agency so that they can name and make sense of these challenges. Allies might also include links with the university centre for Aboriginal studies or external cultural mentors.

4.5.2 Learning about social, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing (SESWB)

Encouraging students on placement to consider the importance of the concepts of social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing can also be a valuable learning opportunity which is transferable to all agency contexts. Field educators need to be aware of and understand these concepts. Developing the capacity of the human services workforce to acknowledge the importance of SESWB is a key focus of the Queensland Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (2009, pp. 22-24) report. The Report highlights that knowledge about the social determinants of health plays an important role in the development of protective factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Queensland Centre for Remote and Rural Mental Health report (2009) supports a holistic concept of health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that is inextricably linked to land and the environment. Swan and Raphael (as cited in Centre for Remote and Rural Mental Health 2009) define Aboriginal health as the following:

The Aboriginal concept of health is holistic, encompassing mental health and physical, cultural and spiritual health. Land is central to well-being. This holistic concept does not merely refer to the 'whole body' but in fact is steeped in the harmonised interrelations which constitute cultural well-being. These inter-relating factors can be categorised as largely spiritual, environmental, ideological, political, social, economic, mental and physical. Crucially, it must be understood that when the harmony of these interrelations is disrupted, Aboriginal ill-health will persist (p. 4).

Further information can be found on the Australian Indigenous Health/InfoNet website <http://www.healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/>.

4.6 LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

The ten dimensions that surround the four key concepts in the conceptual framework⁴ (see Section 1) are those of human rights, gender, history, racism, social justice, identity, collectivism, colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ontologies and white privilege. While some of these dimensions may already inform a student's learning objectives, it is important that they are regularly reviewed by students for their appropriateness in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges across all field placements.

If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are to be embedded in field education, then students and field educators will need to consider how these will be reflected in the learning plan.

IT IS CRUCIAL THAT EVERY STUDENT'S LEARNING PLAN HAS AT LEAST ONE GOAL TO DEMONSTRATE CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK.

⁴ The four key concepts are epistemological equality, 3rd cultural space (3rd space), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies and cultural responsiveness.



Goals can include: analysis (accessibility of an organisation, policies and practices that deal with racism); awareness of their position (white privilege); how they are thinking through challenges such as community engagement; and their development of interpersonal communication skills for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is also important to differentiate universal skills and their application, versus specific skills for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

When considering learning opportunities to assess a student's cultural responsiveness, field educators might consider:

- What is the scope for discrete activities that focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives or services?
- What is the scope for embedding an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus throughout all aspects of the placement?
- How will the student be supported to integrate theory about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and values into their learning goals?
- How will they demonstrate their understanding of knowing, being and doing and how will this knowledge be translated into practice skills?
- How can the ten elements referred to earlier in this section be usefully incorporated into learning opportunities?

Possible ways of demonstrating cultural responsiveness include:

- The student is required to liaise with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander worker and ask if they may accompany the worker to a group program, for example, a health program such as Aunty Jeans (NSW Health Initiative) or an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health clinic such as one that provides services to people with diabetes or that screens children for otitis media. The student's approach to the worker, attendance at the program and the content of their observations during this visit, can demonstrate their capacity to be culturally responsive
- If direct contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, colleagues, agencies or communities during the placement is not possible, then the student completes a case study analysis provided by the field educator. This may be assessed by the field educator or field liaison visitor
- Students complete a learning journal commented on by the field education coordinator.

4.6.1 Exploring alternative assessment processes

According to *Getting it Right* project data,

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS ARE ASSESSED IN ETHNOCENTRIC WAYS AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT FEEDBACK FROM ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COLLEAGUES IS INCORPORATED INTO STUDENT ASSESSMENT. THIS APPLIES EQUALLY TO ASSESSMENT OF NON-INDIGENOUS STUDENTS.

Consideration should be given to the demand on time and the responsibility implicit in any such requests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues.

Crucial considerations are:

- Who is qualified to assess a student's learning in this arena?
- What is the role and status of cultural supervisors or mentors in assessment?
- What part can Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or colleagues play in providing feedback on a student's skill development?
- Is a pass grade in this aspect of practice regarded as critical to a student passing the unit?

Potential responses include:

- At the field education planning stage, identifying and engaging with potential cultural supervisors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers to assist in addressing assessment issues
- Negotiating a 'memorandum of understanding' so that the roles and status of all assessors is clear, including that of community feedback
- Providing training for those involved to familiarise them with the Curriculum Standards
- Negotiating payment, in-kind or other contributions, to these colleagues in recognition of their expertise and time.



4.7 SUPPORTING FIELD EDUCATORS, CULTURAL SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

It is important to distinguish between culturally responsive supervision, cultural supervision and cultural mentoring and each of these concepts is outlined below.

Culturally responsive supervision can be undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or non-Indigenous social work supervisors. It is supervision that reflects respectful collaborative relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognises the central place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in understanding what may be happening in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client's and/or community's situation. Culturally responsive supervision requires that the supervisor is able to critically reflect upon their own identity in relation to that of the student, and has in turn the skills to assist the student to develop cultural responsiveness.

Cultural supervision cannot be undertaken by non-Indigenous people. According to Bessarab (2012)

'CULTURAL SUPERVISION REQUIRES A SPECIFIC APPROACH THAT MUST INCORPORATE AN ABORIGINAL STANDPOINT AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS IN WHAT IS UNFOLDING'

(p.89). Cultural supervision is 'embedded in an Aboriginal/ Indigenous space that is supportive and culturally safe for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal social workers, workers and students to engage in and reflect on cultural issues emerging in their practice/research' (Bessarab, 2012, p.76).

According to the Macquarie Dictionary Online (2014), a mentor is 'a wise and trusted counsellor'; (especially in an organisation) a person who is considered to have sufficient experience or expertise to be able to assist others less experienced'. A cultural mentor in a field education context would be someone who is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and who is able to guide and inform a student or field educator in noticing and understanding aspects of the practice context that are culturally nuanced. The mentor may not be social work trained but is recognised as having local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge such as an Elder or other respected community member. A cultural mentor can play a crucial role alongside social work supervision in deepening a student's learning and increasing the capacity of the field educator to provide culturally responsive supervision.

Field educators' capacity to provide culturally responsive supervision will vary considerably. Their own practice will also vary in terms of *cultural responsiveness* and how culturally safe is their organisation and service provision. As the Curriculum Standards are incorporated into student learning, it cannot be assumed that the field will be ahead of, or even in parallel with, embedding understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges into their service.

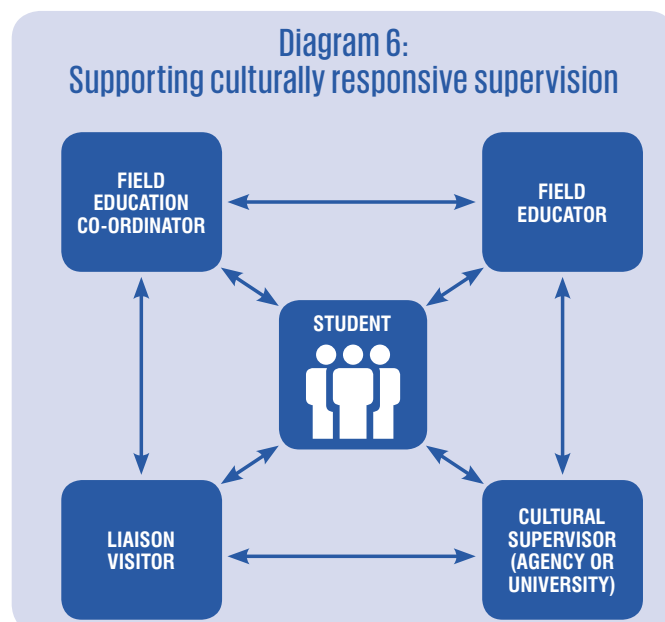
WHILE SOME FIELD EDUCATORS WILL BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE, OTHERS MAY NEED SUPPORT AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO UNDERSTAND THE NEW STANDARDS,

so that Schools, including liaison visitors and field educators, can productively work together to assist students to meet their learning goals in placements.

4.7.1 How can culturally responsive supervision happen?

In order for *culturally responsive* supervision to develop, an understanding of and support for this concept should be incorporated into existing partnerships between Schools and field educators. New and existing field education co-ordinators, liaison visitors and field educators all have a role to play. Wherever possible, cultural supervisors should be incorporated into this model. Learning about, understanding and then incorporating culturally responsive supervision into field education practice can be developed via mutual support and reflection.

Relationships that support the student's learning and culturally responsive supervision might be described:





Strategies to support culturally responsive supervision may include:

- Conducting a survey with field educators to determine their current learning needs around the new ASWEAS Curriculum Standards (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a) and what it means for them, and responding accordingly to those needs
- Providing written information about the new ASWEAS Curriculum Standards and any changes to the School's field education program that will result
- Providing information about concepts of social, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Providing training for field educators about 'courageous conversations about race' (CCAR) as outlined in Section 3
- Offering workshops on all of the above
- Offering professional development opportunities, in partnership with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff or colleagues, on the content, values and skill bases reflected in the new ASWEAS Curriculum Standards
- Providing resource lists of articles, research, teaching tools and the like that field educators can use in both their own practice and in supervision of students
- Negotiating teaching and learning relationships among and between the School (field education co-ordinator), field educator, liaison visitor and cultural supervisor and the student

Linking field educators and other teaching staff into on-line resources such as the Queensland University of Technology training for supervisors (SWISS). Please see their website <http://www.swiss.qut.edu.au/>.

Many Schools already provide training for field educators.

INCLUDING EDUCATION AROUND THE NEW ASWEAS CURRICULUM STANDARDS WILL BE HELPFUL IN ENSURING THAT FIELD EDUCATORS ARE ABLE AND CONFIDENT TO PROVIDE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITHIN THEIR ORGANISATION.

Such training will need to consider:

- How to attract people to attend
- How to manage the issue of field educators who do not come
- How to recognise racism and how to challenge it – some students have experienced racism (about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) from their field educators.

Cultural supervision and mentoring is an important element in ensuring that students are supported to reflect on their practice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous perspectives. Schools will need to consider how this can happen for every student, particularly where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives cannot be accessed within the placement itself. This perspective could be provided through:

- Cultural supervision from a separate area of the same organisation in which the placement is occurring
- Integrative seminars which include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expertise
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the School
- Employment of local Elders
- First Australian staff in the university's Aboriginal unit or centre.

Providing cultural supervisors and mentors with access to information about the field education learning environment, expectations of students, roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders is important preparation and background knowledge for them.



4.8 PLACEMENT PREPARATION FOR STUDENTS

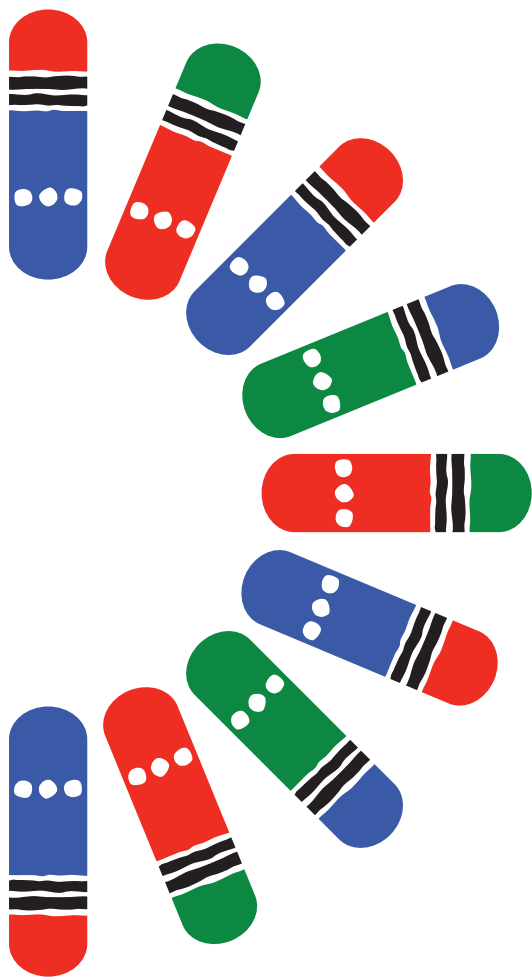
Pre-placement preparation for students is likely to improve the chances of a positive experience for students and the organisations in which they are placed. Preparation could usefully include input about:

- Recognising and responding to racism within an organisation
- Using simulation/role play to practice responses
- Overcoming cultural paralysis for non-Indigenous students
- Recognising and managing cultural isolation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in non-Indigenous settings
- Encouraging and supporting reflection by non-Indigenous students placed in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations or communities about their experience of cultural difference or isolation
- Encouraging the development of supportive networks among students who are experiencing similar challenges
- Encouraging critical thinking and questioning – asking naïve questions early in placement before a student adopts organisational norms
- How to determine if agencies are culturally safe.
A particularly complex organisation might be one in which a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients are present in a mainstream setting.

Immersion or cultural learning (see Section 3) is another way of preparing students for field education. Exploring opportunities for this to occur through the university's Aboriginal centre or local First Australian organisations or communities (for example Land Councils) is likely to be helpful.

4.9 CONCLUSION

This section acknowledges the important role that field education can play in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in the social work curriculum and in the development of culturally responsive social work practices. To do this successfully, Schools of Social Work need to plan, operationalise and create placements that, regardless of context, enable students to meet their learning goals. This has implications for developing relevant training for field educators and developing processes for the proactive engagement of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers, communities and organisations. Success in this area is also likely to contribute to the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as well as enhance the attraction of Schools of Social Work as supportive workplaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, which is the focus of the next two sections of this Framework.



SECTION 5 RECRUITING, SUPPORTING AND RETAINING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS



5.1 INTRODUCTION

Integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges into the social work curriculum has a number of implications for First Australian social work students. A potential outcome is an increase in the number of First Australian students choosing a career in social work. Similar outcomes have been achieved in areas such as medicine, where a deliberate strategy to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical curriculum included a focus on new initiatives to recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students (Phillips, 2004). A recent outcome evaluation of this strategy (Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand & Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, 2012) provides critical insights into what it takes to deliver significant increases in the recruitment and retention of First Australian students in higher education. This section draws on this and other evidence and presents case studies and strategies which can inform the ways in which Schools of Social Work can increase their capacity to proactively and with cultural safety recruit, retain and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students. The potential role of the AASW in addressing these issues is also explored.

5.2 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK STUDENT POPULATION

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS ARE GROSSLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS.

Despite First Australians' comprising up to 2.2% of the general Australian population, the recent Review of Higher Education (Behrendt et al., 2012) indicates that this student group comprises only 1.4% of all university enrolments (p.7). A large proportion, 32.1%, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled in the broad area of higher education studies referred to as Society and Culture which includes social work (Behrendt et al., 2012).

The *Getting it Right* on-line survey (refer to Framework overview for more details) provides a snapshot of the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that were, in 2011, enrolled in social work programs. Data were gathered from 23 of the 26 Schools of Social Work (over 80% response rate) and included information about student enrolment, retention and graduation. Analysis of the survey findings indicates a comparatively high rate of enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social

work students (approximately 4.4%) as a proportion of the total population of social work students. However there are large variations between universities. Eighty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students are enrolled in one university (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific distance education social work program offered through the Koorie Institute at Deakin University in Victoria), while numbers at other universities varied from 16 students to just one First Australian social work student.

In 2011 the number of completing students was very small. The highest number of First Australian social work students completing their studies at any institution, including the Koorie Institute course, was three. In some universities no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work student completed their studies. These low completion rates, as a proportion of overall enrolment numbers, suggest potential problems in the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students. This is supported by national evidence which indicates that across all University degrees, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students experience lower rates of retention and are therefore less likely than other students to complete their studies (Behrendt et al., 2012, p.8).



5.3 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK POPULATION

Given that these social work students are working towards entering the social work profession, it is also important to know the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers within the profession. However it is difficult to locate accurate data in this area.

What we do know is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are generally under-represented in the professional workforce (Taylor et al. as cited in Behrendt et al., 2012, p.9). This statistic not only has implications for the social work workforce, but also for the number of potential field education opportunities for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students.

THE LOW NUMBERS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORKERS REDUCES THE NUMBERS OF FIRST AUSTRALIAN STAFF WHO CAN BE MENTORS AND/OR ROLE MODELS FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS GENERALLY.

See Section 4 for discussion of cultural mentoring and supervision.

5.4 THE ROLE OF THE AASW IN ADDRESSING THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS

Given the professional values and priorities of social work, it is important that the profession increase the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers. The Review of Indigenous Higher Education, clearly articulates the important role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals have in working collaboratively with non-Indigenous professionals in achieving Closing the Gap targets (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xiv).

THE ROLE THAT PROFESSIONAL BODIES PLAY IN ENSURING THAT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE ENTER PROFESSIONS CANNOT BE UNDER-ESTIMATED.

The Review (Behrendt et al., 2012) asserts that the university sector and professional bodies have a joint responsibility in addressing this issue.

The Australian Psychological Society's *Reconciliation Action Plan* (Australian Psychological Society, 2011) is an example of how such a commitment can be demonstrated.

Exemplar: Australian Psychological Association: Reconciliation Action Plan 2011-2014

4. Indigenous education and employment

The APS is committed to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists, by facilitating recruitment, support and retention; mentoring Indigenous students in psychology; developing employment strategies for Indigenous people via graduate employment as psychologists; and through employment within the APS. (Australian Psychological Society, 2011, p.19).

HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO INCREASE THESE NUMBERS WE MUST FIRST ENSURE THAT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE ARE NOT ONLY ABLE TO ENTER INTO SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS, BUT ALSO STAY AND SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THEIR STUDIES.

Historically the formulation of solutions and strategies for increasing the enrolment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education students has focussed on addressing some of the socio-economic and educational issues that commonly confront these students (Behrendt et al., 2012). While this focus has some merit, many of the assumptions underpinning the problem are fundamentally deficit-focussed and based on the premise that, if we can fix the problems of/for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, then we can fix the issues regarding student enrolment, retention and completion.





We should, however, be focusing our attention elsewhere. We need to consider the problems within the profession and our educational/training programs that keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people either away from, or discontinuing, their social work studies. For example the historical relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the social work profession is well known as being a potential deterrent to First Australians' choosing a career in social work. The recent development by the AASW of its Reconciliation Action Plan (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013b) is one attempt to address this barrier.

In a recent research study, Bennett (2013) explored barriers to engagement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers and the AASW. These included the whiteness of the profession, lack of culturally responsive consultative processes and a strong deficit model that regards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as clients and not as partners and professionals. The recommendations made by the research participants to address these issues, provide some important insight for the AASW and educators in this field.

However despite these problems, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to enter social work programs and the profession, even if the numbers are relatively low. Thus

IN CONJUNCTION WITH (NOT INSTEAD OF) EXAMINING THE PROFESSION AND SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION PROGRAMS, WE SHOULD ALSO EXPLORE THE REASONS WHY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE CHOOSE TO BECOME SOCIAL WORKERS, SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THEIR DEGREES AND DEVELOP STRATEGIES THAT BUILD ON THESE STRENGTHS.

This is an area for further research.



5.5. RECRUITMENT OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enter the social work profession for a number of reasons. These include being motivated by their own experiences in using welfare systems, including social worker services, wanting to address issues within their communities and also to educate non-Indigenous social workers (Bennett, 2013; Green, Bennett, Collins, Gowans, Hennessy & Smith, 2012). These quotes capture some of these motivating factors:

Aboriginal social work student

'My passion for social justice, human rights and the rights of fellow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were all major reasons for following the path of social work. I found that as a social worker, I would learn the skills necessary to advocate for my people within a complex system that limits our voice.'

I BELIEVE AND CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT A SOCIAL WORK DEGREE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MY CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND LIFE EXPERIENCES WOULD ALLOW MYSELF TO ASSIST IN BREAKING DOWN ABORIGINAL DISADVANTAGE, WHILE EDUCATING MY FELLOW NON-INDIGENOUS SOCIAL WORKERS, COMMUNITY SECTORS, AND ALL AUSTRALIANS' (GREEN ET AL, 2012 , P. 208).

Aboriginal social work student

'I wanted to do something positive within the community and for my people, I wanted to give back and be a positive role model for young Aboriginal people growing up with many issues that I have also experience.'

For me the most important aspect about being a social worker is to train other social workers so that they will practice appropriately with Aboriginal people and that the harm that continues to impact Aboriginal communities will be addressed' (Green et al, 2012, p. 209).



While this motivation could be regarded as a potential asset for social work programs, a word of caution needs to be made here. It is undesirable, potentially harmful and unfair for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students if they are expected to be the teacher of non-Indigenous students and staff. A more nuanced and culturally safe approach needs to be adopted by Schools if they wish to harness and support this motivation. This requires working in collaboration with First Australian students so that they are first and foremost provided with every opportunity and encouraged to be a learner and to take full advantage of what this role offers. Further discussion of this issue is presented in Section 3 and also later in this section.

In terms of recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students, *Getting it Right* project data indicate that most Australian social work programs either do not have a specific student recruitment strategy or were unaware of the existence of such a strategy. Other Schools reported that recruitment strategies tend to be generic and subsequently were inadequate and generally unsuccessful when it came to increasing the numbers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students. The university based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander units were primarily regarded as having responsibility for the recruitment and selection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The following recommendation from the Review of Indigenous Higher Education (Behrendt et al., 2012) is relevant:

Recommendation 6 That universities and the vocational education and training (VET) sectors:

- work with employers and professional associations to encourage them to support their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to undertake higher education, including through cadetship models, scholarships and flexible leave arrangements

- collaborate with professional bodies and private and public sector employers to build and extend alternative pathways into higher education, including pursuing better credit transfer arrangements between VET and universities, pursuing delivery partnerships, and ensuring that VET providers are promoting higher education as an option post-VET

- support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enrol in and complete higher-level (at least Certificate IV and above), but also diploma and advanced diploma-level, qualifications (Behrendt et al., 2012, p.xviii-xix).

For those Schools who reported proactive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment strategies the following successful features were highlighted:

- The importance of recruiting a cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- The need to adopt a multi-staged, relationship based and focussed approach in recruitment including outreach to high school students, bringing people into the university
- developing relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and agencies and the social work program
- working in partnership with University based Indigenous centres or support units.

According to the Review of the implementation of the Indigenous Health Curriculum Framework and the Health Futures Project within Australian Medical Schools (Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand & Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, 2012), the above strategies also form the basis of student recruitment initiatives that are adopted by six out of 19 Australian Medical Schools (p. 26-27). The Review highlights the features of one particular pre-med program as being particularly successful because it not only proactively prepares Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for their medical program but also fosters a 'whole-of-School' support for student recruitment and support. This was demonstrated by the involvement of a large number of academic staff who become involved in the preparation and delivery of the program. This is regarded as pivotal in fostering positive relationships between medical school staff and future students.

The case examples below highlight how recruitment strategies and projects can be developed.



Case Study: University of New South Wales Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work student recruitment programs

The social work program at the University of New South Wales has a number of recruitment programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The social work program works in conjunction with Nura Gili, Indigenous Programs @ UNSW in recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Over 10 years these programs have dramatically increased the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolling in social work. These three programs are:

1. UNSW Indigenous Social Work Winter School: This Winter School is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 10, 11 and 12. The one week winter school gives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students a taste of university life, what classes are like, what the social work profession does and what subjects they need to do at school in order to gain a place in the social work degree. The Winter School is advertised by the University and is very popular with high school students. The students apply to participate in the Winter School and those students who are successful in their application are provided by UNSW with accommodation and board for the duration of the Winter School. Building on the success of the Social Work Winter School program, other Schools including Medicine now run similar initiatives.

2. UNSW Indigenous Pre-Social Work Program: This program is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are seeking entry into the 4 year Bachelor of Social Work at the University of New South Wales. The pre-social work program is an annual four week intensive program that runs Monday to Friday 9 to 5 in late November and early December. The program is designed to give students an experience of university lectures, tutorials, preparation and also assessments. Whilst teaching participants to write essays, do presentations and exams, it also acts as the selection process into the social work degree. It provides the participating students with an opportunity to develop relationships with a cohort of other potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students and to form relationships with the staff from the social work program. The students who successfully complete the pre-social work program are given credit for the 2nd year Aboriginal People and Social Work course.

3. The 3rd recruitment strategy is the presence at the UNSW social work program of a senior academic staff member who is an Aboriginal person. This person is involved with the Winter School and the pre-social work program and knows who the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are when they enter their degree. This allows the students to have someone to contact for assistance. His staff member also has a close relationship with support staff at Nura Gili, which facilitates liaison between the School and the unit if a student is experiencing difficulties.

<http://www.nuragili.unsw.edu.au/pre-programs-0>



Case study – Why not social work project – Australian Catholic University

In 2010 a senior non-Indigenous academic member of social work staff at the ACU, Canberra campus in partnership with the co-ordinator of the Canberra campus based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit, the Dhara Daramoolen Unit, sought funding from the University for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student recruitment project. A small grant was provided from the University Equity Pathways program which focussed on funding student recruitment initiatives that were targeted to disadvantaged groups.

Initial ideas for the project came from a range of sources, including an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work academic colleague in the School and a local Aboriginal cultural mentor from an ACT non-Government organisation. Relationships Australia actively employs a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who recently completed a local Diploma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counselling. Many of these graduates were now keen to pursue further study but lacked information about social work studies and were anxious about making the transition to a university based course. Background information regarding the UNSW Nura Gili program (refer to above case study) was also gathered in order to identify the elements of what constituted a successful initiative.

The annual one day Why not Social Work workshops have now been running for 3 years. While each year the workshops take on a slightly different format as a result of workshop evaluations and community input, they have resulted in a large increase of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students enrolling in both the Bachelor and Masters of Social Work qualifying degrees. Rates of student retention have also improved. Some of the successful features of the workshop include:

- The adoption of a community development approach in workshop planning. This includes: inviting input and participation from current and graduating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and social workers regarding the workshop program and visiting a range of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies in order to market the program and gauge levels of interest
- Working in partnership with the Dhara Daramoolen staff in the organisation of the workshop
- Utilising the workshop planning and delivery process as a social work student field placement opportunity. This has proved to be an important learning opportunity for non-Indigenous social work students
- Including as workshop activities information about: the social work profession, course content, employment opportunities, student support resources including meeting key staff and getting information about tuition support, hearing from current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students about their experiences of being a social work student including sharing stories of success
- Meeting social work academic staff and networking with other key staff such as administrative and support staff.

While this initiative is dependent on internal funding sources, it is also a relatively low cost project. Maintaining the momentum of running the program on an annual basis is an important goal and provides significant opportunities for developing ongoing relationships with a range of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and community members. Fundamentally this commitment and initiative sends a positive message to the community that the School is committed to providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to pursue a career in social work.



5.6 RETENTION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Alongside the development of proactive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student recruitment strategies, attention also needs to be given to the development of active retention and completion strategies and processes.

GETTING IT RIGHT PROJECT DATA INDICATE THAT THERE IS WIDESPREAD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IN SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK ABOUT THE LINK BETWEEN INCREASED STUDENT RETENTION AND THE PROVISION OF CULTURAL AND ACADEMIC APPROPRIATE SUPPORT.

Students need to be able to access support both within social work programs and through University based Indigenous units. Developing culturally safe learning environments is a critical goal.

5.6.1 Building cultural safety

A key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student recruitment strategy involves the provision of a learning environment that is regarded as culturally safe. Such an environment can be defined as:

an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together (Williams as cited in Bin-Sallik, 2003, p.21).

According to Bin-Sallik (2003), cultural safety goes much further than cultural awareness or cultural sensitivity, because it includes a reflection upon individual cultural identity and then recognises the impact of this upon professional practice. Building on this reflective process is the development of insight and a capacity to acknowledge how the uniqueness of each individual's cultural identity influences the ways that they respond/react in any given situation. Any relationship that reflects cultural safety must be built upon respect and equality.

While fostering cultural safety is a key student retention strategy in Australian medical education, there is also recognition by the Indigenous Doctor's Association and Australian Medical Deans that this can be a difficult goal to achieve. Their recent review of medical education (Medical

Deans Australia and New Zealand & Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, 2012) indicates that overt and covert racism and discrimination remain a significant issue in the majority of Australian medical schools. Strategies that are regarded as being proactive in this area include staff participation in cultural immersion and awareness programs (p. 15). More discussion of this strategy is presented in Sections 3 & 6.

In social work education there are a number strategies and initiatives that have significant potential in creating culturally safe learning environments. Fundamental to any of these initiatives is the adoption of a whole-of-School approach (see section 7).

Creating cultural safety involves a range of strategies and initiatives such as:

- Providing opportunities for staff to undertake training in cultural responsiveness and participate in cultural immersion and awareness programs
- Locating role models and mentors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which could include First Australian social work academics and field educators as well as fellow students
- Ensuring as much as possible, that there is a cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within social work programs. As stated earlier Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are more likely to be retained and to successfully complete their social work degrees when they are in a group of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students
- Addressing racism.

A STRONG THEME TO EMERGE FROM PROJECT DATA IS THE NEED TO DEVELOP THE CAPACITY OF ALL STAFF, AND IN PARTICULAR ACADEMIC STAFF, TO DEAL WITH RACISM WITHIN THE CLASSROOM OR IN SOME CASES FROM OTHER EDUCATORS.

This is a complex and sensitive issue. It is essential that all social workers (including social work students) are able to operate in a manner that reflects the values and principals of social work as outlined in the AASW Code of Ethics (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010). Hence it is important to deal with any racist and discriminatory remarks and attitudes as they appear. However, this needs to be done in a manner that does not shame or further hurt Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, whilst at the same time ensuring that the comments and behaviours are not dealt with in ways that allows the attitudes and beliefs to remain explored. Refer to Sections 2 & 3 for further discussion and Section 8 for numerous strategies for dealing with racist and discriminatory behaviour.



It is also important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are not left to deal with racism themselves or are left feeling that the matter had not been dealt with. When racist remarks or behaviour are not dealt with actively and effectively these experiences can significantly impact on feelings of cultural safety. The following quote highlights the impact that such experiences can have on First Australian students:

Because I do not look like a stereotypical Aboriginal person, sometimes other students have forgotten that I am Aboriginal, or even think that I am not really an Aboriginal person or somehow different to other Aboriginal people. This somehow makes it OK for them to make degrading comments about Aboriginal people in my presence (Green et al, 2012, p. 216-217).

- Facilitating and supporting the active participation and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can, just like any other student, experience difficulties relating to course content, achieving learning outcomes or being able to interact with other staff and students. Often these difficulties arise due to a range of issues including underlying racism within the learning context. However, there are times when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may also experience difficulties in their own development as a social worker. It is important that First Australian students are given the same opportunities for growth and development that are afforded to all students regardless of their racial or cultural background. This involves addressing individual issues and providing the support and guidance that is required.

According to *Getting it Right* project data Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can also experience lateral violence, especially during field education placements.

ADOPTING A BROAD STRUCTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF LATERAL VIOLENCE IS THE FIRST CRITICAL STEP IN DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING THIS DIFFICULT AND COMPLEX PHENOMENA.

Fundamentally it will be important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students learn how to protect themselves from this experience but also develop the confidence and skills to work with community to address this area of violence.

5.6.2 Learning about lateral violence

According to Mick Gooda, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, the phenomenon of lateral violence is not solely an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander problem but is present in all communities and arises from a sense of powerlessness that comes from oppression and colonisation (Gooda, 2011). He cites, for example, the nursing profession which has categorised the bullying that can be experienced between nurses as lateral violence. The common experience here is that this behaviour manifests within groups that lack power. Recognising the power dimensions of lateral violence will be an important aspect of the learning process.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students, the experiences of lateral violence are not likely to be new or unique. However applying new knowledge and theory to understanding the phenomenon and developing social work skills to respond professionally to these experiences are important areas of learning. Non-Indigenous students also need to develop knowledge and skills in this area. Facilitating this learning is an important area of responsibility for social work academic staff. Section 8 contains some strategies that may assist in the development of this capacity.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Section 5 of the *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework* has focussed on the issues that this area of curriculum reform and development raises for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. As in all areas of the Framework, the introduction of substantially more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in social work courses opens up exciting opportunities for Schools of Social Work and the AASW. However within this context of change, attention also needs to be given to areas of unmet need and challenge. Developing the capacity to deal with both positively and proactively is social work core business.

Section 6 considers many of these issues with a clear focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.



SECTION 6 RECRUITING, SUPPORTING AND RETAINING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ABORIGINAL STAFF





6.1 INTRODUCTION

The development of the new essential social work curriculum content area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing focusses attention on the recruitment, retention and role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work academic and general staff. Section 6 of the Framework addresses these issues with particular focus on the challenges and opportunities that this raises for Schools of Social Work. As in all Sections of the Framework a range of project and other evidence will inform the discussion, with specific case examples utilised to illustrate potential strategies and actions.

6.2 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER UNIVERSITY STAFF

The experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within universities has had limited attention. Whilst universities have had Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategies for some time, this is an area that still requires research and attention. Much more focus has been given to the experiences and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within universities (refer to Section 5). Whilst many of the issues that confront Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students are the same, there are some issues that are particular to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

THE NUMBERS AND THE PROPORTION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAFF WITHIN UNIVERSITIES ARE EVEN LOWER THAN THE NUMBERS AND PROPORTION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS.

According to Larkin (2011) in 2011 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up less than one percent of the university workforce'. Whilst this figure is extremely low and should be of concern, the areas in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are employed is even more concerning. As highlighted by Larkin 'Two-thirds of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education workforce are employed in general or non-academic roles. By contrast, across the entire higher education workforce, only about half of all staff work within non-academic roles' (Larkin, 2011, p.7).

The 2012 review by the Australian Indigenous Doctor's Association and the Australian Medical Deans of Indigenous medical curriculum provides an interesting snapshot of the opportunities and challenges that can be experienced in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in medical schools (Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand & Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, 2012). Some of the ongoing challenges in this area that are highlighted in the Review include:

- The persistent presence of institutional, covert and overt racism
- Low numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in leadership positions
- Need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lectures and academic staff to access skill development in the effective development and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum.

The establishment of the LIME (Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education) network was identified in the Review as providing significant support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff.

The important role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic and general staff have in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students should not be under-estimated. However, this cannot be the only reason for employment. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff are also important because of what they bring to the university in terms of knowledges and understanding which invariably universities seek to develop and harness.



6.3 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK ACADEMIC STAFF

The *Getting it Right* on-line survey collected data from 23 Schools of Social Work about the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff. Data about the presence of specific staff recruitment and retention policies were also gathered.

The findings indicate that only eight Schools of Social Work have First Australian academic staff, with eleven institutions reporting that they have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff recruitment policy. A cross-tabulation of this data indicates that all but one of the Schools who currently have Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander academic staff have a specific staff recruitment strategy at their School. In contrast, the majority of Schools of Social Work without Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff do not have specific recruitment policies. An active recruitment strategy is clearly linked to having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff within the school. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school staff retention policies were not common enough (only three institutions reported having such a policy) to draw any conclusions.

ADDITIONAL PROJECT DATA INDICATE THAT MANY NON-INDIGENOUS ACADEMICS ARE CONCERNED THAT UNIVERSITIES ARE NOT CULTURALLY SAFE FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAFF AND THAT FREQUENTLY THESE STAFF BECOME ISOLATED, BOTH CULTURALLY AND SOCIALLY WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY SETTING.

Experiences of isolation include being allocated all of the responsibility for the development and implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum as well as the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This academic isolation can limit the development and pursuit of broader academic and research interests and also impedes the development of a whole-of-School focus and commitment to this area of teaching and learning. These issues are also addressed in Section 7 which focuses on Leadership and Governance.

The recruitment process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work academic staff is a cause of concern for many educators. Often positions are advertised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff resulting in no or very low numbers of applicants for the positions. In some cases non-social work qualified staff have been recruited for social work teaching positions. The requirement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff have

postgraduate qualifications also limits the number of potential candidates. This experience is common given the difficulties for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in completing under-graduate degrees, let alone managing to continue onto post-graduate studies. These issues are also discussed in Sections 3 and 7.

6.3.1 The recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work staff

Getting it Right project data gathered ideas from social work educators about possible strategies for addressing the current problems in recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work academic staff. Section 7 of the Framework also addresses this issue.

A number of the participants stated that they believe that

UNIVERSITIES NEED TO CREATE SCHEMES TO ASSIST ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE INTO POST-GRADUATE STUDIES AND ALSO TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN ACADEMIC AREAS THAT SUPPORT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ACADEMIC STAFF TO OBTAIN POST-GRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS.

The suggestions that universities should 'grow their own', is not new and is a strategy that a number of universities have been attempting to implement in different ways with varying degrees of success, as exemplified in the below case study. It is recognised that without both academic and financial support, it is extremely difficult for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to continue onto post-graduate studies, which in turn severely impacts upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people gaining the qualifications required for academic positions. The following case examples provide insights about how 'grow your own' strategies can be implemented.



Case study about the employment of the first Aboriginal lecturer in Social Work at the University of Western Australia

In 1996 Violet Bacon was employed as the first Aboriginal lecturer in Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Western Australia. The position was guaranteed by the Vice Chancellery and dedicated as an Aboriginal position for which Aboriginality was a recognised selection criterion rather than merely standard academic qualifications. With support from senior University leadership and the Head of School, Violet took on a lecturing position. Her role included developing a new stand-alone unit on Social Work with Aboriginal peoples and to teach across a range of generic social work units. Her substantial practice experiences in the drug and alcohol and other fields as well as close community links and relationships brought a wealth of practice experience to the classroom.

In her first year of teaching, Violet was given support to develop her teaching skills. During her tenure at UWA Violet enrolled and completed postgraduate qualifications. She developed close working relationships with the UWA Indigenous Centre which provided ongoing support to Violet in her teaching role. Violet also developed ongoing consultative relationships with a group of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers. She was also supported to visit Indigenous social work lecturers in Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada to discuss teaching and learning ideas and develop networks. These cultural support networks were critical in maintaining links with the community and in her development and presentation of curriculum.

In 2012 Violet officially retired from her position but maintains mentoring and adjunct connections with the University.

Case Study – Charles Sturt University Employment Strategy

The example below, taken directly from the Charles Sturt University website From:www.csu.edu.au/adminman/hum/IndigenousEmployStrategy.doc

outlines a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategies at Charles Sturt University a NSW regional university.

Charles Sturt University Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy 2012-2015

- Indigenous Staff Study Support Scheme – This scheme provides funding to Indigenous academic and general staff members to cover costs associated with study for a qualification.
- Indigenous Academic Leadership Development Scheme – This scheme provides financial support to Indigenous academic staff to undertake a professional activity that will foster development of leadership skills
- Indigenous Staff HDR Pathways – a program that offers partial buy out of academic staff members to facilitate fast-tracked completion of Graduate Certificate in Research Methods/Honours programs as a pathway into PhD studies
- Indigenous Staff PhD Release Scheme – funding of \$50,000 p.a. to support full time equivalent release from teaching for eligible staff to facilitate PhD completion.

From:www.csu.edu.au/adminman/hum/IndigenousEmployStrategy.doc

Another idea that emerged from the project data was that in the role of accrediting social work programs, the AASW could encourage Schools of Social Work to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching staff. Whilst it would not be appropriate for a professional body to direct universities in their employment strategies,

THE AASW COULD DEVELOP A NUMBER OF GUIDELINES TO ASSIST SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS IN SETTING BENCHMARKS REGARDING THE DELIVERY OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CONTENT WITHIN SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM, WHICH WOULD INCLUDE THE ENGAGEMENT OF APPROPRIATELY QUALIFIED ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK ACADEMICS.

This strategy could be included as an AASW Accreditation requirement.



6.3.2 Retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work staff

Schools of Social Work also need to consider how they are going to retain these staff. The Review of Indigenous Higher Education (Behrendt et al., 2012) clearly states that universities need to develop strategies that recruit, support as well as retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Review of Indigenous Higher Education 2012 (Behrendt et al., 2012)

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

Recommendation 29

That universities develop strategies, informed by the National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy, to recruit, support and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to meet the parity targets set by the Australian Government.

Recommendation 30

That the Australian Government bring forward work to implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher workforce plan under the national Research Workforce Strategy.

Recommendation 31

That the Australian Government consider developing: a funding program to provide additional scholarships at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level to support universities' ability to 'grow their own' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff (p. xxiv).

Many of the issues identified in Section 5 on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are the same for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, but are often magnified. Frequently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (particularly academic staff) who are working outside of specific Aboriginal support centres are the only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member working in the area and are frequently isolated with little or no cultural support. Subsequently it is not uncommon that these staff members find themselves expected to be the expert on and deal with all 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' matters and issues. Hence they often become the support person for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in programs and find themselves assisting other academics and potentially being the person who has to deal with any issues around racism or discrimination.

These pressures and expectations can result in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff experiencing a heavier workload than their colleagues and frequently this extra work is not recognised within their responsibilities. This can have the effect of limiting their ability to undertake other duties (such as research and publication) which in turn limits their opportunities for promotion.

Racism from students and other staff is an area that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff confront. This can include experiences which involve denial of the existence of racism which can leave the person feeling alone and unsupported. Dealing with racism is the responsibility of all staff and particularly those who are in positions of authority.

Another form of racism can manifest when managers are not able to respond or support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to address workplace performance issues. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff can experience many of the same difficulties during their employment as any other staff member. It is not helpful to justify under-performance as being racial or cultural. It is important to assist the staff member to find ways to overcome issues and provide the necessary resources and support so that they perform and develop within their positions. These issues are also discussed in Section 7, Leadership and Governance.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff are often employed because of their expertise within an area of importance which is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. However, due to difficulties in obtaining postgraduate qualifications many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are employed in entry level positions (Associate Lecturer). This ignores the expertise for which they have been employed.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS ACKNOWLEDGE THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE THAT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE BRING WITH THEM AND ENSURE THAT THEY ARE EMPLOYED AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL IN LINE WITH THE EXPERTISE AND THE VALUE THEY BRING TO THE PROGRAM.



6.4 THE PROVISION OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK TEACHING STAFF

Providing access to appropriate training in the effective delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work curriculum is an important area that needs to be explored. As discussed in Section 7, assumptions should not be made that this staff group, because of their cultural background, have the skills to effectively deliver what is often very personal content or the capacity to deal with resistance and racism from students.

Issues of lateral violence, as presented in Section 5, can also be experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and access to skill development as well as personal and cultural support and mentoring is critical. Further resources and information about lateral violence are included in Section 8.

6.5 CONCLUSION

Section 6 has focussed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work staff. While this staff group can provide invaluable knowledge and links between the School of Social Work and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, their recruitment, retention, ongoing support and training needs require thoughtful and strategic consideration and resourcing. These issues are expanded in the next Framework Section which explores Leadership and Governance.

Tips for supporting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

1. Do not expect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member to be the expert on all things 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander'
2. Recognise the skills, knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and employ them at an appropriate level based on their expertise
3. Do not 'dump' everything 'Aboriginal' onto the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member. Recognise that 'Aboriginal' matters are core business and thus everyone's responsibility
4. Develop strategies to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are not isolated and without cultural support
5. Recognise racism and deal with racism immediately and appropriately
6. Ensure that the workplace is a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (including when working with students). Refer to cultural responsiveness (Section 1)
7. Consider the workload of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and also ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have the same opportunities for promotion as other staff. This might mean considering whether or not the current promotional guidelines are discriminatory.

SECTION 7 GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP





7.1 INTRODUCTION

The position adopted in the *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework* is that in order to achieve effective integration of this new ASWEAS essential curriculum (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing need to become central in the social work curriculum. The implications of adopting this perspective reach beyond changes to curriculum and teaching and learning practices to issues of School governance and leadership. This section addresses a number of these issues and outlines evidenced-informed objectives and strategies that can be adopted in order to achieve effective and sustainable changes in governance and leadership structures and processes. Some would argue that change in this area can be difficult to achieve due to a range of pressures confronting social work education, such as decreases in higher education funding, research intensification, increased workloads and new accreditation requirements.

CURRICULUM CHANGE CAN, HOWEVER, ALSO BE REGARDED AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RENEWAL AND REFORM.

As in all sections of this Framework it is important to acknowledge that some of the objectives presented here have already been adopted in various forms in Australian social work education. By articulating them in more detail as well as presenting new ideas, the *Getting it Right* project team seeks to build on current successful initiatives and address gaps in practice.

In this section the issue of who should take responsibility for leading this area of change and development is addressed. While the School leader or leadership team may need to take responsibility for driving and role modelling a clear commitment to these objectives and strategies, ultimately any significant area of change requires the active engagement of the whole School community.

7.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WHOLE-OF-SCHOOL ETHOS AND CULTURE THAT REFLECTS ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WAYS OF KNOWING, BEING AND DOING

The adoption of a whole-of-School ethos that reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing demonstrates to students, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the university more broadly that these knowledge systems are valued. They are valued because they inform not only curriculum content, teaching and learning processes but also School governance and leadership practices and protocols. This in turn role models the knowledge, values and skills that students need to demonstrate in the field. There are a number of strategies which may help to achieve this long term objective.



7.2.1 Developing consultative relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

A pivotal AASW accreditation requirement is that all social work courses must have consultative networks that provide feedback from the field. This includes formal consultative structures in order to ensure that a range of stakeholders, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, participate in decision making related to social work programs (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012b, p.20). While these consultative arrangements may already exist in many Schools, the requirement to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges creates a clear imperative for Schools to review the adequacy of existing consultative structures and processes and identify ways in which they may be strengthened.

INFORMING THE LOCAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY THAT THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION NOW RECOGNISES THE CENTRAL PLACE THAT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES' WAYS OF KNOWING, BEING AND DOING HAVE IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE IS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT AND STRATEGIC BUT IT IS ALSO CULTURALLY RESPECTFUL.

If this information is followed up with an invitation to participate in the local development and teaching of this curriculum, new relationships of trust and respect between the community and the profession can emerge. The potential outcomes here are numerous and include, but are not limited to:

- Receiving guidance about and participation in culturally appropriate protocols, such as Welcome to Countries and Acknowledgements of Country which can be used at significant events, such as the beginning of the academic year or when welcoming visiting guests
- The potential engagement of Elders (it will be important to consider ways of financially resourcing Elders to undertake this work) who may provide cultural guidance, supervision and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous students and staff in all areas of teaching and learning
- Guidance about appropriate curriculum content and teaching practices. This may lead to the co-creation and presentation of curriculum
- Recommendations about the development of appropriate field education opportunities for students in local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples agencies
- Discussion about how the School might work in collaboration with the community in addressing local issues. Such projects might bring a range of mutual benefits to both the community, the School staff and students
- The development of strategies and initiatives regarding the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples students and staff.

The development of any new consultative processes and structures or the strengthening of existing arrangements will need to be considered in consultation with staff from university based Aboriginal units⁵ and a range of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. It will be important that Schools undertake these processes with an expectation that

IT MAY TAKE TIME FOR RELATIONSHIPS TO DEVELOP AND TRUST TO BE ESTABLISHED.

During these discussions a range of issues will require exploration and these are outlined below.

7.2.2 School Advisory Group membership

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory groups need to reflect the diversity of perspectives and experiences that may be present in the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. For some communities the preference may be that forming one group of individuals who can all meet at the same time may not be feasible due to members experiencing a range of competing demands and pressures. Instead community members, such as members of local Elders Councils, may prefer staff to meet in different locations, such as in the premises of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled agencies.

7.2.2.1 Meeting processes

Finalising suitable meeting times and processes may take a while to evolve. For some groups it may be preferable for meetings to occur less frequently and be more purposeful, for example half-day meetings held two or three times per year. It will be valuable to engage group members with a regular review of what works and what needs further development by documenting both the content of meeting discussions as well as the evolution of meeting processes.

⁵ As mentioned in previous Sections, these University based facilities are usually known as Aboriginal units or Indigenous studies centres. Torres Strait is not usually included in their titles.



7.2.2.2 Terms of reference

Collaborative development of the group's terms of reference will be critical and will need to take into consideration the need to clarify the relationships between any new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory group and existing School consultative structures. Determination about preferred Advisory structures will invariably emerge through consultation with a range of stakeholders.

Schools which run distance education courses will need to explore different options. The disparate location of students means the development of local consultative relationships may not always be feasible. In these circumstances School staff should seek guidance from a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, such as University based Indigenous units about the best ways of developing consultative process with the communities in which students are located.

7.2.3 Developing working relationships with University-based Aboriginal units

This strategy is critical to the achievement of a whole-of-School ethos that reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. University-based Aboriginal units often have expertise in a range of areas such as the recruitment, retention and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. The need to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges provides an important opportunity for the development of working relationships between these units and social work educators.

A significant finding in the research undertaken by the *Getting it Right* project is that these relationships are often underdeveloped, but when respectfully approached, the staff of University Aboriginal units can be an important resource. These formal relationships need to take time to develop, trust needs to be established. Adopting a whole-of-School ethos means that the purpose of this relationship building process is the achievement of an ongoing mutual exchange of ideas and resources.

7.2.4 Developing Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP)

The development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (for more information see <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/>) is one way of supporting the development of a whole-of-School commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. While a number of Australian universities have developed Reconciliation Action Plans, project data indicate that in some cases these plans have not been actively adopted by social work programs. In other Schools there appears to be a reluctance to initiate a RAP unless the university has or is in the process of developing one.

In November 2013 the AASW launched its own Reconciliation Action Plan (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013b). The AASW RAP commits the profession to the development of stronger recognition of and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In Section 8 a teaching and learning strategy is presented which considers how the study of RAPs can lead to a range of learning in areas such as organisation practice, community work, research and policy.

7.3 ROLE MODELLING RESPECTFUL ADHERENCE TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROTOCOLS

The Head of Discipline/School can role model their familiarity with and commitment to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols, such as Acknowledgement of Country and the Traditional Owners at key university functions and events, such as the beginning of the academic year. Speeches given during such occasions are an opportunity to articulate clearly the School's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum development. By regarding the role and influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as central to everything that the School does, the School leadership is sending a powerful message to the whole-of-School and University community. Encouraging all staff to do the same in their written outlines as well as in their classes is another practical and symbolic expression of this commitment.

Other important strategies include:

- Ensuring that the Aboriginal country map – see Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies website (<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/>) for information about purchasing this resource – is prominently displayed in the School and available for teaching purposes
- Purchasing local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork for display in the School
- Ensuring that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are available for use in the classroom
- Developing new school vision statements which articulate a commitment to this area of teaching and learning.

The case study below illustrates how a number of the above leadership and governance processes evolved in the *Getting it Right* project.



Case study: Leadership and Governance in the Getting it Right Project

It was important that creating a project which focussed on embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in Australian social work education reflected the principles of culturally responsive social work practices. For the non-Indigenous project team members, including the project leader, this meant being open and mindful of the influences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing can have on all aspects of project activities and relationships. For the Aboriginal project team members it meant being accepted as an equal member of the team and being able to hear other's opinions and to process them in ways that were open and reflective.

Role modelling working in the *3rd cultural space* was an ongoing learning for project team members, requiring commitment to critical reflection, extensive and ongoing consultation, a preparedness to not know and recognition that knowledge is developed by engaging in processes of learning through and from action.

Non-Indigenous leadership in the project demanded attentiveness to the importance of relationship building. This meant adopting a leadership style which enabled and facilitated clear communication between project team members, taking time to work through differences as well as being prepared to listen and learn. It was also important to recognise that this project was fundamentally about influencing and challenging a predominantly non-Indigenous professional culture. In this context non-Indigenous leadership needed to demonstrate taking responsibility and having the confidence to lead and influence cultural change.

The establishment of a predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Reference Group (eleven members in total, which included two non-Indigenous members) involved inviting group members to develop the project's title and the group's terms of reference. The adoption of the term *Getting it Right* in the project title reflected the importance that reference group members gave to the project's aims and objectives. While over two years the Reference group only met twice on a face to face basis, members provided guidance on the development of group communication processes. A project newsletter was circulated quarterly and included individual reference group member profiles as a way of developing and maintaining connections.

During the two years of the project a number of project team and Reference Group members experienced significant personal tragedies and illnesses. Hanging in there with people and being aware that individual contributions would vary and be dependent on a range of broader family and community factors was appreciated and reaped substantial long term benefits for the project.

A range of practical project management strategies arising from this case study are presented in Section 8.



7.4 ADDRESSING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT NEEDS OF STAFF

DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES IN WAYS THAT FACILITATE A POSITIVE AND ACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS, MAY NOT BE AN AREA OF STRENGTH OR SKILL FOR MANY EDUCATORS.

This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous teaching staff. The *Getting it Right* project data indicate that having the skills and capacities to teach this curriculum effectively is not an automatic or natural skill that is linked to cultural background or practice experience (refer to Sections 3 and 6 for further discussion of these issues).

Project data suggest that there are numerous factors here including unfamiliarity with this area of social work practice which can lead to a lack of confidence and capacity to deliver this curriculum. Many social work educators are also concerned about 'getting it wrong' or not doing justice to what are significant areas of learning. Others assert that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content can and should only be taught by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Educators also lack experience and skills in co-creating curriculum and teaching in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Whatever the reason, the requirement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and practices need to be taught to students means that all educators need to be able to access professional development that addresses this area of teaching and learning (see also Section 1, conceptual framework, for discussion of decolonisation and whiteness as ways of understanding and achieving this objective). Importantly, professional development in this field needs to move beyond cultural awareness to an active and ongoing consideration of the personal and professional issues that can arise for people when engaged in this area of teaching and learning.

Wherever possible all staff should be given the opportunity to participate in training and development opportunities where positive and effective collaboration between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people is demonstrated. Cultural immersion experiences could be beneficial here, especially if followed by an active linking of any new cultural insights to teaching and learning practices. Another strategy may include the mentoring of staff by members of the university Aboriginal unit or/and the community.

7.5 CREATING CULTURAL SAFETY FOR EDUCATORS

Project data indicate that all social work educators, but in particular those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, can experience a lack of cultural safety within the classroom when presenting this area of curriculum content. These experiences can involve:

- Students being racist towards educators and each other – this racism can be overt and covert
- Resistance from students in particular to curriculum content that focusses on whiteness
- Presenting content which triggers personal trauma responses
- Being asked by students to share deeply personal experiences such as those arising from the policy of removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children or/and cultural knowledge which may not be appropriate to share in such a forum
- Lateral violence from other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

All of the above responses may also be experienced and witnessed by students in the field. It is therefore imperative that teaching staff role model effective ways of responding to these challenging attitudes and behaviours in ways that promote cultural safety and facilitate learning (refer to Sections 5 and 6 as well as Section 8 strategies). It is important that School leaders adopt a proactive approach of dealing with these issues and not wait for them to emerge and potentially cause harm to staff and students. It is particularly critical that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators have access to appropriate training and are provided with access to cultural and other forms of support.

Adopting a proactive approach may require School leaders to discuss with senior University staff the importance of providing all staff with appropriate training in the effective delivery of this content. It is critical that any provision of staff support and training is not deficit focussed. Fundamentally these are structural issues, emerging from teaching and learning environments which reflect a range of community values and perspectives. This is where the importance of developing a whole-of-School ethos and culture emerge as a critical objective that can facilitate an increase in the School's capacity to address these issues in ways that reflect cultural integrity. The strategy of horizontally and vertically embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being will also to a certain degree address the extent to which these issues arise in the classroom.



7.6 ENGAGING THE WHOLE OF STAFF GROUP IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE PROCESSES

A key finding that emerged from the *Getting it Right* project data was the importance of developing formal processes for the engagement, as much as possible, of the whole of staff group in embedding this new curriculum both vertically and horizontally. It appears that

UNLESS FORMAL PROCESSES EXIST FOR MANAGING THE CURRICULUM CHANGE PROCESS, THERE IS A RISK THAT THIS AREA OF CHANGE AND REFORM CAN BECOME DEPENDENT ON INDIVIDUAL STAFF INTEREST AND EXPERTISE.

The consequences of putting pressure on individual staff, and in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff, to implement curriculum changes and reforms in this area is clearly presented in the Review of the Implementation of the Indigenous Health Curriculum Framework in Australian Medical Schools (Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand & Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, 2012). This Review indicates that while it can be beneficial to have members of the staff group that may have particular expertise and interest in this area of teaching and learning,

AN INDIVIDUALISED APPROACH IS NOT AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF DEVELOPING AND ACHIEVING QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL STAFF, REGARDLESS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND, TO DEVELOP THE CAPACITY TO TEACH IN THIS AREA OF SOCIAL WORK.

7.6.1 Acknowledging and addressing staff responses

Staff may respond variously to these areas of curriculum change. The *Getting it Right* project data identified that many social work educators are excited and relieved that greater attention is finally being given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in social work education. However change can also elicit a range of negative and anxious responses amongst educators. Staff may find it challenging to consider issues of power, colonisation and white privilege and discussing these new areas of learning may mean taking people out of their comfort zone.

Another challenge that will need to be thoughtfully approached is territorialism amongst academic staff. This is the culture that can develop when academic staff have, over many years, developed expertise in certain areas of teaching and learning and resist changing and sharing their curriculum. Other staff may also find it confronting to be part of a process of curriculum renewal when they regard their teaching as already adequately addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content.

Dealing with these challenges in order to engage a whole-of-staff response and commitment can be difficult and requires strong leadership. Recognising the imperatives of giving room for academic freedom and creativity and at the same time striving to achieve some uniformity about what is taught in order to avoid students receiving mixed messages, means inevitably that challenging conversations may need to occur.

Possible Strategies:

- Identify opportunities for all-of-staff training and development sessions which might involve visiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples communities or services (cultural immersion)
- Encourage staff who are actively engaged with the new curriculum to discuss their learning and experiences with the larger staff group
- Adopt a position that this area of curriculum change needs to be managed with the same skill and strategy as any other change management process
- Hold staff meetings and planning days which can provide a forum for the development of locally informed strategies and teaching materials as well as a review and celebration of what is working
- Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lecturers who might teach core Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples units (generic units) to attend staff meetings so that working relationships can develop.



7.6.2 Addressing concerns about workload implications and the 'crowded curriculum'

A common concern of staff that needs to be addressed by leaders is the potential workload implications of changing units. While it is important not to diminish the ways in which staff experience workload pressures, it is also important to recognise that good teaching practices involve a regular (at least annual) review of units. Other possible strategies that may address this concern include:

- Undertake the mapping of current curriculum in small staff groups in order to identify gaps and overlap
- Adopt proactive approaches to scaffolding learning so that both staff and students recognise the progression of learning and skill development
- Through horizontal integration encourage staff to consider ways in which a number of curriculum areas can be dealt with simultaneously. For example, in the teaching of mental health consider developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scenarios which present different ways of knowing and being to students and how these may impact on both the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.

Some of the above work could be done in small teams, thus reducing the pressure on individual staff members. Section 8 includes a range of ideas and strategies in this area.

Staff may view these new curriculum requirements as putting pressure on an existing crowded curriculum. A proactive response to this concern is that situating new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples content should be regarded as central to all units and not an 'add on' (refer to Section 1 – conceptual framework – and Section 8 strategies). Taking the approach that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum needs to be taught in addition to all of the other content taught, and hence buying into the debates and anxieties about the crowded curriculum, reflects a position that the dominant ways of being, doing and knowing cannot be disrupted. The key focus needs to shift to a centring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

7.7 DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE UPPER LEVEL MANAGEMENT

LEADING CURRICULUM CHANGE IN THIS AREA REQUIRES STRONG SUPPORT FROM ALL LEVELS OF UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT.

Gaining knowledge about the overall University policy in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education is important as it provides information on where the new curriculum change process in social work may be situated within overall University policy and strategic directions. This may open up opportunities for social work to be seen as a key driver and innovator in this area, thus potentially mobilising resources and hopefully institutional support and kudos for the hard work being done in the School.

Gaining an overall university perspective could also open up opportunities for cross-disciplinary initiatives. For example, since 2004 Australian Medical education has been 'indigenised'. Exploring cross-disciplinary opportunities for the sharing of experiences and resources could be extremely beneficial for students and staff.

Advocating to a line manager that this area of curriculum renewal and change is a key area of activity could also bring positive benefits. It clearly signals that

LEADERSHIP IN THIS DOMAIN OF TEACHING AND LEARNING REQUIRES SKILL, CAPACITY AND ALSO RESOURCES.

Again this type of dialogue may bring unexpected benefits to the whole staff group. Ideally one of the long term leadership objectives is the development of models of inter-cultural leadership, where the joint development of strategies between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and community members drives and supports this area of curriculum change and development. Role modelling this form of leadership to the university hierarchy sends an important message about the social justice goals of the social work profession.

The case study opposite highlights international social work examples of this area of curriculum change and development.



Case study: Some lessons from the development of Indigenous social work curriculum in the USA and Canada

Increasing the Indigenous content and focus of social work curriculum has been undertaken in a number of countries. In response to requests from Indigenous communities, the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work developed the Four Corners programme, which focusses specifically on delivering social work education to a number of rural based communities including many Native American tribes. Over a 12 year period, the program has engaged the local community including a Native Peoples Advisory Council, in the design and implementation of a new Native Peoples curriculum. Indigenous graduates are now in senior positions in local tribal social and human services agencies spearheading new practice initiatives while others are now beginning to teach in the program.

The Native Peoples Advisory Council has been utilised as a way of addressing the needs and educational outcomes of providing Native content in classes to both Indigenous and non- Indigenous students. Utilising a range of Indigenous learning and teaching processes, such as retreats, quarterly meetings, learning circles and working with Elders, the outcomes achieved during these processes have led to the development of stronger relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, students and community members and new ways of teaching and learning.

For over 10 years, social work education at the University of Victoria, Canada has also undertaken a formal process of indigenising its social work curriculum. By responding to requests from the Indigenous community, the School developed Indigenous specialisations in the BSW and MSW (post qualifying) courses. One of the outcomes has been an increase in the number of Indigenous students and staff. In 2013 the first Indigenous head of a Canadian social work program was appointed. By deliberately adopting the strategy of “growing their own” the School has mentored a number of Indigenous staff and students to complete their Doctorates.

During this process of transition, attention has also been given to what these substantial changes in curriculum mean for non-Indigenous staff and students. At various times, strong and supportive non-Indigenous leadership has been critical in maintaining the momentum for change.

(Personal communication to Joanna Zubrzycki, Jacquie Green, Sept 2011; Personal communication to Joanna Zubrzycki, Wanda Ellingson, September 2013).



7.8 DEVELOPING EVALUATIVE MECHANISMS FOR DOCUMENTING AND MEASURING CHANGE

LEADERSHIP DURING TIMES OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE REQUIRES COMMITMENT, MODELLING OF PROACTIVE ACTIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN.

The action plan can articulate time frames, outcome measures and evaluation processes. In devising an action plan it is important to consider what the levers/drivers might be that will mobilise and sustain the change and how change can be documented and evaluated.

Documenting the relationship between curriculum change and a range of outcomes for students, staff and the School more broadly has the potential to provide timely and important evidence to a range of stakeholders, including university management. Due to the interplay of complex factors such as the historical legacy of the social work profession in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, issues of disadvantage, structures and processes in higher education, a critical consideration is that any substantial changes may take time to emerge.

A LONG TERM VIEW AND COMMITMENT IS NEEDED.

There may be a number of ways of addressing this objective. For example:

- Keeping data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments and retention – It is important to take into consideration that the retention pattern may be quite variable. Data in this area indicate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are more likely, due to complex personal, family and community factors, to take breaks during their studies. This potential variation of enrolment not only impacts on how data can be interpreted in this area, but it also needs to be taken into consideration in the support needs of these students (see Section 5)
- Developing data collection methods (such as case study reports) that document staff and community engagement and the outcomes that might be achieved from these relationships, such as increased field education placements, increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff recruitment and retention
- Considering ways to document the relationship between the development of new curriculum and an increased capacity of social work students to demonstrate *cultural responsiveness* and achieve key graduate attributes in these areas of learning.

7.9 DEVELOPING MECHANISMS FOR EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Given that many academic staff may be teaching new content, it will be important that some quality assurance processes are developed. Universities generally have a range of ways of gathering student feedback on the teaching and learning experience but, given the particular objectives of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in social work education, additional evaluative processes may need to be developed. For example, staff could benefit from the peer review of their teaching and be given some feedback about how they come across in the classroom as well as the quality of and effectiveness of their teaching: Am I getting the language right? Am I getting the terminology right? What's my tone? What's my pitch? What observations were made of student responses and engagement?

CELEBRATING AND ACKNOWLEDGING SMALL VICTORIES

will be an important way of maintaining momentum and recognising as a staff group that these are long term objectives. Formally documenting decisions and processes, keeping track of initiatives and staff responses are all ways of acknowledging and encouraging new ways of knowing, doing and being. Formal evaluation opportunities will also emerge during periods of internal and external course reviews, such as prior to AASW accreditation visits.

Australian Quality Framework (AQF) requirements and processes could be utilised in order to prioritise and document that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are a central focus in the social work curriculum and therefore need to be included across the course in learning outcomes.

The process of adhering to Tertiary Education Quality Standards (TEQSA) compliance requirements can also be utilised as an opportunity to map course content and the expectations against the expected levels of learning that students will engage in across the degree. This is an opportunity to articulate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduate attributes and map these against the ASWEAS requirements (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a, 2012b).



7.10 MOBILISING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous social work student population can play an important role in the leadership and governance of Schools of Social Work. The ASWEAS document (AASW, 2012b) states that students need to be given opportunities to participate in School decision making processes.

According to *Getting it Right* project data, many social work students engage in social work studies because they want to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

PROACTIVELY INFORMING THE STUDENT BODY ABOUT THE RATIONALE FOR CURRICULUM RENEWAL AND CHANGE IN THIS AREA OF SOCIAL WORK COULD POTENTIALLY MOBILISE AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF SUPPORT FOR STAFF.

For example it may at times be strategic for students to advocate to senior university leadership for more resources to be provided in this area of teaching. One of the potential outcomes of this new area of curriculum reform is that social work students, through their field education program, will potentially be engaging more actively with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This more active level of student engagement can promote positive relationship building between the University and the community.

The active support and engagement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student body is particularly important, especially if this population rises as is expected. This has certainly been one of the outcomes achieved in medical degrees as a result of the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical curricula (Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand & Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, 2012).

IF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS HAVE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT, THEY CAN BECOME POWERFUL ROLE MODELS FOR OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY WHO MAY BE INTERESTED IN A CAREER IN SOCIAL WORK.

This type of vouching is a very influential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander process of sending the community positive messages about individuals and institutions.

7.11 ADDRESS FUNDING AND RESOURCE ISSUES

A number of the strategies presented throughout this Framework will require additional financial resources. Locating funding opportunities within the University could include special learning and teaching grants, staff development funds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student recruitment funding and research grants.

ARTICULATING IN ANY FUNDING SUBMISSION THE STRATEGIC LINKS BETWEEN THE NEW AASW ESSENTIAL CURRICULUM (AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, 2012A), ASWEAS ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS (AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, 2012B), THE AASW PRACTICE STANDARDS (AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, 2013A), THE COMMONWEALTH REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION (BEHRENDT ET AL., 2012) AND POTENTIAL OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY WILL BE CRITICAL.

These may include: higher levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff recruitment and retention and the creation of strong partnerships between the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

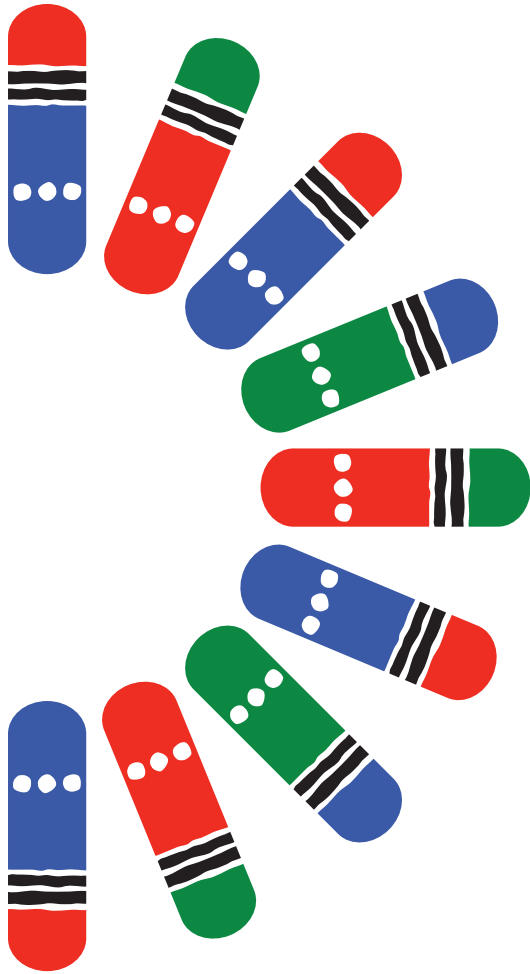
It is also worth exploring different ways in which staff could take on the achievement of some of these strategies as special projects, possibly in partnership with students and community. For example, developing some of these initiatives may form part of a student community development project or field education placement. In this way learning outcomes could be clearly linked to objectives within the Curriculum Statement.

Sources of government funding at a Commonwealth and State level should also be explored. The potential for locating financial support through philanthropic funds is also worth considering, especially given some of the social justice outcomes that can potentially be achieved as a result of new community and university partnerships.

7.12 CONCLUSION

Section 7 has focussed on the impact of the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being with School of Social Work leadership and governance. In particular the key roles and responsibilities of senior non-Indigenous staff in adopting a proactive and supportive leadership position and an increased role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in School governance structures have been outlined.

The purpose of the next and final Framework section, Section 8, is on the presentation of a range of practical strategies that can be utilised in all areas of teaching and learning.



SECTION 8 STRATEGIES FOR EMBEDDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES AND PRACTICES IN THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM



INTRODUCTION

Section 8 comprises examples drawn from our learnings during the progress of the Getting it Right project. They are included here to provide some illustrations of what others have found useful. Many have been drawn from readings from places other than Australia. In utilising international examples of teaching Indigenous knowledges, some adjustments will need to be made when using them in the Australian context.

However, others, notably, are developed by Australian colleagues for use in their settings and we acknowledge and express our thanks to the authors for their permission to include them.

In order to facilitate the successful adoption of any of these strategies they should not be considered in isolation from the substantive content of the Framework.

The strategies are arranged in alphabetical order with a contents list to enable ease of location. We encourage you to both use these if you find them useful and to develop your own strategies and disseminate these to the growing network of Australian scholars, academics, practitioners and other interested people who are committed to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in social work curricula.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF CONTENTS

The following section is organised into 5 topics. A number of strategies are listed under each topic. These are arranged in alphabetical order:

- | |
|---------------------------|
| 1. Student assessment |
| 2. Curriculum development |
| 3. Staff and Students |
| 4. Teaching Strategies |
| 5. Resources |



CONTENTS

1. STUDENT ASSESSMENT	85		
1.1 'Expert' knowledge: deconstructing and challenging received and expert knowledges	85	4.9 Lateral violence – developing skills for analysing and responding	102
1.2 Critical reflection	85	4.10 Prejudice: strategies for dealing with in the classroom	103
1.3 Cultural competence	86	4.11 Problem-based learning	103
1.4 Intercultural practice	86	4.12 Race and racism: strategies for teaching	104
1.5 Marginality and privilege: developing understanding	87	4.13 Race Teaching	105
		4.14. Race teaching – how to deal with the tensions	105
2. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	87	4.15 Racial Hierarchy – an activity provided by Maggie Walter	105
2.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history	87	4.16 Reconciliation Action Plans as a tool for learning	106
2.2 Culturally responsive curriculum development processes	89	4.17 Relational Identity & Narrative approaches in the classroom	107
2.3 Culturally responsive project management	90	4.18 Whiteness – a classroom activity	109
2.4 Horizontal integration – Mapping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content	90	4.19. Yarning circles	110
2.5 Indigenous knowledge in the academy – Model	91		
2.6 Intercultural Teaching	92	5. RESOURCES	111
2.7 Curriculum development – Torres Strait Islander perspectives	93	REFERENCES	112
2.8 Vertical integration – Developing a stand-alone unit on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work	93		
3. STAFF AND STUDENTS	94		
3.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tutors and guest lecturers – providing support	94		
3.2 Recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	94		
4. TEACHING STRATEGIES	95		
4.1 Anti-racist practice in Field Placement	95		
4.2 Antiracist strategies for interpersonal contexts	96		
4.3 Cultural empathy – using Indigenous narratives to challenge attitudes.	97		
4.4 Cultural competence	97		
4.5 Cultural understandings – a classroom activity	98		
4.6 Decolonisation framework for teaching	99		
4.7 Horizontal integration in group work – developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content	99		
4.8 Interpersonal skills for social work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	100		



1. STUDENT ASSESSMENT

1.1 'EXPERT' KNOWLEDGE: DECONSTRUCTING AND CHALLENGING RECEIVED AND EXPERT KNOWLEDGES

The following is an assignment (Campbell & Ungar, 2003) used in Canada to deconstruct expert knowledge in particular the traditional underpinnings of social work knowledge. While the setting and unit within which this assignment was set was specific, it has the potential to be adapted for use in Australia with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges.

Premise: traditional knowledge is privileged in the academy and determines practice.

Principle: non-professional and marginalised voices and knowledges can and should contribute to practice.

Aim: to operationalise the honouring of epistemological multiplicity.

This assignment attempts to deconstruct traditional knowledge claims and enhance the practice of social work.

The assignment

The context was to examine the work undertaken by an individual in the community to make a difference. The individual would need to consent to participate in a study of his or her knowledge as a helper.

Students read McKnight's paper 'Beyond Community Services' (McKnight, 1989) to understand how community guides, or local helpers, are conceptualised. They identified a local person who could be considered by others in the community as a 'community guide'.

Students recruited a willing person and interviewed him/her using an interview guide constructed from the topic area (of guides contributing to assisting marginalised people in the community).

Students then compared what the guides had told them about helping in the community with social work theory about 'helping'. They evaluated 'which knowledge' is more useful by identifying and analysing the theoretical orientation for the analysis.

The students concluded by preparing an annotated bibliography which related to the content of the interview.

The final results for the whole class were pooled, re-analysed and presented at a conference with students.

This assignment could be adapted for use with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges under the guidance of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enable students to:

- Reposition the worker and the foundational knowledges of social work
- Recognise the value of and apply knowledges from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sources.

Reference

Campbell, C., & Ungar, M. (2003). Deconstructing Knowledge Claims. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 14(1), 41-59. doi: 10.1300/J059v14n01_04

1.2 CRITICAL REFLECTION

The following is an assessment process from Hollinsworth (2013) who runs a 'Working effectively with Aboriginal people' course.

Reflective journal

- Combination of critical analysis of required readings with personal/professional reflections on their implications for practice.
- Analysis and deconstruction of course materials, incidents, discussion and responses
- Specific challenges and questions posed
- Submitted at week 5 and week 13 (internal undergraduate), and weekly for external postgraduates.

The journal is run in tandem with an electronic discussion board (not assessed).

Reference

Hollinsworth, D. (2013). Forget Cultural Competence; Ask for an Autobiography. *Social Work Education*, 32(8), 1048-1060. doi: 10.1080/02615479.2012.730513



1.3 CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The following is an adapted example (Bender, Negi, & Fowler, 2010) of an assignment given to students to start to develop culturally responsive practice. It can be adapted for use with working within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander setting.

The Ethnic Roots Assignment

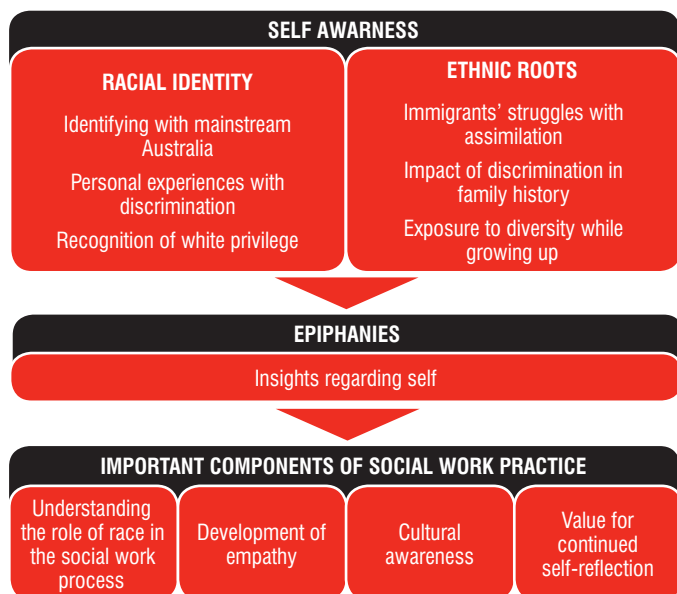
Students are asked to explore their families' ethnic roots, the process of assimilation, implications of their families' experiences for the students' identity and future practice.

Students are asked to:

- Describe their own demographic characteristics
- Explore their parents' and grandparents' background
- Discuss the conclusions of their families' experiences of assimilation⁶ on their (the students') sense of identity and perceptions of future cultural competency.

This assignment was used to develop a model for teaching cultural competence as there was a clear link between self-awareness and components for social work practice.

The model is shown below.



(Bender et al., 2010, p. 39)

Reference

Bender, K., Negi, N., & Fowler, D. N. (2010). Exploring the Relationship between Self-Awareness and Student Commitment and Understanding of Culturally Responsive Social Work Practice. *Journal of Ethnic And Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 19(1), 34-53. doi: 10.1080/15313200903531990

⁶ Not all families will have experienced assimilation but this can be examined from the perspective of white privilege

1.4 INTERCULTURAL PRACTICE

Assessment framework

The following is an example of an assessment framework from Deardorff et al. (2009, p. 26) who write about internationalisation in higher education. This may have applicability for working with embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and processes.

GOALS	OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENTS
To generate new knowledge about global studies	Students can identify some of the processes through which civilisations, nations, or people are defined historically and in the present. Students develop new abilities to describe the host country from the inside out.	Pre/post test essay requiring students to demonstrate mastery of the desired outcomes Focus group discussions Documentation of classroom discussions Student portfolios
To encourage greater civic engagement and social responsibility	Students acquire a heightened sense of global interconnections and interdependencies. Students can describe a social problem requiring collective remedies that transcend national boundaries. Students are more likely to believe their individual intervention in a global social problem is both possible and consequential	Documented questions and issues raised in course assignments Reflection exercises and activities about experiences in civic participation Journal entries or writing assignments about involvement in social advocacy groups and programs

Deardorff (2006) also writes about the use of assessment for [inter]cultural competence in a journal article.

References

Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266. doi: 10.1177/1028315306287002

Deardorff, D. K., Pysarchik, D. T., & Yun, Z.-S. (2009). Towards effective international learning assessment: principles, design and implementation. In H. De Wit (Ed.), *Measuring the success in the internationalisation of higher education* (pp. 23-38): European Association for International Education.



1.5 MARGINALITY AND PRIVILEGE: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING

Hyland & Noffke (2005) offer an assessment example which is located within a pre-service teacher course of critical study of injustice involving in-class lectures, activities and readings. The experiential component includes the assignment which was conducted during their placements in schools.

The assignment:

- Ecological survey of the neighbourhood to include race, gender, class
- Locate resources
- Talk to community residents (parents and teachers)
- Map the neighbourhood
- Form a relationship with a community person and include that person in developing a lesson plan which uses the person's perspective on living in that locality
- Attend an event (of student's choosing) or conduct an oral history
- Reflect on the event
- Present to the rest of the class their reflections.

These activities and presentations were then examined in class to locate them within the historical and political context and to critically reflect and deconstruct understandings.

Reference

Hyland, N. E., & Noffke, S. E. (2005). Understanding Diversity Through Social and Community Inquiry. *Journal of teacher education*, 56(4), 367-381. doi: 10.1177/0022487105279568

2. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

2.1 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORY

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being that are presented in the ASWEAS guidelines (AASW, 2012a) broadens the focus on the historical context that all social work students need to be taught to now include: 'Knowledge of the resilience, strengths and survivorship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences' as well as 'Knowledge of the traumatic legacy of the Stolen Generations' (AASW, 2012a, p. 22), thus encouraging an awareness that the history of Aboriginal and Islander peoples continues to impact on their lived experiences.

Project data indicate that the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history has been quite common in the social work curriculum. However even though the history of the Stolen Generations is presented to students, many graduate without a clear understanding of the extent to which this history impacts on the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as on contemporary social work practices.

Developing curriculum content about the history of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is one way of bringing this history to life in a meaningful way. If this curriculum is developed and taught in collaboration with the community and is balanced with stories of dispossession as well as stories of survival, resistance and resilience, then this curriculum initiative can potentially achieve a range of positive outcomes for students.



Exploring local history

Depending on the location of different Schools of Social Work, local will have different meanings. For distance education students, their local communities may be defined as the ones in which they live rather than those that are located near their university. A useful way for these students to learn about the history of their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is to give students the responsibility, in an assignment, to gather information from local historical sites and places where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories have been documented. This also provides insights about, for example, the colonial history of the area.

Undertaking this form of knowledge development would need to include teaching students about cultural protocols so that students respectfully engage in listening to these stories and learn about how to relay this information without causing harm or offence or breaching local protocols. In this way the assignment can include a range of learning outcomes which could also be important for students to demonstrate before undertaking, for example, a field placement in their local areas. For some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, undertaking this assignment can also be one way of developing of knowledge and insights about their own identities.

It is important not to assume that urban locations do not have richly documented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories. For example, the Koorie Heritage Trust in inner city Melbourne provides history tours of local sites of significance. Undertaking such a tour could be an important learning opportunity for students.

Teaching about the history of removals as well as stories of survival and resilience

Many of the historical accounts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples tend to be deficit focussed. While the history of colonisation, including the massacres of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Stolen Generations, are critical areas of knowledge for students, narratives of survival and resilience as well as accounts of positive relationships, even during the period of early colonisation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians, are also important for students to learn.

Celebrating and learning about the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers

Providing students with insights about the significant role that many Aboriginal social workers have played in championing human rights and social justice provides an important balance to presenting the history of welfare in Australia. See Gilbert (2012) as an important resource in this area. Reading or listening to Dr Tom Calma's speeches (social worker and former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commissioner), which are available on the web at the Human Rights Commission Website (<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice>) would be a rich source of learning for students. Presenting this material also provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with powerful role models.

The history quiz

One way of alerting students to a range of historical facts is to develop a brief history quiz which would include quiz type questions about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander historical facts. Once completed, the lecturer could go through each fact, providing a narrative about its significance. Three example quiz questions which are relevant to the University of NSW are presented below:

Q: What was the purpose of the Native Institute at Parramatta?

A: The education of Aboriginal children

Q: To which political party did the first Aboriginal person elected into Federal government belong?

A: The Liberal party

Q: What year did Paul Keating deliver his Redfern Speech?

A: 1992

References

Bennett, B. (2012). The importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history for social work students and graduates. Chapter 1 (1-25) In B. Bennett, Green, S., Gilbert, S., D. Bessarab (Eds.) *Our Voices: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Work*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Gilbert, S (2012) The People who Populate Aboriginal Social Work. Chapter 2 (26-46) In B. Bennett, Green, S., Gilbert, S., D. Bessarab (Eds.) *Our Voices: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Work*. Palgrave Macmillan



2.2 CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

The following is extracted from Evans et al. (1999) from their experience of working with First Nations peoples in British Columbia to develop curriculum.

Step 1 (initiation) involves one or more informal meetings with the Elders and leaders of the community to set direction and to identify five fundamental goals:

- the community's needs and wishes (cultural or linguistic recovery, development of cultural pride, articulation with formal institutions, funding, other)
- a set of principles to guide the process (e.g., community control, experiential learning, Aboriginal pedagogy)
- sources of information for the course and, if new information must be actively researched, how that research will occur
- relevant University guidelines and limits (eg types of courses and programs, accreditation issues, standards issues)
- community guidelines.

Step 2 (planning) begins with the establishment of a central committee to provide support and guidance. The committee is critical and consideration must be given to cultural issues as well as bureaucratic ones when establishing its composition (e.g., should it include Elders, representatives for community institutions, students and/or parents, education workers, curriculum development resource people from within or outside the community, other resource people) and its structure. This committee needs to be well positioned to establish effective and appropriate communications between all partners and to develop appropriate support and advisory groups. The committee works on identifying culturally appropriate channels for community control over the curriculum process, identifying staffing and other organizational needs, establishing a work team with a mandate and appropriate reporting process, conducting a learning needs assessment that will give direction to curriculum development, and funding the project.

In step 3 (curriculum development) the committee establishes a curriculum model appropriate to its pedagogical philosophy and objectives. This requires identification of the instructional topics and any significant development and implementation issues that need attention (e.g., the recording of information, ethical issues, research methods, or copyright issues). The goal is a draft of the curriculum that will be used but, as already indicated, curriculum development usually requires active research to develop basic information. This can be a time consuming task, requiring effective and efficient community coordination, and care must be taken to ensure consensus of the principal parties.

At Step 4 (implementation) a pilot project can be run to evaluate the curriculum, followed by revisions and re-testing or by the continuing, on-going teaching of the new curriculum. Part of the implementation step is the publication of curriculum material, as necessary and appropriate, and the establishment of a liaison mechanism for ongoing community involvement in the curriculum.

In Steps 5 and 6 (Evaluation and Expansion) the committee evaluates what has been accomplished, makes recommendations on any remedial work that needs to be performed, implements the revisions, and looks ahead for new directions and new ideas. Should the course be expanded? Should another course be constructed at the next, more advanced level? Should a new course be developed? Is there a need for more extensive resource materials, or for more of the Aboriginal style of teaching and learning? How could the resource material be used to supplement other existing courses?

Reference

Evans, M., McDonald, J., & Nyce, N. (1999). Acting across boundaries in Aboriginal curriculum development: Examples from Northern British Columbia. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 23(2), 190-205.

Community and School relationships – mapping exercise

The following exercise can be used as a way of initiating discussion and planning of curriculum development. It was used during the Getting it Right Pilot School Workshops to stimulate planning and discussion amongst staff groups. Positive feedback indicated that the exercise was useful and purposeful. The goal is for staff groups to jointly develop an eco-map of School-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community relationships, which can also be periodically reviewed. An eco-map template encourages exploration of not only whether relationships exist and with whom, but also the nature of these relationships and whether they are reciprocal and ongoing or in the process of development. Initially individual staff members can develop their own eco-maps which can be shared and discussed with colleagues as a group. Once completed, discussion of the eco-map can include:

- The nature and focus of School-community relationships
- The breadth and depth of relationships, including reciprocity
- Engagement with and understanding of the diversity that exists in community
- Discussion of community politics, how it is understood and responded to
- Areas for potential development of new relationships and partnerships
- Role of community in curriculum development, including potential role of Elders in teaching and learning
- Profile of the School in the community, areas for attention and development
- Protocols of working with community
- Skills and capacity of staff and students to deal with concerns about not knowing and getting it wrong when working with community.



2.3 CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

1. Start with an idea (teaching strategy, curriculum development, community engagement, increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and student recruitment, increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agency placements etc.) but:
2. Consult widely. This needs to be with people who can:
 - support and challenge the idea
 - ask critical questions
 - provide resources
 - recommend or refer to other people.
3. Locate allies:
 - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the Indigenous Centres in Universities⁷ are a good place to start. If there is no or little current relationship with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, the Centres can assist in introducing or recommending people
 - Local Community leaders and members
 - Other staff in the University responsible for teaching, research, equity and diversity, community engagement, service learning
 - Agency personnel in the field, especially members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies.
4. Establish a team or group to work on the idea. Small is better than large, 5-6 members is suitable, but:
5. Identify people who can engage as supporters, a reference group. This can be a larger group, up to 15 is manageable.
6. In some cases there will not be an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member who can be involved in the smaller group. It is worth spending time to locate and engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to join the small group, even if it means delaying work on the idea. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from other Universities or community agencies could be approached to see if they would be willing to be involved.
7. Establish group processes for communication. How is it best to deal with potentially competing communication activities such as email? Drop Box can be used for many communications and can accommodate large files. Face to face meetings are often the preferred method but sometimes impractical. Skype or teleconferences also work well. Be prepared for robust debate.
8. For the larger group (e.g. reference group), a newsletter can be useful.

9. Establish decision making processes. Not all group members will always be available at the same time. Agree within the group as to how to proceed with important and necessary decisions as well as ensuring all group members are fully informed. Some decisions will only be able to be made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
10. Keep good records of every meeting and decision. These can be lodged in Drop Box.
11. Pay attention to group processes and particularly relationships with both small group members and relationships with the larger group. If membership changes, pay attention to inclusion.
12. Consider the process of developing the idea into action as Action Research (AR) or Action Learning (AL), using the cycles of AR/AL.

2.4 HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION – MAPPING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CONTENT

Purpose: To identify where and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content as presented in the ASWEAS (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a) can be embedded across the social work course.

Data gathered by the Getting it Right project indicate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in Australian social work education primarily focusses on the history of colonisation, social policy issues, human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and levels of disadvantage. Learning outcomes in this area tend to focus broadly on cross cultural learning and skill development.

In order to address these gaps and facilitate the comprehensive and effective integration of the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander core content, horizontal and vertical integration is proposed. The following provides some guidance on the achievement of horizontal integration. Vertical integration, the development of a stand-alone unit on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work, is addressed later in this Section.

Key steps and processes:

1. The leadership team invites all staff to read the Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework and encourage team discussion of how the principles can be applied to the local teaching and learning context.
2. A template is developed, such as the one below, which facilitates an active review of existing learning outcomes and content of each unit in order to:
 - Identify where new learning outcomes could be developed that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing
 - Consider how assessment of student learning will reflect any new learning outcomes.

⁷ These University based facilities are usually known as Aboriginal units or Indigenous studies centres. Torres Strait is not usually included in their titles.



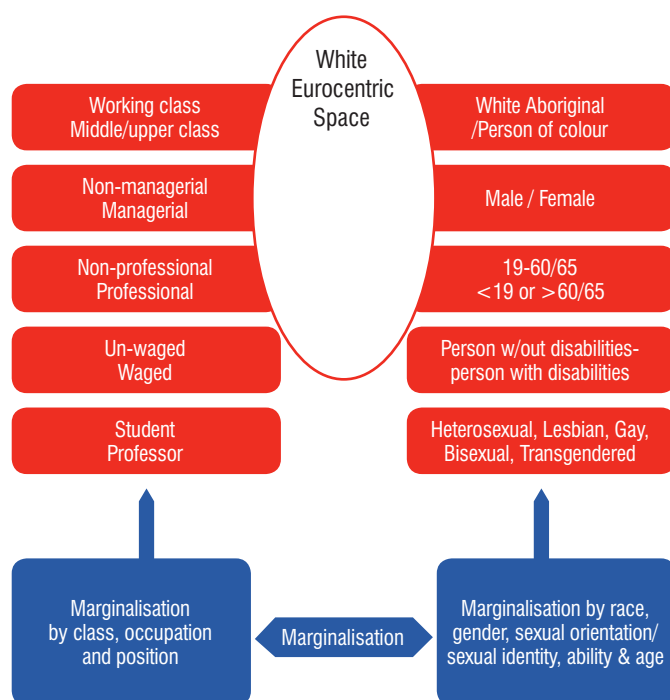
3. Staff are encouraged to explore potential areas of learning where aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing are transferable to other areas of practice. For example in a practice skills unit, such as teaching direct practice skills, 'being able to establish rapport and empathy with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples particularly through the use of listening rather than questioning' (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a, p.23) is also readily applicable to working with a range of client groups, such as young people.
4. Once the above processes have been completed by individual staff, the staff group meets again to share and discuss the outcomes with particular consideration of how the curriculum can be mapped in such a way that students are aware that there is an expectation that they are developing different levels of knowledge and skills across/during their course.
5. The outcome of this mapping exercise is presented to and discussed with the School Advisory Group, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory or Reference group as well as staff of the University based Aboriginal unit. The purpose of the discussion will be to invite feedback, suggestions, explore possible areas for collaboration in the co-construction of curriculum and teaching.
6. The student body is engaged with this review process again in order to get feedback and explore ideas and responses.
7. Once the above review and consultation processes are finalised, the team discusses the timeframe and processes for any unit changes. The actual formal university processes of changing unit learning outcomes may be quite lengthy.

Example of template that can guide unit review

Unit name and number	Current learning outcomes	Potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content that could be included in the unit	Revised learning outcome/s	Implications for student assessment

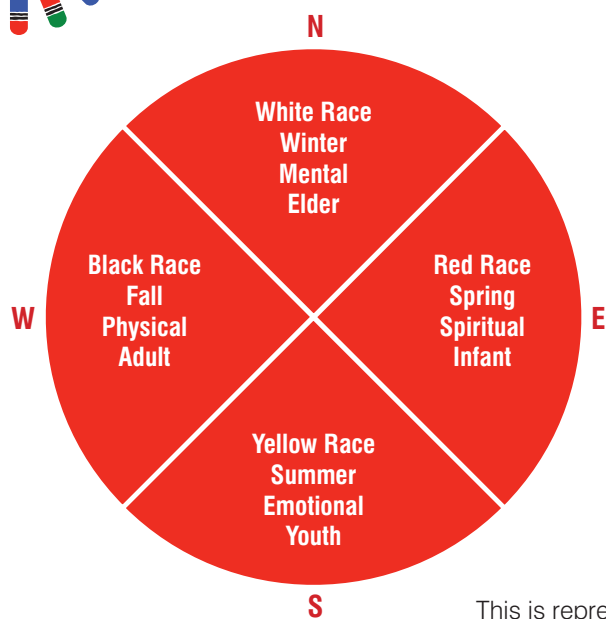
2.5 INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE ACADEMY – MODEL

Dumbrill & Green's (2008) article on Indigenous knowledge in the academy starts by stating that of prime importance is being sensitive to the ways Eurocentric [sic] worldviews dominate the academy and the aim is to disrupt this dominance. They provide a useful representation of the domination and oppression of the White Eurocentric Space, counterpoised with an Indigenous representation of worldview followed by a suggestion for developing a critical multi-centric academy. These are represented here as tools for stimulating discussion in the classroom towards critical analysis or for planning purposes for Social Work staff to consider in efforts to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait knowledges in the curriculum.



Reference

Australian Association of Social Workers. (2012). AASW Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) Guideline 1.1 Guidance on essential core curriculum content. Retrieved from <http://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/3552>

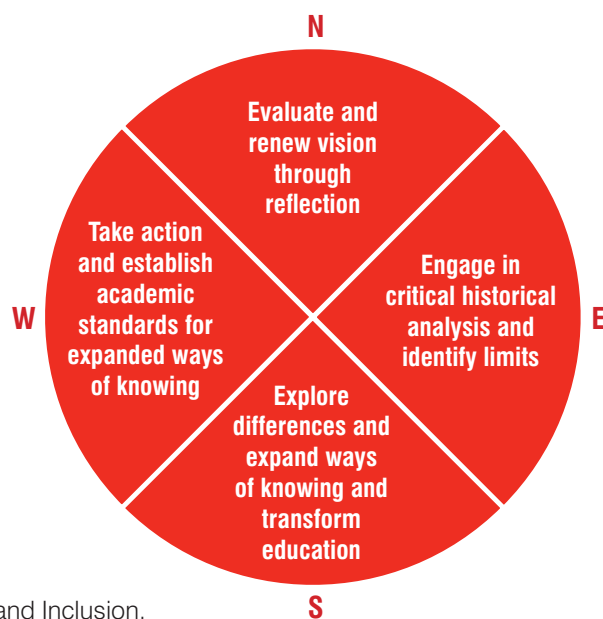


This is represented as Harmony and Inclusion.
This relates to the Canadian experience and so would need
to be adapted according to the local place in Australia.

(Dumbrill & Green, 2008, p. 497)

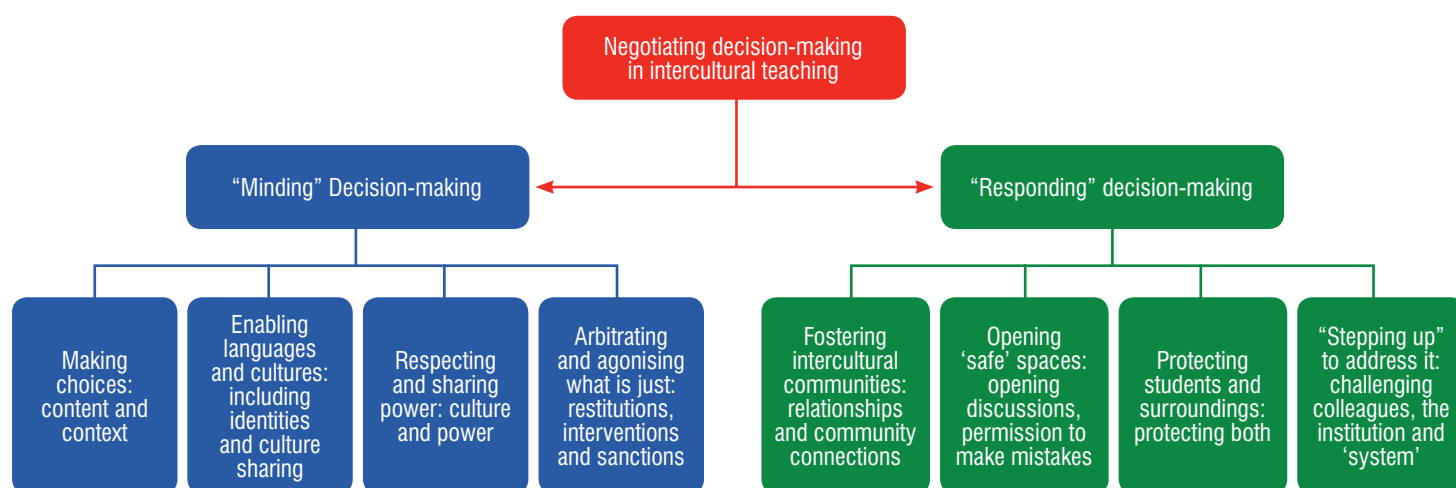
Reference

Dumbrill, G. C., & Green, J. (2008). Indigenous Knowledge in the Social Work Academy. *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 27(5), 489 - 503.



2.6 INTERCULTURAL TEACHING

The following framework is adapted from MacPherson (2010). It provides some principles which might be useful for constructing curriculum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-centred social work.



The remainder of the paper discusses some specific examples of how the teachers addressed each of these topics.

Reference

MacPherson, S. (2010). Teachers' Collaborative Conversations About Culture: Negotiating Decision Making in Intercultural Teaching. *Journal of teacher education*, 61(3), 271-286. doi: 10.1177/0022487109353032



2.7 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT – TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PERSPECTIVES

An important consideration in the developing curriculum in this context will be acknowledging the uniqueness, distinctiveness and diversity of Torres Strait Islander cultures and worldviews. This will be particularly important in Schools of Social Work where a large number of students either live and/or undertake field education in areas where there are large populations of Torres Strait Islander peoples, such as in Queensland.

The contributions of key historical figures such as Eddie Mabo in Australia's history and an analysis of how the Mabo decision was based on critical Torres Strait Islander worldviews is one way of drawing attention to the contributions of this cultural heritage.

The writings of Dr Noritta Morseu-Diop (2013) are an important resource for social work educators seeking material to use in the social work curriculum.

References and resources

Morseu-Diop, N. (2012). Indigenous yarning modalities: an insider's perspective on respectful engagement with Torres Strait Islander clients. In B. Bennett, S. Green, S. Gilbert & D. Bessarab (Eds.), *Our voices: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work* (pp. 114-135). South Yarra: Melbourne: Palgrave Macmillan

http://www.gabtitui.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=12 The web site of the Gab Titui Cultural centre provides information and resources about Torres Strait Islander cultures.

2.8 VERTICAL INTEGRATION – DEVELOPING A STAND-ALONE UNIT ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOCIAL WORK

A key objective of the *Getting it Right* Teaching and Learning Framework is the achievement of vertical and horizontal integration of the ASWEAS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a). While the project data indicate that a number of Schools of Social Work have developed stand-alone units in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work, the content of these units may need to be reviewed if the objective of achieving horizontal integration is actively progressed.

When making decisions about the content that such a unit might cover, it will be important to consider that, according to project data, some content areas are particularly underdeveloped in social work education. These include:

- Teaching the skills of deep listening, yarning and story-telling
- Learning about culturally responsive social work practice with a broad range Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which takes into consideration a diversity of experiences and contexts
- Skills of responding to racism and lateral violence
- Skills and knowledge of developing collaborative cross-cultural working relationships
- Practice interventions that are informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges.

The following strategy has been developed to assist Schools in developing and/or reviewing stand-alone units:

- Map existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander course content, or anticipated content, (see earlier material in 2.6 on horizontal integration)
- Refer closely to the ASWEAS Guideline 1.1, Section 4 (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a) and consider what level of skills and knowledge are being developed by students across the course and what areas of learning would benefit from more in-depth focus
- Discuss these preliminary ideas with the School's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory group as well as staff from the University based Aboriginal unit in order to seek feedback, input on content and explore the potential for co-teaching
- Consider the pros and cons of where in the course such an individual unit should be located. For example, factors such as scheduling the unit before or after the first field education placement will impact on the articulation of learning outcomes for both the stand-alone and field education units
- Taking into consideration the learning outcomes that are developed for this stand-alone unit, explore a range of assessment options. Given the more intense immersion in one subject area that can be developed in a stand-alone unit, explore opportunities to develop student assessment that requires in-depth reflection on the student learning experience.



3. STAFF AND STUDENTS

3.1 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER TUTORS AND GUEST LECTURERS – PROVIDING SUPPORT

When Social Work Schools employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to teach as guest lecturers and tutors, it is important that schools recognise in their policies that this should not be seen as a substitute for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. There is a danger that Universities could rely on guests as the cheaper option. It is important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are included as full staff members in order that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and practices are fully and effectively embedded. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lecturers and tutors do fulfil important roles and these are some suggestions for supporting them in those roles.

- Ensure that the Social Work department has a policy of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lecturers/tutors or sessional staff which includes clear guidelines and processes outlined. This will need to include:
 - Availability of course/teaching materials
 - Arrangements for equipment in teaching venues
 - Access to IT and Audio-Visual help if necessary
 - Venue for student consultation, possibly immediately after the teaching sessions
 - Clear lines of appointment information with introductions to necessary administrative staff
 - Access to photocopying and other resources.
- Allocate one Social Work staff member to be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented and this may include working alongside unit coordinators to arrange for course materials to be available online for students, equipment is ready for use and other teaching related matters.

In the case of tutors or visiting lecturers taking extended roles, that is over a full semester, and for newly appointed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lecturers, it may be that an existing and experienced staff member could be allocated the formal unit coordination role to relieve new staff from having to learn administrative requirements at the same time as they are learning the business of teaching.

3.2 RECRUITMENT OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS

There are a number of strategies that Schools of Social Work can adopt in order to increase their numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The AASW also has a potential role in supporting these initiatives. These include:

- The AASW developing a specific social work recruitment campaign to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into the social work profession
- Schools of social work developing, in conjunction with their local University based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit on campus, an Indigenous recruitment strategy, which could include out-reach programs, school camps, preparatory and bridging programs, amongst other initiatives
- Schools of social work develop working relationships with local high schools, TAFE colleges and other educational providers to develop pipeline programs to attract more Aboriginal students into social work degrees
- All staff within social work programs (including academic, administrative, field education) are prepared (including training) to work culturally responsively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Each school of social work establishing targets that ensure parity within their social work program with non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Each school of social work having an identifiable person to be the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student contact/liaison person
- Including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff as part of any recruitment program, in particular those that occupy an academic teaching position, so that they can act as a role model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. However it is important not to leave that person solely responsible for co-ordinating such a program. A collaborative approach between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will be regarded more favourably by the community because it sends a strong message that this is a whole-of-School commitment and responsibility.

In the process of planning a preparatory workshop on social work to potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students it can be helpful to involve the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students. Getting a sense of what has worked in the past in their initial engagement with social work studies, as well as what helps to maintain their commitment to their studies, are important experiences to draw upon. The participation of the current cohort of students in the workshop as role models and possibly future mentors can also be encouraging for potential students.



4. TEACHING STRATEGIES

4.1 ANTI-RACIST PRACTICE IN FIELD PLACEMENT

The following is an adapted extract from a Canadian work by Rogers (1995) constructing strategies for approving anti-discriminatory field placements. This work was written using Dominelli's (1988) Anti-Racist Practice guidelines. While it is now relatively old it has some suggestions for field placement arrangements which could well be used in an Australian context. This has been adapted to suit the Australian situation.

Approving practice teaching placements

- Is the agency committed to anti-discriminatory and culturally responsive social work practice as well as policies?
- How does the agency monitor its practice with respect to anti-discrimination and *cultural responsiveness*?
- Does the agency provide opportunities for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander workers to become practice teachers?
- How does the agency deal with complaints of racism from students, workers, and/or clients?
- Can the agency ensure exposure to, and offer opportunities for, students to work with a variety of people across a range of differences?
- Can the agency guarantee that when they take an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student that they are on placement for their own learning and not as race experts for the agency?

Pre-placement discussion items

- Is information provided about the ethnic and gender composition of the client group, office, agency and community?
- Are details of any agency equal opportunities policy and the means by which it is activated described?
- Is there an acknowledgement of the reality of oppression in all its forms, including that the student may encounter some manifestation of it in the workplace?
- Is information provided about agency procedures and practices in the following circumstances:
 - Where a client refuses to see a student because the student is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?
 - Where a student wishes to be taken off a case because the client is overtly racist?
 - Where colleagues in the placement agency or other agencies behave in a racist manner?
 - Where the practice teacher displays racist attitudes of actions?

Contracting stage

- Is there clarification of the tasks, cases and projects to be undertaken and procedures/strategies for confronting or challenging racist behaviour?
- Is there clarification of what culturally responsive practice means in relation to the tasks, cases and projects to be undertaken?
- Are resources and support systems for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students, as well as for all other students needing resources or support in their work with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander clients, identified?
- Is there an identification of possible obstacles (personal and organisational) a student may encounter in carrying out the practice teaching requirements?
- Are grievance or review procedures clarified?

The placement experience

- Are students provided with opportunities to engage, assess, intervene, terminate and assess their practice with clients, target and/or action systems who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people?

Commentary on this question: if such placements are not available in sufficient numbers or there are not enough qualified placement teachers in those placements, then other ways of incorporating this learning will have to be devised. Some possibilities are:

- Before students enter traditional or mainstream field placements, the course could require pre-professional [or non-assessed] Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander practice teaching opportunities (Ifill, 1989)
- Laboratories could be set up in the classroom using simulations, social drama, popular culture (films, TV shows, etc.) for students to acquire the knowledge and skills of culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory practice (Ifill, 1989); anti-racist social work curriculum could replace anglocentric concepts in social work theory, practice and policies Dominelli, 1988).
- Are students provided with adequate supervision and resources to carry out their work in a culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory manner?
- Are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students given equal opportunities to learn while acknowledging, but not exploiting, the experience they bring to the setting?
- Are students assured they will not be penalised for exposing policies and/or practices that are discriminatory or insensitive and will be supported by the course instructors and tutors in confronting and challenging them?



Assessment of student progress and performance

- Do assessment processes and procedures empower a full contribution from the least powerful participant, the student?
- Commentary: this is particularly important when students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and assessment can be accomplished in a number of ways such as:
 - Thoroughly informing students of the expectations and assessment process
 - Providing a range and choice of assessment methods so that the student has the power to select and present evidence
 - Giving students the right to reply and respond to all assessment judgements and access to appeal procedures
 - Allowing students to organise their response to assessment in groups and provide them opportunities to assess their evaluators .
- Are assessment systems contextually sensitive?
- Commentary: for example, a mainstream agency in geographic location and with a service mandate that precludes working with many/any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cannot expect the same level of culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory practice from a student as an ethnic-specific agency devoted to empowering a majority of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander clients.
- Are the different cultural, life experience and communication styles of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students considered in a fair appraisal of competence
- Commentary: students' individual difference requires equitable flexibility in making assessment judgements and decisions.

Are questions asked about the extent and nature of any discrimination students might have suffered during the placement, or in their assessment, from the practice teacher, clients or others?

References

- Dominelli, L. (1997). *Anti-racist Social Work: A Challenge for White Practitioners and Educators* (2nd Edition ed.). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Rogers, G. (1995). Practice Teaching Guidelines for Learning Ethnically Sensitive, Anti-Discriminatory Practice: A Canadian Application. *British Journal of Social Work*, 25(4), 441-457.

4.2 ANTIRACIST STRATEGIES FOR INTERPERSONAL CONTEXTS

The following is taken from a study undertaken by Mitchell et al. (2011) to describe the constraints people face in speaking out against racism as well as some suggestions for challenging racism.

- Become informed in order to provide oppositional or counter arguments to false beliefs (such as 'Aboriginal people get special treatment')
- Use the strategies of Intergroup Dialogue:
 - Accept change is a long term prospect and process (changing attitudes is not going to happen in one encounter, but each interaction can be seen as a part of a longer process).
 - 'Thoughtful or dialogic engagement' requires critical reflection on own interpretive framework (understand and engage with the others' point of view, acknowledge their history, position, experience, as well as reflect on own reasons for wanting to 'speak out', locate structural rather than personal allegiances to avoid labelling a person as racist)
 - Accept that conflict will occur and work with conflict in productive rather than damaging ways.

Reference

Mitchell, M., Every, D., & Ranzijn, R. (2011). Everyday antiracism in interpersonal contexts: Constraining and facilitating factors for 'speaking up' against racism. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 21(4), 329-341. doi: 10.1002/casp.1077



4.3 CULTURAL EMPATHY – USING INDIGENOUS NARRATIVES TO CHALLENGE ATTITUDES

Creating cultural empathy and challenging attitudes through Indigenous narratives: A web-based resource hosted by Edith Cowan University

This Australian (made in Western Australia) web-based teaching resource is excellent for teaching students about cultural empathy. A range of health-based role plays and first person narratives provide a rich source of material for students to discuss and analyse.

The web page includes a facilitator's guide which can provide additional ideas about how to make the most of this teaching resource.

Suggested areas of learning which can be addressed include:

- Racism, stereotyping and colonisation
- Whiteness
- Developing cultural safety in organisations, in particular health services
- How to put cultural responsiveness into practice
- Relationship development, engagement and micro-skills for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, such as deep listening and yarning
- Preparing students for field placement.

Resource

Go to the web link below and apply for a user log-in
<http://altc-betterhealth.ecu.edu.au/index.php>

4.4 CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The following describes a model suggested by the author (Deweese, 2001).

Students:

- Identify their own cultural and familial characteristics as those which will influence their practice

Representative strategy:

- Using the values clarification, students are set a range of ethical dilemmas (examples given of deciding how to allocate money to address a situation, e.g. medical treatment to a new-born versus divorced single mother with three children – see the article reference below for more detail)
- This demonstrates the cultural bases of many of the consequent decisions.

- Identify how culture influences worldviews

Representative strategy

- Using mainstream 'American' culture (could translate to 'Australian' culture) in which the five core values of i) active self-expression, ii) equality and informality in social relationships, iii) achievement and accomplishment, iv) control of self and one's destiny in pursuit of a better destiny, v) individualism and autonomy are compared to their own family values and prioritised according to application. Discuss any differences and remaining perplexity.
- From the discussion, students develop their own lists of values that are relevant to their own family and culture
- Students then take one value and extend it to developing a public policy (for example family policy – what might this value translate into and the effects it might have on different family types?)
- Small and large group discussions to start to explore unquestioned assumptions.

- Explore and understand their own assumptions about the world

Representative strategy

- Following on from starting to think about assumptions, students engage in a discussion of privilege using McIntosh's (1995) list of white privileges.



- Identify their own privilege

Representative strategy

- Using the ideas of 'global questions' (focusing on an issue rather than the circumstance of an individual, e.g. discussion of social groups in school rather than peer bullying of a child) and 'cover terms' (welfare mother has public connotations beyond the meaning of the individual words) engage in a series of discussions about the understandings of popular cultural understandings: e.g. the idea of 'dependency' applied to the 'welfare mother' and to the expected role of caring for elderly parents may elicit different understandings
- Use a strengths based framework of questions drawn from Saleebey (1996) to counterpoise the negative to a strengths approach:
 1. survival (how do you get by?)
 2. support (who helps?)
 3. exception (what is it like when you are not feeling judged or stigmatised?)
 4. possibility (what could things look like?)
 5. esteem (when people say good things about you, what is it they say?)
- Develop skills in interrogating language

Using the above strategies to explore further the application of strengths based questioning to 'global questions' or 'cover terms'.

The final stage involves consolidating all these into a verbal presentation to the class which demonstrates the learning and proposals for practice.

References

Deweese, M. (2001). Building Cultural Competence for Work with Diverse Families. *Journal of Ethnic And Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 9(3-4), 33-51. doi: 10.1300/J051v09n03_02

McIntosh, P. (1995). White privilege: unpacking the invisible backpack. In A. Kesselman, L. D. McNair & J. Schneidewind (Eds.), *Woman. Images and realities: a multicultural anthology* (pp. 264-267). London and Toronto: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Saleebey, D. (1996). The strengths perspective in social work practice: extensions and cautions. *Social Work*, 41(3), 296-304.

4.5 CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS - A CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

This exercise is taken from an article written by Perry and Tate-Manning (2006) of an examination of cultural understanding.

Setting: Social work students from Pakeha, Maori, Pacifica backgrounds in Aotearoa New Zealand, the unit – *Working with Families*

Task: in groups of between three and eight

- select a myth, legend or fairytale
- describe the cultural messages in relation to families and family relationships
- identify how these messages affect views of families (currency, theoretical associations, gender, class, relationships)
- form a presentation to the rest of the class with the implications for cultural understanding.

Purpose: to unravel cultural constructions, and apply those and their implications in work with families

The authors found this exercise to be a powerful and enjoyable way to explore cultural understandings and the often unspoken cultural messages contained in taken for granted or accepted stories, in this instance, about families and family relationships. They were able to explore with students how some unspoken cultural understandings affect work with families. While this assignment was only one of an entire unit and was framed within theories and practice work with families, it enabled examination of cultural constructions and the implications for social work practice.

Reference

Perry, C., & Tate-Manning, L. (2006). Unravelling Cultural Constructions in Social Work Education: Journeying Toward Cultural Competence. *Social Work Education*, 25(7), 735-748. doi: 10.1080/02615470600905986



4.6 DECOLONISATION FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

The following is summarised from Muller's (2007) paper on decolonisation for social work practice.

She recommends understanding the framework to enable an analysis of the effects of colonisation and then proposes five stages for decolonisation. These can be used in the classroom for analysis and planning/action.

Five stages of colonisation

1. Denial and withdrawal
2. Destruction/eradication
3. Denigration/belittlement/insult
4. Surface accommodation/tokenism
5. Transformation/exploitation.

Five stages of decolonisation

1. Rediscovery and recovery – use inclusive knowledge of history, rediscover sources of identity
2. Mourning – move towards healing, use inclusive history to start to heal
3. Dreaming (building a recovery plan) – building connections of trust and using Indigenous cultural codes of connectedness, collectiveness and inclusion instead of the dominant cultural codes of domination, individualism and exclusion
4. Commitment – use consensus to build towards action
5. Action – undertake the plan.

Reference

Muller, L. (2007). De-colonisation: reflections and implications for social work practice. *Communities, children and families Australia*, 3(1), 79-86.

4.7 HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION IN GROUP WORK – DEVELOPING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CONTENT

Purpose: To provide guidance on the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content as presented in ASWEAS (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2012a) in the units that focus on the development of knowledge and skills of group work.

Data gathered by the *Getting it Right* project indicate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in Australian social work education can be creatively embedded in generic units such as units that teach students the skills and knowledge of group work practice. This could be one way of addressing the inclusion of a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. The following can also be adapted for any social work practice based unit, such as units teaching micro skills (including counselling) as well as community development.

Key steps and processes:

- Academic staff who teach and develop curriculum in group work units read the *Getting it Right Teaching and Learning Framework* and explore how the principles and strategies can be applied to local teaching and learning context.
- Specific learning outcomes are developed which reflect new content areas.
- Unit assessment is also modified so that any assessment criteria reflect learning outcomes and unit content. Referring to the model of *cultural responsiveness*, as presented in Section 1 and as articulated in the *AASW Practice Standards* (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2013a) can guide the development of assessment criteria.
- When finalizing any re-development of a unit to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content, consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community needs to be undertaken. This may include School Aboriginal and Torres Strait Advisory groups, staff at the University-based Aboriginal units as well as local agencies and workers with whom school staff have a working relationship. An aspect of this consultative process would include the potential for any co-teaching or co-construction of curriculum, presentations to students and other teaching activities.
- Within current unit structures, consideration is given to utilising a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander examples and practice contexts in which group work practices are appropriate or have the potential for development. For example group work interventions are common in areas of social work practice such as parenting programs, therapeutic contexts such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs as well as general



mutual aid groups such as carer support groups. However in many of these generalist practice contexts, there may be low levels of engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group participants. This would be an interesting area for students to explore and research.

- When teaching about the stages of group development, consideration could be given to skills and knowledge needed to engage and recruit a range of client groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples. Students could be encouraged to consider potential barriers, cultural, structural and institutional that may impede access and develop strategies for addressing these in practice.
- In teaching group leadership and facilitation skills, scenarios could be presented to students which require them to explore co-leadership and co-facilitation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and non-Indigenous workers. The values and skills that are required in developing this type of working relationship are readily transferable to a range of group co-leadership and co-facilitation scenarios.
- In the area of developing knowledge about group dynamics and stages, students can be encouraged to begin any group session with an acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Elders. The rationale for including this protocol would need to be clearly presented, with particular emphasis given, for example, of recognising that this protocol reflects the profession's commitment to social justice and human rights. It could also send a very important signal of welcome and respect for any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group participant, such as participants who may not disclose their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. Students could also be challenged to explore and assess the cultural safety of the group environment such as the knowledge and skills required to develop group norms which address racism and resistance. This skill development is also readily transferable to a range of group work contexts.
- Teaching about group evaluation can also include content about how to evaluate the cultural safety of the group environment and the self-evaluation of leadership skills.

4.8 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS FOR SOCIAL WORK WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

Getting it Right project data indicate that social work students are often ill-prepared to engage effectively and confidently with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is however critical that this area of skill development is not undertaken in isolation from the broad areas of knowledge that are presented throughout the Framework, refer in particular to Sections 1, 2 and 3. Many of these areas of knowledge and skill development are also transferable to social work practice with other client groups.

There are a number of approaches that can be explored by educators when preparing curriculum in this area. These include:

Collaboratively develop teaching resources – As in all areas of teaching and learning in this context, it is important to collaboratively develop, with a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, relevant teaching scenarios to be used in role plays or/and as case studies.

Acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are both colleagues as well as clients of social work services. As presented in the model of *cultural responsiveness* in Section 1, recognising the diversity of the population and avoiding stereotyping, essentialising and glorifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are important considerations when developing curriculum such as case scenarios. Adopting a strengths focus, with consideration given to the resilience of First Australians, will be an important goal in any teaching strategy. The following web sites provide numerous examples of success stories that can be used as the basis for developing scenarios. The Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTAR) web site documents success stories in Indigenous health (see <https://antar.org.au/stories/success-stories-indigenous-health-a-showcase-successful-aboriginal-and-torres-strait>). To access success stories in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth leadership see, for example, the Queensland Government website <http://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/education-training/indigenous-youth-leadership-program-stories/>.

Utilise a diversity of agency contexts – Develop curriculum that locates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a range of agency contexts which include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific, such as Aboriginal Medical Services as well as generic contexts, such as the Justice System or Aged Care Services.

Explore a range of methods of communication and intervention – Introduce students to a range of methods of communication and intervention such as, deep listening, yarning, story-telling and narrative therapy. Individual, family and group work interventions also need to be explored.



Learning from case studies – Students can be given the task of developing background knowledge about any case scenarios that they are provided. This would include gathering insights about the individual/family/community characters as well as the contexts (agency and community) in which these characters are situated. This might involve giving students a brief outline of the character, such as a young Aboriginal man who is experiencing racism in his urban workplace and the impact that this has on his young family or an elderly Torres Strait Islander woman who has recently become widowed and is about to go into a rural residential aged care facility. The gathering of background knowledge may include doing some research about what the person might be experiencing and feeling as well as the potential interventions and approaches that may be effective. This exercise will hopefully deepen the student's empathy for the character.

Once students have gathered this background information, the next step can involve more in-depth consideration of how as social workers they would respond to the character, what approaches they might adopt and responses that they could anticipate. In particular it will be critical to facilitate exploration and self-reflection about how the student's own identity, values and assumptions about the character and the case study might impact on practice.

Developing empathy – Pick an incident, issue or problem and ask students to role play that they are the person experiencing that issue. It will be important to focus on the issue and not the racial or cultural identity of that person. For example how might a young woman experience the loss and grief of losing a partner in a car accident or an elderly man who is grappling with his role as carer for his partner with dementia? Encourage the student to reflect on how they might feel if confronted with a similar situation. Then ask the students to consider, draw parallels with how an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person might experience the same situation. What might be areas of difference and similarity?

Assess the student's ability to successfully mediate the differences between them and the client – Explore with students the importance in practice of being able to reflect on how their own identity interacts and influences interpersonal encounters and communication. Differences in identity such as age, gender, cultural background often need to be mediated in order that they do not become barriers in practice.

Recognise the impact of the historical legacy of the social work profession on practice – Preparing students to respond effectively to the anger and resistance that can manifest as a result of this legacy is a critical area of skill development.

Utilising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest lecturers and demonstrations – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers demonstrating their practice can also bring to life the skills and knowledges that are being presented to students. Consideration could also be given to inviting these workers, if appropriate, to participate in the assessment of student skills.

Recognise the potential impact of Aboriginal English on communication and engagement – According to the Australian linguist Diana Eades (as cited in Primary English Teaching Association of Australia, 2014), Aboriginal English needs to be recognised as a powerful expression of Aboriginal identity:

Aboriginal English shows an enduring link to Aboriginal culture — the accents, residual grammatical structures, concepts and words from Aboriginal languages are still in use. The grammatical structure of Aboriginal languages is often transposed onto English. Aboriginal English is not 'bad English', just a different kind of English with its own grammatical rules. It is a vivid and expressive spoken form; as a colloquial form of English it is not often used in writing (Eades as cited in Primary English Teaching Association of Australia, 2014).

In the Global Words website (<http://www.globalwords.edu.au/junior-secondary/>), there are some useful examples of Aboriginal English. Developing case study scenarios which require students to understand both the importance of Aboriginal English and the way that it may impact on practice would be a very useful area of knowledge and skill development. One particular issue that needs to be highlighted is the important role that language plays in facilitating access to services and resources. Standard Australian English is the language of power, education and law. Those who have not mastered it are likely to experience disadvantage in accessing these privileges and resources.

The NSW Department of Community Services has a practice resource (Aboriginal Services Branch, 2009) which draws attention to these communication issues:

http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/working_with_aboriginal.pdf

Sean Choolburra Live and Deadly u tube demonstrates aspects of Aboriginal English in a humorous way

www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnRzJyGYExc&feature=related

Develop awareness about and skills in utilising the Aboriginal interpreter services – In some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities English is not the dominant or first language. For students who are located in or preparing to undertake their placements in rural and remote areas of Australia, such as the Northern Territory (NT), where this may be a common experience, it will be critical to provide opportunities for students to develop skills in utilising interpreters. These skills are transferable to working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups. For example, the website of the NT Government Aboriginal Interpreter Service includes information about the 100 languages and dialects of the Northern Territory: <http://www.ais.nt.gov.au/>



Additional references

Bacon, V. (2012). Yarning and listening: yarning and learning through stories. In B. Bennett, S. Green, S. Gilbert & D. Bessarab (Eds.), *Our voices: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work* (pp. 136-165). South Yarra: Melbourne: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gair, S. (2013). Inducing empathy: Pondering students' (in) ability to empathize with an aboriginal man's lament and what might be done about it. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 49(1), 136-149.

Web based resources

Age of Transition website <http://www.ageoftransition.org/#!dadirri/cubz>

Creative Spirits Website <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri>

Dementia Networking Seminar <http://dtsc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Dementia-Yarning-Presentation-310712.pdf>

Dulwich Centre <http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au/>

The Dulwich Centre (www.dulwichcentre.com.au) has also addressed lateral violence. Through a narrative approach, the Dulwich centre publications focus on reducing the power of lateral violence by adopting community based strategies.

There are a number of possible ways of approaching teaching about lateral violence. Presenting a structural analysis of lateral violence will be critical no matter where this content is located. Lateral violence is a manifestation of powerlessness and oppression and this understanding needs to underpin any practice strategies and interventions. This content can be located in a number of areas including:

- Direct practice – working with individuals, families and groups
- Indirect practice – history of welfare, social policy, community work and organisational practice.

Additional references

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has a number of substantial discussion papers about lateral violence such as the Social Justice Report, 2011 (<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/chapter-2-lateral-violence-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities-social>)

Wingard, B. (2010). A conversation with Lateral Violence. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy & Community Work*, 2010(1), 13.

4.9 LATERAL VIOLENCE – DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR ANALYSING AND RESPONDING

Developing curriculum about lateral violence is a good example of where one area of what may be regarded as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work curriculum is readily transferable to social work practice with a range of groups and in many different contexts. Social work students, both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, will probably witness and need to deal with manifestations of lateral violence throughout their careers. Developing the capacity to analyse the causes, behaviours and consequences of this form of violence, as well as the skills to respond and develop interventions that prevent lateral violence, are all valuable areas of learning and skill development.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, such as Mick Gooda the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, are giving some prominence to the issue of lateral violence in communities but Gooda also makes the point that it is not an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander problem. Citing the example of the nursing profession's categorisation of the bullying that occurs amongst nurses as lateral violence, Gooda (2011) provides a detailed analysis of the historical and structural dimensions of this form of violence. He then adopts a human rights approach in exploring a range of strategies for dealing with lateral violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. According to Gooda, lateral violence is an emerging area of public discourse in Australia.



4.10 PREJUDICE: STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH IN THE CLASSROOM

Pedersen and Barlow (2008) detail a classroom strategy in a University psychology course used to reduce prejudice towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They conducted a 'before' questionnaire to assess knowledge (false beliefs for example) and attitudes (views about 'special' treatment, for example), and tested these after the course. The particular course over six weeks focussed on Aboriginal children and education. Details may be found in the article.

Framework for strategy (developed from literature review of anti-racist strategies)

- Combat false beliefs
- Involve the audience
- Invoke empathy
- Emphasise commonality and diversity within and between groups
- Focus on changing behaviours as much as changing attitudes
- Meet local needs
- Evaluate properly
- Consider the broader context.

Principles

- Avoid inducing collective guilt
- Provide safe environment and permit expressions of different views with an emphasis on respect
- Provide information (such as child rearing practices, intelligence testing and spatial skills, societal causes of poor education performance, information about benefits from *Face the Facts*, the HREOC publication (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012))
- Include voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (examples of different educational strategies such as Chris Sarra's work at Cherbourg School).

Reference

Pedersen, A., & Barlow, F. K. (2008). Theory to social action: A university-based strategy targeting prejudice against Aboriginal Australians. *Australian Psychologist*, 43(3), 148-159. doi: 10.1080/00050060802318587

4.11 PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

The following is adapted from Mackinlay & Barney (2010) and describes a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach in first year Indigenous Australian studies. The process was funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (the forerunner to OLT) in 2010-11 with the intention of evaluating the effectiveness of PBL as transformative education and to explore the relationship between *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies* and PBL.

The example used in the article is Hindmarsh Island and Women's business, but could be adapted to suit any situation.

The seven outcomes for the course are that students will have:

- Described the Hindmarsh Island case
- Examined the results of the High Court decision in relation to the case, its implications in relation to Native Title
- Described aspects of women's role in Aboriginal culture that are relevant to understanding the case and women's relationship to land as a whole
- Identified similarities and differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous approaches presented in relation to the case
- Considered the different discourses at play and how they silence/empower Aboriginal women
- Adapted this knowledge to a situation where students have primary responsibility for their own learning
- Demonstrated their acceptance of the responsibilities for collaborative learning.

Process

The students worked in groups during two weeks and two classes to:

- View a video giving information
- Discuss their understanding
- Develop research questions to help them understand further
- Undertake research
- Present material found.

The questions raised as a result indicated the value of the process in stimulating engagement, critical analysis of issues and discourses, and contributing to greater understanding.

Reference

Mackinlay, E., & Barney, K. (2010). Transformative learning in first year Indigenous Australian studies: Posing problems, asking questions and achieving change. A Practice Report. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 1(1), 91-99.



4.12 RACE AND RACISM: STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING

The following is adapted from Miller et al.'s (2004) paper.

Principles for teaching about race and racism

- Oppression is a reality and a set of internalised values.
- There is no neutrality in the teacher.
- Social injustice and oppression are part of the classroom experience.
- The goals of teaching are to challenge, change and dismantle oppression and unearned privilege.
- Learning must include experiential components that lead to self-awareness and social action strategies which go beyond the classroom.

The authors discuss four challenges for white educators:

1. Instructor legitimacy – who should teach about race. This addresses Dominelli's (1997) 'dumping' as well as needing to model white educators' own awareness of white privilege.
2. Racial privilege – dismantling racial privilege in white dominated countries must be done authentically and the white educator needs to demonstrate that she or he:
 - a. Is willing to interrogate own potential stereotypes and biases
 - b. Does not use language that offends others
 - c. Does not generalise about racial or ethnic groups
 - d. Deals effectively with student comments and reactions
 - e. Does not become defensive
 - f. Is not patronising to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - g. Is honest and willing to acknowledge mistakes.
3. The classroom mix – the educator needs to be able to enable white students to self-examine which may be painful for them, as well as do this with sensitivity to the differences within the white group. The educator also needs to protect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from expectations that they will be the cultural experts or teach white students from their painful experiences of racism. Resistance, paralysis or rage may be present in the classroom.
4. Institutional and professional contexts – educators may have to defend their choice of teaching materials and processes which may not be fully understood or supported professionally or institutionally.

The authors offer these strategies:

1. Know yourself:
 - a. Before teaching the material engage in the work expected of students, deconstruct own history, values, beliefs
 - b. Seek out and use mentors to assist with personal support as well as overseeing the content
 - c. Anticipate challenge but do not 'shut down' the discussion.
2. Acknowledge differential student development:
 - a. Before embarking on the teaching, know the students and their positioning
 - b. Be aware of developmental stages in identity development and racial self-awareness (see Muller's (2007) colonisation stages for example). The educator can model some of this process using his/her own journey
 - c. Establish a framework for the class – what will mastery of the content look like as well as what is the process to be used
 - d. Establish ground rules
 - e. Allow time for self-reflection and understanding of self – use values clarification exercise and case examples
 - f. Use language and concepts to assist students talk about the content and process: concepts of different worldviews, relative and contingent values, social identity, racial identity development, intersection of privilege and oppression, emotional triggers, comfort zone
 - g. Assist students to anticipate reactions from friends and family and influence of own experiences
 - h. Use small group exercises such as fishbowl. Structure exercises to deal with ambiguity (there are a number of teaching exercises in multicultural or intercultural teaching literature) Conclude with an action plan.
3. Understanding the organisational context:
 - a. Locate supporters and team teach
 - b. Be constantly aware of the mix of students in the class and do not over-identify with white students, nor allow the potentially smaller number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students to be the teachers, thus stifling their learning needs
 - c. This teaching should allow for adequate preparation of the student group as well as lead into practice units such as field education. Ideally this teaching should be integrated throughout the curriculum.

Additional reference

Miller, J., Hyde, C. A., & Ruth, B. J. (2004). Teaching about race and racism in social work: challenges for white educators *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 74(2), 409-426.



4.13 RACE TEACHING

Phan et al (2009) provide an account of a 'gateway' course in a BSW course in the USA teaching students about race. The reading details the construction of curriculum development in order to establish a safe and engaging environment in which to start to teach about race and oppression. The authors detail how matters of race are taught in their course to:

- ensure safety
- establish legitimacy of teaching about race as an oppressive structure not merely as a complaint about victimisation
- establish respect with openness
- explore racial identity in relation to oppression
- promote anti-racist strategies.

For reasons of copyright the Table detailing guidelines, tasks and outcomes is not reproduced, but is recommended for reading for beginning educators as considerations for setting up a unit teaching about race.

Reference

Phan, P., Woods, D. R., Vugia, H., Chu, M., Wright, P., & Jones, T. (2009). Teaching note: a social work's program's experience in teaching about race in curriculum *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2), 325-333.

4.14. RACE TEACHING – HOW TO DEAL WITH THE TENSIONS.

The following summarises an example used in pre-service teacher education (Pollock, Deckman, Mira, & Shalaby, 2010) in the USA to teach teachers about race. Examples from the discussions in class are provided in the article.

The three foremost questions to be presented to pre-service teachers in training during their course were:

- What can I **do**?
- What **can** I do?
- What can I **do**?

The classes for teaching about race were then organised around these three questions through a range of activities and assessment pieces.

The main assessment piece was a weekly journal responding to three questions:

- In the conversations just had as a small group and as a large group, what was said and possibly not said?
- Which ideas seemed to cause particular agreement or particular disagreement?
- What were some seeming emotional snags, some intellectual snags? (Pollock et al., 2010, p. 214).

Reference

Pollock, M., Deckman, S., Mira, M., & Shalaby, C. (2010). "But What Can I Do?": Three Necessary Tensions in Teaching Teachers About Race. *Journal of teacher education*, 61(3), 211-224. doi: 10.1177/0022487109354089

4.15 RACIAL HIERARCHY – AN ACTIVITY PROVIDED BY MAGGIE WALTER

The following exercise has been developed by the Associate Professor Maggie Walter an Aboriginal Sociologist and Social Worker based at the University of Tasmania. It is a powerful way of teaching students about the privilege of whiteness. It can also be used with staff groups as a way of opening up discussions about race. The *Getting it Right* project team has used this exercise in a number of workshops.

When working with this exercise, educators will need to be prepared to experience a range of responses such as:

- Resistance from some participants who do not agree with the concept of racial categories and hierarchies
- Participants who demonstrate resistance may do this in a number of ways, including challenging the validity of the exercise, speaking for and on behalf of other participants, in particular those from different racial backgrounds, who they perceive may be confronted by the exercise. Interestingly those participants may not want to be or feel that they need to defended in this way and it will be important the facilitators are sensitive to this type of backlash
- People from the racial backgrounds included in the exercise may find it confronting to be placed in a hierarchy, although what is more common is that these participants welcome the opportunity to speak to their own experiences of prejudice.

It will be important to go around the room and observe how each group responds to the task; this will give you important insights into the types of responses to expect when you open up the exercise for general discussion. You may find it important to de-brief with a colleague after the session. This may also be a good exercise to co-facilitate with a colleague. It is important that the non-Indigenous staff person takes responsibility for the exercise. This role models non-Indigenous people taking responsibility to discuss race and in particular whiteness and this is a very powerful way of demonstrating leadership in this area. Allow at least 1 hour for the exercise.

This exercise can be used in a range of subject areas including;

- The teaching of social work theory – in particular whiteness theory
- Teaching about the history of colonisation



Exercise

- Prepare a number of sets of ten A4 sheets of paper with the names of one of the following groups printed on each sheet:
 - Filipino
 - Somalis
 - Vietnamese
 - Greeks
 - Italians
 - White South Africans
 - Irish
 - Aborigines (depending on your local region you may want to substitute this for Torres Strait Islanders)
 - New Zealanders (Pakeha – that is white New Zealanders)
 - Lebanese
- Begin by introducing students to the concepts of race and culture. For example stating that 'race and culture play an integral role in our personal and professional identities. They both define who we are, what we do and how we do it, how people respond to us and where we locate ourselves in the social structure'
- Then divide your group into small groups (6-10 people per group is ideal) and then distribute a set of 10 sheets per group
- Instruct each group to organise the ten racial groups according to where they think they are located in the Australian social structure. Encourage participants to discuss with each other how and why they have organised the hierarchy in a particular way. Allow approximately 20 minutes for this part of the exercise to be completed
- At the end of the 20 minutes ask each small group to present their hierarchy to the larger group and encourage brief observations from each group about the process of constructing the hierarchy

Invite larger group discussion and in particular focus on what insights this exercise has provided to participants about race and culture. Some discussion at this stage may also extend to the role of this insight in social work.

Reference

Walter, M. & Butler, K. (2013) 'Teaching Race to Teach Indigeneity' *Journal of Sociology*. Vol 49(4) 397-410.

4.16 RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANS AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING

Depending on where this content is presented within the course, there are a number of learning outcomes that can be achieved from providing students with an opportunity to study the process of developing and implementing Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs). The information and resources available on Reconciliation Australia's web site <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/> are an important starting point. Dr Tom Calma, a prominent Aboriginal social worker is the co-chair of Reconciliation Australia in 2014.

Some potential areas of study include:

Organisational practice – Reconciliation Action Plans have been developed by a range of organisations including Qantas, the AFL, Universities as well as local councils, peak bodies and professional organisations such as the AASW, which in 2013 launched its own RAP. These initiatives are an interesting example of organisational change. Studying a couple of organisations, such as local agencies that have or are in the process of developing a RAP, could provide students with important insights about how this type of organisational change is managed and in what ways barriers or resistances to change are addressed and how support and resources are mobilised. Applying theories of organisational change to this analysis would enhance the level of learning and provide students with ways of considering the transferability of this knowledge to other areas of organisational practice.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and governance are also addressed by the work of Reconciliation Australia. The focus on intercultural leadership could be a particularly useful example of working in the 3rd Space.

Community work – One of the important processes in developing a RAP is that of undertaking broad consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Using the development of a RAP as an example of the importance and relevance of these skills, students could apply community development theories to analyse what is meant by culturally respectful engagement and consultation.

Research – Reconciliation Australia have developed the National Reconciliation Barometer. The Australian Reconciliation Barometer is a national research study that looks at the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Learning about how changing attitudes are measured in this way, what research methods and approaches to data analysis are adopted and how the evidence is used to inform social policy are all useful areas of learning. Detailed information regarding this Barometer is available on the Reconciliation Australia web site.



Torres Strait Islander history and culture – One of the fact sheets developed by Reconciliation Australia provides information about Torres Strait Islander peoples. Useful links are provided to further information and resources, including links to the Mabo case which can be used in subjects that present Australia's welfare history.

Social Policy – The Reconciliation movement is strongly focussed on achieving policy change and reform in areas such as addressing racism. These processes of facilitating reform and influence could be studied as examples of social policy development and implementation.

Reference

Reconciliation Australia's Website

<http://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

4.17 RELATIONAL IDENTITY & NARRATIVE APPROACHES IN THE CLASSROOM

Written by Ginny Slattery, lecturer in social work, Flinders University

This summary will outline two examples of teaching/learning methodologies that enable social work students from a diversity of cultural, social and historical backgrounds to learn ways of knowing, being and doing that are helpful for developing respectful and culturally responsive working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These strategies are best suited to an intensive or short workshop that specifically focuses on social work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and that provides adequate time for the reflective and group process aspects of the strategy.

These two methodologies are particularly informed by the following skills and concepts of the Narrative approach to counselling, group and community work as developed by Michael White as well as some aspects of the nonduality deconstructive enquiry processes as developed by Dr Peter Fenner (Fenner, 2007, 2011):

- Deconstruction of language and meanings – deconstructive enquiry
- Narrative open circular questioning – this is a technique that has been developed by Ginny Slattery from Flinders University from her work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and draws from one of the maps in narrative practice and combines this with the skill of 'Deep Listening' as taught to Ginny by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Co-construction of knowledge
- Identity as relational

- Re-authoring practice – bringing forward the preferred stories of identity and identifying the skills and knowledge that support connectedness and build resilience
- Non-dual enquiry processes – this is not a technique that comes from the narrative approach but is informed by the philosophy of Non-duality and derived from the deconstructive non-dual enquiry method developed by Dr Peter Fenner.

*(*This list is not complete but captures some of the main aspects of the approach used)*

Example 1: Exploring the meaning of 'Connectedness' and 'Interconnectedness' and how it shapes identity.

This methodology is designed for social work students to gain a deeper appreciation of the principle and philosophy of connectedness and interconnectedness and how it underpins and shapes identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It also designed to assist students to appreciate the complexity and diversity of the social and emotional wellbeing issues and problems that community members are facing in their daily lives in Australia today.

A related purpose is also to assist social work students from diverse backgrounds to develop a preliminary understanding about the conceptual basis underpinning the implementation of a holistic approach to social work practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This holistic approach has been captured in the term developed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health industry 'Social and Emotional Wellbeing' (SEWB), referred to in a number of key national policy documents and reports addressing SEWB and mental health/social work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This learning methodology involves 2 stages:

First Stage: Small group and Large Group Discussion

- Ask students to form small groups (approx. 6-8) where they are grouped around some large pieces of papers, large art sketch books, coloured pens and textas etc. For 20-30 minutes ask each group to have a discussion based on the following question: *What does the term "social and emotional well-being" mean to you?*
- The educator then encourages the student group to draw a representation of their own meanings, using pictures/ diagrams/words etc associated with social and emotional and wellbeing.
- The educator then asks the large group the following questions:
 - What was it like to do that activity?
 - What did you notice happening?



- The educator then needs to acknowledge 3 main issues:
 - that the concept of social and emotional wellbeing is difficult to language and describe quickly and succinctly with words
 - the more participants within each group talk about the concept, the deeper and more complex the discussion becomes
 - the concept is diverse – it means different things to different people.
- Each small group is invited to share their representations to the larger group. This sharing may include each member's individual drawings or a couple of participant presentations. The groups are not required to reach a formal consensus about a shared definition.
- During the process of each group presenting their representation of the concept, the educator needs to jot down key words on a white board that are presented to the larger group.
- This step involves the educator facilitating a group discussion that names and deconstructs the concept of connectedness and interconnectedness, by making certain types of statements and asking narrative oriented questions. This part of the process involves the educator presenting the following question or statement to the group: 'That before colonisation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities had over thousands of years developed a complex and sustainable system that took care of and protected this' – person points to the words that the students have used in their feedback to describe 'social and emotional wellbeing' and connectedness.
- The educator facilitates a reflective space encouraging students to share responses to the following statement:

'Imagine that there has been an attempt to destroy this connectedness, this emotional and social wellbeing, what is it like to reflect on this?'

During this whole process, the educator uses particular language that promotes a reflective, emotional, spiritual space rather than a cognitive space and avoids using mainstream language about identity.

Second Stage – Self-reflective activity

This stage involves participants gaining a deeper appreciation of the holistic aspects of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SEWB philosophy and the complex interconnectedness between the cultural, spiritual, social, physical, psychological and emotional dimensions of people's lives by engaging in the following self-reflection exercise on identity and wellbeing.

Using the SEWB Holistic Mapping Tool, engage in the following tasks:

- Write a short definition or a few words that capture what each part of SEWB means to you
- Identify skills or knowledge you have in these areas that protect and strengthen wellbeing for you. Are there some parts of your SEWB that stand out to you as particular sources of strength?
- Identify where connectedness exists. Where are the threads of connection weak and where are they strong?
- What stood out for you as you considered your identity and wellbeing in this way?

Example 2: Narrative interviewing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers/community members

This methodology involves the educator conducting narrative interviews that role model, demonstrate and embody the conversational skills and ways of being required of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers to effectively engage with community members and build meaningful partnerships. These narrative interviews are conducted by the facilitator with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and address a range of topics and issues closely aligned with the core competencies in the program. It is also designed to assist students to appreciate the complexity and diversity of the social and emotional wellbeing issues and problems that community members are facing in their daily lives in Australia today.

This strategy involves the facilitator demonstrating a narrative circular questioning process and deep listening skills that brings forward stories that honour and reveal the interviewee's cultural stories, knowledge, skills, strengths and resilience. These interviews also enable students to gain insight into the interviewee's ideas about what constitutes *cultural responsiveness from the perspective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers/community members*. After the interview, the audience is invited to ask the interviewee questions, and the educator facilitates this group discussion.

This educational methodology is an alternative to the more common practices of PowerPoint presentations, DVD viewing and article reading commonly used in academic settings. Ginny has been developing this interviewing practice as an educational methodology over many years now, and during her experience in this work she has observed these narrative interviews to have a very powerful and transformational effect on the audience.



This methodology enables a much deeper presencing and transmission of the skills and knowledge involved in culturally appropriate and safe social work practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. During these interviews Ginny demonstrates a particular interviewing style that relies on deep listening skills, a genuine appreciation and understanding of the principle of interconnectedness, and the commitment and curiosity about the development of solutions arising from the interviewee's worldview.

This teaching/learning methodology relies on conceptual knowledge of the narrative approach and skills embedded in this approach. These interviewing techniques combined with the deep listening skills can be learned and practiced in a range of educational contexts.

References

- Carey, M & Russell, S (2011). Pedagogy Shaped by Culture: Teaching Narrative Approaches to Australian Aboriginal Health Workers. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 30 (3), pp. 26-41.
- Fenner, P (2007) *Radiant Mind: Awakening Unconditioned Awareness* (sounds True, Inc, Boulder Colorado)
- Fenner, P (2011) *Natural Awakening: Advanced Nondual Training* Copyright Peter Fenner (for exclusive use in the Natural Awakening Advanced Nondual Training Program)

4.18 WHITENESS – A CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

The following is adapted from Nylund's (2006) paper.

- Situate self (if White as White and add other characteristics, e.g. middle class, female)
- Suggest Whiteness is a historical, cultural, social and political category
- Ask the following questions:
 - When in Australian history did 'white' become a term used to describe a group of people? How and when did families identifying as Irish, Scottish, Italian, Greek, for example, change to identifying as white or simply Australian?
 - Are there any white cultural practices? Is there a white culture? Why do we find it difficult to answer those questions if we are white?
 - How have white people been shaped by their social environment? How has racism affected their daily lives?
 - How has whiteness been used politically? What current issues centre around whiteness?
 - When are you (if white) white?
 - What does whiteness mean to you?
 - How can white people become antiracist allies?

- Refer to Peggy McIntosh's (1995) paper and ask:
 - Which privileges of those that McIntosh lists in her paper resonate with you?
 - What are five ways in which white people are hurt by white privilege?
 - How is a white person talking about white privilege seen or heard by friends and colleagues?
 - How is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person talking about white privilege viewed by whites?
 - How can we create a climate of safety here so that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person specifying white privileges can have credibility?
- Use film to illustrate the normative presence of whiteness (e.g. *The Castle*, or *Kenny* which focus on class and eschew race entirely) and then another film to examine how even while acknowledging ethnic or racial presence, these can be absorbed into the status quo (e.g. *Storm Boy*, or *The Tracker* which portray stereotyped Aboriginal people and still leave the White as the dominant presence)
- Anti-racism practice may find narrative therapy useful to critically examine white privilege and practice oppositional whiteness. Nylund (2006, p. 37) offers an example from his practice.

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4.19. YARNING CIRCLES

Yarning circles can be organised around community meetings, research projects and can be used in place of a focus group. Yarning circles are another convention that has been taken up by Aboriginal people to facilitate a group discussion.

Lee Townsend, an Aboriginal woman from Blacktown in New South Wales, refers to yarning circles as 'a place where stories and knowledge can be shared in a caring environment that's relaxed and comfortable. A place where each of us can participate to our own level, in our own time and by sharing our own unique journey' (<http://www.theyarningcircle.com/about.htm>). Deborah Bennett, an Aboriginal woman from Queensland who has used yarning circles says the 'process is highly interactive and incorporates many forms of cultural expression: music, song, dance the written and spoken word and can be facilitated as a one on one or group setting' (<http://www.tapestryoftrauma.webls.info/weblease/tpCommon/src/tp1FullPage.cfm?idPageCopy=14771&idClient=977>). Demosthenous, Robertson and Demosthenous (2010) used yarning circles in their research because it 'is a qualitative style of doing research that offers participants an 'intimate and closed forum' in which 'to share their stories' (p. 10). Yarning circles apply yarning an Indigenous form of conversation (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010; Zubrzycki & Crawford, 2012) to encourage the participants to start up a conversation around the topic that is the core of the discussion. The yarning circle is a collaborative process where everyone is invited to share their story.

Yarning circle protocols (adapted from Toolooa High School, 2012)

The facilitator of the conversation must ensure all participants adhere to the protocols as developed by the Traditional Owner Elders of this land. The facilitator must acknowledge the local Elders and the Traditional Owners of the Land.

The protocols are:

- Only one person speaks at a time
- That person can expect to be heard without interruption
- Respect for everyone must be shown
- All group members must agree that the yarning is confidential and will only be discussed in that forum
- The group may choose to use a speaking implement however all group members must agree on what that implement is and protocols for its use.

As the facilitator, you should have a clear goal for each session within the Yarning Circle. Associate Professor Dawn Bessarab has identified four categories under which your yarn will generally fall; these are:

- Social yarn
- Research, Work or Topical yarn
- Collaborative yarn, or
- Therapeutic yarn.

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5. RESOURCES

The websites below are in addition to those that already cited throughout the Framework. Please note that these are only a small example of what is available.

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTAR) – Good resource for campaign for Constitutional Recognition <http://antar.org.au/>

Australian Human Rights Commission – Suspension and reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act and special measures in the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/suspension-and-reinstatement-rda-and-special-measures-nter-1>

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies – website has useful links to information about research protocols and ethics, history, literature and family history <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au>

First Peoples Disability Network Australia – provides discussion about disability issues and links to relevant resources <http://www.fpdn.org.au/about-us/board-members>

Gab Titu Cultural Centre – provides information and resources about Torres Strait Islander cultures http://www.gabtitui.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=12

The Healing Foundation – website focuses on providing information and resources about a range of community based initiatives that have been established since The Apology. <http://healingfoundation.org.au/>

Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education – a program of Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. The website provides access to information and resources in the area of Indigenous health education. <http://www.limenetwork.net.au/>

Lowitja O'Donohue Institute – provides substantial resources in the area of health. Literature resource is particularly useful. <http://www.lowitja.org.au/>

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples (Congress) – the national representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples <http://nationalcongress.com.au/>

National Indigenous TV (NITV) – contains numerous links to Indigenous produced stories and documentaries. The website provides access to some programs on demand. <http://www.nitv.org.au/>

ReconciliACTION Network – a network of young people who support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and reconciliation. This website includes an *Online Education Kit* developed by members of ReconciliACTIONnsw, and information about how young people can get actively involved in reconciliation. Excellent teaching resources for social policy, history, law, human rights <http://reconciliaction.org.au/nsw/>. There is also information about welfare quarantining and racial discrimination. <http://reconciliaction.org.au/nsw/recent-issues/welfare-quarantining-and-racial-discrimination/>

Ronin Films has a wide range of Australian documentaries about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. <http://www.roninfilms.com.au/>

Podcasts for social workers Web site provides access to excellent brief interviews about a range of social work practice topics including whiteness. <http://www.podsocs.com/>

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child care website contains excellent resources on child and family welfare. <http://www.snaicc.org.au/>



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