TOWARD AN AUSTRALIAN CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

A narrative review of the literature

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Acknowledgement of Country[1]

Kaurna

Pepe Adelaide tampendi, ngadlu Kaurna yertangga banbabanbalyarnendi (inbarendi). Kaurna meyunna yaitya mattanya Womma Tarndanyako. Parnako yailtya, parnuko tappa purruna, parnuko yerta ngadlu tampendi. Yellaka Kaurna meyunna itto yailtya, tappa purruna, yerta kuma burro martendi, burro warriappendi, burro tangka martulyaiendi.

English

We acknowledge this paper was written on the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and we pay respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today.

[1] Adapted from the Adelaide City Council https://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/community/reconciliation/welcome-and-acknowledgement-of-country/

Preface

This narrative literature review focuses on the theme of culturally responsive pedagogy, with an emphasis on the Australian context. Since the British colonisation of Australia, Aboriginal students have been significantly disadvantaged by an Anglo-European schooling system that requires them to leave their cultural assets at the school gate. After a decade of collective government failure to 'close the gap' on education outcomes for Indigenous students, urgent work is needed to inform the curriculum and pedagogical reform of state and federal jurisdictions. It is not only Aboriginal students who are impacted by Australia's mono-cultural schooling system. With global population movements, Australian classrooms are becoming more culturally diverse. Recent changes in the educational landscape across the nation, including the release of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* in 2011, and the progressive implementation of a new Australian Curriculum since 2014, have challenged contemporary educators to respond to cultural diversity. Yet while ostensibly promoting cultural inclusion, Australian educational policy approaches are in reality directed toward assimilation, standardisation and a narrowing focus on the measurement of prescribed Eurocentric learning outcomes.

Culturally responsive pedagogy, an approach that originated in the context of African American educational disadvantage, has shown promising outcomes among marginalised student populations internationally, yet has received very little attention in Australian educational policy or practice. For the purposes of this review, we use the term culturally responsive pedagogy to refer to those pedagogies that actively value, and mobilise as resources, the cultural repertoires and intelligences that students bring to the learning relationship.

To date, there is no substantial theoretically informed and empirically substantiated Australian version of culturally responsive pedagogy available to Australian educators working in schools, or to those preparing new teachers. While the emphasis of this review is on the educational experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, it is argued that under the current conditions of super-diversity in Australian classrooms, culturally responsive pedagogy offers a hopeful approach to improving the educational experiences of *all* students.

About the authors

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Introduction

Across the land mass that British colonisers called 'Australia', education has a very long history. For at least 65,000 years (Clarkson et al. 2017) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples successfully educated their youth through 'ancestrally perfected ways of learning'(Yunkaporta 2010, p. 48) in order to ensure that each generation was equipped with the knowledges, beliefs and practices that enabled them to prevail across diverse and dynamic ecosystems (Price 2012b; Rigney 2002). In 1788, colonisers arrived at the shores of Australia and claimed it as their own through frontier violence and legalistic sleight of hand. Over the subsequent centuries, proven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies were largely replaced with education systems transplanted from Anglo-European contexts. The 'success' of this education was measured in terms imposed by the colonisers. To this day, and despite considerable effort by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to remediate educational policy and practice, very little has changed (Price 2012b; Rigney 2001, 2002).

As a result of this systemic failure, there remains a stark and unremitting discrepancy between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educational outcomes. By any measure this is an urgent problem, as articulated in a number of key Australian policy texts. For example, the Adelaide Declaration (MCEETYA 1999) and the subsequent Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA 2008) explicitly recognised—on the basis of social justice—the need for Aboriginal students to have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling. Since 2008, The Council of Australian Governments' *Closing the Gap* policy has targeted education among a range of factors (including health, housing, employment and justice) that result in significant disparities in outcomes for Aboriginal peoples when compared with non-Aboriginal Australians. In 2019, Prime Minister Morrison reported to parliament that the *Closing the Gap* targets in relation to school attendance and reading and numeracy were 'not on track' (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2019, p. 10).

Over the past decade, several initiatives have attempted to address the shortcomings of the education system in relation to Aboriginal students. Such initiatives include *What Works*[2], the *Stronger Smarter Institute*[3], *Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy*[4] with partner organisation *Good to Great Schools Australia*[5], and the now defunct *Dare to Lead* program. However, the outcomes have been variable and, in some cases, contested (ACER 2013; Guenther & Osborne in press; Luke et al. 2013; McCollow 2013; Sarra 2017). As yet, little attention has been given to the potential of culturally responsive pedagogies in Australian classrooms.

Drawing upon the foundational works of Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995b) and Geneva Gay (2010), and as a working definition, we use the term culturally responsive pedagogy to refer to those pedagogies that value, and mobilise as resources, the cultural repertoires and

[2] http://www.whatworks.edu.au/dbAction.do?cmd=homePage
[3] https://strongersmarter.com.au/
[4] https://cyaaa.eq.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx
[5] https://goodtogreatschools.org.au/

intelligences that students bring to the learning relationship. Such pedagogies are taken to be intrinsically dialogic and critically conscious, opening up generative and decolonising possibilities. This conceptualisation rests on the premise that all curriculum and pedagogy are culturally based.

According to the national census conducted in 2016, 2.8% of Australians identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples (ABS 2018). While the wider Australian public may erroneously consider Indigenous Australians to comprise a single homogenous group, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples form a quilt of nearly five hundred separate and sovereign nations that cover the entire land' (Rose 2012, p. 72). Of more than 250 distinct languages spoken across Australia at colonisation (Koch & Nordlinger 2014, p. 3), 150 languages remain in current use, with 10% of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples speaking one or more Indigenous Australian language in the home (ABS 2018). This rich cultural and linguistic diversity contrasts vividly with the staunchly mono-cultural and mono-lingual reality of contemporary Australian schooling.

Given that 79% of Aboriginal[6] Australians live in urban areas, and the vast majority of Aboriginal children (83.9 %) receive their education in government schools (ABS 2018), this review focuses on the potential of *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy* (henceforth CRP) to improve the schooling experiences of Aboriginal children attending public schools in metropolitan and regional areas. This metro-centric focus is not intended to imply that CRP is not relevant or important for Aboriginal students attending so-called 'remote' or 'very remote' schools; rather that schools categorised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as 'remote' or 'very remote' are subject to a rather different range of dynamics (in relation to 'very remote' schools, see Guenther, Disbray & Osborne 2016; especially C10 'Contextually and culturally responsive schools'). But, irrespective of where they live, the current reality is that most Aboriginal children will be highly unlikely to encounter an Aboriginal schoolteacher throughout their formal schooling. Only 1.3% of the teaching workforce who have disclosed their demographic status self-identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Willett, Segal & Walford 2014).

Culturally responsive pedagogy—whether named as such or by similar terms—has been shown to be successful in a range of settler-colonial educational contexts. While much of the early work focused on the value of CRP for addressing educational inequities among African American and Latina/o students in the United States, this work was soon extended to First Nations student populations in the United States (Alaska Native Knowledge Network 1998; Castagno & Brayboy 2008), Canada (Lewthwaite & McMillan 2010; Nicol, Archibald & Baker 2010) and New Zealand (Bishop et al. 2007). However, in Australia, there has been limited theorisation or research of CRP, or documentation of CRP in practice. To date, there have been two published literature reviews that encompass the theme of CRP in the Australian context (Krakouer 2015; Perso 2012). Perso's (2012) review is titled *Cultural responsiveness and school education with particular focus on Australia's First Peoples: A*

[6] Henceforth throughout this review, the term 'Aboriginal people' is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

review and synthesis of the literature, however her concept of CRP is predicated on the concept of *cultural competence* used in the sense of service delivery. As we will later argue, this notion of cultural competence is problematic for various reasons, including the current classroom reality of highly diverse student populations. A second literature review in the Australian context, *Literature review relating to the current context and discourse on Indigenous cultural awareness in the teaching space: Critical pedagogies and improving Indigenous learning outcomes through cultural responsiveness* (Krakouer 2015) focuses on cultural competence more so than pedagogy, and is, as acknowledged by the review's author, relatively brief.

Aims

In this review we aim to:

- Review and map the national and international literature from settler colonial countries for rationales, theories and descriptions of practice for CRP
- Identify current understandings of CRP in order to advance theorisations and consider its potential in the Australian context.

This review focusses on the primary and secondary schooling years, although CRP certainly has a role to play in early childhood learning and higher education. Depending on the legislation in specific Australian states or territories, children begin their primary schooling at around age five and remain in the compulsory system until aged 16 or 17. The main focus is on CRP with Aboriginal students in government schools located in metropolitan and some regional areas. However, with more than a quarter (26%) of Australia's population born overseas (ABS 2017), classrooms in metropolitan and some regional areas are becoming 'super-diverse' (D'warte 2016). Therefore, CRP is advanced as a hopeful approach to enhancing the educational experience of *all* students, irrespective of their home cultures. In what follows there is first a brief outline of historical approaches to Aboriginal education, followed by an overview of changing policy approaches over time. The concept of CRP is introduced through an exploration of its key characteristics and challenges as identified in the literature. Finally, the concept of cultural humility is advanced as an alternative to cultural competence which is currently positioned in Australian educational policy as a proxy for CRP.

Method

The peripheral position of culturally responsive pedagogies in Australia and in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders was readily verified by an initial search of the Scopus academic database, which yielded no documents using the key phrases 'culturally responsive pedagogy' OR 'culturally relevant pedagogy' AND 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander'.

The equivalent searches using Google Scholar were more successful, identifying a small cohort of publications. However, on closer inspection, most of these documents made only passing reference to CRP, with some notable exceptions. An examination of the literature referenced in these exceptions suggested that, individually or collectively, the principles underlying CRP may surface in the Australian literature under various designations. This, coupled with the numerous terms encompassed within the 'culturally responsive pedagogy' family, meant that identifying literature for this review involved an iterative and ongoing process of reference harvesting, rather than simple keyword searches. An Endnote database of relevant and more peripheral publications was compiled, including academic journal articles, book chapters, grey literature (reports and working papers, government documents, theses) and websites. Recent works published over the last decade were primarily targeted, with the major exception being foundational works.

Literature that was primarily concerned with remote or very remote Aboriginal schooling in Australia was excluded from the review, due to our interest in CRP in metropolitan and regional settings where the majority of Aboriginal students receive their schooling. Unlike metropolitan and regional schools, remote and very remote schools are usually located on Aboriginal-controlled lands and serve specific Aboriginal communities. Schools are often small and have high enrolments of Aboriginal students (Guenther & Bat 2013) and 'nearly all of the students will speak local languages before English' (Guenther et al. 2016, p. 48). Remote and very remote schools are thus characteristically unlike their urban counterparts across various parameters.

While we were particularly interested in the concept and practice of CRP in the Australian context, and with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, this review is also informed by a rich international literature on CRP with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. It should be noted that the literature search identified relatively few publications from Europe; this may be because the English-only search missed a body of literature written in European languages. Alternatively, it could indicate that CRP research and practice has not yet penetrated European educational systems. Given the multicultural demographic profile of contemporary Britain, a scarcity of British literature on CRP was surprising.

The review is arranged in three main sections. In Section 1, we frame the context of Aboriginal education in Australia from the early days of British colonisation to the present. We outline the changing policy mechanisms that have shaped governmental approaches to Aboriginal education, irrespective of the needs and concerns of Aboriginal communities. Section 2 introduces culturally responsive pedagogy and positions it among related concepts, particularly multicultural education and culture-based learning. We consider how CRP surfaces in the Australian and international literature in relation to students, teachers and school leadership. Although CRP has a role to play in all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum, an investigation of the local literature exposes significant gaps in the theory and practice of CRP at the subject level when compared to the equivalent international literature. In Section 3 we discuss perceived or actual challenges that limit the uptake and/or impact of

CRP in classrooms, schools and broader education systems. Significant to these challenges is the neoliberal focus on educational standardisation, high stakes testing and narrow understandings of educational success. In a brief conclusion, we argue that CRP holds considerable yet largely unexplored promise for all students, and particularly those who have been marginalised by Anglo-centric education systems.

The scope of this review does not cover *all* themes that may be of interest to educators. For example, we do not discuss the burgeoning literature on spiritually responsive pedagogies (including Aronson, Amatullah & Laughter 2016; Dallavis 2011; Gambrell 2017; Hoque 2018; Lingley 2016). While several authors consider culturally responsive classroom 'management' (Darvin 2018; Gay 2006; Llewellyn, Lewthwaite & Boon 2016; Savage 2010), and culturally responsive assessment (CREA n.d.; Fyhn et al. 2016; Houghton 2015; Klenowski 2009), these themes are not covered in this review. In addition, the issue of culturally responsive and inclusive classrooms (Cartledge & Kourea 2008; Ford, Stuart & Vakil 2014; Shealey, McHatton & Wilson 2011; Waitoller & King Thorius 2016) is not discussed. We therefore do not claim that this literature review is exhaustive; rather, it provides an introduction to the diverse approaches that inform CRP in local, national and international contexts.

Section 1: Aboriginal education in the Australian context

Socio-historical context

By any criteria, the Australian education system has served Aboriginal peoples poorly. It was—and continues to be—based on a Eurocentric model of schooling that aligns all pedagogy and curriculum to the cultural norms and values of the colonisers, imposing top down 'solutions' on Aboriginal peoples with little or no consideration of Aboriginal voices, or the needs, values, interests and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples.

Historically, the earliest colonial efforts to educate Aboriginal children were intended to 'civilise' them by inculcating European values and Christianity (Beresford 2012, p. 3). With a few rare exceptions, the colonists held pervasively deficit views of Aboriginal peoples, based on theories of social Darwinism (Fogarty, Lovell & Dodson 2015). As a result of genocidal acts of violence and dispossession (Reynolds 2001), it was predicted that Aboriginal peoples would soon disappear:

> The keen desire there is for an absolute white Australia would seem to have strong aid from Nature so far as the aboriginal race [sic] is concerned. In a few years the 'happy hunting ground' in the unseen country will have claimed them all. (The Aboriginal dying out 1908, p. 4)

These deterministic and racialised deficit views played out in the educational opportunities offered to Aboriginal children. When compulsory public schooling was introduced in the fledgling British colony of New South Wales (Public Instruction Act 1880) the protests of Anglo-European parents soon led to the exclusion of Aboriginal children and their marginalisation to separate Aboriginal schools, a situation that was to continue at least until the 1950s (De Plevitz 2007, p. 55), and even as recently as 1972 in some jurisdictions (see Cadzow 2007, p. 27 in relation to NSW). At these schools, the curriculum offered was designed 'to develop the boys into capable farm laborers, and the girls into domestic servants' (Teaching the Aborigines 1914). When one group dominates another on the basis of their purported 'racial' superiority, all systems, institutions, laws, values and knowledges of the minority are jeopardised, erased and/or replaced with those of the dominant. In colonial Australia, the educational rationale was underpinned by racist beliefs about Anglo-European intellectual superiority:

> Up till recent times the syllabus set for the blacks was the same as that for white children, - and it has been realised that to expect the young aborigines [sic] to attain this standard is to expect what is altogether beyond their mental capacity. (Teaching the Aborigines 1914)

By the late nineteenth century, it was becoming clear that earlier predictions that Aboriginal peoples would completely disappear were overstated: 'although the full descent Indigenous population was declining, the mixed descent population was increasing' (HREOC 1997, p. 24). Aboriginal children of 'mixed' descent now became the targets of forcible removal in

the belief that they would ultimately 'merge' with the non-Aboriginal population and thereby lose their Aboriginal identity (HREOC 1997, p. 24). Policies of forced removal were enacted in all jurisdictions, and persisted in some regions until the 1970s; the tragic consequences of these brutal practices are experienced by Australian Aboriginal peoples to this day (HREOC 1997).

By 1951, the assimilation of all Aboriginal peoples into Anglo-Australian culture had become official national policy, stripping Aboriginal peoples of their rights to express their culture, practices and beliefs:

> The policy of assimilation means in the view of all Australian governments that all aborigines and part-aborigines [*sic*] are expected eventually to attain the same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, *observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians*. (Commonwealth and State Ministers 1961, p. 1, emphasis added)

Education was seen as mechanism to 'nullify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and identity' (Stone, Walter & Peacock 2017, p. 93) and its exploitation as an instrument of assimilation was unashamedly sanctioned in official policy:

> A major instrument of assimilation is education of aboriginal [*sic*] children. There has been a marked increase in the extent and range of facilities available and this trend should be continued. (Commonwealth and State Ministers 1961, p. 4)

Nationally, assimilation policy was not formally revoked until 1977. As argued by Rigney (2001), 'Indigenous Australian systems of knowledge, governance, economy and education were replaced by non-Indigenous Australian systems on the assumption that the 'race' of Indigenous peoples were sub-humans, and thus had no such systems in place prior to the invasion the price of inclusion for Aboriginal people has been the exclusion of their own identity' (p. 4). Indigenous peoples now function in a system that has been fundamental to their own oppression, because there is no other choice (p. 4).

Contemporary context

It would be a mistake to believe that the racism underpinning the educational services offered to Australian Aboriginal peoples has been relegated to the past. A recent survey of 755 Aboriginal Victorians found that 97% had experienced at least one incident of racism in the preceding year, including 81.9% who were treated as less intelligent or inferior to other Australians, and 50.9% who experienced racism in an educational setting (such as school or university) (Ferdinand, Paradies & Kelaher 2013). These attitudes are reflected in contemporary education at epistemological, systemic, institutional and interpersonal levels (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson 2016). To this day, educational policies are overtly or covertly underpinned by deficit views of Aboriginal learners and their cultures, families and communities. For example, the percentage of Aboriginal students enrolled at a school is a

negative factor in the calculation of ACARA's (2011) Index for Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) (for further discussions of recent policies, see Hogarth 2017; Maxwell, Lowe & Salter 2018; Spillman 2017). In the classroom, the differential treatment of Aboriginal students can surface as 'racism by cotton wool', where teachers 'go soft' on Aboriginal students through different behavioural expectations, standards of work and grading, as a form of 'silent apartheid' (Rose 2012, p. 71).

Given this socio-historical positioning and the intergenerational nature of educational disadvantage, it is hardly surprising that some Aboriginal children are seen as 'unsuccessful' in a schooling system in which 'educational outcomes are measured against their degree of conformity to recognisably White indicators' (Moodie 2017, p. 35). Structural racism in education has been replicated internationally in other settler-colonial nations including United States, Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand. Policy attempts to ameliorate the academic 'underachievement' of Indigenous peoples have a long and chequered history and, to date, have largely failed to address the concerns of Indigenous communities.

Policy context

The policy context of Aboriginal education in Australia operates at both State/Territory and Commonwealth levels. While Australian states and territories are responsible for the education of school-aged children, the Commonwealth Government plays a role at a national policy level. In addition, the Commonwealth government has special responsibilities in relation to the education and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (ABS 2012). Policy failures in relation to Aboriginal education can therefore be attributed at both State/Territory and Commonwealth levels.

Internationally, an entrenched failure to meet the educational rights and needs of Indigenous students is characteristic of settler-colonial contexts. Recent reports confirm thatlarge discrepancies remain between Indigenous and non-Indigenous schooling experiences and outcomes in Canada (Parkin 2015), the United States (Executive Office of the President 2014), and Australia (Turnbull 2018). As will be discussed later, New Zealand has made some notable progress in responding to the educational needs of Māori students, although more work remains to be done (Office of the Auditor-General NZ 2016).

According to Gray and Beresford (2008), 'Australia "discovered" the problem of profound educational disadvantage among its Indigenous people in the late 1960s' (p. 197). Since then, national approaches to address this disadvantage have been ample in rhetoric but scant on outcomes. The earliest Australia-wide policy to address educational disparity, the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (DEET 1989), advanced 21 long-term goals grouped under the laudable headings 'Involvement of Aboriginal people in educational decision making', 'Equality of access to educational services', 'Equity of educational participation' and 'Equitable and appropriate educational outcomes'. Over the next three decades, Commonwealth policy was regularly repackaged in a variety of guises

(see, for example, Education Council 2015; MCEECDYA 2011; MCEETYA 1995, 2006). Some of these documents referred, at least rhetorically, to the central role of culture in the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. For instance, the role of culture in the successful education of culturally diverse students was acknowledged in the *National Statement of Principles and Standards for more Culturally Inclusive Schooling in the 21st Century* (MCEETYA 2000) which asserted the rights of Aboriginal students 'to be strong in their own culture and language'.

More recently, 'motherhood' policy statements have been supplemented with more specific strategies that target teachers and the content they deliver in the classroom. Following from the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008), Australia has introduced a national curriculum which includes *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* as one of three cross-curriculum priorities (CCPs) (ACARA n.d.-a). One of the goals of this strategy is to 'help teachers to understand, respect and represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world views and encourage culturally responsive practices in every school community' (ACARA n.d.-a, p. 1). Teachers are also expected to incorporate seven 'general capabilities' into each learning area of the national curriculum; one of these general capabilities is intercultural understanding (ACARA 2013). The *Australian Curriculum* is complemented by the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL 2011) which requires teachers to know strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Focus Area 1.4) and to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Focus Area 2.4). In addition to these national initiatives, State education departments have promulgated their own policies intended to improve the educational experiences of Australian students (see, for example, DECD 2013; Education Queensland 2011; WA Department of Education 2015).

Yet despite these directives, Commonwealth and State governments are still failing to uphold their obligations to provide Aboriginal students with a culturally and linguistically appropriate education. These obligations were formalised in 2009 when Australia became a signatory to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN General Assembly 2007). And after 10 years of *Closing the Gap* policy (COAG 2008) targeting education among other key priorities intended to ameliorate specific disparities between Australian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, most of the educational parameters remain off track (Caccetta 2018). As Brown (2019) notes, the colonial process has normalised educational inequality and has positioned disadvantage as an inherent part of Aboriginality (p. 56).

Furthermore, irrespective of the intent of policy reforms, there can be a wide gulf between the educational policy rhetoric and actual policy enactment in schools and classrooms (Maguire, Braun & Ball 2015). For example, in their study of schools in New South Wales and Queensland, Phillips and Luke (2017) reported that the current policy imperative to

embed 'Indigenous perspectives' in the curriculum[7] was 'already leading to confused or unanticipated and incoherent classroom experiences' (p. 984) and that some teachers' efforts were resulting in 'misrepresentation, misunderstanding, and the negative positioning of Indigenous students in classrooms (p. 993). Likewise, in a study of 12 primary schools in New South Wales, Harrison and Greenfield (2011) found that:

> Students are not learning *Aboriginal* views or perspectives, rather they are learning about their *non-Aboriginal* teacher's perspective on Aboriginal Australia. They are learning their teacher's meta-narrative *about* Aboriginal people. (p. 70, emphasis in original)

Indeed, in the absence of appropriate professional learning, resources and background knowledge, some teachers avoid the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* CCP altogether (Booth & Allen 2017; Salter & Maxwell 2016). In relation to the *Australian Teacher Professional Standards* 1.4 and 2.4, many teachers are acutely aware that they lack the knowledge and confidence to address the Standards appropriately (Buxton 2017). Furthermore, the Standards can be enacted in ways that essentialise Aboriginal peoples as cultural artefacts, while erasing Aboriginal peoples' concerns regarding sovereignty, politics and history (Moodie & Patrick 2017).

The contemporary Aboriginal education policy context is set against a pervasive policy regime of neoliberalism. In education, neoliberalism surfaces in the form of curricular commodification and standardisation, decontextualisation, hyper-accountability, high-stakes testing and increased state control over how student 'achievement' is measured (Patrick & Moodie 2016; Royal & Gibson 2017; Sleeter 2011; Smyth 2010). Students' educational performance, assessment, attainment and treatment in schools is sociologically and historically decontextualised (Slater & Griggs 2015, p. 443). Such processes have been found to result in 'pedagogies of indifference' which lack intellectual demand and fail to value the cultural (and other) differences of students (Lingard & Keddie 2013). Connell notes the impact of neoliberalism on educating for diversity:

> Since the system of tests and examinations measures a set of skills and performances defined within the dominant Anglo upper-middle-class practices of living, the school system's capacity for cultural and class diversity is quietly but powerfully constricted … Teachers' capacity to make autonomous judgment about curriculum and pedagogy in the interests of their actual pupils is undermined by the system of remote control. (Connell 2013, pp. 107-108)

Neoliberalism subverts educational social justice by holding minoritised individuals and communities responsible for their own marginalisation; and invests instead in deficit policies that problematise the 'Other' (Burgess & Evans 2017, p. 10). In effect, this

[7] 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives integrated within the curriculum refers to explicit curriculum content about Indigenous people, place and story' (Buckskin et al. 2009, p. 47).

> assigns Indigenous children and families to a never-ending game of 'catch-up' with little regard for their strengths, perspectives and aspirations. In doing so it replicates the unequal power relations of the colonial agenda. (Spillman 2017, p. 140)

In education, neoliberal policies produce 'a very skewed and distorted distribution of who is able to access and benefit from education' (Smyth, Down & McInerney 2014, p. 4). Indeed, neoliberalism can be understood as a contemporary manifestation of colonialism (Pirbhai-Illich, Pete & Martin 2017; Tuck 2013), with all the assimilatory force of earlier policy approaches, albeit in a less blatant guise (Lingard, Creagh & Vass 2012). And while Australian educational policy documents bemoan the underachievement of Aboriginal students when compared with their non-Aboriginal peers, this is framed in terms of thwarted national economic potential, rather than the imperative of social justice and self-determination for Aboriginal peoples (Salter & Maxwell 2016, p. 301).

Internationally, neoliberal educational policies have been shown to be intimately linked with race and racism (see, for example, Au 2016; Gillborn 2014; Kohli, Pizarro & Nevárez 2017; Meshulam & Apple 2014). In the United States, Kohli et al. (2017) identify 'a new form of educational racism that is masked by equity language and driven by capitalist, market driven goals' (p. 189). Under neoliberalism, racism and culture are treated as if they do not exist (Sleeter 2011, p. 8). In the Australian schooling sector, this plays out in a range of scenarios, from systemic and institutional racism (Booth & Allen 2017; Daniels-Mayes 2016; Vass 2013), to deficit 'achievement gap' discourses that refuse to engage in decolonising approaches to Aboriginal education (Lingard et al. 2012), right through to the daily experiences Aboriginal children in classrooms and schoolyards (Biddle & Priest 2014; Priest et al. 2017). As Lowe et al. (2014) note, 'policy discourse does not contend with racism, the dominance of a Eurocentric perspective within curriculum and the low expectations afforded to Indigenous students by educational staff ' (p. 76).

Yet despite a plethora of policies that deflect responsibility for equitable educational outcomes away from the policies themselves, Aboriginal students, families and their communities are clear when asked what they want from the Australian schooling system. Aboriginal students seek—amongst other things—positive, authentic and mutually respectful relationships with their teachers (Donovan 2015; Godfrey et al. 2001; Herbert 2012; Lewthwaite et al. 2015; Rahman 2010), culturally safe spaces (Donovan 2015), recognition and valuing of Aboriginal identity and culture (Donovan 2015; Lewthwaite et al. 2017), and an ethos of high expectations as opposed to deficit views of Aboriginal people (Lewthwaite et al. 2015; Rahman 2010).

Clearly, Australian education policy, both past and present, has persistently favoured the Anglo-Australian population while marginalising the Australian Aboriginal population. In their recent analysis of Aboriginal education policy discourses in Australia, Patrick and Moodie (2016) suggest, 'rather than persisting with policy agendas that have proven ineffective over the past 50 or more years, a reframing and rethinking is needed' (p. 180). As Stone, Walter and Peacock (2017) note in relation to the education of Aboriginal Tasmanian

students, ‘Continuing the status quo is not a policy option’ (p. 106). Into this policy mire, we advance the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Section 2: Culturally responsive pedagogy: Literature

Culturally responsive pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that uses 'the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively' (Gay 2002, p. 106). CRP is broadly aligned with various theories and practices of multicultural teaching, equity pedagogy, sociocultural teaching, and social justice teaching (Sleeter 2011, 2012). To add terminological complexity, the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy is captured by a range of expressions, each with their own nuances and histories. Table 1 indicates just some of the terminology that was encountered during the preparation of this review.

Table 1: Synonyms and near synonyms for *culturally responsive pedagogy*

Term	**Example**
Culturally ambitious teaching practices	Waddell (2014)
Culturally centered pedagogy	Sheets (1995)
Culturally compatible education	Tharp (1989)
Culturally competent teaching	Johnson and Alkins (2009)
Culturally and contextually responsive schooling	Guenther (2015)
Culturally inclusive education	Thaman (2001)
Culturally inclusive pedagogy	O'Rourke et al. (2009)
Culturally proficient teaching	Debnam et al. (2015)
Culturally reflective education	Milgate, Purdie and Bell (2011)
Culturally relevant education	Aronson and Laughter (2016)
Culturally relevant pedagogy	Ladson-Billings (1995b)
Culturally relevant teaching	Ladson-Billings (1992)
Culturally responsible pedagogy	Pewewardy (1994)
Culturally responsive education	Cazden and Leggett (1976)
Culturally responsive instruction	Powell et al. (2016)
Culturally responsive pedagogy	Villegas (1991)
Culturally responsive schooling	Castagno and Brayboy (2008)
Culturally responsive teaching	Gay (2002)
Culturally sensitive pedagogy	McGee Banks and Banks (1995)
Culturally sustaining pedagogy	Paris (2012)
Culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy	McCarty and Lee (2014)
Socio-culturally responsive teaching	Lee and Quijada Cerecer (2010)

This terminological diversity has been noted elsewhere (see, for example, Krakouer 2015; López 2016), and three variants in particular have come under discussion. Milner (2017) noted that the constructs culturally *relevant* pedagogy and culturally *responsive* pedagogy are sometimes used interchangeably, 'without differentiating nuances embedded in each framework.' (p. 23). Howard and Rodriguez-Minkoff (2017) assert:

> As practitioners and researchers continue to make nuanced distinctions between relevance and responsiveness where culture and teaching are concerned, we believe such efforts are counterproductive. Both approaches emphasize similar ideas with comparable goals, and whatever differences exist between the two are minimal at best. (p. 8)

Culturally *sustaining* pedagogy extends the concepts of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy by seeking 'to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling' (Paris 2012, p. 93). The expression *culturally sustaining pedagogy* has gained traction in a recent volume edited by Paris and Alim (2017) and has been endorsed by Gloria Ladson-Billings (2017), one of the progenitors of culturally responsive pedagogy. In this review, we use *culturally responsive pedagogy* (CRP) while acknowledging that changing contexts warrant the use of alternative expressions of similar meaning.

While the term *multicultural education* is sometimes used interchangeably with culturally responsive pedagogy (Sleeter 2011, p. 16), it is important to make a distinction between the two concepts, while also acknowledging their shared historical foundations. Multicultural education pre-dates CRP and can be traced to the civil rights struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. At that time, educational institutions in the United States were identified by African American activists as powerful sites of racial oppression (Gorski 1999). Over subsequent decades, multicultural education was framed as a promising mechanism to reduce educational and social injustice. In practice, however, the emancipatory goals of multicultural education have been largely subverted. Multiculturalism in schools has been watered down and trivialised through simplistic folkloric celebrations of ethnic food, clothing and holidays (Kim & Slapac 2015, p. 18). In Australia, according to Harbon and Moloney (2015, p. 17), multicultural education—while always including an anti-racist element—never had the strong social justice goals of the United States and has never really encompassed Aboriginal peoples (Allan & Hill 1995). Canadian multicultural education discourses have actually further marginalised Indigenous peoples by eliding vital issues of sovereignty and colonisation (St. Denis 2011). In the United States, as early as the 1990s, there was a growing awareness that multicultural education was becoming disconnected from its activist roots (Sleeter 1996) and was failing to disrupt the unequal distribution of power that infests colonial educational systems; multicultural education was already 'but a shadow of its conceptual self' (Ladson-Billings 1998, p. 22). Neoliberal interests have, according to Dunn (2017, p. 367) 'co-opt[ed] the discourse of multicultural education for their own gain'. While critical manifestations of multicultural education (May & Sleeter 2010) have been advanced as alternative frameworks, multicultural education has, according to Castagno (2014, p. 47), 'become a weasel word to denote something that has to do with diversity in educational

contexts but that fails to address inequity'. Referring to multicultural education in Australia, Williams (2014) cautions:

> Through 'multiculturalism' Australian Indigenous people are in danger of being grouped with migrants who came to Australia after British colonization … In other words, there is a danger that the distinctiveness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures can be 'diluted' or 'lost' amongst the plethora of other cultures that exist currently within Australian schools. This could be an unintended consequence of multiculturalism on account of its 'umbrella' or all-encompassing effect. Or alternatively it could be an intended consequence of multiculturalism, where dominant social groups deliberately use multiculturalism for the purpose of assimilation. (p. 311)

A further distinction can be made between culturally responsive pedagogy, multicultural education, and *culture-based education*. Whereas multicultural education is 'designed to meet the cultural as well as academic needs of the different student racial or ethnic groups served by a school or system', culture-based education is 'designed to meet the needs of a specific cultural or ethnic group of students' (Demmert Jr 2011, p. 2). To varying degrees, culture-based education uses the home language(s) of the students in the classroom and/or teaches the home language as a subject in the curriculum. It could be argued that the education systems of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are essentially culture-based as they are designed to meet the needs of Anglo-Celtic students by emphasising Anglo-Celtic culture, knowledges and values, and using English as the language of instruction. Culture-based education for Indigenous students has produced positive outcomes in terms of school engagement and connectedness, socio-emotional wellbeing, civic responsibility and/or achievement among Native Hawaiian students (Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward & Jensen 2010; Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward & Malone 2017), First Nations Canadian students (Bell 2013), Māori students in language immersion schools (Bishop, Berryman & Ricardson 2002), Sàmi students in Norway (Fyhn et al. 2016) and Native American students in the United States (Alaska Native Knowledge Network 1998; Demmert Jr 2011; Demmert Jr & Towner 2003; Watahomigie & McCarty 1994). By focussing on specific ethno-cultural student groups, culture-based education has a narrower ambit than culturally responsive pedagogy; we argue that culture-based education is a particular category of culturally responsive pedagogy. Or, phrased differently, all culture-based education should be culturally responsive, but not all culturally responsive pedagogies are culture-based in the sense of being designed to meet the needs of a single specific cultural or ethnic group of students. Given this rather subtle distinction, the terms culture-based education and culturally responsive pedagogy are sometimes used interchangeably without further qualification (see, for example, Brayboy & Castagno 2009; Nicol et al. 2010; Reyhner & Singh 2013). In Australia, successful bilingual culture-based educational programmes have been conducted in remote and very remote Aboriginal community-controlled schools, where they are often called 'both-ways' or 'two-ways' programmes (see, for example, Disbray 2014; Yunupiŋgu 1989).

CRP is essentially constructivist in orientation (Morrison, Robbins & Rose 2008), and draws on Vygotskian understandings of sociocultural learning (Boon & Lewthwaite 2016; Taylor &

Sobel 2011) whereby learning is conceived a 'socially mediated process and related to students' cultural experiences' (Irvine 2010, p. 58). Like multicultural education, CRP arose in the context of the civil rights movement in the USA (Pirbhai-Illich et al. 2017, p. 4), which drew attention to the educational inequities experienced by students of colour and the need for teachers to attend to diverse ways of knowing, thinking, and communicating (Howard & Rodriguez-Minkoff 2017, p. 5).

During the mid-1990s, foundational works by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992, 1994, 1995b) brought CRP into the spotlight by presenting a cogent rejection of deficit discourses, based on her own research of successful cross-cultural teachers and on educational and anthropological scholarship that had been emerging throughout the preceding decade (see, for example, Au & Jordan 1981; Cazden & Leggett 1976; Erickson 1987). While Ladson-Billings' focus was on the educational experiences of African American students, the concept of CRP has proven applicable to other minoritised student populations, including Indigenous, immigrant and refugee students. For a more detailed understanding of the genesis of CRP in general, see Howard and Rodriguez-Minkoff (2017) and Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011). Castagno and Brayboy (2008) trace the history of CRP in relation to Indigenous students in the United States. In the Australian context, early references to CRP include Osborne (1991, 1996) and Hudsmith (1992).

Gloria Ladson-Billings has articulated three principles that underpin CRP: (a) a focus on student learning, (b) developing students' cultural competence, and (c) supporting their critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings 2017, p. 142). Other scholars have expanded on these principles. Summarising from Gay (2010), Aronson and Laughter (2016, p. 165) characterise the culturally responsive teachers as:

- socially and academically empowering by setting high expectations for students with a commitment to every student's success
- multidimensional, because they engage [students'] cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions, and perspectives
- validating of every student's culture, bridging gaps between school and home through diversified instructional strategies and multicultural curricula
- socially, emotionally, and politically comprehensive as they seek to educate the whole child
- transformative of schools and societies by using students' existing strengths to drive instruction, assessment, and curriculum design
- emancipatory and liberating from oppressive educational practices.

Unlike multicultural education, CRP has a robust and unapologetic political dimension (Howard & Rodriguez-Minkoff 2017; Ladson-Billings 2006; Sleeter 2012) that speaks back to hegemonic educational discourses:

> ... we define a culturally responsive pedagogy as an approach to teaching and learning that addresses the sociopolitical context of White supremacy within education and society over time while simultaneously fostering students' abilities to achieve high levels of academic success and cultural competence. (Hayes & Juárez 2012, p. 4)

It should be noted that the intention of CRP is not to *replace* the educational codes of the 'dominant' society, but rather to *augment* them (Brayboy & Castagno 2009, p. 37). If, as Delpit (1988) argues, the 'culture of power' is enacted in the classroom, then all students need access to the implicit codes that underpin access to that power. Students from marginalised cultures need teachers who can help them 'understand the value of the code they already possess as well as to understand the power realities' in operation, 'otherwise they will be unable to work to change these realities' (Delpit 1988, p. 293). This view is shared by Ladson-Billings (2006) in her discussion of CRP:

> Teachers have an obligation to expose students to the very culture that oppresses them. That may seem paradoxical, but without the skills and knowledge of the dominant culture, students are unlikely to be able to engage that culture to effect meaningful change. (p. 36)

In arguing for culturally responsive teaching, Gay (2015) notes:

> no ethnic group should have exclusive power, or total cultural and political dominion over others, even if it is a numerical majority. Rather, ethnic, racial, cultural, social, and linguistic pluralism is considered as a natural attribute of humankind, as a fundamental feature of the democratic ethos (whether as an ethic of community living or a structure of government), and as a necessary component of quality education in both national and international contexts. (p. 125)

The child's right to his or her own cultural identity, language and values is codified in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN General Assembly 1989). Furthermore, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN General Assembly 2007) codify the rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain and revitalise their culture, control their education systems, receive a state education without discrimination and, where possible, access an education in their own culture and language (under Articles 13, 14 and 15). However, the right to a culturally responsive education is frequently denied Indigenous peoples by colonial and settler governments (Reyhner & Singh 2013; UN Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues 2014).

Key characteristics of CRP

Since the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy was first advanced, various scholars have developed frameworks to capture their understandings of the key characteristics of culturally responsive teachers and curriculum. Table 2 compares these frameworks.

Table 2: Frameworks for culturally responsive pedagogy (adapted from Brown, 2007, p. 59)

Culturally responsive teachers:	
Ladson-Billings (1995a)	support students to experience academic success
	support students to develop and/or maintain cultural competence
	support students to develop a critical consciousness
Wlodowski & Ginsberg (1995)	create learning atmospheres in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another
	create favourable dispositions toward the learning experience through personal relevance and choice
	create challenging, thoughtful learning experiences that include student perspectives and values
	create an understanding that students are effective in learning something they value
Gay (2002)	develop a cultural diversity knowledge base
	design culturally relevant curricula
	demonstrate cultural caring, and build a learning community
	establish cross-cultural communications
	establish cultural congruity in classroom instruction
Villegas & Lucas (2002)	are socioculturally conscious
	have affirming attitudes toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds
	have the commitment and skills to act as agents of change
	have constructivist views of learning
	know about the lives of their students and use that knowledge to give them access to learning
Culturally responsive curriculum:	
Abdal-Haqq (1994)	capitalises on students' cultural backgrounds rather than attempting to override or negate them
	benefits all students
	is integrated and interdisciplinary
	is authentic, child-centred, and connected to the child's real life.
	develops critical thinking skills
	incorporates strategies that utilise cooperative learning and whole language instruction, include self-esteem building, and recognise multiple intelligences and diverse learning styles
	is supported by appropriate staff development
	is a part of a coordinated, building-wide strategy

In a synthesis of 45 classroom-based research studies, Morrison and colleagues (2008) investigated how teachers operationalise Ladson-Billings' (1995b) understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. Their findings are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Enacting culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom (from Morrison et al. 2008)

High academic expectations:
modeling, scaffolding, and clarification of challenging curriculum
using students' strengths as instructional starting points
investing and taking personal responsibility for students' success
creating and nurturing cooperative environments
high behavioural expectations
Cultural competence (of students):
reshaping the prescribed curriculum
building on students' funds of knowledge.
encouraging relationships between school and communities
Critical consciousness:
critical literacy
engaging students in social justice work
making explicit the power dynamics of mainstream society
sharing power in the classroom

For clarification, in the literature reviewed culturally responsive pedagogy is *not:*

- Cultural celebration in the absence of substantive pedagogical reform
- An approach that applies to only certain parts of the curriculum
- An approach that applies on only certain days of the school year
- An approach that essentialises culture
- The same as 'Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum' (Education Queensland 2011; WA Department of Education n.d.)
- The same as cultural competence
- Readily transmitted to pre-service and in-service teachers via one-off professional learning workshops
- Readily reduced to a checklist of 'dos' and 'don'ts'
- A silver bullet that can effortlessly reverse longstanding deficits in educational service to Aboriginal peoples

Each of these issues will be articulated in more detail throughout the review. In the following sections, we elaborate on some of the principles of CRP that have recurred in our own readings of the international and national literature.

High expectations: The premise that teacher expectations can influence student outcomes was first advanced 50 years ago by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). Although that early study came under critique, a substantial body of subsequent research adds credence to proposition that teacher expectations influence both student outcomes and student's own beliefs about themselves, and that the effects of these expectations accumulate over time (for recent discussions, see Danişman 2017; Murdock-Perriera & Sedlacek 2018). In settler-colonial societies, persistent deficit stereotypes of Indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups can be replicated in the classroom and influence both teacher and student expectations of academic achievement and behaviour (Sarra et al. 2018). In metropolitan Western Canada, Riley and Ungerleider (2012, p. 319) found that teachers' judgements of hypothetical Aboriginal students influenced their decisions to place them in remedial, standard or advanced classes. A New Zealand study reported that teachers held deficit beliefs and low expectations of Maori and Pasifika students, while simultaneously placing responsibility for achievement gaps with students, parents and home background (Turner, Rubie-Davies & Webber 2015). In Australia, Dandy et al. (2015) found that pre-service teachers, teachers and students hold beliefs about achievement that match community stereotypes: 'Asian students were expected to perform better in mathematics and to study harder than Anglo-Australian and Aboriginal students, and in turn Anglo-Australian students were expected to perform better in mathematics than Aboriginal students' (pp. 77-78). Their research also suggested that pre-service teachers form these stereotypes prior to any classroom experience. Sarra and colleagues (2018, p. 2) argue that Australian society has conditioned educators to have low expectations of Aboriginal students, which is experienced as a pervasive form of racism (Lowe et al. 2014, p. 71).

Since its inception, CRP has spoken back to deficit discourses 'which presume educational disparity is caused by inability and/or lack of effort on the part of children and their parents' (Stone et al. 2017, p. 93). According to Ford and Grantham (2003), 'deficit thinking exists when educators hold negative, stereotypic, and counterproductive views about culturally diverse students and lower their expectations of these students accordingly' (p. 217). Deficit discourses pathologise the 'Other' and are powerful hegemonic tools used by colonisers to govern, regulate, manage, or marginalise minorities (Shields, Bishop & Mazawi 2005, p. x). Howard and Rodriguez-Minkoff (2017) consider deficit thinking as 'perhaps the biggest obstacle to a more authentic manifestation of culturally relevant teaching in schools and classrooms' (p. 24). Nevertheless, developing a classroom culture of high expectations is not without complexity. In their study of professional development for CRP in New Zealand, Hynds and colleagues (2011) found that some teachers 'were challenged to develop high expectations alongside positive relationships, rather than one being at the expense of the other' (p. 348). Keddie and her colleagues (2013, p. 104) refer to a pedagogy of 'caring'—culturally responsive pedagogy that combines social support with high expectations.

As mentioned previously, in Australia there remains a pervasive deficit view of Aboriginal students and their academic potential. A study of Queensland schools published by Phillips and Luke (2017) confirmed that Aboriginal peoples 'continue to be viewed and "treated" through the lens and language of cultural, intellectual and moral "deficit"' (p. 960), and that this deficit discourse manifests as either paternalism or victim-blaming (p. 268). According to Spillman (2017, p 137), a recent major governmental review of Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory is framed almost entirely in deficit views of Indigenous children and their families. Deficit models presume that disparities in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are caused by a lack of ability and/or effort on the part of students and their parents (Stone et al. 2017, p. 93). As Santoro (2009) notes, when teachers see students (and their families) as 'the problem' (p. 38), they are unlikely to interrogate their own schooling practices or discourses that marginalise some students. This deficit view 'resides deep in the educational practitioner's psyche, built up by years of sustained negative imagery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' (Rose 2012, pp. 75-76) leading to low expectations which are 'communicated informally through the curriculum, the school design and the organisational structure' (Yunkaporta & McGinty 2009, p. 70).

The literature on CRP and high expectations is not confined to the academic dimensions of schooling. Several scholars have discussed high expectations in terms of classroom interaction (for example, mutual trust, respect and co-operation), and the implications this may have for classroom 'management' (Bondy et al. 2007; Brown 2003; Gay 2006; Hershfeldt et al. 2009; Kostis & Efthymia 2009; Llewellyn et al. 2016; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke & Curran 2004).

There is no doubt that Aboriginal communities, parents and students want and expect educators to have high expectations for achievement and interaction in school (Buckskin 2012; Burgess & Berwick 2009; Lewthwaite et al. 2015). However, Aboriginal students should not have to choose between academic success on the one hand, and their Aboriginal identity and cultural knowledge-base on the other (Price 2012a, p. 17; Vass 2018, p. 95).

Quality relationships: The nurturing of trusting, respectful and caring relationships—between students and teachers, between students and their peers, and between teachers and the families and communities of students—is considered a vital element of CRP. 'The point of culturally responsive teaching is to *respond* to students in ways that build and sustain meaningful, positive relationships' (Shevalier & McKenzie 2012, p. 1091) The need for caring and supportive pedagogical relationships between Indigenous youth and their teachers has been identified in many settler colonial contexts, including the United States (Alaska Department of Education & Early Development 2012; Castagno & Brayboy 2008; Klump & McNeir 2005) and Canada (Lewthwaite et al. 2013; Lewthwaite & McMillan 2010; Oskineegish 2014). In New Zealand, teachers' development of extended family-like relationships (*Whanaungatanga*) with Māori students has been shown to be necessary and foundational in reducing disparities in educational outcomes (Bishop, Ladwig & Berryman 2014). Stressing the importance of these relationships, the researchers have named this

approach a *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations* (Bishop et al. 2007). In studies that have investigated the understandings of quality teaching held by Australian Aboriginal students and families, trust between teachers and students, and authentic community engagement were recurring themes (Burgess & Berwick 2009; Burgess & Evans 2017; Daniels-Mayes 2016; Godfrey et al. 2001; Munns, O'Rourke & Bodkin-Andrews 2013).

***Diversity as an asset*:** CRP is an asset-based pedagogy (Alim & Paris 2017; Borrero & Sanchez 2017; Howard & Rodriguez-Minkoff 2017). As such, it is a member of a broader family of pedagogies that purposefully identify and draw on the assets or strengths of students, their families and communities (Milner 2017, p. 7) in order to improve the educational experiences of marginalised populations. Such approaches include 'Funds of Knowledge' (Moll et al. 1992), the 'Virtual school bag' (Thomson 2002) and 'Turn around pedagogies' (Kamler & Comber 2005).

Connected to students' life-worlds: A disconnection between school learning and the lived realities of students was noted by Dewey more than a century ago (1907/2008, p. 52). Building meaningful connections between school and the life-worlds of students, their families and communities is a core tenet of the Funds of Knowledge approach to schooling (Hogg 2011; Moll et al. 1992; Moll & González 1997), and has been reiterated in the Australian context by Comber and Kamler (2004) and Hattam and Prosser (2006). As Wrigley, Lingard and Thomson (2012, p. 99) note, effective pedagogies are not only contextualised to students' life-worlds, but stretch beyond these life-worlds in educative ways. According to (Esteban-Guitart 2016, p. 28), learning is facilitated when the curriculum is connected to students lives, including prior learning experiences from their homes and communities. Referring to Indigenous schooling in the United States, Castagno and Brayboy (2008, p. 962) argue that a more holistic approach to schooling, with 'multiple and obvious connections to students' worlds outside of school' is more interesting, effective and authentic.

Socio-political consciousness: In her foundational article *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*, Ladson-Billings (1995b) identified three criteria that underpin culturally relevant teaching: 'an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness' (p. 483). Two decades later, she describes social-political consciousness as largely 'neglected' in CRP practice (Ladson-Billings 2014, 2017), an observation empirically supported by Morrison et al. (2008), Young (2010), Zhang and Wang (2016). According to Ladson-Billings (2017, p. 146), culturally relevant teachers should support their students to become both critically literate of texts and critically conscious of the social, cultural, economic, political dimensions of their life-worlds. Students need to be involved in meaningful projects that solve problems and challenges that matter in their lives. She cautions, however:

> Far too often, teachers choose a 'problem' that interests *them*. Projects like 'saving the rainforest, 'recycling,' or 'animal l rights' may emerge because the teacher has a deep passion for them. However, racial profiling, mass incarceration, or inequity in

> suspension may be impacting students directly. These more politically volatile topics are ones that teachers may want to hold at arm's length. But failure to engage them is exactly why students do not trust schools to be places that deal honestly and forthrightly with the issues of their lives. (p. 146)

The cultivation of socio-political consciousness is not only relevant for marginalised students; '… we also want those in the mainstream to develop the kinds of skills that will allow them to critique the very basis of their privilege and advantage' (Ladson-Billings 2014, p. 83).

In their discussion of CRP in the context of Indigenous schooling, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) also note that 'multiple epistemologies exist and are valid and that these epistemologies are intimately connected to schooling, education, teaching, and learning' (p. 951). The significance of Indigenous/Indigenist epistemologies for CRP is explored in the next section.

Indigenist epistemologies and CRP

In settler colonial nations across the Pacific Rim and beyond, the deliberate attempt to undermine Indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge production has been central to the colonial project. Decolonisation can only advance when Indigenous knowledges and knowledge practices are acknowledged and validated by a nation's cultural institutions, such as schools and universities. In this review, we refer to Indigenous knowledges and knowledge practices by the term *Indigenist epistemologies*.

In Australia, Indigenist epistemologies have been advanced by Aboriginal scholars as conceptual resources to underpin a 'strong' version of CRP. Lester-Irabinna Rigney (1997, 1999), who was the originator of Indigenist research epistemology in Australia, puts forward three provocations that define Indigenist epistemologies:

> Emancipatory (empowering; seeks de-colonisation; anti-deficit views of Aboriginal identity)
>
> Integrity of Indigenous Knowledges (honouring Indigenous students, Indigenous ways of knowledge and transmission, ways of knowing, being and doing)
>
> Privileging Indigenous voices (engagement, democratic inclusion, counter hegemony).

Three critical arguments derive from Indigenist epistemologies:

1. Knowledge production and knowledge transmission in Anglophone settler societies such as Australia are key sites for decolonisation (Rigney 1997);
2. Indigenous ontologies represent Aboriginal peoples as embodied, reciprocal, ecological and related to epistemological knowledge and cultural life-worlds founded from ancient knowledge traditions of transmission (Arbon 2008); and

3. Decolonisation involves elevating and reinstating the authority of Indigenous ways of listening, critiquing, knowing, being and doing (Martin 2008).

Research in Indigenist Epistemologies and Aboriginal Studies in Australia identifies three main areas that are shown to be effective for increasing school engagement, achievement and completion among Aboriginal students: (i) a school culture and leadership that engages and supports the identities, knowledges and epistemologies of Aboriginal students and the local community, and is critically conscious of and responsive to national and international Indigenous issues (DEET 1989; Price 2012c; Rigney, Rigney & Hughes 1998; Rigney 2001, 2006, 2011c); (ii) school-wide strategies that actively develop teachers' capacities to connect with and engage students to improve learning outcomes (Buckskin et al. 2009; Nakata 2007); and (iii) student-focused strategies that directly meet the needs of individual students (Sarra 2007), including anti-racism schooling and pedagogy (Arbon 2008; Aveling 2012; Rigney 2011a, 2011c).

The work of education researchers, teachers and schools within the conditions of neoliberal governmentality is fixed by the ontology, epistemology and practice in the teaching of Aboriginal children. Here the process of neoliberalisation becomes the site of political struggle for and over the work of the teacher, principal and the school. Indigenist epistemologies view all pedagogy and curricula as culturally based and implicated in the reproduction of colonial hegemony (Rigney 2001). Because no pedagogy is neutral or culture-free it is important for teachers to reflect on whose assumptions are operating in relation learning, what counts as legitimate knowledge, and ways of organising classroom communication. Indigenist epistemologies challenge teachers engaging with CRP to struggle with the question of whose knowledge is valid. Indigenist epistemological arguments on the politics of subjugated knowledges are also useful to counter arguments against CRP. Normative 'standards' of learning are linked to cultural choices that reflect mainstream cultural norms. The literature indicates that teaching through the child's cultural strengths is not just important, but vital in terms of connecting home cultures to learning for the benefit of teachers, Aboriginal communities and students. This is especially important at a time in which a normative neoliberal accountability regime is shifting teacher pedagogy and curriculum in ways that undermine approaches that are more culturally responsive for Aboriginal students. By capitalising on Indigenist epistemologies, teachers can mobilise, re-imagine, and re-design pedagogies to leverage the linguistic and cultural repertoires that Aboriginal students bring to class from home. In this way, 'culture' and 'place' can be connected to the learning and knowledges of local Aboriginal peoples through democratic and inclusive classroom dialogue that far exceeds the rote-like instruction these children commonly encounter in schools (Moll et al. 1992). Rigney (2006) advocates for Indigenist epistemologies as conceptual resources for advancing a 'strong' version of those culturally responsive pedagogies that have been too often marginalised in Australian education.

Rigney's (2001, 2006) research into Indigenist epistemologies in education foregrounds four key practices: (a) empowering students; (b) reinforcing the integrity of cultural knowledges; (c) privileging Indigenous voices, knowledges and interests; and (d), building community relationships. If we take up this set of propositions then our experiments with enacting CRP

will engage principals, leaders, teachers, Elders, Aboriginal Community and Aboriginal Education Workers in the productive re-design of curriculum and pedagogy.

CRP and Critical Race Theory

In 1995, Ladson-Billings and Tate drew attention to the superficial nature of multicultural education in US classrooms and argued the need for a robust account of racialised inequity and lack of reform in schools and universities. They advanced the notion of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education, which, 'like its antecedent in legal scholarship, is a radical critique of both the status quo and the purported reforms' (p. 62). Although the original focus was on the African American experience of race and racism which is normalised and enmeshed in the fabric of American social order (Ladson-Billings 1998, p. 11), CRT has since been applied internationally across diverse social contexts where people are minoritised due to race, gender, class or other 'axes of differentiation' (Gillborn & Ladson-Billings 2010, p. 143). CRT is not only interested in overt manifestations of oppression, but in the nuanced and hidden mechanisms of power and its maintenance that disadvantage some groups while privileging others (Gillborn 2006). In reference to education, CRT asks, 'What role do schools, school processes, and school structures play in the maintenance of racial, ethnic, and gender subordination?' (Solorzano & Yosso 2000, p. 42).

Culturally responsive pedagogy provides educators with a framework with which to operationalise CRT in education (Bissonnette 2016; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper 2011). Clearly, CRT aligns readily with the CRP principle of raising students' socio-political consciousness. However, it also has a significant role to play in the preparation of culturally responsive teachers, who must interrogate their own assumptions and biases in order to enact CRP in the classroom (Allen et al. 2017; Hayes & Juárez 2012; Matias 2013).

Student perspectives of CRP

Given that students are the ultimate focus of educational interventions, it is vital to consider how CRP is experienced by young people. Although there is some Australian literature on Aboriginal student perspectives on school and schooling (see, for example, Boon & Lewthwaite 2016; Donovan 2015; Godfrey et al. 2001; Lewthwaite et al. 2015), literature on student perceptions of CRP is limited. Lewthwaite and colleagues (2017) conducted individual and focus group interviews with Aboriginal students, their caregivers and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff at four north Queensland schools in order to identify the pedagogical characteristics that Aboriginal students and their parents consider to be important to learning. The researchers explicitly linked these characteristics to the concept of CRP. Students identified the following characteristics of high quality teachers:

- Developing positive relationships as a foundation for learning
- Cultural bridges are used to promote learning
- Literacy demands are explicitly addressed
- Learning intentions are made clear
- Teaching is differentiated to accommodate diversity:
- Pedagogical expertise
- High expectations but with mechanisms to support and monitor student performance behaviour

(Lewthwaite et al. 2017, pp. 86-87)

Rahman's (2010) research with Aboriginal senior secondary students in South Australian schools, which she also explicitly linked to the concept of CRP, identified many similar characteristics that Aboriginal learners identify as important to them, including positive relationships with teachers who cared about their education and future and were supportive of their educational needs, and a culturally supportive school environment. The importance of quality student-teacher relationships is mentioned by Herbert (2012) and Donovan (2015) in their discussions of Aboriginal students' views of schooling.

International literature on student experiences of CRP include Alton-Lee (2015) and Savage et al. (2011) in New Zealand schooling, and Byrd (2016), Howard (2001) and Sampson and Garrison-Wade (2011) in the United States. In Howard's (2001) study of African American elementary school students' perceptions of culturally relevant teaching, the characteristic most frequently mentioned by the young people he interviewed was the teachers' willingness to care about them and bond with them (p. 137). The next most frequently mentioned characteristic was the teachers' ability to 'make school seem like home', followed by the teacher's ability to make learning fun and exciting. Howard summarised these characteristics as follows:

1. *Caring:* through positive reinforcement, expression of high expectations, giving praise to student accomplishments, and taking time to find out about students' lives outside of the classroom. A sincere commitment to student academic and social development may be the most important expression of concern and care.

2. *Establishing community:* more cooperative learning situations, the elimination of homogeneous ability grouping, establishment of democratic principles, and the promotion of interdependence.

3. *Engaging classroom environments:* using personal anecdotes, using relevant course content, and modifying their interaction styles in ways that are more interactive, engaging, and entertaining for students.

(from Howard 2001, p. 146)

Howard noted that the characteristics described by the students in his sample were not race-specific and did not require teachers to be members of the same racial group as their students (p. 147).

In Hubert's (2014) small-scale study of a culturally responsive mathematics intervention, all five the students interviewed (two African American students, a Hispanic student, a 'mixed' race student and a White student) preferred the culturally responsive approach when compared with conventional mathematics instruction. Their positive comments about the intervention were grouped into the themes of: (1) home-like classrooms; (2) ethic of caring; (3) participation opportunities; and (4) technology use. In addition, four out of five students reported an increase in confidence and all students reported an increase in motivation.

In the United States, Dickson and colleagues' (2016) have designed and tested a survey instrument 'measure' seventh-grade students' perspectives of culturally responsive teaching practices. Student Measure of Culturally Responsive Teaching (SMCRT) has undergone initial validation across three groupings: males versus females, Latino versus non-Latino students, and recent immigrant versus old generation students.

Teacher perspectives of CRP

Teachers are at the coalface of cultural diversity in schools, and their practices, behaviours, dispositions and attitudes can promote or inhibit the culturally responsive climate in the classroom. However, teachers are also part of educational systems that are invested in reproducing rather than disrupting the social status quo (Biesta 2015; Ladson-Billings 1992). Most teachers replicate the norms and assumptions of the dominant culture in which they are embedded (Gillborn & Ladson-Billings 2010), including the imbalances of power that characterise settler colonial societies. As Brayboy and Castagno (2009) warn, 'it is important for teachers to realize that they are inherently and consistently engaged in cultural production and reproduction' (p. 37). Teaching, then, is inherently political (Bissonnette 2016; Howard & Rodriguez-Minkoff 2017), and culturally responsive teaching is 'a political endeavour directed toward equity and justice' (Sleeter 2011, p. 19). CRP 'involves a teacher's deep understanding of how teaching is a sociopolitical act and how the classroom can serve as a place for equity, justice and opportunity' (Durden, Escalante & Blitch 2015, p. 224).

Teacher preparation and professional learning: Adequately preparing pre-service teachers and supporting in-service teachers to enact CRP in their classrooms is vital if Anglocentric and deficit views of students and their families are to be disrupted in any meaningful way (Vass 2017). Yet one of the alarming realities of the Australian educational landscape is the lack of consistent high-quality pre-service and in-service professional learning in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schooling, let alone CRP. Given the overwhelmingly Anglo-European demographic profile of the teaching workforce, the majority of Australian teachers know little about Aboriginal peoples, or their perspectives, cultures and histories (Harrison & Greenfield 2011) and may not have met an Aboriginal person prior to

commencing their teaching careers (Craven, Yeung & Han 2014). And while contemporary teacher education programs in Australia are paying more attention to preparing teachers for Aboriginal learners and their communities—presumably in response to the introduction of the *Australian Curriculum* and the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*—not all pre-service teacher education programmes offer the relevant courses (Craven et al. 2014), nor are these courses necessarily core components of programmes (Moreton-Robinson et al. 2012).

In their audit of teacher education programmes offered at Australian universities, Moreton-Robinson and colleagues (2012) found that courses related to Aboriginal education focused on knowledge transfer (for example, teaching Aboriginal history) rather than pedagogy and teaching practice (for example, teaching for anti-racism). They suggested that 'a focus on "race", racism and anti-racism and the innovative pedagogies' would be more likely to result in 'a positive and lasting impact upon Indigenous education outcomes' (p. 25). This indicates that a focus on asset pedagogies, such as culturally responsive pedagogy, is sorely needed in Australian teacher education programmes.

In terms of in-service learning, a 2013 survey of more than 15,000 primary and secondary teachers found low levels of professional learning in relation to teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In the 12 months prior to the survey, only 27.6% of primary and 28.4% of secondary teachers had undertaken any formal or self-directed professional learning in relation to teaching Aboriginal students (McKenzie et al. 2014). The self-reported impact of professional development in this area was also particularly low, with 33.1% of primary and 35.3% of secondary teachers reporting no perceived improvement in their capabilities (McKenzie et al. 2014, p. 72). With the introduction of the *Australian Curriculum* and the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, more teachers are realising 'how little they know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, how to teach them' (Rogers 2018, p. 30). On the one hand, teachers are expressing their lack of confidence in enacting the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* CCP and Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4; on the other hand, they are either failing to access professional learning in relation to these policies (through choice, or due to the priorities of their school leadership), or there are insufficient quality professional learning opportunities available to them (Buxton 2017, p. 208).

Despite the introduction of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the concomitant expectations of teachers in relation to Aboriginal education, Ma Rhea, Anderson and Atkinson (2012) found that professional learning to support teachers in enacting these expectations was problematic at national, systemic and local levels. Challenges identified included a lack of resourcing, planning and evaluation of professional development, ad hoc and patchy offerings, and a lack of understanding of, or commitment to, Aboriginal educational rights. Alarmingly, teachers interviewed for their study reported that internet searches were just as useful as formal professional development for information about teaching Aboriginal learners: 'This has significant implication[s] for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners who are the subjects of this trial and error approach' (Ma Rhea et al.

2012, p. 55). As Santoro (2013) notes, 'The complex knowledge needed by culturally responsive teachers is not made explicit in the professional standards' (p. 317).

There is no mandated professional development for teachers to develop culturally responsive pedagogies; instead schools are 'strongly recommended' to source and engage appropriate professional learning initiatives (ACARA n.d.-a, p. 6).

Te Kotahitanga: One of the most comprehensively documented professional learning programs for culturally responsive pedagogy was the *Te Kotahitanga* educational reform initiative that was progressively implemented in New Zealand between 2001 and 2013. Based on Kaupapa (agenda/philosophy) Māori approach to research (Bishop 1999), *Te Kotahitanga* aimed to improve the educational achievement of Māori students in mainstream secondary schools. The project began by talking with Māori students, their caregivers and their educators across a range of schools in order to gain a better understanding of Māori experiences of schooling. These conversations, coupled with 'the theoretical position of Kaupapa Māori research, and an examination of appropriate Māori cultural metaphors' (Bishop et al. 2007, p. 1), led to the development of a *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations* underpinned by the following principles:

- power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence
- culture counts
- learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals
- participants are connected to one another through the establishment of a common vision for what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes (Bishop et al. 2012, p. 50)

The *Te Kotahitanga Professional Development Programme* supported teachers to generate these learning environments through a process of induction, formal observations, follow-up feedback, group co-construction meetings, and shadow-coaching (Bishop et al. 2007). Participating educators explicitly rejected deficit explanations for disparities in educational achievement and accepted professional responsibility for the learning of all of their students (Bishop et al. 2007, p. 1). Teachers were supported to:

- care for the students as culturally located individuals
- have high expectations of the learning for students
- manage their classrooms so as to promote learning
- engage in a range of discursive learning interactions with students or facilitate students to engage with others in these ways
- know a range of strategies that can facilitate learning interactions
- promote, monitor and reflect upon learning outcomes that in turn lead to improvements in Māori student achievement

- share this knowledge with the students (p. 1)

Schools participating in *Te Kotahitanga* recorded improvements in terms of Māori student participation, engagement, retention and achievement (Bishop 2012, p. 42). For example, evaluating the impact of *Te Kotahitanga* on Māori academic outcomes, Alton-Lee (Alton-Lee 2015) reported that for schools participating in the initiative:

> Māori achievement in NCEA [the official secondary school qualification in New Zealand] was accelerating at around three times the rate of the comparison group [i.e. Māori students in non-participating schools]. Even better, because of increased enrolment and retention through into year 13, this accelerated improvement occurred for more Māori, including some who previously would have dropped out of school. (p. 31)

In addition to the positive outcomes for Māori students, non-Māori students also benefitted from the programme.

Bishop (2012) noted three impediments to the success of the programme: teachers' tendency to focus on the static, representational and iconographic dimensions of culture; uneven implementation; and difficulties in implementing 'gold standard' empirical research working within a Kaupapa Māori frame of accountability to research participants. Bishop and colleagues (2014) also cautioned that the *Te Kotahitanga* professional learning model cannot simply be transplanted to other situations: 'Apart from anything else, contextual factors—time, place, circumstances, personnel, available resourcing, political discourses and so on—will always differ' (p. xv).

Critical sensibility: Of course, no amount of professional learning for CRP can succeed if pre-service teachers, in-service teachers and teacher educators are not committed to the underlying principles of educational social justice, and are willing and able to act on this commitment (Allen et al. 2017). In *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995b) spoke of the development of critical consciousness in students; yet this consciousness is equally important for teachers. CRP 'requires that teachers possess a critical stance toward the social forces which create inequity' (Schmeichel 2012, p. 227). Referring to the situation in the United States more than a decade ago, Villegas (2007) noted that 'prospective teachers generally enter teacher education believing that cultural diversity is a problem to be overcome and that students of color are deficient in some fundamental way. There is evidence that those beliefs are influenced by unexamined racial/ethnic biases' (p. 374). The need for teachers to interrogate their own assumptions and biases, in addition to their practice, underpins the foundations of CRP (Civitillo et al. 2019; Kieffer 2017).

A range of terminology is found in the literature to refer to the fundamental orientations, values, beliefs and/or dispositions needed by culturally responsive teachers. These terms include—but are not limited to—*critical awareness*, *critical consciousness* and *critical reflectivity* or *reflexivity*. Here we use the term *critical sensibility* to broadly encompass these inter-related concepts (Hattam forthcoming).

For educators, cultivating a critical sensibility is an ongoing process (Siegel 2017) which can be both unsettling and confronting (Ebersole, Kanahele-Mossman & Kawakami 2015; Howard 2003; Riley 2014). Critical sensibility entails the capacity and willingness to reflect on one's own social, educational, and political identity (Dover 2013, p. 5), including values, beliefs, behaviours and attitudes (Ebersole et al. 2015). As Santoro and Kennedy (2016) note:

> those who are members of the majority cultural group face particular challenges. They are often blind to the dominant sociocultural discourses they operate within and take up. Particular educational practices are simply assumed to be 'normal' and 'natural' rather than a product of, and a construction of, the dominant culture of which they are a member. (p. 218)

Teachers need to be 'encouraged and actively taught how to reflectively develop a critical self-awareness of themselves as racialized (and culturalized) beings to more effectively work with culturally diverse student populations' (Vass 2017, p. 8). However, most teachers 'begin teaching with little to no knowledge of themselves as racial beings or of social groups outside of their own and are unprepared to identify, implement, or assess culturally responsive teaching and learning strategies' (Hayes & Juárez 2012, p. 1). For this reason, there is a significant focus evident in the literature on the need for the critical examination of race and other sociocultural dimensions of identity during pre-service teacher education (Bissonnette 2016; Durden & Truscott 2013; Vass 2017). Allen and colleagues (2017) argue that 'a teacher preparation program that does not critically interrogate race, power, and privilege in the context of schools does not maintain a social justice mission and consequently does not meet the tenets of CRP' (p. 13). Such critical interrogation should continue throughout a teacher's working life:

> Applying a culturally responsive lens to our work as educators requires a shift in how we think about students, schools, families and society. But it also requires a shift in how we think about ourselves. Culturally responsive teachers continually interrogate the ways in which our own implicit biases and cultural assumptions shape our beliefs about learning and our interactions with students. (Fullam 2017, p. 132)

CRP and school leadership

Culturally responsive school environments are not the responsibility of teachers alone. Support and commitment is needed from school leadership at all levels, including Principals, Deputies, curriculum or program leaders and senior teachers (Fraise & Brooks 2015; Khalifa, Gooden & Davis 2016; Lopez 2016; Madhlangobe & Gordon 2012; Magno & Schiff 2010; Morgan 2017). Khalifa et al. (2016) argue that culturally responsive school leaders have a principled, moral responsibility to counter the oppression of historically marginalised students (p. 1275).

International models of culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) build on Gloria Ladson-Billings' foundational principles of culturally responsive pedagogy. In their synthesis of relevant literature on CRSL, Khalifa and colleagues (2016) find that such leadership

encompasses aspects of anti-oppressive/antiracist leadership, transformative leadership and social justice leadership, 'but pushes further' (p. 1278). Their synthesis groups the characteristics of culturally responsive school leaders under four themes, with several subthemes, including leadership that:

- *Critically self-reflects on leadership behaviours*

  e.g. Challenges hegemonic epistemologies; Measures culturally responsive leadership, student inclusiveness, policy and practice; Is a transformative leader for social justice and inclusion; Is committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge and contexts; Displays critical consciousness /self-reflection in and out of school; Uses parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in schools

- *Develops culturally responsive teachers*

  e.g. Creates a CSRL team that is responsible for finding new ways for teachers to be culturally responsive; Reforms the school curriculum to be more culturally responsive; Models culturally responsive teaching; Uses culturally responsive student assessment tools; Develops teacher capacities for CRP through Professional Learning

- *Promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environments*

  e.g. Challenges exclusionary policies, teachers and behaviours; Acknowledges, values and uses Indigenous students' cultural and social capital; Uses student voice; Tracks disparities in academic and disciplinary trends; Is accepting of Indigenised, local identities; Builds relationships; Promotes a vision for inclusive instructional and behavioural practices

- *Engages students, parents and Indigenous contexts*

  Resists deficit images of students and families; Is nurturing/caring towards others; Develops meaningful, positive relationships with and understandings of students, families and community; Finds overlapping spaces for school and community; Serves as an advocate and activist for community-based causes in both the school and neighbourhood community.

(from Khalifa et al. 2016, pp. 1283-1284)

Given that the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy has yet to gain significant traction in Australia, it is hardly surprising that Australia has not kept pace with global initiatives toward culturally responsive school leadership practice. During the compilation of this review we found only one school leadership framework in the Australian context that draws overtly on international CRP theoretical principles (Hattam 2018), although elements of these principles do surface in other Australian models. Hattam (2018) discusses some of the themes that emerged in his ethnographic case study of leadership in a culturally diverse secondary college in South Australia. Many of the students had come to Australia under the humanitarian/refugee programme. As a *United Nations Global Peace School*, the leadership

was determined to take up the challenge of 'teaching future Australian global citizens how to live together in communities of increasing cultural diversity' (p. 262). Staff under this leadership had a high level of commitment to the school's philosophies, which included embracing students' prior knowledge, building relationships based on mutual respect rather than power, and explicitly teaching students about their human rights. From this single school case study, six characteristics underpinning culturally responsive leadership were identified:

1. Working with cultural diversity as an asset
2. Working to ensure that students experience academic success that leads to credible accredited qualifications
3. Ensuring that students develop and/or maintain their own cultural competence and a positive sense of their own cultural identities
4. Working to ensure that the school is safe, harmonious and peaceful and that there are opportunities for everyone to feel included
5. Developing and sustaining productive and respectful educative relationships between students, teachers and leadership
6. Sustaining a 'strong' version of student voice (from Hattam 2018, pp. 270-271)

In relation to Aboriginal education, three Australian school leadership programs to improve student outcomes have emerged over the last 15 years. The first of these programs, *Dare to Lead* was a federally-funded national initiative, offering 'a network of support for school leaders to work effectively with current programs and to initiate new models of activity, which will result in improved outcomes for Indigenous students' (Principals Australia Institute 2014). The initiative is now defunct. Two extant leadership programs are embedded within initiatives run by the *Stronger Smarter Institute*[8] and the *Cape York Institute*.[9]

The *Stronger Smarter Institute* (formerly the *Indigenous Education Leadership Institute*), founded by Aboriginal educator Chris Sarra, advances High Expectations Relationships (Sarra et al. 2018) as the key to improving the school environment of Aboriginal students, their communities, and educational staff. Following from Sarra's successful tenure as the first Aboriginal principal of Cherbourg State School in Queensland (Sarra 2005), the *Stronger Smarter* initiative seeks to work with and through school and community leaders to improve outcomes for Aboriginal students, and indeed all students. Luke et al. (2013) characterise the *Stronger Smarter Leadership Program* as drawing on:

> a blend of Western psychosocial interactional and transactional models of change and from represented models of Indigenous interaction, culture and everyday life. Its focus is on personal growth, consciousness-raising and the critique of racism and deficit-thinking. (p. 79)

[8] https://strongersmarter.com.au/
[9] https://capeyorkpartnership.org.au/our-partnership/cape-york-institute/

Many of the strategies advocated in the *Stronger Smarter Leadership Program*[10] align with the principles of leadership for CRP outlined by Khalifa and colleagues (2016).

While an Education Queensland review of Cherbourg State School (cited in What Works: The Work Program 2003) reported positive outcomes in relation to several criteria, a more recent evaluation of schools operating within the *Stronger Smarter* initiative (Luke et al. 2013) suggests that the leadership model has struggled with certain logistic and conceptual tensions. In terms of how leadership may influence classroom practice, Luke and colleagues found that the only substantive innovation was a greater focus on the teaching of Indigenous knowledge, content and topics. The enacted pedagogies they observed across the schools that they evaluated emphasised 'basic skills and vocational education' (p. 261), irrespective of whether or not these schools were operating within the *Stronger Smarter* initiative.

The *Cape York Institute* is an Indigenous policy 'think tank' that operates in the Cape York region of northern Australia (https://capeyorkpartnership.org.au/our-partnership/cape-york-institute/). In terms of schooling initiatives, the institute runs the *Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy* (CYAAA) which is managed by *Good to Great Schools Australia*. The educational model underpinning the CYAAA sites involves three distinct learning domains: Class, Club and Culture (ACER 2013). The Class domain, which is implemented via Direct Instruction (DI), focuses on English literacy and numeracy. As McCollow (2013, p. 101) notes, 'DI is a highly scripted and prescriptive approach to teaching literacy and numeracy basics in which learning is broken down into a hierarchy of skills and tasks'; 'deviation from the script or the use of alternative pedagogical or management techniques is strongly discouraged' (p. 103). There are no cross-cultural or bilingual dimensions to the Class domain (McCollow 2013, p. 101). With sites operating on an extended school day, the Club and Culture domains are implemented after Class, later in the afternoon (ACER 2013). Participation in Club and Culture appears to be optional (ACER 2013). From the literature available, it appears that school leaders are highly focused on the Class domain of the educational model, and that cultural responsiveness is not a consideration in this domain. The CYAAA annual report for 2017 states that 'School leaders and instructional teams focus day to day on strengthening and extending the fidelity of our Class domain utilising the Direct Instruction methodology for students across the campuses' (p. 5). A significant component of the DI model is very close monitoring of student achievement, attendance and behaviour with swift remediation if needed; school leaders are guided by 'coaching principals' from *Good to Great Schools Australia* (Good to Great Schools Australia n.d.). Outcomes from the CYAAA sites are variable and indeed the long-term efficacy of DI is itself contested (for contrasting perspectives see, for example, Eppley & Dudley-Marling 2018; Pearson 2009). An early evaluation of the three CYAA sites found that student attendance had decreased at two sites (ACER 2013, p. 38), and the outcomes around student learning were difficult to quantify (ACER 2013, p. 51). A very recent analysis of publicly available data showed that remote schools (including CYAAA sites) using a DI literacy program had failed to achieve gains in reading and attendance when compared with similar schools not using the program (Guenther & Osborne in press).

[10] https://strongersmarter.com.au/leadership/

Visibility of CRP in Australia

CRP in Australian educational policy: A desktop audit of Australian Commonwealth and State/Territory policy documents, conducted in 2017 during the compilation of this review, found that the term 'culturally responsive' is largely absent from the lexicon of educational bureaucracy. Table 4 lists those few documents that do refer to cultural responsiveness in the context of education. Alarmingly, cultural responsiveness is not mentioned in the policy documents of the Northern Territory and Queensland State governments, despite those jurisdictions having the highest populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (ABS 2018).

Table 4: Educational policy documents 2010-2017 using the term 'culturally responsive' in relation to schooling.

Jurisdiction	Policy document
Commonwealth	*Australian directions in Indigenous education 2005-2008* (MCEETYA 2006)
	The power of education: From surviving to thriving - Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs December 2017)
ACT	nil
NSW	*Rural and remote education: A blueprint for action* (NSW Department of Education and Communities 2013)
	Multicultural Plan 2016-2018 (NSW Department of Education 2016)
NT	nil
Qld	nil
SA	*Aboriginal Strategy 2013-2016* (DECD 2013)
Tas	*Tasmania's Aboriginal education framework (2016–2017)* (Department of Education Tasmania 2016)
Vic	*Marrung Aboriginal education plan 2016-2026* (Department of Education and Training 2016)
WA	*Aboriginal cultural standards framework* (WA Department of Education 2015)
	Directions for Aboriginal education 2016 (Department of Education 2016)

Until and unless governmental policies explicitly state the need for culturally responsive pedagogies, and depending on how and if such policies were to be enacted (Ball, Maguire & Braun 2012), CRP will remain at the periphery of educational practice and depend on the efforts of individual teachers and/or schools and their leadership.

CRP and teacher education: A similar desktop audit of teacher education programmes conducted in 2017 for this review found that only three Australian higher education institutions (University of New England, University of South Australia and Western Sydney

University) offered a subject or course which featured the term 'culturally responsive' in the course name, although numerous course descriptors included that or similar terminology.

CRP across the Australian Curriculum

In order to understand the 'official' position of CRP across the Australian Curriculum, it is necessary to identify links across various elements of the national curriculum documents. The Foundation to Year 10 (F-10) Australian Curriculum is made up of eight learning areas: English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education (HPE), Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), The Arts, Technologies and Languages (ACARA n.d.-b). As mentioned previously, operating across all learning areas are three cross-curriculum priorities (CCPs), one of which is *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures*. The CCPs are 'embedded in all learning areas as appropriate' and have 'have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the learning area' (ACARA n.d.-a, p. 1). Some guiding principles for educators are provided in relation to the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* CCP in order 'to help teachers to understand, respect and represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world views and encourage *culturally responsive practices* in every school community' (ACARA n.d.-c, p. 1, emphasis added). This indirect relationship between cultural responsiveness and the learning areas, as expressed in the Australian Curriculum, is illustrated in Figure 1.

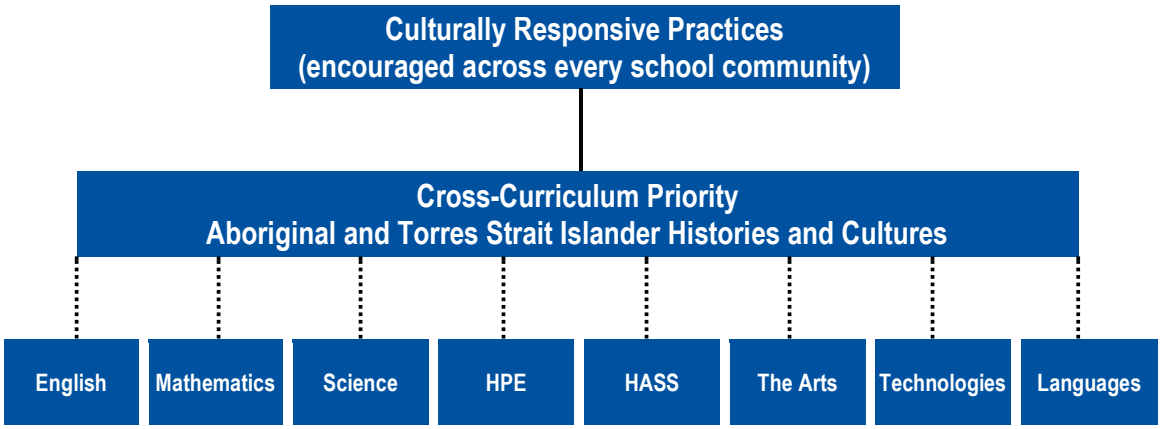

Figure 1: The relationship between cultural responsiveness, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* cross-curriculum CCP and the learning areas in the F-10 Australian Curriculum (the dotted lines indicate the 'varying presence' of the cross-curriculum priority in different learning areas).

Note that cultural responsiveness is framed rather reductively in terms of 'practices' rather than pedagogies and, by implication, the theories that underpin pedagogies. According to

these curriculum documents, there is no *direct* relationship between culturally responsive practices and the learning areas; cultural responsiveness is mediated via the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* CCP. This suggests that CRP is 'officially' perceived to be a consideration only in relation to Aboriginal curriculum content distributed and 'delivered' across the learning areas, and not as a pedagogical approach that has repercussions for the schooling experiences of all students, irrespective of their home cultures. It is also suggests that cultural responsiveness is simply a matter of adding content to each of the learning areas, thus side-stepping profound socio-political issues including racism, sovereignty and self-determination that operate across the entire schooling system. As Aboriginal scholars note, 'additional content is not the answer—content is worth nothing if the relationship between curriculum and pedagogical practices results in biased attitudes and unfair representations of Australian society' (Brown, in Lowe et al. 2014, p. 74). Comparing the Australian and New Zealand national curricula, Aboriginal scholar Tyson Yunkaporta comments:

> I would like for us to consider why a curriculum honouring First Nations sovereignty under treaty is so acceptable in a country a few hundred kilometres to the east of us, but is so completely unacceptable here. (in Lowe et al. 2014, p. 73)

As Burgess and Evans (2017, p. 7) note, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* CCP does not alone ensure transformative educational experiences for Aboriginal students.

Furthermore, while all protagonists of CRP would agree that students must be able to see their own cultures, identities and experiences reflected in the curriculum (Buxton 2017; Henry 2017), there is a real risk that naïve efforts to include cultural content can tokenise, reify and/or misrepresent the dynamic cultures and knowledge bases of marginalised populations (Maxwell et al. 2018. p. 172; Milner 2017). Luke and colleagues (2013) argue that 'the Australian Curriculum mandate for the embedding of Indigenous knowledges raises major issues in terms of the requisite depth of teacher knowledge of Indigenous cultures, histories, issues and languages' (p. 417).

Internationally, understandings of culturally responsive curriculum are far more nuanced than simply inserting content into existing curricular structures. For example, in their standards for culturally responsive teachers in Alaskan schools, the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (1999) expects content area teachers to:

a. pursue interdisciplinary studies across multiple subject areas that are applicable to the curriculum content they will be called upon to teach as it relates to the real-world context in which their students are situated.

b. demonstrate an extensive repertoire of skills for the application of the content knowledge they teach in guiding students toward the development of local solutions to everyday problems in the world around them.

c. demonstrate the ability to acquire an in-depth understanding of the knowledge system indigenous to the place in which they are teaching and apply that understanding in their practice.

d. demonstrate a recognition that many and various cultural traditions from throughout the world, including Alaska Native, have contributed to the knowledge base reflected in the Alaska Content Standards.

e. demonstrate the ability to align all subject matter with the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools and to develop curriculum models that are based on the local cultural and environmental experiences of their students.

f. recognize the importance of cultural and intellectual property rights in their teaching practice and honor such rights in all aspects of their selection and utilization of curriculum resources. (pp. 10-11)

In summary, curriculum content undoubtedly has a significant role to play in CRP, but it requires integration into a broader culturally responsive framework, rather than being bolted on to existing colonising and assimilatory educational systems (Nakata 1995, p. 48). In their discussion of the Australian Curriculum, Lowe, Backhaus, Yunkaporta and Brown (2014) cite both national and international literature that points to 'an unequivocal link between culturally unresponsive curriculum and the largely uninterrupted trajectory of Indigenous student underachievement' (p. 65). In the following sections, the implications of CRP for specific learning areas of the Australian Curriculum will be considered. Attention is drawn to relevant Australian literature where this is available.

English: Literature on the theme of culturally responsive approaches to English in the Australian Curriculum is scarce. However, recent research by D'warte (2014, 2016, 2018) is of significance. D'warte's work focuses on teachers and students jointly investigating the home languages represented in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms in southern and western Sydney. Students researched and mapped their own multilinguistic 'funds of knowledge' and shared their inquiries in the English class. Through this process, 'students and teachers came to recognise and then utilise what they knew and could do and applied this to studying English' (D'warte 2014, p. 29). Teachers reported numerous positive English literacy outcomes, as well as increased student engagement, interest and attention to tasks (D'warte 2018). Non-curricular outcomes included improved intercultural communication, increased parent and community engagement and connection (both between students and their families and communities, and between teachers and their students' families and communities), and a strengthened sense of inclusion and belonging (among students, parents and community) (D'warte 2018).

Turning to the international literature, Adkins (2012) advances a framework for culturally responsive English instruction in the United States that has four dimensions:

a. integrating curriculum and instruction that is meaningful to students and explores societal inequalities, biases, and assumptions in a broad range of texts

b. recognizing the integral role of student voice, in all of its forms, and students' experiences in constructing meaning, developing literacy skills, and working for social change

c. developing a classroom community characterized by high expectations with support and collaboration among members inside and outside of the classroom

d. utilizing a variety of tools to provide frequent feedback and formative and summative assessment to guide appropriate instructional decisions (p. 74)

Mathematics: For many Aboriginal students, mathematics is a gatekeeper to future prospects (Morris & Matthews 2011, p. 30), yet the mathematics taught in Australian schools is Eurocentric (Carter, Cooper & Anderson 2016), often de-contextualised and abstract, and potentially alienating for *all* students (Thornton, Statton & Mountzouris 2012). There is a view amongst many teachers that mathematics is objective and culture-free (Morris 2017, p. 116). Morris and Matthews (2011, p. 30) observe, 'The mathematics that is experienced by most people (through our education system) does not provide any cultural connection, nor does it provide connections with the students' world view'. Where cultural connection is attempted, it may be tokenistic and superficial. In relation to Aboriginal perspectives in the mathematics curriculum Morrison and Matthews (2011) state, 'We want to make it clear that when we talk about CRMP [Culturally Responsive Mathematics Pedagogy], we do not mean maths worksheets with boomerangs around the border' (p. 31)

Mathematics with Aboriginal learners in mind is the focus of two initiatives that: *Make it count: Numeracy, mathematics and Aboriginal learners*, funded by the Australian Government for four years 2009-2012 (AAMT n.d.), and *YuMi Deadly Maths*, which operates from the Queensland University of Technology (YuMi Deadly Centre n.d.). *Make it count* has an explicit focus on CRP while *YuMi Deadly Maths* is based on a pedagogical framework that has synergies with CRP, particularly a focus on making strong connections to the reality of the students' lives.

Make it count worked with a total of 35 metropolitan and regional schools across five states, with 'research and development directed at improving Indigenous students' engagement, achievement and attitudes in mathematics, and for engaging parents and the wider community in Indigenous students' learning of mathematics' (AAMT n.d., p. 1). Although cautious about the interpretation of results, it was reported that the *National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) outcomes showed some 'very encouraging improvements' (p. 3). AAMT's framework for responsive mathematics pedagogy was based on three critical dimensions: academic inclusion, cultural inclusion and social inclusion. They reported that 'None of these is enough in its own right—all three elements need to be present in effective teaching of Indigenous students' (AAMT, n.d., p. 5). Apart from literature published directly through the program, some of the participants have published

independently on the outcomes of *Make it count* in their schools (for example, Sparrow & Hurst 2012; Thornton et al. 2012)

YuMi Deadly is an ongoing initiative designed to 'enhance the learning of all students, particularly Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, minority and low-SES students, in a manner that is culturally empowering, builds pride and positive identity, and sustains community links' (YuMi Deadly Centre n.d.). Currently, the mathematics element of the initiative (PRIME Futures) involves more than 60 schools in 10 geographical clusters across Australia. It 'aims to discover new knowledge and ways of improving learning in mathematics for Indigenous students' through action research or experimental methods' (Sarra et al. 2016, p. 4). The PRIME Futures project is due for completion in 2019, so it is too soon to evaluate the outcomes. However, 'An early analysis of the program indicates that teachers have observed an increase in student engagement and learning and an improved understanding of mathematical concepts' (Sarra et al. 2016, p. 5).

In addition to this Australian literature, recent international literature focussing on culturally responsive mathematics includes Aguirre and del Rosario Zavala (2013), Harding-DeKam (2014), Hubert (2014) and Waddell (2014) in relation to culturally diverse learners and/or their teachers in the United States; Nicol, Archibald and Baker (2013) and Nolan and Weston (2014) in relation to First Nations learners in Canada; and Nutti (2013) who discusses culturally responsive mathematics from the perspective of Sámi teachers in Sweden.

Science: Like mathematics, school science is considered by some to be 'acultural' (Gondwe & Longnecker 2015) and therefore beyond the scope of culturally responsive pedagogy (Boutte, Kelly-Jackson & Johnson 2010). The situation in relation to culturally responsive science in the curriculum is complicated by parallel international and national initiatives to integrate Indigenous Knowledges into the teaching of science (for Australian discussions of Indigenous Knowledges in school science see, for example, Baynes 2016; Desmarchelier 2016; Gondwe & Longnecker 2015). McKinley (2016) offers one of the few Australian discussions of cultural responsiveness, as opposed to Indigenous Knowledges, in school science. Internationally, the need for CRP in science curriculum is discussed in relation to Indigenous students by Abrams, Taylor and Guo (2013) and in relation to other minoritised students by Brown and Crippen (2017), Codrington (2014) and Milner (2011).

Health and Physical Education (HPE): Eurocentric sports occupy a dominant position in the contemporary Australian Physical Education curriculum and have done so for several decades (Williams 2018). Williams (2014, p. 307) notes that 'the vast majority of serving HPE teachers will not have been exposed to Indigenous physical activities when they were high school students, during their pre-service training or in their actual work', and argues that 'to most HPE teachers in Australia, Indigenous PE perspectives are alien in every respect'. It was not until the Australian Sports Commission published *Yulunga: Traditional Indigenous Games* (Edwards & Meston 2008) that some teachers began to consider the possibilities of incorporating Aboriginal sports and games into the conventional HPE curriculum of football, cricket, basketball, softball, tennis, and so on, in order to increase cultural inclusivity. Traditional Indigenous games or dance are often seen as a mechanism to address the

Australian Curriculum requirement for Aboriginal perspectives (see, for example, Dinan Thompson, Meldrum & Sellwood 2014; Louth & Jamieson-Proctor 2018; Whatman & Meston 2016). in his study of Torres Strait Islander dance introduced into the HPE curriculum in a Canberra school, Williams (2014) warns of the dangers of cultural appropriation and tokenism, and urges teachers to position Indigenous tutors in principal roles.

Humanities and the Social Sciences (HASS): The integrated learning area called Humanities and the Social Sciences (HASS), which Australian States and Territories have been progressively implementing since 2017, is composed of four sub-strands which were previously taught as discrete learning areas: History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business. Australian discussions of CRP in relation to HASS can be expected to surface in the literature under the disciplinary sub-strands, or internationally under the term 'social studies'.

Given the contested nature of Australian history, and the implications of this history for the inequitable distribution of land and resources across the continent, it is remarkable that no Australian literature in relation to culturally responsive History or Geography was identified in the preparation of this review (for a critique of Aboriginal perspectives in the Australian Curriculum: History, see Fricker 2017). Likewise, no Australian literature on culturally responsive Civics and Citizenship or Economics and Business was located.

International literature on these curriculum areas includes Martell (2013) and Stowe (2017) (History); Harcourt (2015) and Gruenewald (2008) (Geography); and Ramirez and Jaffee (2016) (Civics and Citizenship). No international literature on culturally responsive Economics and/or Business was identified.

The Arts: The Australian Curriculum: The Arts covers five subjects: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts. Australian literature linking CRP to any of these sub-strands is scarce but includes Meiners and Garrett (2015) and Wilson (2016b) in relation to Dance, and Cain (2015) in relation to Music (although framed in the language of multicultural education rather than CRP).

Internationally, CRP has received at least some consideration in Arts-based subject areas. New Zealand seems to be comparatively rich in literature linking CRP with Dance (for example, Ashley 2014; Melchior 2011; Whitinui 2010), Drama or Performing Arts (Baskerville 2009; Cody 2015; Hindle 2011) and Visual Arts (Hindle 2011; Turketo & Smith 2014). Buffington (2014), Buffington and Bryant (2019) and Knight (2015) focus on culturally responsive Art education in the United States, while articles by Broome (2014) and Rovegno and Gregg (2007) each offer candid reflections on their own endeavours in CRP through Indigenous art and Native American dance respectively. The theme of culturally responsive music education is explored by Lind and McKoy (2016).

Technologies: In the Australian Curriculum, Technologies covers two dimensions: Design and Technologies and Digital Technologies. No Australian literature on CRP and the

Technologies curriculum learning area was located during the compilation of this review. Internationally, literature on CRP and Technologies in the school curriculum is scant. Examples in relation to Indigenous students include Anohah and Suhonen (2016); Babbitt et al. (2015); Eglash (2007) and Kafai et al. (2014). The absence of resources and literature in relation to the teaching of Technologies in schools is disappointing and there is an urgent need for culturally responsive digital education for Indigenous young people in the Pacific regions (Rigney 2017).

Languages: Through the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*, students can learn a language in addition to English. International literature on the theme of culturally responsive approaches to teaching foreign languages is scant (for an example in the context of New Zealand, see Conway & Richards 2017), except in relation to English as Foreign/Second Language (see, for example, Blair 2017; Bui 2014; Douglas 2017). No Australian literature was identified.

It should be noted that the opportunity to learn an Australian Aboriginal language within the Australian Curriculum dates only to December 2015, when *The Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* was endorsed. This framework is intended to 'guide the development of teaching and learning curricula for particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages' (ACARA n.d.-d).

Freeman and Staley (2018) note a serious contradiction in the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* in relation to students who speak an Aboriginal language as their primary language:

> [W]hen students with an English-speaking background learn a second language at school, such as Mandarin, ACARA recognises the need to create a separate second language learner pathway. Yet, when Aboriginal-language-speaking students learn a second language at school (e.g. English), ACARA (2009) states it is in the students' best interest to offer them the same curriculum, the same assessments and set the same high expectations for all learners regardless of their language background. (p. 178)

Some state or territory governments plan to introduce initiatives intended to support the teaching of local Aboriginal languages in schools, or have already done so (see, for example, Northern Territory Government 2017; NSW Department of Education & New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group 2018). An evaluation of an Aboriginal languages and culture program offered in regional locales in New South Wales recommends that Aboriginal languages and cultures should be included in the core curriculum for all students, rather than considered as 'add-ons' (Katz et al. 2018a, 2018b).

Section 3: Culturally responsive pedagogy: Challenges

Many of the most eloquent advocates for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy are nevertheless aware of its challenges. Gutiérrez and Johnson (2017) observe that, 'culturally relevant and equity-oriented pedagogies are often misunderstood and taken up in ways that diverge from their original intent. In short, 'bad things can happen to good ideas' (p. 252). Sleeter (2012) articulates a need to confront and address what she calls 'the marginalization of culturally responsive pedagogy'. She notes the impact of the current neoliberal educational climate on teaching:

> As the work of teachers becomes increasingly prescribed, attempts to work with culturally responsive pedagogy are increasingly difficult. Teachers have less time to research and develop curriculum that students can relate to, non-tested curriculum disappears under pressure to raise test scores, and teachers are increasingly patrolled to make sure they are teaching the required curriculum. (Sleeter 2011, p. 19)

In the following sections, we discuss some of the limitations and challenges faced by advocates for CRP.

Conceptual confusion or distortion

Gloria Ladson-Billings, one of the foundational theorists of CRP, has recently commented on some of the concerning interpretations by educators who claim to be CRP practitioners (Ladson-Billings 2014, 2017). While there are differences between the various articulations of CRP, Ladson-Billings (1995a) advanced a framework consisting of three strands: a focus on student learning, developing students' cultural competence in their own and other cultures, and supporting students' critical consciousness. Each of these components has been put into practice in problematic ways. Student learning, rather than understood as intellectual growth, is often interpreted in terms of standardised test scores. The concept of student cultural competence has been distorted with static and one dimensional understandings of culture, or has been refocused exclusively on the cultural competence of the teacher. The socio-political or critical consciousness element of CRP is often either ignored entirely, or co-opted to suit the agendas of the teachers. While culturally relevant teachers should help students engage in projects relating to problems that matter in *their* lives (Ladson-Billings 2017, p. 145), teachers instead frequently choose an issue that interests *them* (Ladson-Billings 2017, p. 146), thereby inadvertently disempowering students even further.

Fasching-Varner and Dodo Seriki (2012) echo Ladson-Billings' concerns, identifying a 'disconnect between the theory of CRP and how teachers articulate what it is that they actually believe to be culturally relevant' (p. 2). They suggest that the misuse of CRP is moving it 'further and further from the hopes and aspirations of the original scholarship' (p. 2). In a study that used Ladson-Billings' three-strand framework of CRP with school leaders in a metropolitan elementary school in the United States, Young (2010) reported that

'confusion over culturally relevant pedagogy was palpable in all facets of data collection' (p. 251).

Super-diversity

In terms of cultural diversity, most of the empirical research on CRP to date has taken place in relatively homogenous classrooms. Referring to the North American context, Henry (2017, p. 14) notes that most research on CRP has taken place in homogenously African American or Latino settings (see also Morrison et al. 2008). As mentioned earlier, Australian classrooms are becoming increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse. For example, recent statistics for government schools in New South Wales confirm that cultural diversity is on the rise and that, in 2017, 34.2% of students came from homes where one or more of 238 languages other than English are spoken (CESE 2017).

Increasing student diversity in the classroom is not solely an Australian phenomenon. In a globalised world, and with increases in both voluntary and forced migration (IOM 2018), demographic profiles are changing in schools across many nations. For example, super-diversity is now characteristic of schools in New Zealand (Donaldson 2018), the United States (Mitchell 2018) and Europe (Gogolin 2011). In relation to Canadian schools, Henry (2017, p. 14) note that, 'In reality, most classrooms are diverse, including "homogeneous" classrooms with students from the same ethnocultural backgrounds or even from the same family; children may identify quite differently and experience their race and culture in ways unlike their family members. Our pedagogies have to be expansive enough to engage these differences'. Her comments are equally applicable to classrooms in any location.

As Howard and Rodriguez-Minkoff (2017, p. 16) note, some scholars question the capacity for CRP to accommodate such diversity. However, Garland and Bryan (2017, p. 52) argue that it is not necessary for teachers to learn everything about their students' cultures in order to successfully enact CRP.

Validation

One recurring theme regarding CRP is the quest for evidence that it 'works'. Several proponents of CRP note that conclusive evidence that there is a causal link between CRP and improved student outcomes (however these may be conceived) is limited; available evidence consists primarily of small-scale case studies (see Castagno & Brayboy 2008; Gay 2015; Sleeter 2012). Indeed, simplistic concepts of 'what works' in education are inherently problematic (Auld & Morris 2016; Zhao 2017). As Biesta (2015, p. 80) observes, 'something never "works" in the abstract sense but always in relation to a particular purpose or set of purposes' (see also Biesta 2010). Under neoliberalism, the primary purpose of schooling is to prepare young people to serve the needs of the economy (Clarke & Phelan 2015; Keddie

2016; Thomson, Lingard & Wrigley 2012), while 'what works' is measured via the achievement scores obtained through high-stakes competitive testing (Connell 2013).

In education, 'what works' is intimately linked with the concept of 'what counts' as success. In the Australian context, and despite policy rhetoric that endorses Aboriginal community involvement in decision-making, the education system refuses to grapple with the prospect that 'Indigenous communities have different criteria for what counts as "success" beyond and in addition to test scores and other conventional measures' (Phillips & Luke 2017, p. 991). It follows that, in order to establish if and to what extent CRP 'works', academic achievement—irrespective of how this is measured—should be just one criterion. Other criteria equally worthy of investigation include, for example, engagement with learning; sense of identity, belonging and safety (particularly in relation to racism); and relationships with educators and peers, among other factors.

Quantitative evidence that CRP 'works', in the sense of raising student achievement, is available but not voluminous. In their study of the influences of culturally based education on the academic performance of Native American students, Demmert and Towner (2003) discuss the difficulties of conducting experimental or quasi-experimental quantitative research into the efficacy of such programs. Reliable and valid quantitative research on the effectiveness of *any* educational intervention is inherently challenging for several reasons, including the difficulties in adequately controlling variables in the research setting, the length of time required for any effect on academic performance to be detectable, and the ethical implications of excluding a control group from a potentially valuable educational program (see also Bishop 2012; Demmert Jr & Towner 2003, p. 11). Where students are not from the 'mainstream' culture, there is the added complication of identifying valid and reliable measures of student achievement that are culturally appropriate and unbiased (Demmert Jr & Towner 2003, p. 12). With these caveats in mind, international experimental or quasi-experimental quantitative studies of CRP and student achievement encountered in the compilation of this review include Bell and Clark (1998), Bishop et al. (2007, Chapter 9), Brenner (1998), Bui and Fagan (2013), Byrd (2016), Clark (2017), Dee and Penner (2017), Garcia, Chun and Santiago-Rivera (2016), Ladwig (2012), López (2016) and Underwood (2009).

Notably, there was very little published evidence of quantitative research on CRP in the Australian context. In a recent study, the National Centre for Longitudinal Data found improved literacy scores among Aboriginal students whose schools are actively embedding the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander* CCP in their curriculum (Skelton 2016). Boon and Lewthwaite (2015, 2016) have developed and validated an instrument for measuring seven subscales of culturally responsive pedagogy, determined through interviews with Australian Aboriginal students and their parents, and have piloted the instrument with 141 practicing elementary and secondary teachers.

Compared to quantitative research, there is rich and diverse international research literature that provides qualitative support for CRP as an approach to enhance the learning experiences and/or outcomes of minoritised students. The research approaches include ethnographic

studies (e.g. Blair 2017; Lee & Walsh 2017), grounded theory (e.g. Allen, Jackson & Knight 2012; Bajaj, Argenal & Canlas 2017), narrative (e.g. Bergeron 2008; Donovan 2016) and case study (e.g. Cholewa et al. 2014; Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist 2003). In the Australian literature, there are few published qualitative studies that report on the impact of CRP on the schooling experiences of Aboriginal students. Two publications identified were case studies by Morris and Matthews (2011) and Munns et al. (2013).

International mixed methods research incorporating both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of CRP include the studies by Bishop et al. (2007), Savage et al. (2011), Griner and Stewart (2013), Moon (2011), Sampson and Garrison-Wade (2011), Martell (2013), (Powell et al. 2016), and, in Australia, studies by Boon and Lewthwaite (2015, 2016) and Llewellyn et al. (2016).

Essentialism and stereotyping

One of the challenges to CRP that has been identified in the international and national literature is the danger of cultural essentialism—'the assumption that all members of a category of people share one or several identifiable, defining cultural features' (Alvaré 2017, p. 34). Essentialism and ethnocentrism position culture:

> as timeless and monolithic … Individuals are not seen as active agents of culture change, but rather vessels for bodies of cultural practices, knowledge, and dispositions that they mechanically reproduce on a daily basis. (Alvaré 2017, p. 36)

Essentialism is problematic because 'minority cultures (like all cultures) are fluid and experience change, both in urban, multicultural settings, as well as in rural, ethnically homogenous ones' (Alaska Department of Education & Early Development 2012, p. 41). Gorski (2016) cautions educators against essentialist and static conceptions of students' cultures:

> When we do focus on culture—again, as one of a vast array of foci— we should focus on the individual cultural identities of individual students rather than on lists of presumed cultural traits stereotypically attributed to entire groups of people based on language, race, ethnicity, class, immigration status, or other identities. And we must refuse to conflate these identities with amorphous notions of culture or emphasize culture at the expense of emphasizing other ways in which students are marginalized. (pp. 223-224)

Indeed, each student can have multiple cultural identities (Ebersole et al. 2015, p. 98). In honouring the complex identities of students, Bissonnette (2016) suggests that

> the notion that the 'cultural' in 'culturally responsive pedagogy' is not confined exclusively to race or ethnicity … the importance of recognizing and affirming the nuances of students' sociocultural identities, which requires us to consider our students' class, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religious affiliations (among other

> descriptors), and the manner in which these elements might intersect so that we may evolve our culturally responsive practices. (p. 21)

In their research on the schooling experiences of Navaho and Pueblo students, Lee and Quijada Cerecer (2010) intentionally use the term 'socio-culturally responsive education' in order to emphasise that Indigenous young people are not solely defined by their culture. While arguing for the concept of *culturally sustaining pedagogy*, Alim and Paris (2017, p. 12) emphasise that it is crucial to avoid static understandings of culture. Moodie and Patrick (2017, p. 445) note that in Australia, Aboriginal educational policy documents usually use the term *culture* in ways that overlook the diversity that exists within groups.

In relation to the education of Indigenous peoples, essentialism can surface in the form of learning styles theory and discourses (Castagno & Brayboy 2008, p. 954; Gutiérrez & Rogoff 2003). In Australia, the concept of 'Aboriginal learning styles' was popularised in the 1980s and 1990s (see, for example, Harris 1984; Hughes & More 1997) and, despite swift critique (Nicholls, Crowley & Watt 1998), remains an active concept among some educators . For example, Tyson Yunkaporta's (2009) 'Eight Ways' Aboriginal pedagogy has been linked by some commentators to Aboriginal learning styles theory (for a discussion, see Vass 2018). As Vass (2018) notes, 'the practices associated with learning style theory could potentially be relevant for any student, irrespective of their background, raising concerns about the dangers of singling Indigenous students out in these ways' (p. 98).

In Australian classrooms, essentialism can also surface as pan-Aboriginal approaches to curricular content, a situation that has arguably been exacerbated by embedding the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* Cross-Curriculum Priority in the Australian Curriculum. Although cultural content integration is considered a 'good thing' in the CRP literature because it provides opportunities for all students to 'see' their culture valued and validated in the classroom (López 2016), such content needs to draw on local and authentic resources and knowledges. Yunkaporta (2009, p. 152) makes a distinction between 'Indigenised content and authentic Aboriginal perspectives'. Pan- Aboriginal curriculum in the Art classroom, for example, might include a dot painting activity without explaining that this art-form is localised to particular regions (see Wilson 2016a). While teachers scramble to include Aboriginal content in the curriculum in order to address the Australia Curriculum CCP, it is imperative that they avoid stereotypes and assumptions in relation to diverse Aboriginal cultures.

Tokenistic and/or superficial approaches

One of the potent critiques of multicultural education is its tendency towards tokenism, whereby culture is rendered in terms of the visible and the superficial. Uncritical multicultural approaches to education focus on the conspicuous 'four Fs' of culture—food, folk-dancing, festivals and fashion (Harbon & Moloney 2015, p. 16)—without engaging with the deeper dimensions of students' cultural lives or the complex issues of power,

discrimination or colonialism. Typically, multicultural 'celebrations of diversity' (Ladson-Billings 1998) present reified views of 'other' cultures as static, exotic and/or homogenous (Chan 2011; Holm & Zilliacus 2009; Vass 2017). While CRP attempts to move beyond the tokenistic and the superficial, Ladson-Billings (2014, p. 77) notes that many well-intentioned practitioners who claim to be culturally responsive 'seem stuck in very limited and superficial notions of culture'. According to Ladson-Billings, culture:

> is not merely the visible and tangible components of a community such as artifacts, foods, and customs, although those things are indeed a part of culture. However, it is important to emphasize the dynamic and fluid nature of culture that is much more than lists of 'central tendencies' or worse, 'cultural stereotypes.' From an anthropological perspective, culture encompasses worldview, thought patterns, epistemological stances, ethics, and ways of being along with the tangible and readily identifiable components of human groups. (2017, p. 143)

In her discussion of the 'marginalisation' of culturally responsive pedagogy, Sleeter (2012) comments on 'cultural celebration' manifestations of CRP. If cultural celebration becomes the endpoint of CRP, 'Learning "about" culture then substitutes for learning to teach challenging academic knowledge and skills through the cultural processes and knowledge students bring to school with them' (Sleeter 2012, p. 569).

Superficial approaches to CRP may include checklists and lesson plans which, when used unreflectively, can give the impression that CRP is readily reduced to a series of steps. As Sleeter (2012, p. 570) notes, checklists often serve the purpose of documentation and compliance, rather than encouraging critical engagement with the underlying principles of CRP (see also Siope 2013, pp. 39-40). In her problematisation of CRP as an equity practice, Schmeichel (2012, p. 225) warns of a tendency, especially in practitioner journals, to promote CRP 'not as a critique of inequitable social structures, but as a new source of lesson plans or classroom activities'. Cultural responsiveness should be a long-term and often deeply personal endeavour:

> Although it might be useful to simply have a checklist of culturally responsive practices, in reality we know that learning to be culturally responsive cannot come from reading a book or attending one workshop, even though these are good places to start. (Klump & McNeir 2005, p. 64)

In the Australian context, tokenistic and superficial approaches to Aboriginal education are evidenced at all levels of the system, including policy consultation (Gillan, Mellor & Krakouer 2017, p. 59); school engagement with Aboriginal students, parents and communities (Burgess & Evans 2017; Hardy 2016; Phillips & Luke 2017), curriculum content (Donovan 2016; Lowe et al. 2014; Lowe & Yunkaporta 2013; Morris & Burgess 2018), teacher training and professional development (Buxton 2015; Labone, Cavanagh & Long 2014; Riley & Pidgeon 2018), and even in relation to the presence of Aboriginal staff in schools (New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group 2004). The annual

celebration of NAIDOC Week or Harmony Day [11], in the absence of a sustained and long-term commitment to culturally responsive teaching, curriculum and school ethos, is an example of tokenism in Australian schools.

It is imperative that CRP moves beyond superficial engagement with the visible artefacts of Aboriginal cultures:

> … quality pedagogy in Aboriginal contexts must include more than a phone call to an Aboriginal dance agency or painting a mural on a school wall. (Harrison & Greenfield 2011, p. 68)

Sovereignty and self-determination

As discussed previously, CRP originated in the United States in the context of an education system that was consistently failing the needs of African American and Latina/o students. With the focus of CRP subsequently broadening to Indigenous education in the United States, Canada and other settler colonial nations, it could be expected that fundamental issues of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination would be part of the dialogue. However, in their comprehensive review *Culturally Responsive Schooling for Indigenous Youth*, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) observed that 'the overwhelming majority of scholarship on CRS [culturally responsive schooling] for Indigenous youth is silent on this important issue' (p. 948). Today, more than a decade later, it would seem that this omission has yet to be addressed. Fickel, Macfarlane and Macfarlane (2017, p. 102) note that 'often the conceptual frameworks that are promoted to support educators in developing CRP do not consider or critically engage with key Indigenous constructs such as sovereignty and self-determination, colonization, cultural and language revitalization and preservation, or Indigenous epistemologies'. Lee (2015, p. 11) argues that a socially, culturally and linguistically responsive education for Indigenous peoples 'cannot be separated from Indigenous knowledge, values, and cultural and political sovereignty'.

In terms of self-determination and sovereignty, the situation for Aboriginal Australians is arguably more fragile than for Indigenous peoples in comparable settler colonial societies. Unlike the United States, Canada and New Zealand, there is no Australian legal apparatus, such as Treaty, that recognises Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. This is despite the fact that 'The Australian state is unable to point to any evidence of any First Nations having renounced sovereignty' (Watson 2014, p. 155). And while Australia belatedly endorsed the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) which asserts the rights of Indigenous peoples to educational self-determination (Article 14), the Declaration is not legally binding. Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars and activists argue that First Nations Australians are unequivocally entitled to political and

[11] NAIDOC is an acronym for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee'. NAIDOC Week is help in the first week of July. Harmony Day is held annually in Australia in March to coincide with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

intellectual sovereignty (Behrendt 2013; Foley, Schaap & Howell 2013; Moreton-Robinson 2007; Rigney 2001), successive Australian governments and their institutions have failed to make meaningful progress in recognising the sovereign rights of Aboriginal Australians.

While Australian literature that explicitly links Aboriginal education to treaty and sovereignty is scarce, the archive of Aboriginal scholar Lester-Irabinna Rigney is relevant (Worby, Rigney & Tur 2006). Rigney (2001) argues for a more overt focus on 'intellectual sovereignty' in order to achieve educational equality and self-determination. He expands on this notion and its implications in *Indigenous Education, Languages and Treaty* (Rigney 2003a). Given that Indigenous peoples' inherent jurisdiction and control of their children's education has never been ceded, the existing settler relationship and authority over schooling must be redefined. In *Can the Settler State Settle with whom it Colonises* (2011b), Rigney argues that the Anglo-centric schooling apparatus must dialogue with the intersections of Aboriginal knowledges and reform itself to such an extent that Indigenous authority and regulation are recognised (see also Rigney 2003b, 2011a, 2011c). In the absence of a treaty, Rigney questions whether settler governments are capable of redefining the relationship in this way, and whether true reconciliation is possible. The need to build culturally responsive educational governance, curriculum and pedagogy to benefit Indigenous interests using treaty is implied here:

> Treaty and the re-definition of a new relationship attempts to move beyond past and present injustices. The goals of social and economic justice are built on the principles of rights recognition through relationship building and reconciliation via education … The challenge is to develop genuine understanding and dialogue across the lines of division in an attempt to bring a final resolution to citizenry rights injustice faced by Indigenous peoples. Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in education must develop new ways of pursing dialogue and negotiation to build new structures to prevent further human and community devastation. (Rigney 2003a, p. 73)

Educationally, this failure to redefine the educational relationship between settler and colonised manifests as avoidance and tokenism in policy documents, such as the Australian Curriculum. In their 2013 analysis of Australian Curriculum documents available at that time, Lowe and Yunkaporta found that curriculum content included only scant mention of key Aboriginal political issues, such as Aboriginal rights, invasion and the Stolen Generations, and no mention at all of Terra Nullius[12], Aboriginal self-determination and sovereignty. The authors conclude that 'It would be fair to summarise the current inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content as weak, often tokenistic and overwhelmingly unresponsive to historical and contemporary realities' (Lowe & Yunkaporta 2013, p. 12). Likewise, Moodie and Patrick (2017) found that the relevant *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL 2011) can be 'interpreted in ways that perpetuate an

[12] Terra Nullius, a Latin expression meaning 'nobody's land', was a principle used in late 18th century European law to claim ownership of land. The principle was invoked by the British colonisers to claim possession of Australia, despite the reality that the continent was occupied by Aboriginal peoples, and had been for thousands of years. Source: https://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/factsheets/terra-nullius/

essentialised and ahistorical understanding of Indigenous peoples and perspectives' (p. 439), eliding 'any sense of Indigenous agency or sovereignty' (p. 448).

As Vass (2013) argues:

> Education is well positioned to play a decisive role in critiquing the historical, social, economic and political narratives and structures that underpin inequitable relationships within Australia. The enduring impact and influence of deficit thinking, assimilationist ideologies, and race-based assumptions are all built on the legacies associated with dispossession and the ongoing denial of Indigenous sovereignty. (p. 93)

A truly culturally responsive pedagogy should not only link culture to learning, it should recognise inherent Aboriginal jurisdiction, authority and regulation over Aboriginal schooling (Rigney 2011a, 2011c) to enable Aboriginal students to enact their rights to social, economic and political self-determination and sovereignty.

Fear

Even for teachers who are positively inclined towards culturally responsive pedagogy, there remain, for some, reservations that engaging with the cultural worlds of students is risky. The fear of causing offence or contravening Aboriginal protocols is a recurring theme in Australian discussions of teacher engagement with Aboriginal students and their cultures. This fear has apparently not been mitigated with the introduction of the Australian Curriculum's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* cross-curriculum priority, and Focus areas 1.4 and 2.4 of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teacher*s (Baynes 2016; Booth 2014; Ma Rhea et al. 2012). As Buxton (2017, p. 205) observes in relation to Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum, 'teachers who have a willingness to do the right thing but are afraid of getting it wrong, take an easier option'. Rose (2012, p. 71) argues that socially conscious professionals are more prone to avoiding engagement with Aboriginal people or Aboriginal content for fear of been seen 'politically incorrect or racist'. In his study, Yunkaporta (2009) identified several factors that inhibited teachers from engaging with Aboriginal perspectives, including 'fears of mainstream backlash, loss of credibility/centrality/privilege/expert status, the unfamiliar or other, giving offense or violating Aboriginal protocol, and failure to meet education/workload requirements'. He noted that these fears 'are a root cause of the trivialisation of Aboriginal knowledge in curriculum' (p. 162).

Cultural competence and CRP: Is there a difference?

In 2006, the journal *Anthropology News* published a letter written by James Green, author of *Cultural Awareness in the Human Services: A Multi-ethnic Approach* (1982). While acknowledging shared responsibility for introducing the term 'cultural competence' into

professional services practices more than twenty years earlier, Green (2006, p. 3) now wanted to draw attention to its 'pernicious' impact. In his revised view, cultural competence was associated with 'an unhealthy hubris, presumptive of technical expertise that is more rote than lived. It should be dropped'. He offered the concept of *cultural humbleness* as an alternative that is 'honest, and doable' (2006, p. 3).

Cultural competence may be understood as 'a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals that enable effective interactions in a cross-cultural framework' (Cross et al. 1989, p. iv). Related concepts, often used synonymously, include cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural safety, cross-cultural communication and cultural proficiency (Hollinsworth 2013, p. 1049). Following Green's 1982 publication, the concept of cultural competence gained considerable traction in the health and social work sectors in the United States and elsewhere, and was seen as critical to improving the services provided to increasingly multicultural populations. In the Australian context, improving the cultural competence of non-Aboriginal service providers was one of 339 recommendations of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* (Johnston 1991, Recommendation 210a), and was expected to lead to greater accommodation of cultural difference. In reference to education, some commentators consider teacher cultural competence to be a vital factor in building positive learning relationships with Indigenous students in Australia (Buckskin 2012) and the United States (Castagno & Brayboy 2008).

The notion of cultural competence was one of three dimensions of CRP articulated by Ladson-Billings (1995b). However, in more recent reflections Ladson-Billings notes that this notion has been frequently misunderstood (Ladson-Billings 2017, p. 143) and has proven difficult to convey to teachers (Ladson-Billings 2006, p. 35). In her work, Ladson-Billings primarily refers to the capacity for educators to develop the cultural competence of *students*:

> In the context of CRP, cultural competence refers to the skill and facility to help students recognize and appreciate their culture of origin while also learning to develop fluency in at least one other culture. The goal of cultural competence is to ensure that students remain firmly grounded in their culture of origin (and learn it well) while acquiring knowledge and skill in at least one additional culture. (Ladson-Billings 2017, pp. 144-145)

Cultural competence, in this context, is not only relevant for marginalised students:

> Developing a multicultural, multilingual perspective or competence means that all students (including White, middle-class students) broaden their cultural repertoires so that they can operate more easily in a world that is globally interconnected. (Ladson-Billings 2017, p. 145)

However, in literature and policy documents that engage with CRP, *teacher* cultural competence has emerged as a priority: 'Although cultural competence originally focused on students, more recent articulations of this theory call on teachers to develop cultural competence as well' (Buehler et al. 2009, p. 409). In her discussion of CRP in the Australian

context, Perso (2012) sees cultural responsiveness as *enacted* cultural competence (p. 22), and in fact several scholars use the terms cultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy virtually interchangeably (see, for example, Daniels-Mayes & Sinclair 2014; Dunbar & Scrimgeour 2009; Krakouer 2015). In some Australian jurisdictions, educational authorities have included cultural competence training for teachers in their strategic plans and policy documents (e.g. ACT Government 2016; DECD 2013). The Western Australian Department of Education (2015) has the most elaborated framework, promoting the development of educator cultural competence along a continuum that begins at *cultural awareness* and moves through the stages of *cultural understanding* and *cultural competence* to the end point of *cultural responsiveness*. This model is replicated in a recent Commonwealth policy document on the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (House of Representatives - Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs 2017).

The concept of cultural competence is seemingly benign; who would advocate for cultural *in*competence (cf. Carey & Prince 2015, p. 278)? However, across the health and service sectors, numerous conceptual problems have been identified, all of which have implications for the viability of cultural competence in educational settings, and especially when used as a proxy for CRP. Aboriginal scholar Mark Rose, once 'unashamedly' a proponent for cultural competency, is no longer convinced it has the 'capacity to deliver' in its current manifestation (Rose 2013, n.p.). He notes that the concept 'seems to have gained a life of its own without ever having gone through any semblance of a vigorous intellectual interrogation', resulting in a 'feeding frenzy' of cultural competence training programs (n.p.).

As an essentially depoliticised construct (Pon 2009), cultural competence fails to address or challenge socio-political inequalities at structural, institutional and interpersonal levels (Azzopardi & McNeill 2016; Fisher-Borne, Cain & Martin 2015; Ortega & Faller 2011). To interrogate the mechanisms of power and oppression that operate in our societies, cultural competence must begin with critical self-reflection and self-critique rather than a focus on the 'Other'. Referring to cultural competence in social work, Sakamoto's (2007) comments are equally relevant for education:

> I advocate a re-visioning of cultural competence that is simultaneously framed by anti-oppressive principles while also being open to different ways of knowing. If the ideological and theoretical influences guiding 'cultural competence' are not named and interrogated, cultural competence can simply be reduced to the management of 'diversity' within the current neo-liberal political climate, percolating through human service systems in the same way as 'multiculturalism' and 'empowerment' have done. (p. 109)

In relation to cultural competence training in the Australian Indigenous health sector, Farrelly and Lumby (2009, p. 20, citing Fredericks 2006) comment that 'creation of awareness does not lead to the needed structural changes, recognition of Indigenous rights nor understanding of white race privilege'. As Rose (2013) observes, 'any semblance of cultural competence is vested not in understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, but understanding your own cultural setting and worldview' (n.p.). Furthermore, efforts to increase knowledge

'about' particular cultures are likely to be of 'questionable value' unless there is a concurrent change in attitudes and behaviours (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia 1998, p. 119). The potential for cultural competence training to function merely as a corporate risk management or efficiency strategy has also been noted (Carey 2015; Hollinsworth 2013).

Cultural competence has the potential to reinforce essentialised and stereotyped notions of the 'Other' by presuming cultural homogeneity among very diverse peoples (Gorski 2016, p. 223). Training for cultural competence can be reduced to a checklist approach of 'dos' and 'don'ts' (Ladson-Billings 2017). The viability of 'knowing' a culture without being embedded within that culture is also problematic (Dean 2001, p. 624; Rose 2013). The contemporary Australian population is made up of more than 300 separate cultural or ethnic groups (excluding the cultural and linguistic diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) and more than one quarter of Australians were born overseas (ABS 2017). It follows that Australian classrooms are super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) and is clear that teachers—who may encounter a changing subset of these cultures each year or even each school term—cannot be 'competent' in every culture. Indeed, efforts to 'become' competent in each of the cultures represented in the classroom (however that may be measured) are likely to result in superficial, essentialist and reductionist understandings of students' home cultures.

The concept of *cultural humility* may be a viable alternative to cultural competence. The term 'cultural humility' is usually attributed to Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998), who were concerned by the 'traditional' notion of cultural competence in the United States health sector as 'detached mastery of a theoretically finite body of knowledge' (p. 117). While in no way discounting the value of learning as much as possible about the cultures of clients (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia 1998), cultural humility encompasses three core dimensions that can be expressed across individual and institutional levels: accountability (as opposed to knowledge mastery); lifelong learning and critical reflection, and mitigation of power imbalances (Fisher-Borne et al. 2015). In their concept analysis of relevant literature, Foronda et al. (2016) found that cultural humility entailed high-level transformative learning, lack of superiority, a change in overall perspective, and awareness of power imbalances, as opposed to mastery of skills and information about various cultures. Cultural humility has gained significant impetus in the health and social work sectors, but is currently on the periphery of the education sector (for rare discussions of the opportunities and challenges of cultural humility in education, see Carey 2015; Nolan 2016). Yet Paulo Freire, in *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to those who Dare Teach* (1998), wrote of the *Indispensable Qualities of Progressive Teachers for their Better Performance*:

> I shall start with humility, which here by no means carries the connotation of a lack of self-respect, of resignation, or of cowardice. On the contrary, humility requires courage, self-confidence, self-respect, and respect for others.
>
> Humility helps us to understand this obvious truth: No one knows it all; no one is ignorant of everything. (pp. 71-72)

More recently, in reference to teaching in culturally diverse contexts, Reid (2017, p. 211) has observed that 'a teacher who already "knows" what her [sic] students need to know, who lacks the humility to look, and learn, before she teaches, can only ever reproduce what she already knows, and limit the learning of her students … humility is necessary if teachers are to find out how to learn from and with their students'.

The term *cultural safety* is also entering into the 'official' language of Aboriginal education, as evidenced in at least two recent policy documents (Department of Education and Training 2016; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs December 2017). In terms of global Indigenous rights, United Nations links cultural safety with education, stating that: 'in order to guarantee cultural safety and culturally appropriate education for indigenous students, curricula must be based on, or sufficiently reflect, indigenous peoples' cultural values and beliefs' (UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2009, pp. 7-8).

The concept of cultural safety originates from the health sector in New Zealand, largely through the efforts of Māori nurse and educator Irihapeti Ramsden (1990). Cultural safety is frequently defined as:

> an environment that is 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, living and working together with dignity and truly listening. (Williams 1999, p. 12)

Conversely, culturally unsafe practices encompass 'any actions that diminish, demean or disempower the cultural identity and well-being of an individual' (Brascoupé & Waters 2009, p. 7, citing Cooney, 1994)

Along with the concepts of cultural competence and cultural humility, cultural safety has been adopted from the health disciplines into other sectors, including the schooling sector (see, for example, Macfarlane et al. 2007). In Australia, the concept of cultural safety is finding traction in the human and community services (Commission for Children and Young People n.d.; Frankland, Bamblett & Lewis 2011) and Higher Education (Bin-Sallik 2003), but has not featured in schooling discourses until quite recently. In their report, Buckskin et al. (2009) make an explicit link between culturally responsive pedagogy and cultural safety (p. 68), as does Rahman (2010). A strong statement linking Aboriginal Education and cultural safety is made in the recent report, *The Power of Education: From Surviving to Thriving - Educational Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students* (House of Representatives - Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs 2017), where cultural safety is described as 'the essential foundation upon which all education and support programs must be built in order to succeed' (p. xvi). This concept of safety must extend beyond the school to include students' families and communities (p. 45).

In their discussion in the context of First Nations Canadians, Brascoupé and Waters (2009) note that culturally safe approaches to diversity have an inherent political dimension that disrupts the power imbalance implicit in cultural competence models of service provision.

While cultural competence focuses on the *knowledge* of the service provider, cultural safety focuses on the *power* of minoritised peoples to determine whether or not the service relationship has met their needs for respect, equity, culturally appropriate engagement and trust. Cultural safety aims to expose the deep-seated and largely unspoken assumptions of power often held by professionals and to establish more equitable relationships between service providers and service recipients (Gerlach 2012, pp. 152-153). Cultural safety requires professionals to critically reflect on and question their personal cultural heritage and colonial history, and ultimately to accept responsibility for change (Gerlach 2012, p. 153)

It should be evident that there is a potential alignment between the concepts of cultural humility and cultural safety. Both concepts focus on the redistribution of power and on the need for professionals to engage in sincere and critical self-reflection. In this way, these newer concepts may be a significant advance on the cultural competence framework that currently imbues educational policy discourses in Australia. Nevertheless, not all scholars agree that these concepts are useful when applied across sectors. For example, Carey (2015) includes the concept of cultural humility in her discussion of 'simplistic decolonial paradigms' (p. 838) in Australian Indigenous Studies. Referring to cultural safety in the Higher Education sector, Nakata (2013) asserts that: 'those who rally to the language and logic of cultural safety fail to recognise that it promotes victimhood rather than Indigenous agency and resilience' (p. 296). Ultimately, it remains to be seen whether or not the notions of cultural humility and cultural safety provide any advance on the concept of cultural competence in Australian models of Aboriginal education, or whether they will—like cultural competence—simply become part of the policy lexicon without any accompanying structural and systemic change.

Section 4: Conclusion

In conclusion, we reiterate that a comprehensive account of the literature related to culturally responsive pedagogy, with a specific focus on Australia, has been beyond the scope of this brief review. Although we have attempted to address key themes, it is clear to us that this review is at best partial. Nevertheless, the literature covered here suggests a way forward for educators, schools and education systems. We argue the case for advancing, both theoretically and practically, an Australian culturally responsive pedagogy. This argument is based on two provocations:

> Firstly, the systemic failure of past and present policies to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal students is, by any measure, an urgent problem that is replicated internationally in other settler-colonial societies. As a signatory to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN General Assembly 2007), Australia has an obligation to uphold the rights of Aboriginal peoples to an education that is culturally and linguistically appropriate and that does not aim at, or result in, involuntary assimilation (UN Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues 2014, p. 1). Australia's current schooling system places Aboriginal students at an educational disadvantage, yet far too often Aboriginal peoples—rather than the education systems themselves—are framed as 'the problem'.
>
> Secondly, Australian classrooms are increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, yet the evidence suggests that many teachers lack the confidence and/or expertise to engage with cultural difference in supportive and educationally productive ways.

Official policy responses to these provocations include state initiatives such as 'Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum' (e.g. Education Queensland 2011; WA Department of Education n.d.), and inclusions in the national Australian Curriculum such as the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures' Cross-Curriculum Priority and an 'intercultural understanding' General Capability. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL 2011) specifically require teachers to know strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Focus Area 1.4) and to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Focus Area 2.4). In addition, the Standards require teachers to demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds (Focus Area 1.3).

However, given that school systems—and hence schools—generally do not provide any substantial professional learning related to improving Indigenous student learning outcomes (Ma Rhea et al. 2012) or responding to diversity (McKenzie et al. 2014), it is difficult to determine the impact of these policies on the actual educational experiences of Aboriginal and culturally diverse students. Furthermore, to date has been no comprehensive review of the uptake of these policy ideas, especially in terms of the ways schools are organised and

how curriculum and pedagogy are enacted in schools. There is an urgent need to know more about the 'actually existing pedagogies' (Lingard 2007, p. 246) that dominate in schools across Australia. Lingard (2007) refers to the dominant pedagogies as *pedagogies of indifference* or *pedagogies of the same*, summarised as being strong in care for students, but which mostly failing to work across difference and lacking both intellectual demand and connectedness to the world (p. 246). This view is confirmed by Hayes et al. (2009) who found that 'classroom practices are very traditional, following predictable routines, and are largely unsuccessful as far as formal learning is concerned' (pp. 251-252). Given no significant shift in the educational targets embedded in the Australian Government's 'Closing the Gap' (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2019) policy across a decade, there is every reason to believe that these approaches are not working as policy technologies for reforming teaching practices. We need an alternative framing for advancing a national debate about what constitutes pedagogies for difference.

To date, little attention has been given to the potential of culturally responsive pedagogies in Australian classrooms and unfortunately the work of a few productive advocates (e.g. Nakata 2011; Rahman 2013; Sarra 2007; Vass 2018; Yunkaporta & McGinty 2009) is yet to seriously inform curricular and pedagogical reform across state and federal jurisdictions. Internationally, there is growing body of evidence that culturally responsive pedagogies *do* improve educational experiences and outcomes of First Nations peoples and other minoritised groups. Culturally responsive pedagogies require a shift in teaching practice, curricular materials, teacher dispositions and school–community relations (Castagno & Brayboy 2008, p. 941). Such pedagogies embrace and build on students' identities and backgrounds as assets for learning.

There is presently no substantial theoretically informed and empirically substantiated Australian version of culturally responsive pedagogy available to Australian educators working in schools, or to those preparing new teachers. We hope this literature review will provide some resources and ideas for educators who are committed to improving learning experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal young people, for students from diverse heritages, and indeed for *all* students in Australian schools.

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