Toward a decolonizing Australian Culturally Responsive Pedagogy?

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Acknowledging Country

It is customary for Indigenous people across the world to acknowledge and value traditional ownership of country. In doing so we recognise and value the obligations and responsibilities for country each of us carries as a significant political, social and symbolic mark of respect and as an important cultural protocol.

I acknowledge the Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters upon which we meet.
Main Moves

1. Introducing our research: Two rationales
2. Our focus on redesigning curriculum and pedagogy
3. Some versions of culturally responsive pedagogy
4. Some work in progress
5. Towards a Decolonising framing
1. TWO RATIONALES
TOWARD AN AUSTRALIAN CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

AIMS AND BACKGROUND

Aim: The aim of this project is to examine how teachers enact culturally responsive pedagogy in Australian mainstream middle school classrooms. Specifically this will entail a multi-sited action research project in 7 mainstream schools, augmented by analysis of policy texts, and additional evidence about school structures, and school culture. The project will develop an Australian theory for culturally responsive pedagogy that draws on International and Australian Indigenous Studies, new pedagogy studies, and new empirical work in schools.
(A) Establish and sustain a collaborative research community across a cluster of schools to produce new professional and scholarly knowledge about culturally responsive pedagogical practice;

(B) Review the archive of educational research in settler colonial countries for rationales, theories, and descriptions of practice, for culturally responsive pedagogy;

(C) Analyse Australian federal and state policy texts in the area of Indigenous schooling to ascertain how problems are named and how solutions are proposed;

(D) Develop an augmented approach to action research that brings together data sets from classroom action research over 2 years, in 7 schools, with data about school structures and school culture; and

(E) Advance descriptions and theorisations of an Australian culturally responsive pedagogy that will inform teacher education, school-based professional development, and schooling and Indigenous policy in different Australian jurisdictions.
Australia is an increasingly culturally diverse country, there is good evidence that cultural diversity does contribute significantly to our economy and society, and we make claims about high levels of community harmony and cohesion.
Barely half of population born in Australia to Australian-born parents

Census shows 49% of population either first- or second-generation migrants, with remaining 51% at least third generation

Follow live updates on the census release
Cultural Diversity

Australia is home to the world's oldest continuous cultures. 26% of Australians identify with more than 270 ancestries. 1 in 4 Australians were born overseas.

Nearly 20% of Australians speak a language other than English at home. 1 in 2 have an overseas-born parent.

2013 overseas migration represented 60% of Australia's population growth.

Top migrants to Australia:

1 in 5 Australians have experienced race-hate talk.

It is estimated that migrants contribute over $10 billion to the Australian economy in their first 10 years of settlement.

86% of Australians support action to tackle racism.

$10 Billion in 10 years

But then globally, nations such as Australia are contending with serious tensions related to increasing cultural diversity. Put simply, all nations now struggle with ‘ungovernability’ pressures from within and outside of the nation.

Inside of the nation, traditional sites for sociality and community are breaking down, such as family, church, and local community. But then new formations of sociality and community are evident, such as trends towards hyper-nationalism and religious fundamentalism of various kinds.
We might be rightly proud of multicultural Australia, but then cultural diversity is still highly contested on the street, in the workplace, and in media culture. And cultural diversity is one of the divisive sites in Australian politics.
Parliament to debate making burqa compulsory for Pauline Hanson
Alan Jones must apologise on air after losing appeal over Cronulla riots case

Vanda Carson, Daily Telegraph
October 2, 2012 12:11pm

ALAN Jones must apologise on air for a racist rant where he called Sydney's Lebanese Muslims "vermin" who "infest our shores" and "rape" and "pillage" our nation, having failed in an appeal.

A $10,000 damages payment, which has been held pending an appeal, is also expected to be released in coming days after today marked the end of a seven-and-a-half year legal saga.
Nigel Farage's anti-migrant poster reported to police

Unison's Dave Prentis said poster showing a queue of migrants and refugees incites racial hatred
The Alternative Right, commonly known as the Alt-Right, is a set of far-right ideologies, groups and individuals whose core belief is that “white identity” is under attack by multicultural forces using “political correctness” and “social justice” to undermine white people and “their” civilization. Characterized by heavy use of social media and online memes, Alt-Righters eschew “establishment” conservatism, skew young, and embrace white ethno-nationalism as a fundamental value.
STOP THE HORDES

GET OUT!

KEEP AUSTRALIA WHITE!

ANTIPODEAN-RESISTANCE.INFO
CHANGE THE DATE
NO PRIDE IN GENOCIDE

MAJOR GENERAL
LACHLAN MACQUARIE
GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES
1810 - 1821
"What are YOU doing for AUSTRALIA DAY?"
JULY 30, 1915.
Indigenous Australians have never ceded sovereignty, Shareena Clanton tells Q&A - video
It’s time to RECOGNISE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia’s Constitution and deal with the racial discrimination in it.

WHY RECOGNITION

We need to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people in the Australian Constitution, the nation’s rule-book.

We need to deal with the sections that allow for racial discrimination.

Constitutional recognition is about telling our country’s whole story and dealing with the racial discrimination in our highest legal document.

Australia’s Constitution was written more than a century ago. By then, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had lived here for more than 40,000 years, maintaining the oldest living culture on the planet.

Yet the Constitution, Australia’s rule-book, doesn’t recognise this and still allows for racial discrimination.

It begins as if Australia’s national story only started with the arrival of the British. As Harold Ludwick, a Bulgan Warra man from Cape York, puts it: “If the Constitution was the birth certificate of Australia, we’re missing half the family”. 
Did you know that Australia is the only Commonwealth nation that doesn’t have a treaty with its Indigenous people? This is a major concern for many Indigenous people. But why?

In short, the lack of treaty in Australia goes to the very heart of the wound in our nation. The absence of a treaty suggests an ongoing denial of the existence, prior occupation and dispossession of Indigenous people in Australia and highlights a lack of engagement and relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

We gathered at the 2017 National Convention of Australia. We are the descendants of all peoples of the contemporary nation. This is our statement from the heart.
5. But then too much theory, policy and practice in this area misunderstands the nature of cultural diversity, there are outmoded stereotypes of ‘multiculturalism’ based on reified notions of culture, there is ‘an easy invocation of cultural harmony’ that itself ‘entails dangers’

6. Research often focuses too much on macro-policy analyses for problematisation and pays too little attention to grounded studies that examine ‘the capacities humans employ in their daily lives to navigate the complexities of their world’.
7. Importantly though schools are both affected by these pressures, but also provides spaces for skilful intervention. We could research the effects of increasing cultural diversity on the school but we prefer to focus instead on how schools teach for cultural diversity.
School Context Statement

The Thebarton Senior College motto is 'Carpe Diem Quam Minimum Credula Postero' - these words remind us to "seize the day and be prepared for what tomorrow brings".

The College achieves its mission of preparing students for their transition into further learning, employment and life as global citizens through quality teaching programs.

The core values of the College are Excellence, Respect, Innovation and Sustainability. Our vision for the College is an engaged, connected and resilient community of learners: students, support staff and teachers.

Recognised as a United Nations Global Peace School in 2007, Thebarton Senior College welcomes students from over 76 different cultures. This diversity provides a rich and unique educational environment. Students are encouraged to participate in the many events and celebrations that take place each term.

Thebarton Senior College offers an extensive SACE curriculum and is also a Registered Training Organisation. The college is the only New Arrivals Program provider for senior secondary students in Adelaide.

The Thebarton Senior School Context Statement describes the nature of the student cohort, teaching and leadership staff, resources, directions and outcomes and is an essential part of the school's responsibility as a member of the Department of Education and Child Development within the South Australian government.
The huge discrepancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student success at school, by any measure, is an urgent international problem.
Minimum educational attainment achieved, Indigenous persons 18 years and over — 1994, 2002 and 2008

(a) Includes Year 10/11 and basic vocational qualifications.
(b) Includes Year 12 and skilled vocational qualifications.
(c) 1994 estimate for Bachelor degree has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Sources: ABS 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and 2002 and 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Surveys
Minimum educational attainment achieved, persons 18 years and over by Indigenous status — 2008

(a) Includes Year 10/11 and basic vocational qualifications.
(b) Includes Year 12 and skilled vocational qualifications.

Sources: ABS 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and 2008 Survey of Education and Work
Figure 19: Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate, 20–24 year-olds

• There has been decades of policy action in this area, but there is no comprehensive review of the take up of these policy ideas, especially the ways schools are organized and how curriculum and pedagogy in schools are enacted.

• There is a paucity of research ‘analysing the impact of racism on Indigenous educational outcomes’, and they recommend ‘the development of an Indigenous pedagogy for pre-service teacher training’ with a complementary anti-racist pedagogy as part of the Aboriginal Studies curricula’ (Moreton-Robinson et al, 2012, p.1-2).
Most Indigenous students attend government schools (ABS, 2015) in Australian cities and or large regional centres (ABS 2006),

Yet globally there is growing body of evidence that culturally responsive pedagogies do improve academic success for First Nations peoples (Castagno & Brayboy 2008).

Unfortunately the theory and practice of culturally responsive pedagogies in Australia is only weakly developed, has had no significant peer evaluated reviews (e.g. Perso, 2012; Krakouer, 2015), and presently has a few productive advocates (e.g. Sarra 2007, Yunkaporta, & McGinty, 2009, Nakata, 2011; Rahman, 2013), but this work has yet to seriously inform the curriculum and pedagogical reform projects of the state and federal jurisdictions.
PROPORTION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE LIVING IN CAPITAL CITIES, 2016 (a)

- Darwin: 11,960 (20.5%)
- Brisbane: 54,158 (29.0%)
- Perth: 31,214 (41.1%)
- Sydney: 70,135 (32.4%)
- Melbourne: 24,062 (50.4%)
- Hobart: 8,534 (36.2%)
- Adelaide: 18,403 (53.8%)
- Canberra: 6,476 (99.5%)
WHERE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE LIVE

At 30 June 2006, New South Wales had the largest estimated resident population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (152,700 people or 30%), followed by Queensland (144,900 people or 28%), while the Australian Capital Territory had the smallest (4,300 people or 1%). The Northern Territory had a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents (30%) than any other state or territory.

At 30 June 2006:

- 32% (165,800 people) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians lived in major cities
- 21% (110,600 people) lived in inner regional areas
- 22% (113,300 people) lived in outer regional areas
- 9% (47,900 people) lived in remote areas
- 15% (79,500 people) lived in very remote areas.
Our focus on redesigning curriculum and pedagogy
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• Focusing on curriculum and pedagogy
• Sustaining professional learning communities for teachers
• Taking seriously the pedagogical challenges of teachers
• Unsettling deficit views of students and their communities
• Treating students’ lifeworlds seriously in a curricular and pedagogical sense
• Getting past highly scripted models for teaching and developing contemporary models of negotiating curriculum with students.
Pedagogy refers to a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within and among particular sets of social relations. (Giroux and Simon 1989)

It’s a curriculum and pedagogy problem

Unless we solve the pedagogy problem, all other efforts at reconstruction ... will be in vain. The curriculum is, in the final analysis, what teachers enact in classrooms. (Boomer, 1999, p. 136)

It is through pedagogies that education gets done. (Lingard, 2007, p. 247)
Sustain **professional learning communities** that enable teacher inquiry

But then as Hayes et al (2009) argue: ‘[t]he key issue is not what kinds of pedagogies improve educational outcomes but how to support the development of the kinds of pedagogies that we have good reason to believe will work. As in the past, the sticking point remains practice’.

They point out that the present model for improving pedagogy involves adopting the institutionally supported framework faithfully into your context.

This model shows no sign of being successful in disadvantaged schools, as it is local knowledge about practice that largely determines what kinds of pedagogies get adopted.
Taking seriously the pedagogical challenges of teachers

How to sustain positive classroom relationships and expect rigor?

How to unsettle deficit views of students and their communities?

How to treat students’ lifeworlds seriously in a curricular and pedagogical sense?

Finding ways to integrate lifeworld and subject discipline knowledges in ways that don’t trivialise either?
challenge of sustaining high expectations for learning

...the challenge is to provide learning experiences (curriculum) that are intellectually demanding along with appropriate pedagogy that supports students to be successful.
getting past highly scripted models for teaching and developing contemporary models of negotiating curriculum with students.

Negotiating the curriculum
Connectedness in the ‘productive pedagogies’
‘funds of knowledge’ approach
local literacies approach
‘place-based’ pedagogies
‘multiliteracies’ project
‘situated’ pedagogy’
Indigenous perspectives
It’s about relationships!
It’s about educative relationships!
Lifeworld knowledge
- funds of knowledge
- place
- vernacular literacy
- popular culture
- out-of-school learning sites
- Culturally responsive pedagogy

Subject discipline
- vocabulary
- deep understanding
- skills
- understandings
- literate practice
- numeracy
I suggest that students must be taught the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of ... life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane, decontextualized subskills, but rather within the context of meaningful communicative endeavors; that they must be allowed the resource of the teacher’s expert knowledge, while being helped too acknowledge their own “expertness” as well ... (Delpit, 1988, p. 296)
The challenge here then is to clarify conceptually and further develop the more dialectical interrelation invoked by Delpit.

How can we provide some clarity around the lifeworld knowledges that young people bring to class?

The pedagogical challenge is about finding ways to integrate lifeworld and subject discipline knowledges in ways that don’t trivialise either?
We advocate for pedagogies that:

• demand high intellectual challenge,
• are dialogic,
• improvisational (in the jazz sense),
• culturally safe and responsive, and
• develop critically literate active citizens.
INTERNATIONAL VARIATIONS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY
Teaching for cultural diversity: pedagogical approaches

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) provides one of the many alternative versions of culturally responsive pedagogy and her work is primarily for improving learning outcomes for African-American children. Her version of culturally responsive pedagogy ‘rests on three criteria or propositions:
(a) Students must experience academic success;
(b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and
(c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order’ (p. 160).
Teaching for cultural diversity: pedagogical approaches

For Villegas and Lucas (2002a, 2002b) the problem is the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of classrooms that requires attention and they argue for a theory of the culturally responsive teacher that has these six characteristics:
(a) is socioculturally conscious,
(b) has affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds,
(c) is capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students;
(d) is capable of promoting learners’ knowledge construction;
(e) knows about the lives of his or her students; and
(f) uses his or her knowledge about students’ lives to design instruction that builds on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar (Villegas & Lucas (2002a, p.21)
Kaupapa Maori researchers and educators have developed their own version of a *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations*. To quote from their most extensive definition that has these elements:

- power is shared,
- culture counts,
- learning is interactive and dialogic,
- connectedness is fundamental to relations, and
- there is a common vision of excellence for Māori in education (Bishop et al, 2007 p.15).
Our conceptual framework draws upon the Eight Alaskan Culturally Responsive Teacher Standards to guide our research process and inform our theoretical work. Alaskan Culturally Responsive Teacher Pedagogies include:

1. teaching philosophy encompassing multiple worldviews;
2. learning, theory and practice knowing how students learn;
3. teaching for diversity;
4. content related to local community;
5. instruction and assessment building on student’s cultures;
6. learning environment utilising local sites;
7. family and community involvement as partners; and
8. professional development’
Teaching for cultural diversity: pedagogical approaches

Castagno & Brayboy (2008) argue that culturally responsive educators engage the cultural strengths of students and engage constantly with their families and communities in order to create and facilitate effective conditions for learning. They see student diversity in terms of student strengths; they orient to it as presenting opportunities for enhancing learning rather than as challenges and/or deficits of the student or particular community.
This project also borrows from Chris Sarra’s *Stronger Smarter* philosophy which encapsulates the following conditions for improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students:

- Requires a focus on positive engagement (rather than being punitive)
- Demand for high expectations for all Indigenous students
- Indigenous students need opportunities to develop a positive sense of their cultural identity
- Educators to work in partnership with community
Toward an Australian Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

1. High Intellectual challenge
2. Strongly connected to student lifeworlds
3. Recognition of cultural difference as a positive asset
4. Activist oriented
5. Performing learning &/or multimodal literacies
Towards A Decolonising Framework
Settler colonialism ‘predominately bypasses the [indigenous peoples] in an attempt to directly connect with the land’ (Moran 2002, p. 1016). The aim is not exploitation but a winner-take-all replacement. The aim of settler or internal nationalism is either the obliteration or complete assimilation of Indigenous peoples inside of the grid of the nation-state.
Antipodian orientalism ... Aboriginalism

Hodge and Mishra (1991) are instructive on translating Orientalism, to the Australian context. Orientalism according to Said:

One of its great themes, writes Said (1985: 7) is that since they (the Other) cannot represent themselves, ‘they must therefore be represented by others’ who know more about them than they know about themselves. Within Australian culture a similar phenomenon can be labelled ‘Aboriginalism’ (p. 27).
‘Tolerant’ liberal multiculturalism

Liberal multiculturalism (Brown, 2007; Povinelli, 2002) argues tolerance for ‘cultural diversity’ whilst containing it at the same time. Putting it simply, ‘these other cultures are fine but we must be able to locate them within our own grid’ (Bhabha, 1990, p. 208).

- Tolerance adopts a ‘position of relative indifference to the other’
- The model of hospitality invoked, understands the other as ‘alien’ of the ‘stranger’. .. In which is not at home and does not belong
- The image of welcome is thin, as the ‘relationship is asymmetrical’, and ‘dependent of the goodwill of the host’ and ‘perpetuates the image of ‘us’ and ‘them’”.
- Hospitality can readily turn in hostility.

When taken up in education policy, key ideas such as ‘interculturality’ are conceptualised as ‘add on’
Neoliberalism changes the meaning of liberal multiculturalism. 
- Is largely indifferent to both the progressive equality seeking strand and hence is not interested in the tolerant national citizen but a cosmopolitan market actor
- Managing diversity for market success
- In regards to Indigenous peoples; it seeks to divide Indigenous people into ‘safe’ and radical’ and seeks to accommodate the former

- ‘The cultural project of neoliberalism accords rights to Indigenous people but only to help them compete in the rigors of globalized capitalism or, if this is deemed impossible, to relegate them to the sidelines, allowing the game to proceed unperturbed’ (p. 112)
Some examples of public pedagogical work that continues to reiterate and constitute the (racist) Australian nation.

Claiming 'we' in the name of privileged insiders
Narrowing the focus for our concern
Dehumanising the ‘Others’
A Politics of Reiteration
Suffering amnesia whilst privileging a history of the victors
Undermining social movement struggles through derision
Rigid binary thought (you are with us or against us claims to patriotism)
Claiming religion as a rationale for one’s prejudice
Playing post-truth whilst desperately attempting to control the politics of one’s own representation
Working through affect (eg fear and anger)