OUTLINE FOR THE TEACHING MODULE

COUNTRY AND SUSTAINABILITY: APPLIED HOLISTIC THINKING FROM AN ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVE

This teaching module includes following materials:

1. Teacher's Background Reading

2. Teaching Outline

3. PowerPoint presentation with embedded audio files.

The time required to do justice to the material is three classroom hours in total. The module can be delivered in a single block or in two blocks of 90 minutes each, in which case it is recommended there be less than a week between the two blocks.

The primary teaching tool is the PowerPoint slide presentation with embedded audio files.

Teacher's Background Reading

Overview and Scope

The teaching module is designed to be inserted across a university (post-graduate and undergraduate) curriculum – particularly within non-technical courses including business, education, arts and the social sciences, including the health sciences. The module could also be picked up by more technical disciplines and the sciences. It is specifically designed to be used within units of study that either teach systemic / holistic thinking or are taught by lecturers who are sympathetic to systemic approaches to their subject matter.

The module is designed as a package that can be easily taken up by a lecturer or facilitator with no background in Indigenous studies. :

Teaching and Learning Approach

We are not only using the Indigenous concept of *Country* to introduce Education for Sustainability (EfS), but also to sensitise non-Indigenous students and staff about the complexity of working ethically with Indigenous people and ideas. The best and most ethical approach is to ensure the centrality and authenticity of Indigenous Knowledge by bringing Indigenous content (story) into the western classroom directly via the voice and photographs of an Indigenous Knowledge Holder / elder.

The Indigenous Australian concept of *Country* is tacit knowledge and therefore difficult to impart in a standard lecture or tutorial format, especially to non-Indigenous people. Although times have changed since Aboriginal people were living in traditional ways, it is still true that an understanding of *Country* is best achieved through an experiential teaching and learning approach. The Indigenous manner of experiential teaching and learning is of course impossible to replicate in a typical university classroom, but the

approach advocated here is aimed at creating an experience that will at least serve as a window into how some Indigenous people perceive the world, and how this worldview contributes to an understanding of the evolving modern concept of sustainability.

While this kind of learning and teaching may seem challenging for a teacher or student in the fast-paced environment common in Australian higher education, experiential learning itself is not alien to the tertiary classroom. Experiential learning may be defined as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience; knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience' (Kolb 1984). This approach is usually contrasted with the teaching method common in some lecture-style classrooms in which 'pre-existing fixed ideas are transmitted to the learner' (Kolb 2005).

This module is designed around experiential learning activities that were provided and carefully vetted by Aboriginal elders in the New South Wales region with their permission to use the materials specifically in the tertiary classroom context as part of this module. The activities are not intended to educate students about a specifically New South Wales Aboriginal point of view, but rather they are designed to create an awareness of basic principles that are a small part of the foundation of Indigenous thinking.

The exercises are very simple to organise and deliver, and require minimal previous knowledge on the part of the lecturer.

Integration into the Unit of Study

In order to successfully integrate this module into your unit of study, it is recommended you situate the bulk of your sustainability-related content in the weeks prior to delivering this module.

Also, ask your students to read the following two short articles prior to attending the module:

- Morris, Dick. 'Thinking about Systems for Sustainable Lifestyles', in *Environmental Scientist* 2.2009 pp. 15-18.

- Kwaymullina, Ambelin. 'Seeing the Light' in the *Indigenous Law Bulletin* May, June 2005, v 6 issue 11, pp. 11-15.

Background – Project Rationale and Evolution

This project is informed by research undertaken by ARIES in 2009 on behalf of the Commonwealth Government investigating how Indigenous perspectives could be incorporated into Education for Sustainability (Perey et al 2009).

A core tenet for sustainability practice is the use of systemic thinking, which recognises that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and is a better way to understand and manage complex situations (Tilbury and Cooke 2005). This has proved difficult to communicate and teach. Bob Doppelt labels this 'systems blindness' (2008:51) and argues it is due to two deep-seated limitations in humans: proximity and temporality. Proximity means that awareness of the impact of our actions is limited to people and places in our immediate space. Temporality is the difficulty to conceptualise the delayed impact of our actions on the future.

Concept of *Country* and EfS – *Country* embraces Sustainability

The concept of *Country* was identified as an important contribution to EfS, which could benefit change for sustainability in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities (Perey *et al*. 2009:15). The concept of *Country* describes the Indigenous ecological perspective and embodies the non-Indigenous ideas and ideals of sustainability.

The concept of *Country* embraces sustainability. It is the holistic engagement of a person with a specific physical location that is both symbolic and real. Indigenous people have a deep emotional connection to *Country* – they care for and nurture *Country*; visit *Country*; talk to *Country*; sing for *Country*; and feel sorry for *Country*. *Country* defines identity and with identity comes obligation to oneself, to others past, present and future, and to nature.

Non-Indigenous people have difficulty understanding the idea of *Country* yet it embodies the values of sustainability that EfS seeks to promote. This understanding of *Country* is not new and has been the subject of extensive anthropological and sociological studies.[1] However, limited research has been undertaken on how *Country* is taught and learnt, especially at the boundary of Indigenous and non-Indigenous systems that are intentionally seeking to co-create a new shared view of sustainability.

Two findings from this research are relevant to the development of the learning module:

1. As our Indigenous advisors suggest, *Country* is an holistic system of thinking, acting, imagining life, and living. As such, it has the potential to help address a significant barrier that people face in learning about sustainability: What does systems thinking mean in practice?

2. The idea of *Country* is a motivator for change. This has been recognised as important and institutionalised in two major government initiatives: *Caring for Our Country* and *Indigenous Australians Caring for Country*. *Country* is also an important focus of ongoing research; particularly investigating identity construction, who we are, and the barriers and enablers for the development of Indigenous communities.

Country is not easy to explain. It is tacit knowledge and therefore difficult to impart, especially to non-Indigenous people. In the words of one of the Indigenous advisors, '*Country* washes over you, it just is.' The implication is that learning about *Country* would seem to need experiential approaches in order to impart understanding.

TEACHING PLAN

Note: for teachers wishing to adapt this teaching module to a different Indigenous story, please see instructions in the Teaching Supplement attached at the end of this revised teaching plan.

Equipment Requirements

*   A computer connected to a projector (or suitably large monitor) and a sound system.

*   The lecturer/facilitator needs to have a remote mouse or be close enough to the computer to manually advance the slides.

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[1] For example: Sveiby and Skuthorpe (2006); Rose (2000); Rose *et al* (2002); Tonkinson (1991)

Important: Test the PowerPoint presentation in your classroom well in advance of delivering the teaching module as some older computers have insufficient memory or use pre-2007 versions of Microsoft Office which may not play the audio correctly. No problems have been reported using Apple computers.

Part I: Introduction

- Slides 1 (title page) through 8.

- Slides not supported with audio recording.

- Recommended time: **30 minutes.**

These slides provide an opportunity to contextualise this teaching module within the rest of the lectures/tutorials in your unit of study, particularly when talking to slide 3. It was explicitly the request of the Aboriginal Elders who contributed to the development of this teaching module that we do not provide a script for the lecturer/facilitator to read out. These introductory remarks require the lecturer/facilitator to have viewed the whole presentation beforehand and to have thought about how the aims of the teaching module, as described above, fit within the other material in their unit of the study.

Be honest about your own familiarity, or lack thereof, with Indigenous material and protocols. Such open and candid disclosure is crucial to creating the right environment for students to be open to a new experience and a new way of thinking, and can be treated as an 'ice-breaker' for the teaching module.

It is important to demonstrate respect for the protocols around working with Indigenous material, even if they seem unfamiliar. For example, you should read out the Acknowledgement of Country in slide 4 even if you have never done an Acknowledgement of Country before. One does not have to be of Indigenous descent to read an Acknowledgement of Country – it is only a formal 'Welcome to Country' that requires a local representative of the Traditional Owners of the Land. If possible, also take the time beforehand to learn the name of the Traditional Owners of the Land on which the class is taking place. When making the Acknowledgement of Country, you can then mention the names used to refer to them.

When it comes time, in slide 6, to introduce Les Bursill, the Aboriginal Elder who has contributed the voice recording that we hear later, read out the following list of other contributors to this teaching module:

Other Aboriginal contributors:

- Dr Shayne Williams, Indigenous Elder of the Dharawal people of southern Sydney, Senior Lecturer at Macquarie University.

- Professor Dennis Foley, Gai-mariagal people of northern Sydney, Professor at Newcastle University.

- Patricia Ellis, Woman of the Brinja-Djuwin people of Southern NSW.

Mention that the teaching module was developed for the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations by the Australian Institute for Environment and Sustainability at Macquarie University in conjunction with Warawara, the Indigenous Studies Department at Macquarie University.

Finally, introduce any marking scheme you may have devised. A pass/fail system based on participation is recommended.

Part II: Introduction to Four Basic Tenets of Indigenous Philosophy

- Slides 9–12.

- Slides supported with audio recording (lecturer/facilitator needs not say anything).

- Recommended time: **15 mins** (audio = 9:22 minutes).

(Note: Use a keyboard or mouse to advance the slides. If the audio does not come on automatically when each slide is advanced, double click the speaker icon.)

The following slides introduce four concepts relevant not only to this teaching module but also to Aboriginal culture in general:

1. Reciprocity
2. Sustainable Conservation
3. Mentoring
4. Gerontocracy

All four of these points are informed by the idea of Aboriginal Law, which is a locally defined set of rules observed by a particular language group in a particular geographic area. Story is the traditional vehicle of communicating the Law. Of the four concepts listed above, the second (sustainable conservation) describes the way Aboriginal people are oriented towards the land, and the other three underpin social relationships within a particular mob.

The Indigenous concepts described here, and illustrated by the story in Part IV, provide an excellent framework for students to engage with systemic thinking, i.e. a way of thinking about the world that engages holistically with social and ecological systems, past, present and future. In other words, students may begin to recognise that these four concepts embrace sustainability, because they depict the holistic engagement of a person with a specific physical location that is both symbolic and real.

Slide 9 (audio 1:30 mins) Brief description of elements of Aboriginal culture relevant to the Whale Law Dreaming story presented in Part IV (law, ethics, and cyclical responsibility).

Slide 10 (audio 1:40 mins) Reciprocity (men fighting).

Slide 11 (audio 2:10 mins) Sustainable conservation. Image of a campsite. Over a period of time a campsite is continually maintained and improved, because the place is developed to become a haven.

Slide 12 (audio 4:02 mins) Mentoring and gerontocracy (i.e. older people are the leaders because of their knowledge). Image of an elder mentoring a young man grinding ochre, a sacred act.

Part III: Group Activity 1: Exploring the four tenets

- Slide 13 (no audio).

- Recommended running time for this group activity, including presentations and discussion: **20 minutes.**

Organise the room so that students are sitting in a large circle facing the centre, then divide them into groups of four students each, sitting next to each other around the circle. Each group of four explores one of the four concepts that have been explained by Les in the previous slides and audio, then group presentations are made facing the centre of the circle. The benefit of this approach is that students feel part of a collective project without the teacher as an authority figure in the front of the classroom.

Reiterate that Indigenous culture is not something to be cherry-picked or appropriated out of its traditional context. The goals in this session are to reflect on our own practices and beliefs and how they relate to our ideas around the concept of sustainability.

Students can talk about how their particular concept relates to both the sustainability literature that they have read to prepare for the class, and also to what degree they feel that this particular aspect is present in contemporary life. Students are encouraged to draw from their own experiences.

Optional: Specific prompts can be provided as follows:

1. "Reciprocity" is a concept that requires an individual to uphold and enforce Aboriginal Law in cases in which that individual has been wronged. It also requires an individual to repay acts of generosity or kindness (including education). Focus your discussion on the latter kind of reciprocity (individual responsibility to repay acts of generosity).

    How might this idea of responsibility affect:

    - Your personal or professional life?

    - Corporate responsibility and sustainability?

    - Our political system and leadership?

2. What role does "sustainable conservation" (as presented by Les) play in contemporary Australian life?

    - Do you think about this concept when consuming and recycling?

    - How does this concept fit with the idea of economic growth?

    - Are there implications for housing design and town planning?

3. How does your experience of higher education compare with the approach Les describes, i.e. mentoring by older people in which ethics plays a central role?

- What are the implications of your observations for our education system?

4. In Aboriginal society (as with some other societies in the world) older people are deeply respected for their wisdom, and therefore their decisions and opinions are valued above those held by younger people.

- In what aspects of your day to day life have you witnessed this level of respect for the opinions of elders as being present or absent?

- What are the implications for society?

- What in general are your observations?

Alternatively, discuss the following general questions:

How might the Australian debate about carbon emissions be different if our politics were dominated by a "gerontocratic" system?

In 1987, the UN defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." How applicable is this definition to the Aboriginal perspective on sustainability?

After 5 minutes of discussion, select four or five groups at random to present to the class a few of their observations on the concept they were assigned. Questions and discussion are encouraged. You can use the Aboriginal tool of silence to encourage questions and discussion after each short presentation.

Note: The Aboriginal tool of silence is also used in facilitation methods such as Dialogue where the group sits in silence reflecting on the question, topic, experience that is being discussed. When someone in the group has a comment to make, either a statement, or a question, or a reply to an earlier comment, then they speak without interruption – there is respectful listening. Each comment may be followed by further periods of silence. The purpose is to share individual perspectives without having to defend any statement being made.

Part IV: Telling of the Whale Law Story

- Slides 14–17.

- Slides supported with audio recording.

- Recommended time: **15 mins** (audio = 8 minutes).

The Whale Dreaming: Discovery of Law, Ethics, Reciprocity, and Cyclical Responsibility. This is told in an holistic way: it describes the annual cycle of renewal, through abundance, and the re-capitulation of Law and Country responsibilities. In this story, we see how powerful forces of nature come together to tell the people of their responsibilities, and that those forces act upon the teller in such a way as to introduce

elements of behaviour that cause the cycle to come to a close. Whales arrive, abundance arrives, the Whale Spirit character appears and dictates the Law, he eventually oversteps his responsibility, is overthrown and speared to death, and returns to his Totemic form.

Total time: 80–90 minutes so far.
If you are splitting the overall teaching module into two 90-minute segments, this is a good stopping point. If there is more time, you can encourage some discussion on initial impressions of the story and how it appears to relate to the four concepts.

Part V: Revision

Note: this section is only required if the overall teaching module is broken into two segments on different days. If the module is delivered in one 3 hour session, skip to Part VI.

- Slides 13–17 (11 mins).
- Running time for discussion: **15 minutes.**

Re-play slides 13 and the story slides (14–17) with audio to refresh students' memories of the story and four underlying concepts. If there are any new students present, explain that in the previous session the class split into small discussion groups to discuss how the four concepts related to sustainability.

Part VI: Group Activity 2

- Slides 18–19
- Slide 18 is supported with a 3-minute audio recording.
- Time required for the student group activity: **50 minutes.**

Note: The recording only introduces the concept of interpretive "layers" in Aboriginal Law stories, but does not explain the group activity. The lecturer is responsible for providing the appropriate instructions.

After the recording with slide 18 finishes, explain the exercise.

The primary task of this group activity is to understand the Law Story and to identify layers of meaning (as per the instructions in slide 18), with a focus on any ethical (moral) implications related to sustainability.

(Minimum time required: 30 minutes)

Other instructions before breaking into groups:

- The different layers of the story should not be neglected.

- Discussions will be held in groups.

- Groups should discuss in an egalitarian way, encouraging and listening to the voices of all in their group, particularly if there are any language barriers. It is the responsibility of all group members to ensure discussion is equal and mutually respectful.

- Each group should appoint a scribe to write down conclusions drawn and present to the group later. These notes should be considered an important and accurate record of the group's thinking process – warn them that the notes may be collected at the end.

- The groups should write all names of students in the group on the top of the sheet of notes.

- Group presentations should be short introductions of the layers in the Law Story, plus any additional insights, troubles or comments the group experienced.

Divide groups into 3–5 students each. Breakdown of groups should be random (not self-formed) to encourage diversity in concepts.

Provide clear direction to get students to physically move into circles in their groups for discussion. This creates permission to act in different ways and disrupts the normal expectations for interaction between people in a normal classroom setting.

While students are discussing, walk around and record the names of students in each group, if needed for marking purposes.

Some groups may struggle and want to ask you for additional direction. Only general encouragement should be offered, rather than hints or model answers. If required, refresh students on the four concepts of reciprocity, sustainable conservation, mentoring and gerontocracy. As a last resort, suggest that the group simply retell the parts of the story they found most interesting, and explain why it was interesting to them.

Call the groups back after 10 minutes to give presentations of written conclusions (2–3 minutes each group. If space allows, a good configuration is a large circle of chairs, rather than rows of chairs facing the front of the room. Randomise the presentations as much as possible rather than following a linear, sequential reporting sequence whose predictability constrains the sharing of ideas as groups methodically follow one another. If there are more than 25 students in the class (i.e. more than 5 groups of 5 students), you may elect to choose only a proportion of groups to present, so that the total time of presentations does not exceed 20 minutes).

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Optional Slide 19 (if time allows; recommended time: 30 minutes - minimum 15 minutes extra required)

A secondary task, if there is sufficient time, is for groups to create their own adaptation of the Whale Law Story which is relevant to sustainability and to the current Unit of Study. Through a process of open discussion, each group assigns new roles to each of the characters from the Law Story, including:

- Guruwul the Whale

- The Food driven ashore by the Whale

- The Whale Spirit

- The local Aboriginal Community.

The new versions of the story should also include elements of the four concepts of Aboriginal culture mentioned in slides 9–12:

- Reciprocity

- Sustainable Conservation

- Mentoring

- Gerontocracy

After sufficient time has elapsed for group discussion (allow 10 - 15 minutes), draw groups back to a chair configuration suitable for group presentations.

Invite all groups to present their re-interpretations of the Law Story (3–5 minutes per story). As before, randomise feedback from the groups rather than following a linear, sequential reporting sequence (allow 15 minutes).

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Part VII: Conclusions and Wrap-Up

- Slides 20–21

- Recommended time: **25 minutes**

Draw together the first group activity with the second, so that students can get a clear idea of the connections between Education for Sustainability, the concepts of *Country* discussed in the first group session, and the story analysed in the second group session. Revisit the concepts of holistic thinking, systems thinking, and sustainability within the broader context of the current Unit of Study. Then invite general discussion around the outcome of the two group activities in the Teaching Module, and the relationship between those activities and the Unit of Study.

The suggested debriefing involves providing students with the context to hold a 5 minute discussion in small groups to answer the following three questions:

1. Two things I learnt today (ideas, concepts, etc.).

2. Two things I want to learn more about.

3. Two things that I can use to apply this to (business, studies, family, topic area, etc.).

Wrap up by reminding the groups of any specific learnings about Australian Aboriginal culture that have come from the Teaching Module.

Provide a bibliography and make suggestions for further study and exploration.

Total time for Sections V – VII: 90 minutes.

Pre-reading for students

The following two short articles should be distributed to students and are required pre-reading before attending the teaching module.

Morris, Dick. 'Thinking about Systems for Sustainable Lifestyles', in *Environmental Scientist* 2.2009 pp. 15-18.

Kwaymullina, Ambelin. 'Seeing the Light' in the *Indigenous Law Bulletin* May, June 2005, v 6 issue 11, pp. 11-15.

OTHER REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Some or all of these references may also be relevant additional reading materials for lecturers who wish to deliver the Teaching Module.

Andriopolous, C and Dawson, P. *Managing Change, Creativity and Innovation* (Los Angeles Lon New Delhi Singapore Washington DC: Sage, 2009).

Commonwealth of Australia. *Education for Sustainability: The Role of Education in Engaging and Equipping People for Change.* www.aries.mq.edu.au/publications/aries/efs_brochure/ (1 March 2010)

Perey R, Grant C, McLeod K, Miller S, Pearce S, Pearson L, Price K and Springham Q. *Incorporating Australian Indigenous Perspectives in Education for Sustainability.* A Report prepared by the Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability for the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (unpublished, 2009).

Deborah B. Rose. (2000) *Dingo Makes Us Human: Life and Land in An Aboriginal Culture.* (New York: CUP, 2000).

Deborah B. Rose, D'Aminco S, Daiya N, Devereaux K and Daiyi M. *Country of the Heart: An Indigneous Australian Homeland.* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2002).

Tilbury, D. and Cooke, K. *A National Review of Environmental Education and its Contribution to Sustainability in Australia: Frameworks for Sustainability - Key Findings.* Canberra: Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage and Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability (ARIES, 2005).

Tonkinson R. *The Mardu Aborigines: Living the Dream in Australia's Desert* (Fort Worth: Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1991).

TEACHING SUPPLEMENT: HOW TO ADAPT THIS TEACHING MODULE TO A DIFFERENT INDIGENOUS STORY

We have gone to great lengths to ensure that the Dharawal Whale Spirit story in this teaching module is presented in a careful way, so that it can be a didactically relevant and culturally appropriate teaching tool even when used outside the traditional Dharawal geographical area of influence. Through the contextualising material presented in the slides, university students in the Northern Territory, for example, will be able to gain insights into the modern concept of sustainability even if those students have an extensive pre-existing knowledge of Aboriginal culture in their own geographic areas.

We anticipate, however, that there may be special circumstances in which a teacher will want to replace Les's Whale Spirit story with a different story native to Aboriginal people in a different geographic area. This supplement provides basic guidance on how a teacher may go about customising the teaching module with a different story.

Note that we can only provide general recommendations, as the nature of the necessary adaptations to be made will vary on a case-by-case basis.

Step One

Begin by establishing a mutually respectful and flexible relationship with the traditional knowledge holders of the story that will replace the Whale Story.

Guidance in this section is directed towards teachers who are not the traditional owner of the replacement Aboriginal story, but even Aboriginal knowledge holders will benefit from reading through the background materials provided in the links below.

- Ensure that the replacement story is not appropriated out of cultural context and without the permission and full participation of the traditional owners of the story.

- Establish a respectful relationship with the traditional knowledge-holders which should proceed on the basis of equal respect for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous goals, where each partner has equal voice to guide the relationship towards the fulfillment of both Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous agendas.

- Any non-Indigenous person working in an Indigenous area of study should always be genuinely open to the project agenda changing and adapting according to the needs and concerns of the Indigenous contributors. In some ways, this is the way any true partnership should operate, but the point is particularly valid when working with Indigenous people whose voice may be suppressed because they are partnering in the context of a "foreign" operational paradigm. In addition to ensuring equal voice and credit to the Indigenous contributors, the project team also needs to be sensitive to any local political situations in the Indigenous landscape, particularly in regard to who has the right to speak for a local Indigenous community.

- The following links point to a representative sample of government and non-government publications that describe appropriate ways to work in Aboriginal communities. There are of course many more materials available, and these are only a starting point:

1. *Working with Aboriginal People and Communities: A Practical Guide*. A general NSW DOCS publication (note the last 12 pages in particular).

   http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/working_with_aboriginal.pdf

2. *Working with Aboriginal Communities* (Revised edition 2008) *A Guide to Community Consultation and Protocols*. A NSW Board of Studies publication more specific to education issues.

   http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/working-with-aboriginal-communities.pdf

3. *Respect, acknowledge, listen: practical protocols for working with the Indigenous community of Western Sydney* (2003). A set of protocols designed for Western Sydney with some content widely applicable across Australia.
   http://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/folklore/creative_heritage/docs/ccdnsw_indig_westsydney.pdf

Step Two

Work collaboratively with the Aboriginal knowledge holder to assess how much and what kind of contextual material is needed to present the story in the classroom.

The main risks to introducing elements of Indigenous culture to non-Indigenous students in a non-Indigenous environment include the following:

- Trivialisation

- Over-romanticising

- Lack of proper attribution (to particular Indigenous people as well as to particular geographic locations)

- Inaccurate presentation

- Paradigmatically inappropriate presentation

- Pandering to stereotypes

- Encouraging a consumerist or acquisitive approach to Indigenous knowledge, stories or ideas.

There is a growing body of research about how to bring Indigenous concepts into Western classrooms in a manner that is both appropriate and authentic. See, for example, KD Warner, *Teaching Environmental Scientists From Country: Integral Wisdom for a New Australia* (http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/seminar.html, accessed 15 March, 2011).

It is of course impossible in a Western university paradigm to treat Indigenous material in a completely traditional manner. Traditional education involves oral transmission by community elders, who pass on information in *Country* to younger people in the community in patient "lessons" that span long periods of time. These elders endeavour to organise every aspect of a young person's life, including their relationship to

Country, to others in the community, to their ancestors, and to the wider world, according to traditional Indigenous logic specific to a particular community. Most traditional education involves story ("Dreaming Story" or "Law Story"). Any educational effort that falls short of the above will be, in some way, a misappropriation of the Indigenous material.

We have attempted to create a teaching module that provides students with a starting point on a journey of learning about the Indigenous worldview, introduced to them in the most appropriate way; i.e. such that the material was appropriately attributed, accurately presented, and within a teaching and learning paradigm that enables students a glimpse into the Indigenous way of perceiving the world.

The biggest challenge was the last one: how to transform a learning environment characterised within a tradition of categorical thinking into an atmosphere conducive to making sense of an Indigenous narrative. By "categorical", we mean the style of thinking that breaks down elements of a system into smaller parts for analysis and generalisation, rather than exploring the interconnectivity of all elements. Is there a way to facilitate a paradigm shift for the students?

One approach we considered, and later abandoned due to potential logistical and time constraints for lecturers wishing to adopt the module, was to physically take the students outside the classroom and conduct some or all of the learning experience among any natural flora in or around the campus. The experience of many of our Indigenous advisors suggested that this technique helped to get students out of the mind-space of their usual lectures and tutorials, into a space that encourages a more holistic, personal, and physical experience of the learning material. This approach may work well in some campus environments, but not all … and what if it rains?

The approach we settled on was to focus the teaching module on an Indigenous Law Story / Dreaming Story. In order to enable a non-Indigenous teacher to facilitate the experience without corrupting the story in any way, and also to ensure accurate attribution to the traditional Owners of the Law Story, the project team decided to package the story into an audio recording. The recording would present the story as related by the traditional story owner, and would be supported with photographs on PowerPoint slides that locate the story to the correct geographic area from where it originates.

In order to set the right tone conducive to a paradigm shift in their thinking, the students would be enabled by the lecturer/facilitator not only to interpret and relate to multiple story layers, but also would be assisted to establish a personal relationship with the story – to put themselves and their own life experience into the story. According to the Indigenous project partners, this would approximate a traditional Indigenous way of teaching and learning and would draw students out of passive (rote learning) or overly analytic (categorical thinking) modes of participation into active or experiential learning.

Step Three

The teacher will need to adapt the PowerPoint slide presentation (attached) and audio to accommodate the replacement story and appropriate contextualisation.

The most time-consuming task will involve re-recording the replacement audio story and bringing it to the classroom in a format that can played to the students while

showing them slides containing the appropriate contextual material (as in section II above).

At minimum, the teacher will need to revise slides 6, 7, 10, 11, 14–17. It will be necessary to delete all of Les's photographs that do not relate to the replacement story. We reiterate that it is inappropriate to use Indigenous images out of cultural context, and this advice applies also to the use of Les's photographs. If used, they must be used appropriately, i.e. in such a way that your Indigenous partners feel is culturally relevant. Advice may also be sought from Les Bursill himself.

Also, if there is a new story to replace the one from Les, it may be necessary to adapt the "four concepts of Aboriginal culture" which means also revising slides 9–13, and 19. In the end, the only slides that could be left unrevised by the teacher are slides 1–5, 8, and 18.