

Readings summarised in these notes follow (the beginning number is the reference used later in the notes):

1.1 Langton, M. 1993. *Well I heard it on the radio and I saw it on the television*. North Sydney: Australian Film Commission, 23-43.

1.2 Harrison, N 2011 'Starting out as a teacher in Aboriginal education' in Harrison, N *Teaching and Learning in Aboriginal Education*, Oxford University Press, Australia, pp. 1 – 15.

1.3 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). 2010. *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies*, AIATSIS, Canberra

2.1 Behrendt, L. 1995. *Aboriginal Dispute Resolution*. Maryborough, Victoria: Federation Press, 12-30.

2.2 Martin, K 2005 'Childhood, lifelihood and relatedness: Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing' in J Phillips & J Lambert (eds) *Education and diversity in Australia*, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW.

2.3 Foley, D. 2008. 'An Indigenous Standpoint Theory'. In Gunstone, A. (ed.), *History, Politics and Knowledge: Essays in Australian Indigenous Studies*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 113-133.

3.1 Carter, D 2006 'Aboriginal history and Australian history' in *Dispossession, dreams and diversity: Issues in Australian studies*, Pearson Education, Frenchs Forest, NSW.

3.2 Williams-Mozley, J 2012 'The Stolen Generations: What does this mean for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people today' in K Price (ed) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education: An introduction for the teaching profession*, Cambridge University Press, Sydney, NSW, pp. 21 - 34 (this reading is in the required text book for this course)

3.3 Attwood, B. 2003. *Rights of Aborigines*. Crow's Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 307-345.

4.1 O'Brien, L 2007 'Sharing our space' in *And the clock struck thirteen*, Wakefield press, Adelaide.

4.2 Price, K 2012 'A brief history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in Australia' in K Price (ed) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education: An introduction for the teaching profession*, Cambridge University Press, Sydney, NSW, pp. 1 – 20.

4.3 Beresford, Q. 2012. 'Separate and unequal: An outline of Aboriginal Education 1900-1996'. In Beresford, Q., Partington, G. and Gower, G. (eds.), *Reform and Resistance in Aboriginal Education*, UWA Publishing.

5.1 Alissa Macoun (2011) Aboriginality and the Northern Territory Intervention, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 46:3, 519-534

5.2

http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_indigenous_outcomes/2013/05/2011CensusPaper08_Education_Part2_Web.pdf

5.3 Gunstone, A. 2012. 'Indigenous education 1991-2000: Documents, outcomes and governments'. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 41(2): 75-84.

6.1 Short, D. 2005. 'Reconciliation as Education: the Council and the 'Peoples Movement''. *Journal of Australian Indigenous issues*, 8(3-4): 33-52.

6.2 Gunstone, A. 2007. 'Community Involvement and Education in the 1991-2000 Australian Reconciliation Process'. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 36: 39-48.

6.3 Zembylas, M. 2007. '*The politics of trauma: empathy, reconciliation and peace education*'. *Journal of Peace Education* 4(2): 207-224.

7.1 Harrison 2011 'Building community trust and collaboration in teaching and learning in Aboriginal education.

7.1 Evans, C 2012 'Your professional experience and becoming professional about working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities' in K Price (ed) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education: An introduction for the teaching profession*, Cambridge University Press, Sydney, NSW, pp. 52 – 63.

7.2 Gollan, S and Malin m, 2012 'Teachers and families working together to build stronger futures for our children in school' in Q Beresford, G Partington & G Gower (eds) *Reform and Resistance in Aboriginal Education*, UWA Publishing, pp. 149 -174.

7.3 Buckskin, P 2012 'Engaging Indigenous students: The important relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their teachers' in K Price (ed) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education: An introduction for the teaching profession*, Cambridge University Press, Sydney, NSW, pp. 164 – 180

8.1 Price, K 2012 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in the Classroom' in K Price (ed) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education: An introduction for the teaching profession*, Cambridge University Press, Sydney, NSW, pp. 151 – 163.

8.2 Craven, R 2011 'Why teach Aboriginal Studies?' in R Craven (ed) *Teaching Aboriginal Studies: A practical resource for primary and secondary teaching*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, pp. 1 – 21.

Week 1: Representation, Ethics and Teacher Education

At the end of this topic you should have:

- Considered your own worldview, what your values are and why you decided to become a teacher.
- Considered the various constructions of “Aboriginality” that are evident in society today.
- Developed an understanding of ethical guidelines that can guide non-Indigenous researchers and educators in working with Indigenous communities.

Aboriginal groups are not all the same. Methods to use in classroom:- *Note: ‘In talking and writing about others, including Aboriginal people, it is easy to produce stereotypes and generalisations *about* them. Through our own discourse we can easily move from talking about some people to talking about all the people in that group, and hence these people all become the same. The best solution to this problem for teachers is to begin with a study of Aboriginal people in the local area or community, using local Dreaming stories and local speakers to find out about the traditional owners of the land upon which the school stands. The children will learn to talk about one group of Aboriginal people, not all Aboriginal people. Another solution is to be very careful about the language that we use to talk about others. Teacher language creates images of Aboriginal people in the minds of students. It is helpful with children to use a more specific language (tribal) name such as Darug, Nyungar, Ngarrindjeri, Anaiwan, Yorta Yorta or Ngunnawal or to teach the term used by Aboriginal people themselves: for example, Koori, Palawa, Murri or Nunga (all of which mean people) rather than using the generic term, Aboriginal. This reinforces the concept that there are many different groups of Aboriginal people living in various parts of Australia.’ (Harrison 2011, p. 14-15)

Reading overview: 1.1 Langton, M. 1993. *Well I heard it on the radio and I saw it on the television*. North Sydney: Australian Film Commission, 23-43.

- ‘knowledge can only happen as we enter into a dialogue with the other culture’ p. 25
- Important is seeing the cultural inter-relatedness. P. 25
- There is a naïve belief that Aboriginal people will make ‘better’ representations of us, simply because being aboriginal gives ‘greater’ understanding. This belief is based on Racism is the assumption of the undifferentiated *Other* p. 27
- Racism is an assumption that all Aborigines are alike and equally understand each other – no cultural variation etc. p. 27
- Aboriginal people find white perceptions of Aboriginality are disturbing due to history of forced removal of children, denial of civil rights and dispossessions of land p. 28 – (to afraid to be identified as aboriginal).
- Someone noted 67 definitions of Aboriginal people p. 28
- Definitions for how to define ‘Aboriginal person’ p. 28
- Past negative views of Aboriginal people p. 34
- Current working definition that most Aboriginal people accept is p. 29 (i.e. recognised by members of community etc).
- For purposes of providing grants or loans – must present certificate of ‘Aboriginality’ p. 29
- ‘intrinsic to Western culture, as a mechanism for grappling with fear of the unknown and apparently known, the uncertain and the apparently certain – that’s why the make

'primitive' p. 30 (point where she says apparently known – I believe referring to Western previous encounters with Indigenous groups).

- 'We record their 'native' traditions under the pressure of ours' p. 30
- 'imaging them in order to imagine us' p. 30
- 'Aboriginality' arises from subjective experiences of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who engage in any intercultural dialogue.. the creation of Aboriginality is not a fixed *thing*' p. 31
- 'Aboriginality' only begin to arise in 1788. P. 32
- Aboriginal people when first seen white people thought they were ghosts – spirits of the dead returning to be with their relations p. 32
- Before contact there were Pitjantjatjara, Warlpiri, Yolngu people etc. Not referred to as Aboriginal. **Mention this in assignment. Own Identities etc.**
- 'Australians do not know and relate to Aboriginal people. They relate to stories told by former colonists' p. 33
- Films, video and television are powerful media: it is from these that most Australians 'know' about Aboriginal people. These actors and what they represent etc. are ideas generated by Australian image producers. P. 33 – **Reflection** - This highlights the power media has in shaping identity and creating 'others'.
- 'Aboriginality' is field of intersubjectivity in that it is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, of imagination, of representation and interpretation'. P. 33 – **Reflection** - As media has the ability to influence how I view Aboriginal's identity (i.e. all Aboriginal people are the same etc.) and the fact that 'Aboriginality' definition has and is always changing, highlights to me that it is important to always have an open mind, seek other opinions, be critical of what I read and view, to form my own opinions. As suggested by the lecturer, I should actively try and seek out information myself i.e. speak to local Indigenous groups etc.
- Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people create 'Aboriginalities' p. 34

Three broad categories of cultural and textual construction of 'Aboriginality': p. 34-35

1. Aboriginal interaction with Aboriginal people in Aboriginal culture.
2. White people stereotyping, iconising, mythologising Aboriginal people. These Anglo Saxons do this without first hand contact or dialogue with Aboriginal people.
3. Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal people engaging in actual dialogue. Forming own opinions based on first hand contact. **Reflection** – This is the role that we should be occupying. Making our own informed views, not blindly following and believing in the views that have been presented to us through media etc.
 - Aboriginal life in modern Australia has been described as 'welfare colonialism' p. 35
 - Aboriginal people have no pyramidal hierarchy of social and technological evolution i.e. stone age, iron age etc. p. 37
 - 'stereotypes, however inaccurate, are one form of representation' p. 38
 - 'Most people who come into contact with 'Aboriginal affairs' remark on (or are tempted to) the difficulty of dealing with Aboriginal people and things Aboriginal' Talking to them is confusing, disorientating, dangerous. Don't want to repeat mistakes of the past. The main issue some people find difficult to deal with is one of *difference*. P. 38 – **reflection** – Difference should not be an issue. As a teacher, I should embrace and encourage students to talk about their cultures etc. and celebrate cultural differences and different world views.
 - 'That Aboriginal people, ways of doing things or saying things, appearances and style, are so extremely different from the Anglo-Australian norm, whatever that might be, has been a recurring theme in Australian history' p. 39 **reflection** – this reminds me of the essay I did on The Dreaming for Aboriginal Cultures. We have a lot in common etc.

Reading question for reflection: Consider the ways that Aboriginality has been constructed in the past and today and by whom. In particular, what are the three broad categories of cultural and

textual construction of 'Aboriginality' that Marcia Langton outlines in reading 1? Please provide your own understanding of these three categories of representation.

Reading overview: 1.2 Harrison, N 2011 'Starting out as a teacher in Aboriginal education' in Harrison, N *Teaching and Learning in Aboriginal Education*, Oxford University Press, Australia, pp. 1 – 15.

- Do not stereotype. Assume all Aboriginal students work the same p. 1.
- Learn from speaking to Aboriginal people (as suggested by lecturer also) p. 1
- Trial a range of reading strategies and work on different ways of communicating with the children p. 5
- 'broader goal of getting to know people in the community' p. 6
- Chris Sarra also got into the community with success p. 7
- 'Aboriginal people will also be your best teachers' p. 7
- Tip – remind students that townships i.e. Adelaide - their names have been ridden over by Aboriginal names p. 8
- Common elements of successful model where aboriginal students finish school are: intense community involvement, local decision-making, locally controlled resources, respectful support by non-Aboriginla parts of the community p. 13
- See evidence of benefits for including community p. 13
- 'In talking and writing about others, including Aboriginal people, it is easy to produce stereotypes and generalissationg about them p. 14
- Best way to avoid stereotyping etc. is to begin study of Aboriginal people in local area or community, use local Dreaming stories and local speakers talk about traditional owners of the land. Students learn to talk about one group of Traditiional people not all Aboriginal people p. 14-15. **Reflection** – these are tips also provided by our lecturer. This is important as a pre-service teacher to not stereotype etc. **use in assignment.**
- Tip – use more specific language i.e. Ngarrinjjeri, Nunga, Koorie etc. Not just 'Aboriginal' – thus reinforcing the concept that there are many groups of Aboriginal people p. 15 – **use** in assignment.

Reading question for reflection: Reflecting on the discussion in the Harrison reading, what do you think the difference is between 'equity' and 'equality'? Which do you think is crucial to your learning in this course and why? What does Harrison mean by a 'deficit discourse'?

Reading overview: 1.3 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). 2010. *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies*, AIATSIS, Canberra

- This article provides principles that guide research involving Aboriginals including practical methods how these can be achieved.
- 1. Recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of peoples and individuals – Reflection – This has been echoed so far in the course to recognise different Aboriginal groups, do not stereotype. P. 2

2. Right of indigenous peoples to self-determination.
3. See p. 3 – indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expression' p. 3
4. Principle 7 - responsibility for consultation and negotiation – rights to record and/or film require clearance from participating interviewees/subjects. **Reflection** – important tip from teachers
 - a. 'obtain (do not assume) invitations to visit the community
5. 'indigenous communities and individuals have a right to be involved in any research project focused upon them and their culture p. 10

Reading question for reflection: What are some of the ethical guidelines that can guide non-Indigenous researchers and educators in their dealings with Aboriginal peoples and communities? Why do you think they are important?

Task: View the avatar film clip. How are 'whiteness' and 'otherness' portrayed in mainstream films about humanitarian crises and colonialism? The clip uses footage from seventeen different films, all of which tell the same narrative about a white protagonist's encounter with the "Other." Consider how the story is consistently told from the white colonizer's perspective. What are the stereotypical role/s that the Indigenous characters play? Many of you would have seen these films before. Were you aware of these stereotypical racial constructions before viewing this remix? Remember that whiteness and the power it affords is often invisible to those in this privileged position.

- The Indigenous groups were always the victims that required saving by white people.
- They always looked thankful for white people helping them.
- The white people were always the ones in charge and leading the action i.e. young Aboriginal girl saying 'yes boss'.
- They looked helpless were portrayed and presented to be helpless.
- Their customs/way of life was always judged/compared to white people's way of life – referred to as 'strange'.
- I have seen many of these films. Admittedly, I did not recognise this. Especially films like Avatar.

Task: Common myths about Indigenous Australia. http://www.reconciliation.org.au/home/get-involved/learning-tools/mythbusters#how_indigenous_are_you

- One of the biggest myths about Aboriginality is that if you have white skin you can't be Indigenous - you've got to be black to be "a real" Aboriginal - or that Aboriginality is attributed to the degree of ancestry, such as "she is 1/8th Aboriginal" or a varying combination of "white-bits and black-bits". These perceptions are highly offensive to Indigenous Australians and must be understood as products of colonial thinking. Ideas of genetics and culture are often mistakenly collapsed together so that if someone's skin is lighter, they are thought to have lost that equivalent of Aboriginal culture. Identity is tied to the cultures that a person is raised in, and how they identify with that culture. **Reflection** – In my assignment, I could mention that I subconsciously made this distinction. Also reference the working definition of Aboriginality i.e. 'descent of Indigenous person, recognised by community etc. (more social definition). Could possibly reference previous definitions how

Anglo-Saxons defined Aboriginals based on skin colour etc. and how I had slightly conformed to this.

- The popular belief that Indigenous people are genetically unable to tolerate alcohol because they did not drink until Europeans settlement is another myth. Indigenous people have long fermented drinks into alcohol from a range of sources such as the sap of some gum trees, bauhinia flowers and wild honey, banksia cones, pandanus plants and in the Torres Strait, the juice of coconut tree buds. There is no scientific evidence of a genetic variance that would predispose any racial or ethnic group to alcohol or make them less tolerant. In fact, humans are very genetically similar, sharing 99.9% of their genomes in common.

Indigenous people trash their houses

- One of the most prevalent media images of Indigenous communities shows dilapidated, poorly maintained houses. Unfortunately, this is a reality, but it has given rise to the myth that Indigenous people purposely trash their own homes.
- Data collected over a long period by healthabitat shows the majority of all repair works (70%) to houses in Indigenous communities are needed because of lack of routine maintenance of public housing by government - less than 3% arose because of vandalism, intentional damage or misuse.²⁸ Other major causes include the chronic shortage of housing and lack of consultation with communities about their needs.
- The high cost of maintenance in remote areas and the harsh climates in which homes are built are also contributing factors.

Lecturer summary for the week:

Hi everyone,

Thanks for your contributions this week. Below are some summary comments, which are based on your responses to the activities.

You all demonstrated an excellent understanding of the three broad categories of cultural and textual construction of 'Aboriginality' outlined by Langton. In particular, the third category describes constructions that are produced when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people engage in dialogue together. This can avoid perpetuating familiar stereotypes and myths associated with Aboriginal peoples that are constructed solely by non-Aboriginal people. Through such social interactions the people involved can 'test imagined models of the other' (p. 35). This provides important opportunities to question what informs some of the myths and stereotypes in our world. It is here that Langton refers to the concept of '**intersubjectivity**' and 'intertextuality'. In essence, these concepts describe how words and phrases gain layers of meaning over time through their use in different contexts. So we don't merely read a text or watch a film for the codes and signs that are present but filter these texts through our previous understandings and ways of knowing the world. The point that I think Langton is making here, is the importance of **always questioning the ways we interpret the world, from whose perspectives we interpret it, and to interrogate how we've come to know 'what we know'**. **It is only through engaging in dialogue with others that joint understanding and joint constructions of meaning can be produced.**

As teachers, you have an important opportunity to counter **stereotypes** in your classroom. Stereotyping refers to the act of reducing someone to a few features or characteristics.

Stereotypes exclude everything that is different. As Harrison notes 'We all need to be careful about making up our minds too early. This is one of the great traps of stereotyping: drawing premature conclusions about other people whom we do not understand' (p. 1). Part of countering stereotypes in the context of this course, **is to ensure that you represent the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and peoples** (this was also highlighted in the 'myth-busting' link provided). **For example, there are vast differences between Aboriginal language and cultural groups.** The experiences of Aboriginal people will also be different depending on whether they live in urban, rural, or remote areas.

The language guide included in this week will help you develop an awareness of appropriate terminology to use in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as recognising their diversity. The First Peoples of Australia often identify themselves by their nation or language group and **many Aboriginal people identify themselves as belonging to several nations. Where possible, always refer to the specific language group you are talking about (e.g. where your school is located).** This point is also highlighted in your 'Guidelines for Ethical Research' reading through the principle: Recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of peoples, as well as of individuals.

Another concept raised this week was 'deficit discourse'. Unfortunately, much of the discussion about Aboriginal education falls into a **'deficit model'**. Harrison describes how, if you talk about others in a negative light for long enough they become 'deficient in the eyes of the people with whom you talk' (p. 9). Reports on Aboriginal education often position Aboriginal students as in deficit, or as being behind non-Aboriginal students and needing to be 'brought up to their standard'. Think about how you can avoid framing Aboriginal people in deficit terms and ensure you have high expectations for the success of all students – 'low expectations of Aboriginal people will keep them in a position of disempowerment' (p. 10). There is a great TedX lecture delivered by Dr Chris Sarra on this issue. You can access this link through Week 8/Task 2 link.

Finally, you considered the difference between **equity and equality**. These are both crucial concepts in this course. There was some confusion about these two terms so I just wanted to clarify the difference here. Rather than a discourse of 'treating everyone equally' I want you to consider how you might 'achieve equity'.

I recently read about an activity that a schoolteacher undertook with their primary school class every year, which I think provides a good way of understanding the difference between these two terms and may be something you could try with your own class in discussions about social equity and disadvantage. In this activity all the students sit in a circle, you ask everyone to take off his or her left shoe and throw it into a pile in the centre. Once all the shoes are piled up, you begin re-distributing them, one to each student, at random. Then you tell everyone to put on the new shoe and inevitably your students begin to complain. 'This isn't my shoe', 'it's too big', 'it doesn't fit me properly'. Whatever their complaints are, very few students are actually happy with their newly mismatched shoes. You ask your students 'what's wrong?' because as a teacher you did everything fairly. All your students have two shoes, one for left and one for right. But your students insist that 'they aren't the correct shoes' for them. So you ask them 'you want the shoes that are the best for each of you individually?' and of course they reply yes!

So what is the point of this example for a social and educational context? The point is that it isn't about treating every student equally and the same, but that it matters that you choose the right, individualised learning approach for them. That is the difference between *equality* and *equity*. *Equality* means everyone gets exactly the same opportunities/approach - without regard for individual differences. *Equity* means everyone gets the same quality of outcome – in this

case educational outcome - that fits their individual needs. Equality for all is a superficial approach because it doesn't recognize that there are unequal groups within society.

Extra resource you might want to look at:

Communicating Positively: A Guide to Appropriate Aboriginal Terminology (NSW Department of Health).

Copy can be downloaded from the NSW Health website at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2004/aboriginal_terms.html.

This guide was developed to assist NSW Health staff to communicate more effectively with their Indigenous clients, and explores the correct terminology to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (not just in NSW), as well as terms associated with Aboriginal communities and community organisations. This overview will be helpful in gaining a better understanding of the historical, political and cultural context around why it's important to communicate respectfully with Indigenous communities.\