Reconstructing the Australian story: Learning and Teaching for Reconciliation

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Claire Veronica Kelly

March 2013
Acknowledgements

In submitting this thesis, I offer my respect to the Elders past and present, of the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin nation, on whose land I live and work. I acknowledge this land was the place of age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin people's living culture has a unique role in the life of the region.

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Cultural warning

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are warned that the resources, oral presentations and discussions in this thesis may contain the voices and/or images of deceased persons and images of places that could cause sorrow. There is no intention to harm.
Preface

Thou shalt not steal

In 1788 down Sydney Cove
The first boat-people land
Said sorry boys our gain's your loss
We gonna steal your land
And if you break our new British laws
For sure you're gonna hang
Or work your life like convicts
With chains on your neck and hands….

They taught us
Oh Oh Black woman thou shalt not steal
Oh Oh Black man thou shalt not steal
We're gonna civilize your Black barbaric lives
And teach you how to kneel
But your history couldn't hide the genocide
The hypocrisy to us was real 'cause your Jesus said you're supposed to give the oppressed a better deal
We say to you yes whiteman thou shalt not steal
Oh yeah our land you'd better heal

Your science and technology Hey you can make a nuclear bomb
Development has increased the size to 3,000,000 megatons
But if you think that's progress
I suggest your reasoning is unsound
You shoulda found out long ago
You best keep it in the ground….

You talk of conservation
Keep the forest pristine green
Yet in 200 years your materialism
Has stripped the forests clean
A racist's a contradiction
That's understood by none
Mostly their left hand hold a bible
Their right hand holds a gun

(Carmody, 1989b). Reproduced with kind permission from Kev Carmody.
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Summary

This study examines the question of how teacher educators can support pre-service teachers to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. In Australia for the last twenty years, bi-partisan educational policies from Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have expected that Universities will develop teacher education courses to promote 'greater sensitivity towards Aboriginal issues and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students'; and that 'schools will educate all young Australians to acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2008, p. 27). However, my research demonstrates that for a significant number of pre-service teachers preparing to work in Victorian Primary and Secondary schools there is a continuing spectrum of resistance to the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula.

The evidence is drawn from three data sets: First, in 2008 and 2009 fourth year pre-service teachers (PSTs) at Victoria University, Melbourne completed surveys which identified their experiences of learning about Indigenous history and contemporary issues in their own Primary and Secondary education, in their University studies and their teaching placements; and their questions and comments in regard to including Indigenous perspectives in their own curriculum planning. Second, collaborative self-study was undertaken by Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers working with the 2009 cohort of those PSTs to support them to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. Third, experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators talk about their own experiences of schooling, about events that shaped their understanding of the silencing of Indigenous voices and about their determination that it is possible to challenge colonial perspectives and take steps on the path of reconciliatory education and action.

The analysis is informed by Critical Theory and Constructivist understandings of the nature and purpose of education whereby social justice will be evident in teacher education if and when the agents of education ask questions with morally informed content about their own practices and those of the schools and systems in which they are embedded. I examine the challenge to the academy from Indigenous scholars to respond to the question of 'whiteness', to the reproduction and recreation of knowledge which continues the hegemony of colonial perspectives of who we are as Australians.
The study explores the complexities for PSTs and teacher educators working in the context of government policies which expect educators to include Indigenous history and continuing struggles for social, economic and political rights as important elements of Australian history, without recognising the co-existence of Indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing and without engaging with Indigenous demands for recognition of continuing sovereignty. The results show that a significant number and cross-section of teacher education students in this study had little or no experience of the inclusion of Indigenous themes in their own schooling or in their teaching placements. The curriculum guidelines in place during their schooling and their teaching placements (which outline what teachers were expected to present to their students) have encouraged the exclusion of themes to which teachers are either resistant or are not confident about, by crowding the curriculum, by not providing appropriate professional development and by not situating Indigenous experience as an essential part of the story of who we are as Australians.

Without confronting the colonial discourse which supports the representation of Indigenous peoples as ‘the other’, or as victims, in University and school curricula, teacher educators will be unable to support PSTs to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. Indigenous history and contemporary concerns will continue to languish in the face of competing demand on teachers’ time and expertise, resulting in the exclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience from the Australian story.

As a non-Indigenous teacher educator I am aware of the contested ground on which this study is based. Many Indigenous educators suspect that non-Indigenous people still wish to control Indigenous knowledge and maintain compliance with the continuing dominance of non-Indigenous epistemologies. This reality will continue to create challenges for educators and education systems in Australia. I offer some examples of the resources and activities that have helped to begin the process of breaking through the paradigm of colonialism and opened the minds and hearts of PSTs to the possibilities for reconciliatory education in decolonising classrooms. This research contributes new perspectives to debates in teacher education about the philosophical and practical constraints on teacher educators and PSTs to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. It proposes that Indigenous epistemologies and experiences must be recognised as co-existent with non-Indigenous epistemologies and experiences if we are to become reconciliatory learners/teachers.
Chapter 1  The fundamental challenge for teacher educators

Attempts by Indigenous peoples to assert and protect legally recognised rights to native title, to seek justice for the indecencies which resulted in the stolen generations, to plan, through self determination, a future for our children which will overcome the tragedies of the past—all of these have been shoved aside in a climate of racial intolerance and hostility.

This is the fundamental challenge …how to again rebuild the relationship between Indigenous and other Australians. How to reconcile us together, as citizens of one united Australia, with futures which are inextricably intertwined (Yu, 1998, p. 9).

The decision to play The Apology through the PA and have all classes stop and listen to it was remarkably easy to make, for who could debate the necessity of The Apology, nor of our imperative to provide it for all to hear? With about 150 of my peers, I sat and watched a (slightly delayed) picture on the screen and heard the words through the speakers. Silence was absolute as we listened to the speech that, although much longer than expected, gave everything we hoped that it would. A large group of students, many of whom have known nothing other than the policies of denial and disrespect shown to Indigenous Australians by successive governments, understood that there was nothing more important than to listen. To give this moment the respect that it deserved.

There were tears and sadness, for this was a solemn event but there was also a feeling of elation, of hope. An understanding by all that we have opened a new chapter for all the people who call this land home, a chapter we hope will lead us to a more harmonious future (Sproule, 03.03.08).

1.1  Introduction

This thesis explores the question ‘How can teacher educators support pre-service teachers to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning?’ It was inspired by the challenge above from Peter Yu (1998), as Chairperson of the Kimberley Land Council, to contribute to a relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous
Australians which recognises land rights and-determination as key factors for reconciliation. As a non-Indigenous teacher educator working with pre-service teachers (PSTs) who will be important contributors to this relationship in the coming decades, Yu’s words focussed my understanding of the inextricable connection between the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and our understanding of who we are as Australians. They motivated me to investigate the implications of this connection for my work with PSTs in the School of Education at Victoria University (VU). Is it possible to reconstruct the Australian story to include what has been excluded? Is it possible to recognise the devastation but also the resistance and celebration of the First Peoples of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their epistemological perspectives which continue to co-exist alongside ‘western’ paradigms, despite the hegemony of the dominant culture, the ideological and cultural dominance which makes the exercise of power over oppressed peoples seem to be the normal order of things?

In the second quote, Year 12 Northcote High School student, Noni Sproule describes her experience of listening at school to the Prime Minister’s Apology to the Stolen Generations (Rudd, 2008) in the Commonwealth Parliament. The Apology came as a result of the work of generations of Indigenous activists, extending back to at least the National Day of Mourning proclaimed by Aboriginal leaders on Australia Day 1938, in defiance of the 150th celebrations of the planting of the British flag by Captain Phillip on the land of the Cadigal people near the colonial outpost that came to be called Sydney (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2008). The ten years work of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) was the immediate forerunner to The Apology. Some of this shared history will be explored in this study. Noni Sproule speaks to the possibility that education can encourage students to ask questions about ‘the policies of denial and disrespect shown to Indigenous Australians’ and can empower them to be part of creating a more socially just future. Noni’s words are a demonstration of the dialectic relationship between learning and teaching. They remind us that we are all learners. If we can listen, teachers can learn from their students just as students can learn from their teachers. In this study I have listened to PSTs, to colleagues and to other experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators in order to answer my research question, to explore opportunities to develop decolonised classrooms.

When I began this research I believed that the education policies, nationally and in Victoria where I work, which expect that Indigenous themes will be included in curriculum planning, were detailed and adequate to the task of supporting that inclusion. What I discovered is that while the overarching policy commitments
recognise the need for inclusion, the curriculum guidelines which put these polices into practice result in the exclusion of Indigenous experience as central to the Australian story. PSTs have come through their own schooling without widespread exposure to Indigenous knowledge and experience. They face a crowded curriculum with epistemological perspectives learned from the paradigms of continuing colonialism. It became clear from listening to the PSTs, examining the Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF) guidelines in operation when they were school students themselves, the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) in operation when they were in their school placements, and in new Australian Curriculum (in Victoria the AusVELS), that those curriculum guidelines in fact exclude Indigenous themes from school curricula. I examine this exclusion in detail in Chapter 5, showing how a Year 10 History syllabus, while apparently including Indigenous themes, can in fact be understood as exclusion, as part of the paradigm of viewing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as ‘the other’, as not connected to the mainstream Australian story.

The preface to this study presents the lyrics of Indigenous songman and historian Kev Carmody’s song, *Thou shalt not steal* (Carmody, 1989b). In many ways those words encapsulate one of the themes of my research. Australians live in a country where the legitimacy of the occupation of the land is based on legal tenets and epistemological perspectives which construct an Australian story whereby the original owners of those lands are forced to the periphery and labelled as the transgressors, both literally in terms of lands and goods and figuratively in terms of the Australian story. Professor Marie Battiste, a Mi’kmaw educator from Potlo’tek First Nations of Cape Breton (Unama’kik), Nova Scotia, explains that universities ‘tend to acculturate and conscript different kinds of knowledge into their own existing categories for what can be known, how knowledge can be organised and what forms of knowledge are legitimate and credible’ (Battiste, 2011a, para. 1). In her paper examining aspects of centre-periphery theory Hoppers (2000) notes the ‘profound challenges to these discursive strategies that legitimise control’ in the work of Shiva (1991) and Tuhiwai Smith (1999).

This research explores the experiences and questions of the PSTs with whom I worked at VU where the inclusion of Indigenous themes was situated within the fourth-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Unit *Curriculum and Innovation*. I have included visual representations of knowledge throughout this study in recognition of the importance of such ways of knowing in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures and because I use these visual representations extensively in my work with PSTs. Radika Parameswaran, in her Chapter in the *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous*
Methodologies, explores the ‘chameleon codes of resistance and hegemony in relation to visual representations’ (2008, p. 423) but nevertheless concludes that:

deploy[ing] the very visual artifacts that students are immersed in, not merely to authenticate or liven up lectures, but as pedagogical material that can provoke thoughtful interrogation of the power relations among nations, classes, races, men and women...[can encourage] students to think in multidimensional ways about historical contexts (p. 426).

The lithograph below (Broad, 1886) always engenders strong opportunities for PSTs’ discussions of colonisation. It is significant not only for the insight it presents of the double jeopardy being meted out to Indigenous landowners but also because it was created by a non-Indigenous observer. This thread, of awareness, criticism and in some cases action against the effects of colonisation on Indigenous peoples from among sections of the non-Indigenous population, will be noted through this thesis as an important element for opening spaces for understanding and reconstructing the Australian story.

Figure 1  “The revenge of the Whites as they are hunted down and shot like dogs”. Early European representation of the retaliation against Aboriginal hunters whose traditional food sources had been displaced by new animals brought by the colonisers.

(Broad, 1886)
For the past nine years I have worked as a teacher educator in the P-12 B.Ed. program at VU. My experience of the reluctance of PSTs to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning for their school placements prompted me to explore why this exclusion has continued in Victorian Primary and Secondary schools. Territory, State and Commonwealth education policies for the last two decades have expected that schools will ‘provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989) (see also 1.3 below).

My work at VU has offered me the opportunity to weave together many of the threads of experience and thinking that have developed on my journey as a learner/teacher in Australia from the middle of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. In this study I present three data sets. First, I report and analyse the findings from two years of surveys of fourth-year PSTs about their experiences of learning about Indigenous Australian themes in their own schooling and in their school placements. The surveys also offered the PSTs opportunity to record their questions and comments about planning for the inclusion of Indigenous historical and contemporary material in their own teaching, in their year-long, one day per week plus a six week block school placements. Second, I present the collaborative self-study conducted between Indigenous lecturer Davina Woods and non-Indigenous lecturers Bill Eckersley and myself, working with the 2009 cohort of those PSTs, particularly in the fourth-year B.Ed. Unit, Curriculum and Innovation. Third, I share conversations between myself and other experienced non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators who reflect on their own experiences and on themes raised by the PSTs and lecturers.

Throughout this study I refer to Indigenous Australians as ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Torres Strait Islanders’, and as ‘Indigenous’, interchangeably. If possible I name the particular language group/Nation to which people belong and encourage the PSTs with whom I work to do the same. Many Indigenous peoples speak their original languages (usually three or more, in order to communicate with neighbouring Nations), as well as English. Many others are reviving/reclaiming their first languages, for example in Victoria the Yorta Yorta, Wemba Wemba, Gunnai and Wathaurong peoples (Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, 1998 to present). There are different points of view regarding the most appropriate descriptors. The United Nations has long established policies that education should respect and include the world’s Indigenous peoples’ knowledge and cultures (United Nations, 1948), (United Nations, 1990), (United Nations World Education Forum, 2000), (United Nations, 2010). Australian Indigenous educators have played a significant role in the development of those policies and some
see solidarity with the Indigenous peoples of the world in the use of ‘Indigenous’. Other activists and educators prefer to use the descriptors ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Torres Strait Islanders’, when describing the totality of the more than 250 Nations who countries occupied, and still occupy, the land mass and islands now known as Australia, with the naming of particular peoples where possible. The map below shows those Nations.

![Map showing the 270 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Countries on the continent and islands now called Australia.](image)

**Figure 2**  
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Map showing the 270 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Countries on the continent and islands now called Australia.

This map is just one representation of many other map sources that are available for Aboriginal Australia. Using published resources available between 1988–1994, this map attempts to represent all the language, social or nation groups of the Indigenous people of Australia. It indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. Boundaries are not intended to be exact. This map is NOT SUITABLE FOR USE IN NATIVE TITLE AND OTHER LAND CLAIMS. David R Horton, creator, © Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS and Auslig/Sinclair, Knight, Merz, 1996. No reproduction allowed without permission.

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### 1.2 Background

When I was a student in the 1950s and 1960s in Victoria, Australia, I learned very little about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this country. School
textbooks typically paid scant attention to cultures which have occupied the continent for millennia. Analysis of a number of school history texts published between 1901 and 1964 demonstrated that when Indigenous people were mentioned, the effects of invasion and occupation were ignored; aspects of Aboriginal life were selected which would have appeared bizarre and different; and generalisations were painted rather than accurate details about identifiable people from one geographic area:

Our aborigines (sic) are called “primitive” because they do not read and write, or cultivate the ground, or build houses. This is because they have lived for so many hundreds of years (sic) cut off from the rest of the world by the sea around Australia’s shores. They have never known “civilization” until our ancestors stepped ashore (Gormley, P., 1964, Workbook of Social Studies, Linehan and Shrimpton, Melbourne, quoted in (Groome, 1994), p. 34).

These aspects of difference and of generalisations, rather than listening to particular Indigenous people, still define much of what the PSTs observed in their school placements in the twenty-first century. In terms of my own education I remember being told by a Primary teacher that Aboriginal people were ‘untrustworthy because they just went off on walkabout whenever they felt like it and came back whenever they felt like it’. I remember thinking even then that it didn’t make sense. I wondered ‘why people just went off’; moreover, I wondered why they came back. The First Peoples of this continent now known as Australia were omitted from the story of this country or were grossly misrepresented as primitive, child-like or untrustworthy. I had no way of learning that

Successive generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups maintained their group identity and connection to land by respecting and continuing the names and activities of the Dreaming through stories songs, dance and ceremonies…. [they] managed their environments …[and] exchanged goods and resources through complex networks of social, ceremonial and economic connections (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1993 p. 6).

There was no further reference to Indigenous peoples during my own Primary and Secondary schooling. At home my family were defiantly proud of their Irish heritage and defiantly antagonistic to British imperialism, remembering particularly the Great Hunger (the 1840s-1850s Irish Potato Famine) which precipitated my ancestors escape
to Australia, and the 1916 Dublin Easter Uprising against British rule.

Like Indigenous Australians, the Irish peoples have suffered the dispossession of their land, the rewriting of their history, the erosion of cultural knowledge through assimilation, the traumatisation of lifeways and the effects of diaspora and displacement (dé Ishtar, 2005, p. 47).

My grandmother always had a print of the Albert Namatjira watercolour, *Ghost Gum* (Figure 3 below), on her lounge room wall and spoke of Namatjira as an important representative of Aboriginal Australians. Mary Sabina Kelly was a strong working-class woman who passed away at the age of ninety-three in 1975. Her uncompromising attitude towards inequality and her belief in social justice were important influences on my own understanding of the world. Discussions around the dinner table at home with my parents and at Nana’s place often included reference to the work of catholic missionaries ‘caring for the less fortunate’. While I now understand a great deal more about the role of the churches in Australia in controlling the lives of Indigenous peoples, the dinnertime conversations were spoken in terms of concern for people’s welfare.


**Figure 3** Albert Namatjira *Ghost Gum* 1945

(Namatjira, 1945)

In Chapter 2, section 2.5 Listening to language, I discuss some aspects of the life and work of Albert Namatjira, which throw light on important elements of the Australian story, particularly the power of visual knowledge and of Indigenous resistance to colonial hegemony.

It wasn’t until I was a university student in the 1970s that I discovered books which presented research into the harshness and also the complexities and richness of Aboriginal peoples’ culture and circumstances (Hardy, 1968), (Gale & Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1970), (Rowley, 1972a), (Rowley, 1972c), (Rowley, 1972b). I began to appreciate that non-Indigenous Australia’s lack of understanding of the Indigenous histories of this country lead to attitudes which allow continuing
discrimination to be perpetrated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In particular Gale’s investigation of the life of people on reserves such as Coranderrk near Healesville was illuminating:

In 1880 the dormitory girls at Coranderrk shocked the manager by conducting their own strike: ‘For many weeks past elder girls have positively refused to obey the Matron or work, saying they would if paid wages – they have prompted the orphan house boys to disregard my instructions and encouraged them to rebel’ (Board of Protection of the Aborigines Archives, 31 May 1880 quoted in Gale & Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1970, p. 61).

This aspect of the control of work and wages has a resonance through to the present day with the recent recognition that ‘trustees’ of all kinds, from cattle station managers to local police, Protection Boards and State bureaucracies, through to the 1980s, ‘lost’ (appropriated) millions of pounds of Aboriginal wages. Kidd (2006) provides a detailed examination of the situation in Queensland. The 2006 Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs looks at the situation in other States and Territories (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006). Not only is the fact that Indigenous wages were appropriated by those acting on behalf of Australian governments still missing from non-Indigenous knowledge of the Australian story. The ‘stolen wages’ are also relevant to the commonly held prejudice about the amount of resources needed to begin to afford justice to Indigenous Australians. The appropriation of Indigenous wages is part of the story of ‘special treatment’ in Paul Kelly’s song (1992) which introduces Chapter 4 and in The Last Kinection’s explanation of their song I still call Oz home (The Last Kinection, 2007) which concludes Chapter 4.

When I began teaching at Glenroy High School in the Northern suburbs of Melbourne in the 1970s, I remember carting around boxes of books and posters and cassette tapes, determined that students would understand that the whole story cannot be found in one book and that music, visual arts and personal stories were valid, insightful and engaging places for research. The advent of the Internet has allowed access, at the click of a mouse, to a treasure trove of resources for research into Australian history and contemporary circumstances, from primary documents, film, photographs, radio and television podcasts, poetry and song lyrics, through to music videos, a particularly engaging medium for young people. For example, a video version of Kev Carmody playing Thou Shalt Not Steal, which prefaces this thesis, can be viewed on Youtube
(Carmody, 1989a). I also remember that the Glenroy High school library held only resources that perpetuated myths such as Australian history began in 1770 (Captain Cook discovered Australia) and that the first people were soldiers, convicts and ‘free settlers’. An archetypical example of such material can be seen on the cover reproduced below, of *The Australia Book*, which won the 1952 Australian Children’s Book of the Year Award (Pownall & Senior, 1952).


*Figure 4*  
*The Australia Book*  
(Pownall & Senior, 1952)

The first people depicted on the book cover are the British invaders, followed by a naked Aboriginal man and boy, both looking backwards. There are no Indigenous females, no Chinese whose market gardens produced much of the food for the growing non-Indigenous population and no Afghans who transported much of the building materials, furniture and food staples into rural and remote areas of the country. The final Aboriginal image is still on the first line, of only the boy, looking backwards without an adult, as in the ‘dying race’ (Perkins, 2008a). When *The Australia Book* was republished in 2008, it was described as ‘one of the most beautiful and original books ever published for children in Australia’; and ‘if you only wanted one book about Australian history this would be it’ (Pownall & Senior, 2008).

In the late 1980s I worked at the Northern Metropolitan College of TAFE (renamed the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE in 1996). The students were Indigenous adults from all over Australia and their stories and experiences were extraordinary, powerful and full of meanings that I began to appreciate. The more I listened to the Indigenous educators and students with whom I worked and the more I read, the more I began to understand the responsibilities to country, the spiritual obligations and the family commitments which, unknown to most non-Indigenous educators, were the story behind the ‘walkabout’ referred to by my Primary school teacher: I thought I knew quite a lot about Australian history, but I was constantly surprised by how little I really knew and understood. Archie Weller’s work was particularly powerful (Weller, 1981), (Weller, 1986). I was introduced to resources such as the films *Lousy Little Sixpence* (Morgan, 1982) and *BabaKiueria*, (Atherden, 1986), both by non-Indigenous filmmakers; and I
deepened my understanding of the importance of personal life stories as ‘ways of knowing’. I also learned to listen more deeply.

When asked by colleagues and friends as to why I thought there was so little recognition of Aboriginal rights I would reply ‘because we live on stolen land’. We live with a dilemma - living in the so-called lucky country without having acknowledged the sovereignty of the original owners, with the longest continuous cultures and land management on earth, and their ongoing presence and resistance to assimilation into the dominant culture – which creates an emptiness in our hearts. Henry Reynolds’ book, *This whispering in our hearts*, an examination of white concerns for Aboriginal welfare in Australia in the 1830s and 40s, the 1880s and 1926-34, takes its title from a speech by New South Wales parliamentarian Richard Windeyer in 1842 (Reynolds, 1998). Reynolds describes the speech, called ‘On the Rights of the Aborigines of Australia’, as ‘perhaps the most sustained and intellectually powerful attack on Aboriginal rights ever mounted in early colonial Australia (p. 20). And yet, after five days of speech-making Windeyer admitted at the end of his speech: ‘How is it that our minds are not satisfied? …What means this whispering in the bottom of our hearts?’ (cited in Reynolds, 1998, p. 21). Now, after the first two hundred years of the omission of Indigenous Australians from the Australian story, which is really only beginning to be remedied, there is an emptiness in our hearts. My surveys of PSTs’ experiences in their own schooling and in their school placements demonstrate a continuing omission (exclusion) of Indigenous themes even in the face of explicit State and Commonwealth education policies that expect inclusion and reconciliation:

As a nation Australia values the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society — a society that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse, and that values Australia’s Indigenous cultures as a key part of the nation’s history, present and future (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 1999, Preamble).

### 1.3 Education policies

For the past twenty years bi-partisan State and Commonwealth education policies have supported particular initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and also advocated the inclusion of Indigenous history and contemporary themes in the education of all students. In 1989 the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989) included the following goals:
17. To develop programs to support the maintenance and continued use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages;

20. To enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at all levels of education to have an appreciation of their history, cultures and identity; and

21. To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures.

The National Report on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Johnston, 1991a) included the following recommendations:

295 (a) All teacher training courses include courses which will enable student teachers to understand that Australia has an Aboriginal history and Aboriginal viewpoints on social, cultural and historical matters, and to teach the curriculum which reflects those matters;

(b) In-service training courses for teachers be provided so that teachers may improve their skill, knowledge and understanding to teach curricula which incorporate Aboriginal viewpoints on social, cultural and historical matters; and

(c) Aboriginal people should be involved in the training courses both at student teacher and at in-service level.

During the 1990s the Commonwealth Government developed a National Reconciliation and Schooling Strategy which included:

development of consistent teacher education courses to promote greater sensitivity towards Aboriginal issues and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

a grassroots campaign to promote greater understanding by students of their school area's local Aboriginal community and its history; and

increasing the school community's capacity to research local Aboriginal history and bring in local Aboriginal people to support classroom activities.

In 1999 the Melbourne Declaration, created by the bi-partisan Commonwealth and State Ministers of Education, meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), expected that:

All students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to and benefit from, reconciliation between

In 2000, CAR’s National Strategy to Sustain the Reconciliation Process (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 2000) noted education as second only to leadership in importance. The Strategy recommendations included that the following actions be taken by schools and tertiary institutions, supported by sufficient resources from State and Commonwealth governments:

- the development and provision of curriculum materials to support the teaching in all schools of the history of Australia, including the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
- incorporate within the core curriculum, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, racism awareness and the history of Australia including the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- develop appropriate learning resources, where possible working with Aboriginal education groups and Elders to focus on local community history. Aboriginal education groups and Elders should be provided with adequate support and respect for the work that they do.
- informed pre-service and in-service training of teachers to ensure competence in teaching Australia’s history, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ perspectives, and allocate funds for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenters.

In Victoria the guidelines for Preparatory to Year 10 school curricula include many references to the history and culture of Indigenous Australians

- Students evaluate the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the fight for civil and political rights and land rights …. evaluate the contributions of key participants and leaders in these events…. (and) compare different perspectives about a significant event and make links between historical and contemporary issues (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2007c).

The Commonwealth Government’s new Australian Curriculum, to be implemented in stages from 2012, wants students to better understand the richness of the Australian story, including the longevity and uniqueness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2010).
However despite all this explicit policy, the evidence in this thesis from the PST surveys, the collaborative self-study between their lecturers and the conversations with experienced educators demonstrates that rather than being included in Victorian school curricula, Indigenous perspectives and the history and contemporary circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are being excluded.

1.4 The Australian Story

On the 14th of August 1830, the Sydney Monitor newspaper published a letter to the Editor describing the ‘dreadful treatment of the prisoners at the penal colony of Moreton Bay’ (now Brisbane) from ‘A free colonist’ which included the following words:

This, Sir, is the situation of the poor native youths at Moreton Bay.... Their dinner is taken into the field. When boiled, their meat, very inferior, weighs (bone and all) about 8 or 10 ounces—it should be a pound before boiled....At one time, the Commandant did not allow them water enough to drink at their work, and they suffered much from thirst....They are allowed water now, but sometimes they run short even of this necessary article, which is a hardship they have no right to endure.... For supper, the men sometimes make a rush to the swamp, and, pulling up the flags, the roots of which are eatable and ... gnaw them greedily. No other supper is allowed them. They are liable to be punished for this sort of supper. Some have died of the dysentery through it (Gregory, 2011).

Whoever the ‘free colonist’ might have been, the words of this letter bear strong resemblance to the ballads of the convicts transported to the colony of New South Wales and later colonies which came to be called Australia, particularly for ‘political’ crimes (Rudé, 1978). The reference to the ‘poor native youths’ is an example of the recognition by some newcomers of the particular conditions meted out to the peoples whose lands were being colonised, the ‘hunting them down like dogs’ of Broad’s lithograph (Broad, 1886) and the ‘special treatment’ of the Paul Kelly song (P. Kelly, 1992).

The letter is an example of the opportunities available to reconstruct the Australian story through the use of written and visual narratives which challenge the pretence of a mono-cultural version of British colonialism as ‘civilising the natives’ and promoting ‘a fair go for all’, the story of The Australia Book. The recognition of injustice, particularly from among those who also suffered at the hands of the soldiers and the squatters, can
be seen in ballads and poetry, in government reports and in diaries and letters and in the visual arts, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The painting in Figure 5 below is typical of many colonial representations (available from the websites of the various State and Commonwealth libraries, museums and galleries). Aboriginal people are clearly part of the picture, even though the legal fiction of 'terra nullius' was the foundation of 'settlement'.

![Figure 5](image)

*William Knight, Collins Street, town of Melbourne, New South Wales, 1839* (Knight, 1839).

I examine some of these accounts in Chapter 2. There are hidden Australian histories, such as the Myall Creek Massacre (Cheshire, 2001, P. Stewart, 2007), the Mowla Bluff Massacre (Torres, 2002) and the many that took place in Victoria (see Foley, 1998-2009 and Clark, 1995); and the resistance to this invasion (Broome, 2005, I. D. Clark & Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1995, Pascoe 2007). There are leaders, such as those honoured by Indigenous educator and colleague Davina Woods in her poem which won a Victorian Premier’s poetry award, *Urban Songlines* (Woods, 2006, personal communication, February 3, 2011): ‘our Elders, statesmen and women of high degree’. Twentieth century leaders including William Cooper, Jack Patten, Geraldine Briggs, William Ferguson, Margaret Tucker (National Museum of Australia, 2008b) and the great nineteenth century statesman William Barak (Culture Victoria, 2010, Murphy-Wandin, 2012) among many, are unknown to most PSTs, teachers and teacher educators.
Peggy Van Toorn presents examples of early Indigenous written responses to colonialism which offer previously unheard elements of the Australian story, including the articulate and poignant letters from the people of Coranderrk Reserve, led by Barak; plus a forensic examination of John Batman’s diary whereby she declares him well aware that he was perpetrating a fraud on the Indigenous leaders present at the so-called Batman Treaty supposedly trading trinkets for vast tracts of land around Melbourne in 1834 (van Toorn, 2006).

The strength and resilience of Indigenous resistance to attempts to eliminate recognition of their continuing occupation of their lands is a compelling narrative which challenges the basis of the ‘settlement’ of Australia. It is this narrative which the legal fiction of terra nullius sought to conceal and which we have yet to accept as a defining element of the Australian story. It is why the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty is inextricably bound to the possibility of education for reconciliation. It is why we are still as educators confronted with entrenched practices in schools and universities of seeing Indigenous Australians as ‘the other’. It is why we can accept and/or ignore the imposition of a government Intervention into Indigenous communities which does little to address appalling disadvantage and lack of social justice.

Certainly when I began teaching in the 1970s Indigenous people were still accorded little recognition in textbooks, educational policy or practice. Some curriculum materials did begin to be published (Buggy & Cates, 1982) but they were not part of the usual curriculum offerings for primary and secondary students in Australian schools. Such texts were stimulating and engaging for students: wanting to let the past ‘speak for itself’ and to do so by asking students to investigate primary sources: ‘Published histories…official papers, diaries, ballads, unpublished papers, cartoons and paintings….so that students are brought face-to-face with the original meaning of history as enquiry’ (Buggy and Cates, 1982, p. iii). Nevertheless in presenting a large amount of material on the colonisation of the Sydney area for example, Buggy and Cates (1982) include only passing reference to the resistance leaders such as Pemulwuy (Willmot 1987). The Indigenous resistance to the invasion was yet to be told in school or university texts.

Indeed, this inclusion is still not widespread. On more than one occasion I have heard PSTs question ‘why the Aborigines just let all these terrible things happen’ when stories of massacres are encountered. There is still little academic, let alone popular, knowledge of this part of our history – for example, in Victoria at ‘Murdering Gully’, ‘Murderers’ Flat’ and ‘Bay of Martyrs’ (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1993, p. 7).
More is found in the Australian popular imagination of the resistance by North American tribes such as the Cheyenne and Cherokee and Chief Sitting Bull than is known of Mosquito (Parry, 2005) or Jandamarra (Pedersen & Woorunmurra, 2000), the Gunditjmara (Weir, 2009), or the Kalkadoons (Armstrong, 1980). The fact that in Victoria there are approximately forty Aboriginal languages (Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, 2011), and therefore Nations and cultures, is a revelation. The proposition that PSTs know and can say the name of the traditional owners on which their school is situated, and that they acknowledge that name in their classrooms is meta-cognitive for children’s learning and opens pathways that are both technical and epistemological for them to consider the inclusion of Indigenous themes in their teaching.

Figure 6  Aboriginal Languages of Victoria
(Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, 2006). Printed with permission.
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Charles Perkins, the first Aboriginal male to graduate from an Australian University and leader of the Freedom Ride prior to the 1967 Referendum (National Museum of Australia, 2007) to change the Australian Constitution to allow Indigenous peoples to be counted in the census, put it this way

My experience of a good Australian is when white people would be proud to speak an Aboriginal language, when they realise that Aboriginal culture and all that goes with it, philosophy, art, language, morality, kinship, is all part of their heritage. And that's the most unbelievable thing of all, that it's all there waiting
for us all. White people can inherit 40,000 or 60,000 years of culture, and all they have to do is reach out and ask for it! (in Read, 1990, p. 315).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century many more resources are available for teachers and PSTs to read and use in their curriculum planning in order to understand and present an inclusive view of Australian history and society. Moreover State and Commonwealth government policies on Indigenous education in school curricula are detailed and thoughtful, mostly having been determined in consultation with Indigenous educators and representatives.

However most educators do not feel confident about where to go for appropriate resources or how to develop appropriate student activities and research opportunities nor are they supported through Indigenous staffing or in-servicing. The policies are not being put into practice. As a teacher and School Council member, as a teacher union official and program manager for government funded initiatives, I understand the important role of policy to support (or demolish) social justice initiatives. But policy isn’t change itself. There needs to be commitment. Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and practitioners know from their work that emphasising compliance rather than commitment, policy rather than focussed pre-service teacher education programs with professional support for classroom teachers, means there is little chance that programs will have a significant impact on student teachers:

without a commitment to social justice, where teacher educators do not share a sense of moral responsibility for our actions as education professionals, ethical considerations can become secondary to instrumental approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and teacher education, emphasising compliance rather than commitment (Reid, 2009, p. 13).

Moreover in the past, ‘when Indigenous studies has been incorporated into curriculum at schools and universities, it has tended to focus on describing Indigenous peoples and problematising Indigenous life-ways and responses to colonisation’ (Phillips, 2005, p. 1).

My work with Bachelor of Education students at VU shows that tertiary students even in this new millennium have not learned a great deal of appreciation and respect for Indigenous history, culture, science and epistemological world-views as part of their
own schooling and do not live in a country that knows and values the Indigenous heritage and ongoing strength and resilience of Aboriginal peoples.

It is these PSTs who will be the curriculum developers and curriculum implementers for the next 40 years. How can we as University educators work with the current and future primary and secondary PSTs to achieve the inclusion of Indigenous Australian themes in school curricula? What sort of pedagogies, strategies and collegial support can be developed, to assist PSTs at University and as they move into the profession, to make possible the reconciliatory education that our history and future demand? Can we move away from seeing Indigenous cultures, from our mainstream ‘white is right’ epistemological perspective, as belonging within a paradigm of deficit/loss (Phillips, 2011), or as the exotic other? My research explores the dimensions and implications of not recognising the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous epistemologies, of accepting the continuing domination of the non-Indigenous world view to continue to exclude Indigenous perspectives from the Australian story. How can educators, that is PSTs, teachers and teacher educators, listen to and work with Indigenous educators towards reconciliatory education? These questions became the starting point of my PhD journey.

1.5 Learning and teaching

In this study, the combination of historical research, surveys of PSTs’ experiences and questions regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula, collegial self-study between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers and conversations with experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, allows the development of a comprehensive response to complex questions. My research is situated in a learning and teaching context intrinsically connected to the Praxis Inquiry (PI) Protocol, the practice/theory foundation for learning and teaching at VU. Starting with PSTs’ own experiences and questions about Indigenous Australian history and contemporary issues is an authentic place to begin an investigation with them about how to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. Such an approach supports them in responding to the challenge in the PI Protocol (see Figure 7 below) to identify and investigate ontological and epistemological as well as technical aspects of their practice – a process that has already been shown to open transformative pathways for learning which eventually lead to changed practice (Gudjonsdottir, Cacciattolo, Dakich, Dalmau, Davies & Kelly, 2007).
Krugr & Cherednichenko (2006, p.6), whose work guided the development of the PI Protocol at VU, noted the work of The Coalition of Essential Schools in the United States of America (McDonald, 2003) who also propose that ‘the teacher education curriculum as question’ may be thought of as a ‘protocol’, a semi-structured set of questions which collaborating teachers can ask themselves in action-based inquiry. This notion of Praxis, which informs the PI Protocol, strongly influences the questions being asked in this research: to identify and investigate ontological and epistemological as well as technical aspects of reconciliatory education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE DESCRIBED</th>
<th>PRACTICE EXPLAINED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSTs describe practice (cases, artefacts, anecdotes) and identify questions eg, what do I wonder about when I think about this event/artefact?</td>
<td>PSTs seek to discover professional explanations for their practice (literature, research, mentors &amp; colleagues, teacher education) How can I understand this practice?</td>
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<th>PRACTICE THEORISED</th>
<th>PRACTICE CHANGED</th>
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<tr>
<td>PSTs consider the overriding question: who am I becoming as an educator as I integrate these understandings and beliefs into my practice Who am I becoming as a teacher?</td>
<td>PSTs plan action (how can I act to improve learning for students and improve my capacity as an educator? and of course what are my new questions?</td>
</tr>
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Figure 7 The four dimensions of the Praxis Inquiry Protocol in the P-12 Bachelor of Education at Victoria University (Gudjonsdottir, et al., 2007, p. 168).

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The connections between the dimensions of the PI Protocol and an awareness of technical, epistemological and ontological factors provide a rich opportunity for PSTs to recognise and evaluate complex interactions between the learning and life outcomes of students, educational policies, socio-political and cultural factors, ethical considerations and the ongoing discourse of education. PSTs are able to develop research opportunities for their own students which are connected to big questions, appreciate epistemological perspectives and thus reframe and reconstruct their worldviews and deepen their commitment to collaborative and transformative action (Dalmau, 2002, p. 66).

I recognise that for many Australian Indigenous researchers Western paradigms cannot adequately portray Indigenous realities; and ‘developing more adequate representations requires privileging Indigenous realities via Indigenous ways of knowing which, in turn, involves rediscovering, developing and applying ‘Indigenous'
paradigms (Swisher, 1998, quoted in Nakata, 2004 p. 8). For Battiste ‘What is becoming clear ... is that any attempt to decolonise education and actively resist colonial paradigms is a complex and daunting task’ (2008, p. 508).

Māori Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith goes so far as to say ‘The term “research” itself is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism… “research”, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary (1999, p.1).

In the words of Australian Indigenous educator Norm Newlin:

**YOUR Ph.D.**

My culture belongs to me and my people,
we didn’t give permission
for you, to steal our knowledge.

The halls of higher learning
enhance your perspective
of my way of life.

When your time with us was done
you wore your ermined collar trim
smiling for the camera,
as you held your ribboned scroll.

You became the expert
on our culture, speaking about us
for us, denying us our voice.
Go back to your culture and speak for it,
we have our voice now,
not that we lost it, you ignored it.

So don’t speak about the issues
that are our concern
unless you consult with us,
the Aborigines of this land.

(in Craven & Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1996, p. 188)

As a non-Indigenous educator I hope to make a contribution to understanding the constraints on non-Indigenous efforts to implement the policies put in place in collaboration with Indigenous educators. If those policy demands are to be realised, questions such as the following need to be explored:

- How are Indigenous Australians represented in discourse practices and the social system in which schools and communities operate?
Reconstructing the Australian story: Learning and Teaching for Reconciliation

- What knowledges are silenced, made invisible or literally erased (Cannella & Lincoln, 2009, p.69)?
- What impact does this silence have on PSTs opportunities to engage in reconciliatory education?
- Can those privileged by racial power divest themselves of privilege and engage in a decolonising enterprise (Cowlishaw, 2004, p. 66-7)?

I am consciously committed to learning from and working with Indigenous understandings and research paradigms as the context for my endeavour to present insights into reconciliatory education. In Australia we have an amazing opportunity to learn with and from Indigenous peoples. I say ‘with’ because as Indigenous colleagues and researchers point out, for too long non-Indigenous colonisers, squatters, government ministers and officials and academics have taken land and/or knowledge for their own gain. State education systems in Australia were geared to ensure that Indigenous, and indeed working class, children were prevented from going past primary school classes and were thus ready for domestic, agricultural and industrial work (Marginson 1997, Dalmau 2002). For children like my father, who left school in Grade Six, the cost of further education and the attitudes of the times, that children from his poor rural background should be out earning a living as soon as possible, limited his opportunities. For Indigenous children, not only cost and attitudes but also the law, curtailed their opportunities.

Education does not stand alone, a neutral instrumentality somehow above the ideological conflicts of the society. Rather, it is deeply implicated in the formation of the unequal cultural, economic, and political relations that dominate our society…. in which dominance is reproduced and contested, in which hegemony is partly formed and partly fractured in the creation of the common sense of the people (Carspecken & Apple, 1992, p. 509).

In 2008 research conducted for Reconciliation Australia reported that less than half of those surveyed claimed a ‘high’ level of knowledge of Indigenous history (43%) or culture (35%) (Reconciliation Australia, 2009). The 2010 Reconciliation Barometer reported similar results (Reconciliation Australia, 2010a), including that levels of trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are very low. Only 12% of Indigenous and 9% of non-Indigenous respondents agreed that ‘We trust each other’.
These surveys show ‘that while Australians see the relationship as important there is general acknowledgement that there is a lot of work to be done to build the quality of the relationship and how the two groups see each other’ (Reconciliation Australia, 2010b). The Indigenous newspaper, the *Koori Mail*, reported that at a meeting of 600 teacher education students in Brisbane in 2008 less than one third said they had met and spoken with an Aboriginal person. They self-assessed their level of knowledge about Aboriginal culture as ‘little’ to ‘some’ knowledge. Many had already formed negative opinions about Aboriginal people, often through media stories (Koori Mail, 2008). It is in this contested milieu that teachers are being asked to develop programs to implement the new understandings being presented by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators.

Teacher education always occurs in a particular time and place. The goal of reconciliation has been an ongoing moral and ethical imperative for some teacher educators and programs, and has guided the vision of quality teacher education aimed at social justice and equity in those programs (Reid, 2009, p.13).

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study investigates why the mostly non-Indigenous PSTs (over the eight years I worked with the fourth-year PSTs, a small number identified themselves to me as Indigenous) in *Curriculum and Innovation* were reluctant to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. The data collected to explore my research question ‘How can teacher educators support pre-service teachers to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning?’ brings together the experiences, questions and reflections of PSTs, their lecturers and other experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. This combination of data sources offers a bricolage (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, Kincheloe, 2001) of evidence which shows that despite detailed policy which expects that teachers will include Indigenous themes, as outlined in 1.3 above, those themes are being excluded from school curricula. The notion of bricolage used here recognises the importance of connections between disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, divergent methods of inquiry and diverse theoretical and philosophical understandings of the various elements encountered in the act of research. ‘In particular, critical bricoleurs employ historiographical, philosophical, and social theoretical lenses to gain a more complex understanding of the intricacies of research design’ (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 679).
As noted by Phillips (2011, p. 10-11), with notable exceptions (Craven & Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1996), (Craven, Halse, Marsh, Mooney, & Wilson-Miller, 2005), previous research into Indigenous studies has concentrated on improving Indigenous students' participation in non-Indigenous education contexts. This is one of the two expectations placed on teachers by Territory, State and Commonwealth policy requirements. Programs such as What Works (McRae et al., 2002 – 2012, Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 2012) and Dare to lead (Principals Australia Institute, 2003-2009) have been developed to support that expectation. I proceed from the assumption, and I am explicit about this with the PSTs with whom I work, that any classroom in Australia could have Indigenous students and we should be confident as educators that the curriculum we offer our students is respectful, inclusive and engaging for all students, including Indigenous students.

My research analyses the experiences and questions of the PSTs, soon to be graduate teachers, who are expected to implement the policies outlined above. The perspectives of their lecturers and of other experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators throw light upon the PSTs’ comments and questions. This tapestry of inter-related themes offers access to the path of knowledge we might walk together (Dodson, 2009) as Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators seeking to challenge colonial paradigms. It is based in part on my own journey as a learner and teacher through the second half of the twentieth century and into the new millennium, as a non-Indigenous educator trying to understand and challenge the hegemony of the dominant discourse which has ensured the exclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience from school curricula despite the policies. The study offers other non-Indigenous educators insights into themes which emerge from the PSTs’ responses to including Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning, from working with Indigenous colleagues and from the stories told by other experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. It also explores some resources and assessments that have opened spaces for creating decolonising classrooms.

1.7 Thesis outline

The majority of Chapters in this thesis begin with two quotes, one from an Indigenous educator and one from a non-Indigenous educator, using the broad definition of education as the transmission and creation of meaning about where we have come from, who we are and who we could be, as peoples contributing to a better world for all. Quoting both Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices to begin each Chapter was
chosen to honour the co-existence of ways of knowing, of epistemological perspectives, from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous experience, reflection and research, in regard to opportunities for education for social justice and in particular in regard to reconciliatory education.

The only exceptions are in Chapter 4, Listening to pre-service teachers, where I have used the lyrics of the Paul Kelly song *Special Treatment* as the introduction. Kelly, non-Indigenous song man, long-time collaborator with Kev Carmody (most memorably in the song celebrating the Gurindji strike, *From Little things Big Things Grow* (Carmody & Kelly, 1993), speaks of a theme articulated by some PSTs and some other non-Indigenous responses to the question of Indigenous dispossession - that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders get more than their ‘fair share’ of government support. Also in Chapter 5, Stand up and Be Counted, I have used the lyrics of the song *Blackfella Whitefella* (Warumpi Band, 1985) from the Warumpi Band, who originated in the Aboriginal settlement of Papunya in the central desert region of the Northern Territory in the early eighties (Murray, 2007). Their chorus line, ‘Stand up and Be Counted’, is an appropriate heading for a Chapter that tells the stories of experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators who have indeed stood up and been counted. In Chapter 7, Decolonising the classroom: becoming a reconciliatory learner/teacher I begin with the painting of Ned Kelly by Ngarrmaliny Janama in recognition of both the epistemological demonstration of the painting and the importance of visual knowledge in this study.

Chapter 1: The fundamental challenge for teacher educators, introduces the context of this study based on my work with PSTs in a P-12 B.Ed. at Victoria University (VU), Melbourne, Australia. I explain why I felt inspired to pursue the question of ‘How can teacher educators support pre-service teachers to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning?’ I put forward the proposition that reconciliatory education requires recognition of sovereignty. I look at aspects of the Australian story and outline the learning and teaching context in which this research is situated.

Chapter 2: The question of ‘whiteness’, examines literature which explores the paradigm of assimilation and continuing colonialism in Australia and the implications for reconciliatory education. I privilege the work of Australian Indigenous theorists and educators who argue that without confronting the normative power of ‘whiteness’, as an insidious, mostly unrecognised epistemological standpoint which constructs non-Indigenous perspectives of the nature and content of knowledge about the world, we will continue to reproduce a colonial construction of the world. University and school curricula will continue to reflect that ontology, that set of beliefs about the nature of
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reality and therefore existence (Paton, 2011), by excluding Indigenous centrality to the Australian story. I argue that as educators, if we do not examine the assumptions embedded in the hegemony of the dominant culture about what is normal and what is ‘other’, we will continue to be caught in the tentacles of assimilation. This analysis supports the recognition of co-existing epistemologies and the proposition that acknowledgement of Indigenous sovereignty is a critical element if reconciliatory education is to be effectively implemented. Through the exploration of these important themes which flow through the thesis – co-existing epistemologies and sovereignty - I argue that the contested concept of reconciliation does offer opportunities to work towards the possibility of education for social justice.

Chapter 3: On the path of knowledge how might we find each other? explores the methodological terrain which supports my research. The title is taken from a speech by Mick Dodson, from the National Centre for Indigenous Studies, about his priorities as 2009 Australian of the Year (Mick Dodson, 2009). Professor Dodson, a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, emphasises the importance of a good education in improving life chances; the failure of Australian education systems to provide this right for Indigenous children; and our responsibilities as educators to give every Australian child a chance to learn about Indigenous history and culture. I am aware that the space for a non-Indigenous researcher working towards the inclusion of Indigenous history and contemporary circumstances in Australian school and teacher education curricula is littered with methodological and ideological complexities. I privilege the work of Indigenous educators and researchers in this study of the inclusion of Indigenous themes in curriculum planning. I also present the work of non-Indigenous researchers and educators who demonstrate the possibilities for listening to and working with Indigenous educators on learning and teaching for reconciliation.

The anti-colonial analyses of Australian ‘whiteness’ theorists are supported by Critical Theory to provide a framework in which to challenge the hegemony of control exercised by a colonial class society with all its subtle and not so subtle mechanisms of power, which results in the dearth of implementation of reconciliatory education policies. Constructivism supports this research by underpinning the philosophy and practice of the School of Education at VU, whereby students’ prior knowledge, questions and research are the basis for learning and teaching and where reflective practice, teacher self-study and collaborative approaches to teacher professional development are recognised as valuable. This Chapter concludes with the research
methods used to investigate the question of how to support PSTs to become reconciliatory learners/teachers.

Chapter 4: Listening to pre-service teachers, presents the results of twice yearly survey responses of fourth-year PSTs in 2008 and 2009, in the P-12 B.Ed. at VU, about their exposure to Australian Indigenous themes in their own schooling and in their school placements. I also report and reflect on the PSTs’ questions and comments about the inclusion of Australian Indigenous themes in school curricula. One of the main purposes of the surveys was to provide PSTs with their own data for discussion in lectures and seminars. The themes which emerged from the surveys contributed to the discussions between the lecturers working with the 2009 cohort of those PSTS, which are reported in the next Chapter.

Chapter 5: Unity without assimilation: Collaborative self-study between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers, presents discussions and resulting actions taken by three lecturers, Davina Woods, Bill Eckersley and myself, working with the 2009 cohort of PSTs whose surveys are reported in the previous Chapter, to support the inclusion of Indigenous Australian themes in the fourth-year core Unit *Curriculum and Innovation*, in the Bachelor of Education at Victoria University.

Chapter 6: Stand up and be Counted, presents conversations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators who demonstrate by their work and their insights that it is possible to challenge the paradigm which assumes that ‘white is right’, to acknowledge and respect Indigenous ways of knowing and to challenge the dominant hegemony which says that Indigenous self-determination is not possible. In 1990 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs defined self-determination to include ‘Aboriginal control over the decision-making process’, as well as ‘control over the ultimate decision about a wide range of matters including political status, and economic, social and cultural development’ (as cited in Dodson, M. & Pritchard, 1998, p. 2). The educators reflect on experiences and ideas which throw light on these concepts and on comments and questions raised by the pre-service teachers. The combination of the PST surveys, the self-study reflections of their lecturers and the conversations with experienced educators, provide a strong platform for the propositions in Chapter 7.

In Chapter 7, Decolonising the classroom: becoming a reconciliatory learner/teacher, I examine some opportunities for non-Indigenous PSTs and teacher educators to become reconciliatory learners/teachers, based on this research. I begin the Chapter with a consideration of the radical possibility that Indigenous epistemology could be a
critical element in defining the spaces where we reconstruct the Australian story. Examples of questions and resources explored with PSTs in our work towards reconciliatory education are considered.

In Chapter 8, Inclusion not Exclusion, I conclude with what I have learned from this study. My research demonstrates that rather than supporting the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience as central to the story of who we are as Australians, Commonwealth and Victorian curriculum guidelines for learning and teaching actually lead to the exclusion of that knowledge and experience. I consider the limitations to the study and indicate areas for further research.

I end this Introduction with the painting below, an entry into a Queensland schools NAIDOC poster competition, which interprets the ‘Closing the gap’ slogan from the continuing Commonwealth government Intervention into Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. The Intervention proposes that the huge gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous access to services and achievement indicators in health and education will be overcome by stricter bureaucratic administration of welfare support. Chloe Miller from Oakey State School in Queensland has confronted the epistemology of the dominant paradigm, which underpins the continuing control of Indigenous decision-making, by celebrating ‘unsung heroes who close the gap by leading their way’. Like the quote which introduces this Chapter, from Victorian High school student Noni Sproule, which speaks to the possibility that education can empower us to be part of creating a more socially just future, Oakey Primary school student Chloe Miller closes the Chapter with a lesson in listening to Elders and learning together:

*Figure 8* 2010 Queensland NAIDOC poster *Unsung Heroes: Closing the gap by leadership their way.* (C. Miller, 2010).
Chapter 2

The question of ‘whiteness’

2.1 Epistemological perspectives

…whiteness is constitutive of the epistemology of the West; it is an invisible regime of power that secures hegemony through discourse and has material effect in everyday life (Moreton-Robinson, 2004b, p. 75).

All peoples live by their cultures and all Indigenous cultures are under attack by the multiple tentacles of an intruding white society which positions its own cultural paradigms as the ‘norm’ to which all other peoples must aspire (dé Ishtar, 2005, p. xxvi).

These two Australian researchers, Geonpul scholar Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson whose country is Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island), and the Irish-Australian Zohl dé Ishtar, point to a powerful paradigm that camouflages the continuing, though often unconscious, attempts by the mainstream to continue to assimilate Australian Aboriginal peoples. They both point to the power of ‘whiteness’ as an insidious, mostly unrecognised epistemological standpoint which constructs non-Indigenous perspectives of the nature and content of knowledge as normal and Indigenous knowledge as peripheral and deficient. They challenge us to confront this assumed normality of non-Indigenous ways of perceiving the world, of non-Indigenous epistemologies, as sufficient constructs on which to build an understanding of who we are as Australians and how we might work towards achieving social justice. They argue that without examining and challenging assumptions about what is ‘normal’ or ‘mainstream’ and what is ‘other’, we will continue to be caught in the tentacles of assimilation. Their analysis offers insight into the resistance of pre-service teachers (PSTs) to the inclusion of Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. The privilege of being ‘white’, that is, of belonging to and accepting the colonial construction of the world, means that the authors of University and school curricula reflect that ontology by excluding Indigenous centrality to the Australian story. Indigenous demands for
recognition of continuing sovereignty remain unanswered and university and school curricula relegate Indigenous struggles for social, political and economic rights to the periphery.

This Chapter reviews literature pertinent to the question ‘How can teacher educators support pre-service teachers to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning?’ It examines the paradigm of colonialism and Indigenous resistance to continuing attempts at assimilation, and the implications for reconciliatory education. The title of the Chapter refers to the question of ‘whiteness’ in recognition of the analyses of Indigenous scholars and educators who argue that unless non-indigenous educators examine the privilege of being part of the ‘normal’, unless we challenge the ‘anthropological gaze’ we will continue to reproduce representations of the ‘exotic other’ in University and school curricula. This examination is also called a ‘question’ in recognition of its place in the complexity of the struggle for social justice, which also includes recognition of the power of class and of gender discrimination, in their various manifestations. For many Indigenous activists and scholars the overarching effects of colonialism and the resulting disadvantages suffered by Indigenous students and communities are paramount. At the same time the educational disadvantage suffered by low socio-economic students in Australia also demonstrates the power of capitalism to affect the life chances and educational opportunities of not only disadvantaged Indigenous students but also the broad spectrum of children of the working class. The most recent Programme for International Student Assessment 2009 academic performance data (Thomson & Australian Council for Education Research, 2011 p. 296-298), confirm that the Australian education system continues to have difficulty in overcoming barriers to high quality educational outcomes for schools serving Low Socio-Economic Status communities as well as for Indigenous students. The recognition of Indigenous exclusion from the Australian story is nonetheless a particular omission from our knowledge of who we are as Australians and as citizens of the world, a knowledge that is expected by educational policy-makers, as well as by Indigenous educators and those concerned to challenge the colonial paradigm, to be part of school curricula. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, for more than two decades educational policies have sought to overcome Indigenous students’ disadvantage and ‘to provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989). This study seeks to explore the economic, social and cultural paradigms which influence PSTs’ perceptions of and willingness to develop appropriate
content and pedagogies to implement those policies and to become reconciliatory educators.

As educators, unless we explore the question of ‘whiteness’ by recognising and challenging the legacy of a colonial invasion, that legacy will continue to hold an epistemological and a technical grip on the imaginations of non-Indigenous Australians. The technical result of this continuing grip of the legacy of the invasion are the living conditions offered to many Australian Indigenous peoples, that would be absolutely incomprehensible to all other sections of Australian society if they were to find themselves in such circumstances. Many of the ‘communities’ where non-urban Indigenous Australians live are places originally established as Missions or Reserves, to contain people from many Nations whose traditional lands had been squatted upon (Denholm, 1998) by the invading pastoralists, with their hard-hooved animals which broke down the fragile soils of the ancient continent, destroying the harvesting of root crops like the murrnong yam daisy in Victoria (Pascoe, 2008, p. 22) and displacing the game animals of the traditional owners. The apparent dysfunction of many such communities, as portrayed by the media and perceived by non-Indigenous Australians, is another world for PSTs who have come through their own schooling without exposure to considering the history of colonialism (as demonstrated by the survey data reported in Chapter 4) and yet they are expected to implement the policies outlined in Chapter 1. The epistemological result of the grip of the legacy of the invasion on our imaginations is the exclusion of Indigenous centrality to the Australian story in University and school curricula. I explore the evidence for this in more detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Chapter 7 offers some examples of resources, assessments and pedagogies which challenge this exclusion and support reconciliatory education.

Later in this Chapter the role of the trade unions in supporting Indigenous working conditions and land rights struggles is noted. This resistance to the control of peoples’ lives by the hegemony of ruling class interests has been a significant element of the untold stories of the last two hundred years of the Australian story. Certainly it was not a homogenous story of support for Indigenous rights, just as the exclusion of Indigenous knowledge by the academy is not a homogenous tale. There was some resistance. Anthropologist Donald Thomson battled the assimilationist policies of governments and universities from the late 1920s until his death in 1970. His story (Moore, 2000) offers much opportunity for PST and student research. Teacher Notes are available to accompany the video of his story (Libby Tudball, 2000). The 2006 film Ten Canoes (De Heer & Djilgirr, 2006), based on photographs from Thomson’s time with the Yolgnu people in the 1930s, also has Study Notes (Libby Tudball & Lewis,
2006). These resources are noted here to indicate the resistance of some in the academy in the early twentieth century to viewing Indigenous peoples as passive nomads. In his 1968 Boyer lecture non-Indigenous anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner spoke out against the ‘great Australian silence’. He talked of wanting leaders like David Unaipon, Albert Namatjira, Robert Tudawali, Durmugam, Douglas Nicholls, Dexter Daniels, and many others, written into the narrative of Australian history. Not to scrape up significance for them but because they typify so vividly the other side of a story over which the great Australian silence reigns; the story of the things we were unconsciously resolved not to discuss with them or treat with them about; the story, in short, of the unacknowledged relations between two racial groups within a single field of life supposedly unified by the principle of assimilation (W.E.H. Stanner, 1974 (1969), p. 25).

Nonetheless the policy and practice of assimilation still reaches into the perspectives and the curriculum activities undertaken by many educators today. In Chapter 4 PSTs report the continuing use of ‘doing dot paintings’ and ‘writing dreamtime stories’ as ways to ‘learn about Indigenous culture’ in schools. The importance of recognising the privilege of members of the dominant culture and the constraint that places on being able to fully understand Indigenous perspectives means that the curriculum materials referred to above may continue to promote an assimilationist, anthropological gaze if used without consideration of issues including Indigenous agency, sovereignty and self-determination. Therefore resources such as the Thompson video (Moore, 2000) or the Twelve Canoes website (Ramingining Community of North Arnhem Land, Reynolds, Heald, & De Heer, 2008) are best used with PSTs after activities which encourage reflections on who we understand ourselves to be as educators and of co-existing epistemologies. I also consider the reflections of Barry Osborne, a teacher and researcher with nearly thirty years experience working with Torres Strait Islander students (2003), in particular his observation that while in the field of Indigenous research pre-eminence should be given to Indigenous researchers, nonetheless ‘reform, if it is to be democratic and successful, must be based on coalitions between the various groups of the least advantaged’ (1995).

In analysing the hegemony of whiteness in the ubiquitous medium of film, a rich source of curriculum resources for both PSTs and for their students (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4.3), Richard Dyer provides detailed examples of both ‘historical’ and ‘the more fictional, escapist and entertainment forms of the genre where ‘the temporal, spatial, racial story of history is a product of the template of enterprise and imperialism’ (1997,
This template of enterprise (capitalism) and imperialism is imposed upon the intersections of class, gender and colonial conquest as sites of hegemony. They are also, or potentially can be, sites of resistance (Giroux, 1999) as demonstrated in Chapter 7. Theorists who reject the construct of ‘whiteness’ as the critical paradigm within which to situate experiences of discrimination and exclusion, see the structural determinants of class as paramount and the paradigm of ‘whiteness’ is a distraction (M. Cole, 2012). I see a complex interaction of the power of colonialism as part of the imposition of imperial domination originating from Europe (in Australia’s case from Britain) continuing to limit the opportunities and outcomes of the majority of the population of the world.

Another objection is that the ‘whiteness’ paradigm belongs to the discourse of colour from the United States of America. The insistence that ‘white’, juxtaposed to the ‘black’ of African-American, is the most important criteria for understanding power can lead to a lack of acknowledgement of the sovereign rights of Indigenous peoples. Moreton-Robinson makes the point that this juxtaposition ignores the original usurpation of land, knowledge and power. ‘The problem with the American literature is that it tends to locate race and whiteness with the development of slavery and immigration rather than the dispossession of Native Americans’ (2004b, p. viii).

An example of the pitfalls inherent in using ‘white’ as the delineator of power and privilege came at an international conference sponsored by the Project for Critical Pedagogy Centre that I attended with Australian colleagues in Baeza, Spain in 2009. An Australian film made about The Apology to the Stolen Generations (Spillane, 2008) was shown to participants. The conference organisers wished to make the point that Prime Minister Rudd’s Apology (Rudd, 2008) was merely a whitewash designed to make white do-gooders feel better. There are elements of truth in that proposition, given the refusal of government and opposition parties to consider the issue of reparations, so the Apology could be seen as merely a panacea. However, when challenged by the fact that the Apology was a demand from many Indigenous leaders before, during and after the ten years (1991-2000) of CAR and that most of the people in the film were indeed Indigenous, conference organisers asked ‘well why are all the black people in the background?’ It seemed that Patrick Dodson, Lowitja O’Donahue, Shelley Rees and all the other Indigenous leaders were not recognised as Indigenous because their skins are not ‘black’. Conference participants were advised that the idea that the colour of a person’s skin has anything to do with their Aboriginality is offensive to Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians define their Aboriginality by family,
land and culture. The legal definition of Aboriginality, as determined by Indigenous Australians and accepted by Australian law, is that a person who identifies as Indigenous and is accepted by their Elders as Indigenous, is recognised as an Indigenous Australian (Forrest, 1998). It is only the conservative polemicists such as Andrew Bolt in Australia who argue that light-skinned people have no right to call themselves Indigenous or to be accepted as Indigenous (Bolt, April 15, 2009). In Chapter 6 Bruce Pascoe comments on the personal and political implications of being Indigenous in the face of such challenges. This example of academic self-assurance, that the analyses of researchers from afar can adequately explain the particularities of class and colonialism beyond the north-western (European and North American) centres of capitalist reproduction, exposes the danger of relying on formulaic explanations which do not take account of the history of colonisation and the subsequent land rights struggles of particular Indigenous peoples (Connell, 2007, p. 209).

The Conference was organised by academics working in North America, however there was no critique of the silencing of Native American voices in the knowledge production of the academy. Most examples of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in North America, with some exceptions (Dunbar, 2008), (Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2008), concentrate on the experiences of African-Americans. In Britain David Gillborn argues for the adoption of CRT ‘within a revitalized critical anti-racism’ (2006, p. 27). However such analysis does not address the recognition of Indigenous claims to sovereignty. Connell’s analysis of the limitations of policy to bring about justice simply by recognising discrimination and underrepresentation is pertinent (2010). Rather than using ‘white’ as the delineator of power and resistance in Australia I am acknowledging and accepting Indigenous educators’ propositions that without including an understanding of and challenge to the hegemony of colonial privilege we will not, as teacher educators, be able to support PSTs to include appropriate Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. The use of the term ‘white’ in Australian theoretical and historical analyses has the hegemony of colonial perspectives clearly within its sights (Banivanua Mar, 2009, Carey, 2009, Paisley, Cole, & Haskins, 2005).

Certainly, Aboriginal leaders in Australia have been influenced by African American civil rights and labour activists from at least the early twentieth century. Indigenous activist and historian John Maynard, grandson of Indigenous activist Fred Maynard (Goodaill, 2006) observes that ‘Through their contacts with African-American seamen on the docks and waterfront of Sydney the Aboriginal leaders of the 1920s acquired
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knowledge of the works of Frederick Douglas, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey' (Maynard, 2007, p.29). Also, when shown Youtube clips such as Nina Simone singing *Strange Fruit* (Simone, 1965), a song written by school teacher and union activist Abel Meeropol in 1939 and first performed at a New York teachers’ union meeting (Independent Television Service, 2003), PSTs certainly made connections between the circumstances of African-Americans and Indigenous peoples.

In the Australian context, the scholars whose work on ‘whiteness’ is referenced at the beginning and throughout this Chapter situate their epistemological and methodological knowledge as clear challenges to the colonial discourse which continues to constrain the possibilities for educators to engage in reconciliatory education. The evidence in this study, from the surveys of PSTs, the self-study between their lecturers and the insights of the experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, makes clear the necessity of acknowledging this colonial discourse if we are to challenge the paradigm of ‘white is right’ and the results of that epistemological and technical grip on the imaginations of non-Indigenous Australians.

2.2 Reconciliation

Davina Woods understands the current concept of reconciliation to have come from two Aboriginal men Kevin Cook and Kevin Tory - who were very much involved in the organising of the Building Bridges concert (Pollock, 2008), on the 26th January 1988. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs then used the title Building Bridges so the two men thought, well you know, if nothing else we’ve given the politicians a bit of something to think about. And they would argue against the Indigenous activists who say ‘oh but it wasn’t our idea’ and say ‘yeah it was actually, we planted the seed so we should actually really do something with it’ (Woods, Section 6.8 below).

![Figure 9](https://example.com/figure9.jpg)

*Figure 9* White Australia has a black history: Don’t celebrate 1988 (Museum Victoria, 2011).
The Australian Human Rights Commission defines reconciliation as a process of improving, renewing or transforming relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples for a future based on:

- understanding the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people
- understanding the past injustices and impacts of colonisation and dispossession (my emphasis) on Indigenous peoples

These tasks may seem relatively straightforward. Commonwealth, State and Territory education policies have been advocating the inclusion of such understandings for more than two decades. Indigenous and non-Indigenous historians have offered research exploring the past and present. Non-Indigenous historian Gary Presland gave us a detailed view of the lives of the peoples of the Kulin nations (Presland, 1985), with a recently revised edition (Presland, 2010), Indigenous historian Eric Willmot told the story of the Eora warrior Pemulwuy (Willmot, 1987), Frank Hardy exposed the circumstances of The Unlucky Australians, the resistance of the Gurindji and the need for the trade union movement to support the struggle for Land Rights (Hardy, 1968). Henry Reynolds began his lifetime of more than 15 books and numerous articles on Indigenous history, beginning in 1972 (Reynolds, 1972) including The other side of the frontier: Aboriginal resistance to the European invasion of Australia (Reynolds, 1982) through to Fate of a free people (Reynolds, 2004) rebutting Keith Windschuttle's claims about Aboriginal history (K. Windschuttle, 2002). Gary Foley developed his website of research and resources (1998-2010). Deborah Bird Rose collaborated with and presented the insights of Aboriginal colleagues (D. B. Rose, 1991, 2004; D. B. Rose & Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Native Title Research Unit, 1995; D. B. Rose, D’Amico, & Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2002). Government Inquiries have been held (Johnston, 1991) (.Wilson & Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997), (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2010) (Cornwall, 2002). Territory, State and National Museums have re-interpreted their collections and research under the direction of Indigenous scholars and curators (National Museum of Australia, 2008b), (Museum Victoria, 2009). Local and State Indigenous Keeping Places, for example the Krowathunkooloong Keeping Place in Bairnsdale (Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative, 2012b), the Western Suburbs Indigenous...
Gathering Place (Western Suburbs Indigenous Gathering Place Association, 2010) and the Koorie Heritage Trust (Koorie Heritage Trust, 2011) document and conserve artefacts, art works and written and oral histories for their communities and also to promote Aboriginal cultures to the wider community through exhibitions and education programs. But the evidence from my data collection and from other researchers such as Craven (2005) and Clark (2008) suggests that the implementation of these policies is not widespread and that there is still reluctance by many PSTs and teachers to take up the challenge to break through the colonial paradigm. In arguing for self-determination for Indigenous peoples in the political sphere Mick Dodson suggests that ‘the failure over the last three decades, of increased expenditure on Aboriginal Affairs to achieve meaningful outcomes is most often cited as evidence of the failure of self-determination’ (Michael Dodson, 1996, p.12). These are the circumstances within which pre-service and graduate teachers and schools exist. The popular support for the Apology to the Stolen Generations made by the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, in the Commonwealth Parliament on February 13th 2008 (Rudd, 2008), suggests that there is concern and goodwill in the population towards changing those circumstances. Many schools, workplaces and communities watched as The Apology broadcast live on national television (in Chapter 5 colleague Bill Eckersley gives one example). Before The Apology, only a third of Australians were in favour of an apology but after it had been delivered, two thirds thought it was a positive thing (Behrendt, 11 October, 2008). But if that recognition is to make a difference to existing circumstances then education will be a crucial element. There is still a long way to go if we are to approach a situation such as envisaged by Patrick Dodson:

What greater achievement could we bequeath to our children than a nation united where its Indigenous people and their cultures, laws and languages are central to the foundations of the Nation State? (2008)

I am aware that the concept of reconciliation is contested. Indigenous activist, historian and educator Gary Foley sees the term as referring to a ‘belief that significant historical truths can be swept under the carpet in the rush for a swift resolution of an unpalatable past’ (1999a). It is important PSTs to appreciate and understand this criticism as part of the discourse. From a different perspective, Indigenous Professor Marcia Langton opposes reconciliation as an ‘essentially meaningless tirade of euphemisms and metaphors ... pitted against the hard politics of community life’ (Langton, 2007). I have chosen to work with the word ‘reconciliation’ to connect PSTs’ questions and research to the work of the many Indigenous educators and leaders who use the concept to
challenge the lack of social justice evident in Australian Indigenous health, education and law and order statistics (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012a) and propose strategies to overcome that lack. Many of their speeches are available on the Reconciliation Australia website (Reconciliation Australia, 2010c).

I deliberately privilege the work of Australian Indigenous researchers in this study of the inclusion of Indigenous themes in curriculum planning. Jean Phillips has been particularly influential (Phillips, 2005), (Phillips & Whatman, 2007), particularly her analysis that when Indigenous studies focuses on the ‘other’ it creates a distance between Indigenous and other Australians historically and in the present and ‘positions Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of being and knowing within the broader context of colonialism – past and present (Phillips, 2005, p. 2).

I am also aware that for a non-Indigenous learner/teacher the selection of work by particular Indigenous researchers to reference can be contentious. This difficulty is one faced by teacher educators, PSTs and teachers who seek to understand the discourse and to know which resources to recommend to their students. Resources prepared with Indigenous educators may not all be consistent with criteria such as the annotated bibliography and teacher’s guide to resources from the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (Hill & Barlow, 1985). PSTs who argue to continue the long-adopted activity of getting students to write their own ‘Dreamtime’ stories (Section 4.5.2 below) quote the Australian Broadcasting Commission’s Dust Echoes which includes a classroom activity of ‘Make up a new story or develop further some aspect of an existing one’ and compares fairy stories as from a similar genre (Australian Broadcasting Commission, 2007, p. 4).

Even the protocol of seeking advice from Indigenous educators is not necessarily clear cut for non-Indigenous educators, given the disagreements between some activists and educators and also the time demands placed upon Indigenous representatives. There are different politics and perspectives in Indigenous peoples’ standpoints, just as there are in non-Indigenous politics and perspectives. In her recent Boyer lectures, Langton put forward the proposition that there is a ‘racist assumption in the green movement about Aboriginal people being the enemies of the wilderness’ (Langton, 2012). On the other hand, Leah Talbot, a Kuku Yalanji woman from far north Queensland and a Program Officer with the Australian Conservation Foundation, disagrees with Langton’s support for the mining industry and gives numerous examples of ‘when people of good faith from environment, government and Indigenous organisations and communities’
have come together to achieve outcomes such as the return of National Parks and pastoral leases to their traditional owners (Talbot & Sweeney, 2012).

As a non-Indigenous educator I hope to engage in ‘dialogue [which is] not just about ‘talking’ with each other and listening but …also requires that both parties acknowledge the right of the other to participate in the process’ (Phillips, 2005 p.6). I am also guided by international perspectives which cast light on Indigenous educational and epistemological standpoints, in particular the work of Maori Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), Native American Professor Sandy Grande (Grande, 2008) and Canadian Professor Marie Battiste from the Potlo’tek First Nations (Battiste, 2011a; Battiste, 2011b); and by the work of non-Indigenous researchers and educators who demonstrate the possibilities for listening and learning together with Indigenous colleagues. Anna Haebich (2000) and Deborah Bird Rose (D. B. Rose, 1991, 2000, 2004; D. B. Rose & Australian Heritage Commission., 1996; D. B. Rose & Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Native Title Research Unit., 1995) have listened deeply to their Indigenous teachers and their work is inspirational.

Professor Moreton-Robinson is a leading exponent of the connection between the continuing dominance of the colonisers over the sovereignty of Indigenous nations in Australia (no Treaty has ever been enacted) and the historical and contemporary injustices imposed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Moreton-Robinson, 2003), (Moreton-Robinson, 2004b), (Moreton-Robinson, 2004a), (Moreton-Robinson, 2007). Along with Indigenous scholars such as Tony Birch (2007) (2010), Moreton-Robinson confronts the academy with her contention that ‘Australian cultural representations of mateship, egalitarianism, individualism and citizenship are reproduced … and taught as though they do not have an epistemological connection to whiteness (Moreton-Robinson, 2004a, p.87). As I demonstrate in Chapter 5, the validity of Moreton-Robinson’s argument can be seen particularly in the construction of the concept of ‘citizenship’ in the History and Civics and Citizenship domains of the Victorian and Commonwealth curriculum guidelines of the past twenty years, where despite explicit overarching policy, Indigenous struggles for social, economic and political rights are not situated as central to the story of who we are as Australians.

2.3 Colonialism and Feminism

Moreton-Robinson argues that while ‘middle-class feminists’ recognise that white race privilege makes a difference to women’s life chances, they fail to appreciate that their
position as situated knowers within white race privilege is inextricably connected to the systemic racism they criticise but do not experience (Moreton-Robinson, 2000a, p. xv). This challenge was confronting. As someone who has identified as a feminist since the 1970s, I can argue that as a student, a teacher, a trade unionist and a parent, I have been working to bring about a more just society. But following a recommendation some years ago from colleague Davina Woods (whose experiences and insights are recorded in Chapters 5 and 6) I read *Talkin’ up to the white woman: Aboriginal women and feminism* (Moreton-Robinson, 2000b). Moreton-Robinson notes Phillipa Rothfield’s analysis that white feminist theory tends to blanket political practices and concerns with its insistence that women’s oppression as women is the overarching story (Rothfield, 1994). Had I been deceiving myself that I could be part of the resistance to the hegemony of the dominant paradigm which excludes the centrality of Indigenous struggles for recognition as the First Peoples, with their accompanying social, legal and economic rights? This question, the possibility of being part of the resistance, of being a teacher for social justice is relevant to supporting PSTs to respond to the expectations of the policy makers and curriculum writers that they include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. Can non-Indigenous teacher educators work with PSTs so that they can become ‘teachers who regard teaching as a political activity and embrace social change as part of the job — teachers who enter the profession not expecting to carry on business as usual but prepared to join other educators and parents in major reforms’ (Cochran-Smith, 1995, p. 494).

In the film about the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, *Ningla A-Na* (Cavadini, 1988), Indigenous women activists discuss the priority they give to the struggle for Indigenous rights over the struggle for women’s rights. Activist and poet Lisa Bellear, a Goenpul woman of the Noonuccal people of Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island), worked for a number of years, before her untimely death, in the School of Education at Victoria University. In the following stanzas from her poem ‘Women’s Liberation’ in her collection *Dreaming in urban areas* Bellear is uncompromising in her word picture of ‘middleclass’ responses to the epistemological disconnection between black and white.
I mean how could I, a white middle class woman, who is deciding how can I budget when my man won’t pay the school fees and the diner’s card club simply won’t extend credit. I don’t even know if I’m capable of understanding Aborigines, in Victoria? Aboriginal women, here, I’ve never seen one.

and if I did, what would I say, damned if I’m going to feel guilty, for wanting something better for me, for women in general, not just white middle class volvo driving, part time women’s studies students
Maybe I didn’t think, maybe I thought women in general meant, Aboriginal women, the Koori women in Victoria Should I apologise should I feel guilty
Maybe the solution is to sponsor a child through world vision.

(Bellear, 1996, pp. 6-7)

Bellear, acknowledged as an inspiration by Davina Woods, draws attention to the condition of being rendered invisible, referred to by Indigenous educators in Chapters 5 and 6, and expressed in her poem above as ‘I’ve never seen one’. In the clip ‘Have you ever met an Aborigine?’ from her film Blood Brothers (1993) Indigenous filmmaker Rachel Perkins offers a similar glimpse into the non-Indigenous imagination that Indigenous peoples live somewhere else. Such material provides for thought-provoking discussions with PSTs. Bellear is acerbic in her description of the ‘solution’ of assuaging our ‘guilt’ by ignoring Indigenous dispossession and lack of sovereignty, and instead opting for charity.

Pay the rent  You are on Aboriginal land

(Image removed due to copyright restrictions).May be viewed at http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/?irn=365494

Figure 10  Pay the rent: You are on Aboriginal land.  (Marie McMahon, 1982).
At the same time there were non-Indigenous Australians who did see through the dominant paradigm which cast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as peripheral to the Australian story. In her poster in Figure 10 above Marie McMahon presents another example of non-Indigenous resistance to that discourse and a productive resource for PST discussion.

Sandy Grande argues that ‘the complicity of white women in the history of domination, positions mainstream feminism alongside other colonialist discourses’ (Grande, 2003, p.329). So as non-Indigenous educator can I take a socially just position and not be complicit in a continuing domination of the colonial hegemony? Throughout this thesis I propose and provide evidence that educators can make choices to bring to their curriculum development recognition and respect for the co-existence of Indigenous epistemologies and the acknowledgement and inclusion of this knowledge and practice, this praxis, in our work.

Some feminists have taken up the challenge to recognise white hegemony in ‘western’ societies. In 1988 U.S. American educator Peggy McIntosh compiled forty-seven daily effects of white privilege, ‘conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographical location, though these other privileging factors are intricately intertwined’ (McIntosh, 1988, p.5). Here are a few from her list:

- I can go shopping alone most of the time, fairly well assured that I will not be followed or harassed by store detectives.
- I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
- When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
- I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
- I did not have to educate our children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
- I can be pretty sure that my children’s teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others’ attitudes toward their race.
I can swear, or dress in second-hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.

I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group (McIntosh, 1988, pp 5-9).

There were non-Indigenous women throughout the two hundred years of Australian colonial history who raised their voices against Indigenous oppression, theft of the lands and attempted physical and cultural genocide (Reynolds, 1996, 1998), (Maynard, 2005), including Ann Bon (1838-1936), an early friend of Taungerong and Wurundjeri people, in particular the great leader Barak (Gillison, 1979), (Perkins, 2008b). For Wurundjeri Elder and descendant of Barak, Aunty Joy Murphy-Wandin:

I think it's important to say that William Barak and Anne Bon were probably the forerunners of reconciliation, and I think that's the way that it should be. I know that William had many other powerful relationships, but I would say that none were as powerful as a black and white person coming together in this way (Murphy-Wandin, 2012).

Other non-Indigenous women such as Mary Bennett (1881-1961), Ada Bromham (1880-1965), Shirley Andrews (1915 - 2001) and Jessie Street (1889-1970) joined with Indigenous men and women to agitate for social and political reform (Reconciliation Australia, 2007). The writer, poet, environmental and land rights activist Judith Wright (1915-2000), a friend of Indigenous writer, poet and activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Noonuccal, 1970), (Noonuccal & Bancroft, 1993) , eloquently persuades us to recognise that we (non-Indigenous Australians) are ‘born of the conquerors’ (J. Wright, 1991).

There are also non-Indigenous women who have formed family partnerships with Indigenous men (see conversation with Jan Muller, Chapter 6) and non-Indigenous men with Indigenous women. The reason for noting these women is my awareness that for non-Indigenous PSTs, the knowledge that there has been opposition in the mainstream Australian population to the dominant colonial discourse is a revelation, an inspiration and an important research thread for themselves and for their students. If
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we want pre-service and graduate teachers to feel inspired by the resistance of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists and educators, and ordinary people, to the hegemonic power of colonising words and actions, then we need to include such stories in the Australian story, in learning and teaching for reconciliation. As discussed below there are examples of research where this hegemony is being challenged.

2.4 Educational perspectives

The work of Deborah Bird Rose was particularly influential on my thinking when I was completing my Master of Environmental Science thesis (C. Kelly, Connellan, Davie, & Robb, 1999) through her remarkable record of Aboriginal Australians’ concepts of landscape and wilderness in ‘stories, songs and song-poems which already are in the public domain’:

Evocative, expressive, and frequently beautiful even in translation, songs and song-poems are often profoundly insightful for strangers in spite of the fact that they cannot bring the context of local knowledge to bear in understanding the meanings of the words (D. B. Rose & Australian Heritage Commission., 1996, p.2).

As Rose says, these forms of knowledge speak to us all because of their power and beauty. Importantly for teacher educators Rose highlights the importance of local knowledge and adds that, ‘because they have lost so much, [Aboriginal people] are not prepared to speak publicly about their knowledge in any detail’. For now, Rose says, these forms can ‘begin to communicate something of the fullness of people’s relationships to the nourishing terrains of their lives’. Rose offers us an example of Indigenous epistemology in the distinction between wilderness and quiet country drawn by her informant, Daly Pulkara, when he looked at heavily eroded land. Pulkara describes erosion as ‘the wild, country that has not been looked after’. This ‘wild’ was a place where the life of the country was falling down into the gullies and washing away with the rains. On the other hand Daly went on to speak of quiet country

country in which all the care of generations of people is evident to those who know how to see it. Quiet country stands in contrast to the wild: we were looking at a wilderness, man-made and cattle-made (D. B. Rose & Australian Heritage Commission, 1996, p. 19).
The Eurocentric view of wilderness as pristine ‘terra nullius’ (empty land) ignores the land management practices that have protected sacred landscapes for millennia, so that they can be still seen today in National Parks, as if untouched by human hand.

There is so much to be learned from Aboriginal people – about land management with fire, about the species of the continent, about relationships among living things, and between living things and the seasonal forces, about how to understand human society as a part of living systems, taking humanity seriously without making it the centre of creation (D. B. Rose & Australian Heritage Commission., 1996, p. 4).

Teacher educators need to listen to, respect and bring such co-existing knowledge systems to our work with PSTs. Otherwise it is almost impossible to escape the trap of seeing Indigenous peoples as either invisible or as the ‘exotic other’ and accepting the ‘hegemony of whiteness’ as the norm.

Sandy Grande believes that ‘education must engage issues of power, history and self-identity. In so doing, we must provide students the hope and possibility of democratic action, that is, collective agency and revolutionary struggle’. Grande sees ‘teacher education ... as a political project ... vital to the development of a free and equitable society’ and teachers as ‘active participants in the construction, distribution, and evaluation of knowledge, values and cultural practice. This brings the purpose of teaching and education back to the imperatives of democracy’ (Grande, 2004). This vision of the potential of teachers to empower themselves and their students to contribute to a free and equitable society sustains my research. The question to be examined is what does this mean for reconciliatory education? Is it possible to explore and challenge the influence of power and privilege that blind us to systemic inequity? These questions are at the frontline of endeavours to include education about Indigenous Australia in school curricula.

The Praxis Inquiry (PI) Protocol, which provides the practice/theory platform to support learning and teaching in the School of Education at Victoria University makes clear the connection between epistemological and educational perspectives. How we understand the world, based on our ethics and beliefs, influences our work as educators. If we want, as teacher educators, to support PSTs to implement the policies outlined in Chapter 1, we need to go beyond technical, content-driven activities and include exploration with them of the big questions of perspectives and values.
The work of educators in north western New South Wales, represented in the *8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning* website (Yunkaporta, Shillingsworth, Kirby, & Turnbull, 2010) demonstrates the capacity of Indigenous pedagogies to support learning for all students, ‘as an example of productive engagement of Aboriginal concepts and processes within mainstream education.... to show that these are not only effective in primary and secondary schooling, but in tertiary education as well’ (Yunkaporta, 2009, p. x). I explore the *8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning* further in Chapter 7. *What Works*, a program developed by Davina Woods and others, was designed to assist teachers to plan and take action to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students. It is another example of knowledge and practice which challenges the deficit model of thinking about Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum (McRae, et al., 2002). The principles and practices developed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators working together to address the lack of resources and strategies to support Indigenous learners, are appropriate for all students This challenges the deficit model in educational pedagogy, which was explicitly discussed with the fourth-year PSTs (see Chapter 5) and is paralleled by the challenge of Indigenous theorists to the dominant hegemony which ignores Indigenous demands for recognition of sovereignty as a necessary condition for social justice in a colonised land.

Deborah Bird Rose contends that the knowledge frameworks of the dominant hegemony are able to posit the violence perpetrated on Indigenous peoples as belonging to the past (2004). The idea that violence and discrimination towards Indigenous peoples belong in the past is a recurring theme in my discussions with each cohort of PSTs that come through Units of Study hoping to prepare them to include Indigenous themes in their teaching. The conservative (Liberal/National coalition) government in power in Australia from 1996-2007 gave license to the argument that we are not responsible today for what happened in the past. The leader of that government articulated this argument in his 1997 address to 1000 delegates at the Reconciliation Convention in Melbourne, held to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, when ninety percent of the population agreed that Aboriginal people should be counted in census, that is they should be counted as citizens in the land they had inhabited for millennia:

we must not join those who would portray Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism.
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Such a portrayal is a gross distortion and deliberately neglects the overall story of great Australian achievement that is there in our history to be told, and such an approach will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved although inevitably acknowledging the blemishes in its past history.

Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control (J. Howard, 1997).

In response many delegates stood and turned their backs on the Prime Minister. The harsh reality is that in times both past and recent, in many towns in rural and regional Australia, Indigenous people were expected to walk on only one side of the street. A twelve year old boy can be thrown in the lock-up for being charged with stealing a chocolate frog (Farouque, 17.11.09), Aboriginal deaths in custody were enough to spark a Royal Commission (Johnston, 1991) and the death of a man in police custody on Palm Island sparked a declaration of a ‘state of emergency’ by the Queensland government, a coroner’s recommendation for criminal prosecution against the police, an acquittal and a continuing controversy (Hooper, 2008), (Schwarten, May 14, 2010). Palm Island was used by the Queensland government from 1918 to 1985 as an open prison – no-one was permitted to leave, employment was limited and wages were controlled by the Queensland Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The original inhabitants of the area were removed and replaced with Indigenous people considered to be ‘unmanageable’, including recently released ex-prisoners and single mothers with ‘mixed-race’ children (Hunter, 2005). Most Australians are unaware of the similar histories of many Aboriginal 'communities', established by government or missionaries to keep Aboriginal people in designated areas. PSTs are certainly unaware of this history when they question why 'Aboriginal communities are so dysfunctional' (author’s seminar group, May 2008). The powerful contemporary narrative by Zohl de Ishtar, Holding Yawulyu: White culture and Black women’s law, quoted at the beginning of this Chapter, records her two years of listening to and learning from the senior women at the old mission, now ‘community’, at Balgo in Western Australia. It also records the dodgy doings of various administrators and store managers who act as if they have the right to control the dispersal of funds and other aspects of the lives of the Aboriginal people for whom they ostensibly work. It is a poignant insight into the implications of seeing Indigenous Australians as the other, as powerless and unreliable in the eyes of the white managers and bureaucrats, who there at Balgo and all across the land, make
decisions without reference to Indigenous Elders and protocols. This inability of officials and administrators to listen to, let alone follow, the directions of the Elders is an example of the power of the colonial hegemony to construct and implement an understanding of how the world should work. These administrators and officials come from the same world of the dominant hegemony in which non-Indigenous educators are immersed.

The current Commonwealth government Intervention in the Northern Territory is an example of this epistemological divide. The Intervention was originally introduced in June 2007 by the above mentioned Liberal/National Party conservative government after a Report commissioned by the Northern Territory government, *Little Children Are Sacred* (Anderson & Wild, 2007), which detailed and proposed solutions to endemic hardship suffered, especially by children, in remote communities of the Northern Territory. The government responded by calling a state of emergency in these communities. The Report had identified education as a key to helping children and communities foster safe, well adjusted families. The Intervention substituted the recommendations of the Report with removal of rights to appeal against administrative decision-making and suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act in order to implement the state of emergency (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2007).

![Figure 11](image_url)  
*Figure 11*  
The pretence of government consultation with Indigenous leaders  
(@Tandberg, 2011). Printed with kind permission from the artist.
Since the election of the Labor government in November 2007 the Intervention has been continued. Some prominent Indigenous people support the Intervention, and they receive great publicity for their views in the mainstream media (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2007). Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists who oppose the Intervention receive less media attention. They use community agitation, Union and University meetings and self-funded publications to pursue their case (Altman & Hinkson, 2007), (Nicholson, Behrendt, Vivian, Watson, & Harris, 2009), (Catholic Communications, 30.08.2011), (Concerned Australians, 2011).

For non-Indigenous educators the differing positions of Indigenous activists on issues in the public discourse is an area of complexity and controversy. I am sometimes asked by PSTs about the activities of the Native Police in the nineteenth century (Reynolds, 1998, Chapter Five), (Perkins, 2008b, Episode Four). ‘Native police were a coercive body designed to control, enforce and remove any dissidence by non cooperative Aborigines’ (Kamira, 1999, p. 3).

In his paper Indigenous education: is there a place for non-Indigenous researchers? (1995), Barry Osborne reports Karen Starr’s analysis of responses to a survey of educators on the question of social justice: that there are at least three positions on social justice – conservative (which supports equal opportunities), liberal (which supports inclusive curriculum and affirmative action), and egalitarian (which seeks ‘collective emancipation rather than competitive individual accomplishments’) (Starr, 1991, p. 20-23).

Osborne aligns himself with the egalitarian position, noting the work of anti-colonialist activist Franz Fanon (1967), such that in the field of Indigenous research pre-eminence should be given to Indigenous researchers. Osborne also believes that the debate over social justice, politics, pragmatics, standpoint epistemology and representations needs to be in the open, strong, sincere and ongoing, and that alliances are valuable. He concludes that

reform, if it is to be democratic and successful, must be based on coalitions between the various groups of the least advantaged…. There are dangers in coalitions - unity of purpose can waver, sectional distinctiveness can be swamped (and I know many Aboriginal educators are opposed to this loss of distinctiveness under the rubric of social justice) - but without the majority, pressure for reform is difficult to maintain within a participatory democracy (1995).
Osborne also points to Kailin’s observation that there has been a long history of white American opposition to racism, that is frequently ignored or glossed over and that this history should be acknowledged in helping PSTs to develop strategies to combat racism (Kailin, 1994). There are many examples including (McIntosh, 1988), (McCarty, Lynch, Wallace, & Benally, 1991), (McCarthy, 2003), (McDonald, 2003), (Cochran-Smith, 1995), (G. R. Howard, 1999), (Landsman, 2009).

If we are to achieve the expectations of educational policy makers and Indigenous educators outlined in Chapter 1 then all teachers need to take up the challenge to work together in what Patrick Dodson calls ‘collaborative partnership... (which) can only be developed through a process of engagement based on mutual respect, trust and a deep understanding and commitment to agreed objectives’ (Patrick Dodson, October 10, 2007). For PSTs, the knowledge that there have been non-Indigenous supporters of Indigenous campaigns for recognition and justice opens pathways for examining their previous assumptions about the otherness of Indigenous peoples.

From the beginning of colonisation ‘alliances were formed between Aboriginal Australians motivated to help their people and white Australians wanting to redress the injustices suffered by dispossessed peoples’ (National Museum of Australia, 2008b), (Reynolds, 1998). Sections of the trade union movement gave strong support. Prior to the Gurindji walk-off from Wave Hill station which eventually led to the first Land Rights legislation in Australia (Carmody & Kelly, 1993), conversations between stockmen who had worked for the British cattle company Vesteys and Dexter Daniels, a North Australian Workers’ Union organiser, helped to galvanise the strike.

The National Museum of Australia website Collaborating for Indigenous Rights 1957-1973 (National Museum of Australia, 2008b) provides a wealth of primary and secondary sources for student research about the campaigns for civil rights, the right to vote and rights to benefits such as the old age pension, led by Indigenous activists and supported by unionists and others and for Land Rights, at a time when companies were developing mines in Aboriginal reserves and pastoralists were paying little or no wages to Aboriginal workers. The photograph below is from that site and provides many, many resources for Teacher educators, PSTs and their students.
This struggle for self-determination continues to inform Indigenous resistance to being represented as the other. Recognising and learning about that struggle must be an essential aspect of learning and teaching for reconciliation, including recognising co-existing epistemologies and legal recognition of Indigenous sovereignty. The Victorian and Commonwealth curriculum guidelines which cover what teachers should be working on with their students do include references to Indigenous struggles for Land Rights and Civil rights. The problem for PSTs and for teachers is that because they have not learnt to appreciate Indigenous epistemologies or to recognise Indigenous struggles for social, political and economic rights as central aspects of the Australian story, these elements of the curriculum are often omitted.

2.4.1 Multicultural perspectives

PSTs at Victoria University and the students with whom they work in their school placements are from varied cultural backgrounds, many being the children of non-Anglo migrants, some of whom are recently arrived and some of whom have come from war-torn homelands. How are such students located in a paradigm of ‘whiteness’?
My experience working with PSTs from multicultural backgrounds is that if we recognise and encourage questions about their own experiences of education, of social justice, of history and contemporary circumstances, then we open spaces for considering ourselves, as learners and teachers, as local, national and global citizens putting into practice, social justice and ethical behaviour. (In Chapter 3 I discuss the role of these values in learning and teaching for reconciliation). In opening these spaces we break away from a teacher-centered ‘this is what you must learn’ approach, towards a student-centered, Praxis Inquiry (PI) based approach, the epistemological underpinning of the Bachelor of Education at Victoria University. The PI Protocol (Cherednichenko & Kruger, 2005, Kruger & Cherednichenko, 2006, Kruger, 2006, Gudjonsdottir et al, 2007) entreats us to start with students’ questions. Encouraging PSTs to use their own questions to support and extend their research, their professional reading and their curriculum planning, allows authentic examination of not only sorrowful events from Australian history and contemporary circumstances, but also the resistance, resilience and celebration that are part of the Australian story.

In a children’s book about her life, Indigenous leader Lowitja O’Donoghue gives a definition of racism.

Racism is a way of thinking in ways that treat some cultural groups as inferior to others. Racist people think that the colour of your skin, or your religion, or the country you come from, are things that make you better than other people who are different (O’Donoghue, 2003, p. 5).

O’Donoghue speaks of working with refugees to help them learn English and find jobs and homes. There are many examples of resources such as this one available from Indigenous educational sources such as the Koorie Heritage Trust, that offer reconciliatory opportunities to ‘value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage’ at the same time as providing for ‘justice and equity for all’ (O’Donoghue, 2003, p. 18). If, as teacher educators, we can encourage PSTs to recognise the co-existence of Indigenous epistemologies and the unique status of Indigenous Australians as the First Peoples of this land whose struggles for recognition and justice are integral to the Australian story then we will be well on the way to supporting PSTs from all backgrounds to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning.

PSTs are often drawn to ‘Dreaming’ stories as ways for students to learn about ‘Aboriginality’. As will be seen in Chapter 4 there are important considerations to be explored with PSTs if such curriculum is not fall into the paradigm of the exotic other. Nonetheless there are opportunities for learning and teaching to include Indigenous
themes through listening to ‘Dreaming’ stories. For example the Southern Cross constellation, portrayed on the Eureka flag, first flown by striking miners in Ballarat in 1854, is recognised as a symbol of resistance to unjust laws and support for democracy and freedom. For the Jardwadjali and Djab Wurrung communities of south-western Victoria the constellation represents the Bram bram bult brothers, appointed by the creator spirit, Bunjil, to bring order to the world; to name the animals and creatures, to make the languages and give the laws, throwing spears at the giant emu, Tchingal, who had transgressed the laws (Brambuk Cultural Centre, 1998). Bunjil had a special place near Gariwerd (the Grampians). From there he could look out over the ranges (State Government of Victoria, 2008). Figure 13 below shows what western astronomy calls the Southern Cross and what Jardwadjali and Djab Wurrung science/epistemology knows as Bunjil.

![Bunjil the Creator with his two Wirringan, or dingo helpers](image1.png)

**Figure 13** Bunjil the Creator with his two Wirringan, or dingo helpers  (© State Government of Victoria, 2008)

In Figure 14, for the peoples of the Torres Strait, what western science calls the Southern Cross is the left hand of the sea-hero Tagai. The rising of the constellation marks the time for the planting of food crops (Sharp, 1993).

![Stars of Tagai](image2.png)

**Figure 14** Stars of Tagai: based upon a watercolour by Lieut.G.Tobin and drawings of the Tagai Constellation by Gizu and Mariget of Mabuiag.

Cover from *Stars of Tagai* (Sharp, 1993). Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Such epistemological perspectives can be powerful ways for PSTs and their students to think about Indigenous ways of knowing, by firstly thinking about their own identities and cultural representations and then by considering ways to include Indigenous knowledge in their curriculum planning. The questions and activities from the National Gallery of Victoria’s Education program, discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.3.2, offer examples of such ways for PSTs to work with their students.

In 1997, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (now the Australian Human Rights Commission) released a report of its Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (R. D. Wilson, 1997). To mark the 30th anniversary of the Racial Discrimination Act the Commission published a book of stories of ‘Indigenous Australians and all those who have made Australia home’ (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2005). In the words of Jackie Huggins:

Some of us have been involved in reconciliation for a long time. It can be dispiriting but it can also be uplifting, and once you have felt reconciliation, you know it to be something achievable and so right and good you can’t help but keep coming back for more (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2005, p. 20).

The Commission later produced an accompanying educational resource, to promote issues ‘that concern different groups in the Australian community such as migrants, refugees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2007b). The Commission went on to produce an education resource to accompany the Bringing them home Report (R. D. Wilson, 1997) to develop an ‘understanding of the history of the forcible separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, and associated historical and social justice issues’ and ‘the value of community action and ways of responding to social justice/human rights issues at a local level’ (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2007a). Indigenous educators want recognition that particular government policies were meant to ‘breed out Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians’ and also recognition of their special place as First Peoples, whose ‘claims for social justice and human rights …originate from a different source, both historically and in international law…. [and are] best articulated through the … the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially Article 3 that asserts the right of Indigenous peoples to self determination (Calma, 2008). For non-Indigenous teacher educators this means understanding and acknowledging the particular place
Indigenous knowledge and experience have in the Australian story, past present and future.

2.4.2 Representations of Aboriginality

Michael Dodson gives many examples of the ‘representation of and theory about’ Aboriginality by early invaders of the place now known as Australia:

...cunning, ferocious, and marked by black ingratitude and base treachery; the Australian nigger is the lowest type of human creature about....But having one splendid point in which he is far ahead of the chinkie. He'll die out and the Chinkie won't (M. Dodson, 1994, pp. 25-27).

Professor Dodson notes that ‘if you are overwhelmed by this litany of statements, made with a confidence exceeded only by their ignorance, they are only a fragment of what Indigenous peoples have borne in body and spirit since we came in to the view of the colonisers’. Quoting from the Sydney Morning Herald of September 1988, Professor Dodson also demonstrates that these theories and attitudes are not just from times past:

In 1988 at the national conference of the Returned Services League, Victorian state president, Mr Bruce Ruxton, together with the national president, Brigadier Alf ... called on the federal government to ‘amend the definition of Aborigine to eliminate the part-whites who are making a racket out of being so-called Aborigines at enormous cost to taxpayers, and for some kind of genealogical examination to determine whether the applicant for benefits was a full-blood or a half-caste or a quarter-caste or whatever (M. Dodson, 1994, p. 27).

In 2009 similar sentiments were expressed by media commentator Andrew Bolt in It's so hip to be black

Meet the white face of the new black race – the political Aborigine....Dodson, the Australian of the Year and a fierce advocate for a treaty between black and white, had a white father and from the age of 10 was a boarder at a Victorian Catholic school....I’m only saying that this self-identification as Aboriginal strikes me as self-obsessed, and driven more by politics than by any racial reality (Bolt, 2009).
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Bolt continued writing similar articles until a number of the people he named took a case to the Federal Court which found that two of Bolt's 2009 columns attacking fair skinned Aboriginal people breached the Racial Discrimination Act. Bolt's newspaper, the Melbourne Herald Sun, was ordered to publish a corrective notice. (Marr, 19.10.2011). In Chapter 6 Bruce Pascoe comments that Bolt is 'a journalist who's trying to make a living in a pretty rough newspaper, so he does pretty well out of bagging everyone. The easiest people to bag are the defenceless, and he does pretty well out of that'. Given that representations of ‘Aboriginality’ by many non-Indigenous scholars, writers of children's stories and educational textbooks, politicians and commentators, continue to exclude Indigenous peoples from a central role in the Australian story, teacher educators seeking to support PSTs to include appropriate Indigenous perspectives in their curriculum planning need to confront such attitudes.

The following is an excerpt I have used with PSTs to consider issues and implications we face as teachers when venturing into cross-cultural terrains. In her series of Boyer lectures, historian Inga Clennninnen (2001) describes an incident on a beach on the southwest coast of what we now call Western Australia in 1801. A French scientific expedition comes upon a man and woman digging for shellfish. The man runs, but the woman, 'seized with fright', flings herself down and flattens her face and body into the sand. The Frenchmen surround her. One puts presents beside her -- a mirror, a little knife -- while another quickly checks to see whether she still has her front teeth. Hoping she might stop crying, the men withdraw twenty feet or so. But she remains pressed into the sand, save that she once lifts her head and looks at them. So they come back and pick her up and hold her suspended so they can examine her. Then, as she still would not stand, they laid her on her back on the sand. At last the men left her and saw her stealing away on hands and knees into the bushes, leaving behind their presents and her stick.

In one sense the woman was lucky: these strangers didn't rape her, they didn't abduct her, they didn't kill her....Of course they would not have treated a Frenchwoman met on a beach like that, but these heirs to the French Revolution certainly recognised her as a fellow human... they gave her both time to stop crying, and little gifts, and they molested her only in so far as their scientific purposes required. They were only doing their job -- and they did her no harm.

Or so they thought. Now, consider the matter from her perspective. She had been surrounded; she had been paralysed with terror. One of the strangers had forced his
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fingers into her mouth. At that point she had been lying face down, so he must have turned her head to the side before he could thrust them in. Then they had lifted her and stared at her and tugged at her garment as she hung in their hands....

What is terrifying is that we do not know, even as we watch her press herself into the sand, as we watch her crawling away.... What did she think was happening to the child in her belly, the child she was desperately trying to protect from their sight and touch? (pp 1-3).

For PSTs these words paint a in a powerful word picture whereby they could feel the violation of sovereignty perpetrated by explorers (who were not about seizing the land in this case, but were observing the other). The Reading broke through the detachment of textbook neutrality. On the other hand, Indigenous scholar, Phillip Morrissey (2007, p. 69) rejects Clendinnen's *Dancing with Strangers* (2005) as ‘an attempt to render invisible and dematerialise contemporary flesh-and-blood Aborigines’ and reiterates Behrendts’ analysis (Behrendt, 2003) of the pervasiveness of Australia’s ‘psychological *terra nullius*’.

The representation of and theory about Aboriginality by early invaders of the place now known as Australia, had an early expression in the laws and practices governing the entitlements of Indigenous peoples to live on the tiny parcels of land ‘given’ to them by the Aboriginal Protectorates established to ‘sooth the dying breasts’ of people believed to be about to be on their way to extinction. In *The First Australians* (Perkins, 2008b) Episode Two,”Freedom in Our Lifetime”, the historical record is presented of the duplicitous decisions foisted on the people of what is now Victoria, especially at Coranderrk in the nineteenth century, a situation mirrored in the twentieth century at Cummeragunja in New South Wales. Patrick Dodson, a Royal Commissioner into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and from 1991-1997 and Chairman of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, describes the public discourse during the PSTs’ own schooling in *Whatever happened to reconciliation*?

A cultural genocide agenda has been foisted on the Australian public in the context of extensive media coverage about the social collapse of Indigenous communities, centred on sexual abuse of children and rampant violence fuelled by alcohol and drugs. Rather than explaining the human tragedy caused by decades of under-investment by governments in capital and social infrastructure, the Howard government has promoted a neo-conservative discourse in which Aboriginal people’s failure
to take responsibility has become the central tenet of the debate. (Altman & Hinkson, 2007, p. 23)

Academic discourse has also seen a ‘bitter, polemical struggle’ (Manne, 2001, p. 31), the so-called history wars, between those who seek to deny the magnitude of the harm done to Indigenous Australians from the beginning of colonisation, such as Windschuttle (2002) through to the effects of the removal of children as recorded in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Report Bringing them home (R. D. Wilson, 1997), leading to what Patrick Dodson calls

The tragedy of…Indigenous policy (that) has focused on destroying the potential for this nation to respect and nurture the cultural renaissance of traditional Indigenous society….We are left with a vague sense that the problems of the present day crisis have no history and that the way forward is for Indigenous people to abandon their identity and to be absorbed into European settler society. (Dodson, P. in Altman & Hinkson, 2007, p. 22).

For many Indigenous historians, rather than a ‘history war’ between populist-conservative and liberal historians, the academic debates over massacres of Indigenous peoples are ‘a cultural and ideological war, which in the aftermath of Mabo and subsequent native title legislation, created an ideological panic amongst those in Australia who would prefer that Indigenous people remain in a place of reliance (T. Birch, 2007, p. 108). Birch argues that moving forward progressively as a nation, as the reconciliation process hopes for, cannot be accomplished until the past is addressed more directly, with Indigenous voices central to this process (my emphasis), (p. 112).

This bitter polemical academic struggle has its companion in the arena of school education. The conservative government holding power in Australia between 1996 and 2007 seized the opportunity provided by Windschuttle and others to strengthen its assimilationist policies and to decry what it termed a ‘black armband view of history’ (McKenna, 1997). A new compulsory national history curriculum was proposed by the then Prime Minister John Howard, as ‘a series of Topics and key Milestones which inform a chronological approach’. It did not include any reference to the Stolen Generations or even to that icon of white Australian resistance to oppression, the Eureka Stockade (Commonwealth of Australia & Australian History Curriculum Reference Group, 2007). That curriculum lapsed due to the electoral defeat of the Conservatives.
2.5 Black Power

On the podium of the 200 metres at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City the African-American athletes Gold Medallist Tommie Smith and Bronze medallist John Carlos raised their black-gloved fists in their ‘cry for freedom ....and justice’. They were supported by the silver medallist, Williamstown High School Physical Education teacher Peter Norman, who wore the Olympic Project for Human Rights badge. Carlos had unzipped his jacket, another breach of protocol, as Peter Norman explains in the film Salute (2009) as ‘a tribute to blue collar workers, black and white’.

![Figure 15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Carlos-Smith.jpg)

When Norman died in 2006 Smith and Carlos travelled from the USA to Sydney to give eulogies and to be pallbearers at Norman's funeral (News.com.au, 2008).

The 1970s was the time of the black power movement in Australia. Foley defines the 'Australian Black Power movement' as 'the loose coalition of individual young Indigenous activists who emerged in Redfern, Fitzroy and South Brisbane in the period immediately after Charles Perkins' ‘Freedom Ride’ in 1965 (Foley, 2001. p.1). The
black power salute signified resistance to oppression (Foley, 2001, Lothian, 2007). Foley nominates the 1970 establishment of the Redfern Aboriginal Legal Service, the 1971 Springbok rugby tour, and the Aboriginal Embassy in 1972, as three seminal events which ‘helped to define the ideas, personalities, actions and alliances that formed the Redfern Black Power movement, which in turn influenced Indigenous political notions and actions for more than a decade’.

In 1963 Yolngu people from Yirrkala in eastern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory had sent petitions to the Commonwealth Parliament protesting against the annexation of more than 300 square kilometres of land from the Arnhem Land Aboriginal reserve so bauxite found there could be mined.

Finally, in the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory on the 27 April 1971, Mr Justice Blackburn ruled against the Yirrkala people in their case against Nabalco and the Commonwealth of Australia.

The dismissal of the claim shocked the Yolngu people. On 6 May 1971, they sent representatives to Canberra to present a statement to Prime Minister McMahon but the
eventual response, issued on Australia Day 1972 was to deny 'any legal right under the Australian system' and instead to establish

new form of lease... rather than attempt simply to translate the Aboriginal affinity with the land into some form of legal right under the Australian system.... we concluded that to do so would introduce a new and probably confusing component, the implications of which could not clearly be foreseen and which could lead to uncertainty and possible challenge in relation to land titles elsewhere in Australia which are at present unquestioned and secure (W. McMahon, 1972).

![Cartoon](http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/images/history/toons/toon22.html)

*Figure 17* “Finders keepers ....!” [losers weepers]. Satirical allusion to the children’s rhyme referring to the adage whereby when something is unowned or abandoned, whoever finds it can claim it.


This decision by the keepers of the colonial construction of property and knowledge to maintain the status quo would galvanise Indigenous activists. When Aboriginal activists in Redfern heard the speech on the radio they understood that it rejected the idea of an Aboriginal title to land and decided on action. With the support of the Communist Party of Australia, four young Aboriginal men - Billy Craigie, Tony Coorey, Michael Anderson and Bert Williams - travelled from Sydney to Canberra. By the end of Australia Day they were seated on the lawns facing Parliament House under a beach umbrella with a sign that read 'Aboriginal Embassy' (Figure 17 below). Many indigenous and non-
Indigenous supporters travelled to Canberra to support the action. Jan Muller was one of them (see Jan’s story in Chapter 6, Section 6.5).

The Embassy was removed by police and re-established several times until February 1975, when it closed. The following year Parliament passed the first Commonwealth law on land rights. A second tent embassy opened on the same site in January 1992, while the High Court was deciding the Mabo Case (Clarke, Baker, Teachers and students, Footscray City Secondary College, & Woolum Bellum Koori Open Door Education School, 2000), (Hughes, 2007), (Perkins, 2008c) and still stands in front of the first Parliament House.

![Aboriginal Tent Embassy established outside Parliament House, Canberra, Australia Day 1972. Michael Anderson, Billie Craigie, Bert Williams and Tony Coorey.](image)

*(Tribune, 1972)*

These events, although documented by the National Museum of Australia, the Museum of Australian Democracy and the Documenting Democracy websites, are still not part of the popular knowledge of who we are as Australians. Without this knowledge how can we understand Australian history and contemporary circumstances? How can teacher educators support PSTs to include indigenous themes in their curriculum planning, with guidelines that ask us to ‘analyse change and continuity over time … social and political ideas and structures, cultural values and beliefs…. [and] key concepts such as democracy, governance, the rule of law, justice, religion, liberty, authority and leadership (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2007c) at the same time as we are living in a country where ‘Aboriginal people are still unrecognised
within the Constitution and do not have a recognised role to play in the building of our nation’ (Patrick Dodson, 2008). According to Michael Dodson, then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, now Professor and Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University

Since colonisation Aboriginal Affairs policy has been dominated by attempts to suppress our difference. Policy for, and about, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has consistently asserted the dominance of the mainstream discourse over the voices of Indigenous peoples.... Such an approach reveals an inability to embrace our difference and be enriched by it (Michael Dodson, 1996).

The idea of embracing difference is in stark opposition to the continuing expectation by governments that Indigenous Australian peoples conform to assimilation. The threat to close outstations, as part of the current ‘Intervention’ in the Northern Territory continues this forced assimilation policy. In *Our Generation* (Saban, 2011), a film made in collaboration with the Yolngu people, community members speak eloquently of the importance of outstations for keeping culture strong, which the Intervention would close down. The Yolngu people have created a significant body of work for non-Indigenous people to learn about their culture and stories, from the Bark Petitions to the band Yothu Yindi’s work, films such as *Ten Canoes* (De Heer & Djilgirr, 2006) and the *Twelve Canoes* website which followed it (Ramingining Community of North Arnhem Land, Reynolds, Heald, & De Heer). *Yolngu Boy* (Johnson, 2001) and the book *Why warriors lie down to die* (Trudgen, 2000), written in collaboration with Rev. Dr. Djiniyini Gondarra, who is an active participant in *Our Generation*, all present the richness and complexity of Indigenous experience and epistemological perspectives. The *Twelve Canoes* site in particular is spectacular, consisting of twelve video pieces on aspects of the history, environment and culture of Yolgnu people. A Study Guide has also been prepared to accompany the site (Lewis, 2008). But like the material on Thompson of Arnhem Land discussed earlier, the potential for PSTs to see these presentations within a paradigm of exotic, ‘real Aborigines live in the north of Australia’, means such resources need to be understood and used within a framework of knowledge and respect for the complexities of working in a cross-cultural context.

The history of government and church policies towards Indigenous peoples moved from a blindness to the cultural coherence and the diversity of approximately 270 Indigenous nations in 1788, to ‘protection’ then ‘assimilation’ then ‘integration’ (Michael Dodson, 1996), (Rowse, 1998) (Prentis, 2008), (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Education Website, 2008), (Elder, 2009), (Prentis, 2009). Some activists would say that that ‘reconciliation’ is the next stage in that line of failed policies. But the recognition of the co-existence of Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the Bark Petitions (National Archives of Australia, 2000–2005), the Barunga Statement (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2009), the cultural demonstrations of sovereignty such as those in Section 2.6, of continuous connection to this land for millennia, together with land rights legislation, have strengthened Indigenous claims to self-determination and centrality to the Australian story. The challenge for teacher educators is to support PSTs so that what students are learning in schools will be consistent with the policies that have acknowledged the importance of Indigenous experience to our understanding of who we are as Australians.

On June 3rd 1992, by a majority of six to one, The High Court, in Eddie Mabo and Ors v The State of Queensland, ruled that native title to land is recognised by the common law of Australia, throwing out the legal fiction that when Australia was ‘discovered’ by Captain Cook in 1788 it was terra nullius, an empty or uncivilised land (AIATSIS Native Title Research Unit, 2004). Prime Minister Paul Keating, at the Australian Launch of the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples in Sydney on 10 December 1992, challenged us:

   to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians.

   … [to recognise] that it was we who did the dispossession. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the disasters. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion.

   It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask - how would I feel if this were done to me? (Keating, 1992)

In 1993, in proposing the Native Title Bill, the government’s response to the High Court’s Mabo decision Prime Minister Keating said:

   The court described the situation faced by Aboriginal people after European settlement…. a ‘conflagration of oppression and conflict which was, over the following century, to spread across the continent to dispossess, degrade and devastate the
Aboriginal people’. They faced ‘deprivation of the religious, cultural and economic sustenance which the land provides’ and were left as ‘intruders in their own homes’.

To deny these basic facts would be to deny history - and no self-respecting democracy can deny its history. To deny these facts would be to deny part of ourselves as Australians. This is not guilt: it is recognising the truth. The truth about the past and, equally, the truth about our contemporary reality. It is not a symptom of guilt to look reality in the eye - it is a symptom of guilt to look away, to deny what is there. But what is worse than guilt, surely, is irresponsibility. To see what is there and not act upon it - that is a symptom of weakness. That is failure (Keating, 1996, p. 169).

When PSTS listen to this speech (Keating, 1992) they become aware of matters of which they have not previously been cognisant. But, as the surveys reported in Chapter 4 show, there is still resistance to acceptance of the centrality of these ‘basic facts’ (Keating, 1996, p. 169) to the Australian story and resistance to a perceived accusation of guilt when these ‘facts’ are discussed in early Curriculum and Innovation seminars.

The legacy of terra nullius allows the resistance waged by Indigenous nations to defend their countries, in the past and the present, to be largely ignored in the popular discourse and in University and school curricula. Steps are being taken in historiography to move away from a ‘stone-age people’, ‘Otherness’, examination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples. However critical questions for non-Indigenous educators remain.

- Can we, in collaboration with Indigenous educators, develop an education theory and pedagogy that recognises, respects and includes Aboriginal epistemology?
- What are the roles of Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators?
- Where does the demand from Indigenous leaders for self-determination fit into society’s agenda for education and for social justice?

I know from listening to PSTs that we need find ways to understand the past that engage young Australians with ways to contribute to the future ‘and to work towards new relations between and among us – relations as yet not fully imagined’ (D. B. Rose, 2004, p. 184). My experience working with Indigenous colleagues has shown me the importance of the role of leadership and the power of the knowledge and experience of
Indigenous educators. The appointment of Indigenous lecturers to the School of Education at VU supported PSTs to imagine the history and contemporary circumstances of the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

My thesis is that if we are really to claim that we support social justice, then we must acknowledge the privilege that non-Indigenous Australians gain from the lack of a Treaty, from the lack of recognition of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in our education systems and from the acceptance that living conditions in many remote Indigenous communities are impossible to comprehend, let alone being adequately addressed. This position is not new. In from 1979-1983 the Aboriginal Treaty Committee (ATC), which was composed of prominent non-Indigenous Australians who had been working for many years to promote Indigenous rights, including H.C. (Nugget) Coombs and the poet Judith Wright. It is worth noting that the ATC was criticised by a number of Indigenous leaders regarding their involvement in matters that were the prerogative of Indigenous decision makers. At that time some Indigenous leaders supported the concept of a Treaty and some believed that land rights were necessary before a Treaty could be negotiated. I discuss these considerations because the question of non-Indigenous educators working in the field of ‘Indigenous Studies’ is still controversial amongst Indigenous activists today. The ATC, in an article questioning whether they should even continue, concluded by agreeing with the words of Bruce McGuinness, the chairman of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Co-operative:

Naturally we recognise that the Aboriginal struggle, our struggle for liberation, will be won by us, here in this country, but all liberation struggles need an external front to pressure and to lobby. Hence we applaud efforts to liaise and make links with supportive peoples and groups in other countries, just as we welcome support from sincere whites in this our land, but our experience and our history in this past two hundred years points up the necessity for distrust (Aboriginal Treaty Committee, n.d.).

Professor Larissa Behrendt (2003), of Eualeyai and Kamilaroi heritage, calls the inability to recognise Indigenous demands for sovereignty a ‘psychological terra nullius’. Behrendt notes that not only have traditional systems of governance and dispute resolution been ignored or undermined, but that there has also been

…a reluctance to devolve power and decision-making to Indigenous people through representative bodies and community organisations despite evidence ... that policy making
is more effective if Aboriginal people are given a central place in the development of those policies (R. Miller, J., Ruru, Behrendt, & Lindberg, 2010, p. 206).

Borrows (2004) notes the comment from Social Justice Commissioner Jonas (2001, p. 29) that practical reconciliation, as in the Intervention in the Northern Territory, initiated by the conservative Liberal/National government and continued under the Labor government, strips Indigenous disadvantage of its historical context, does not seek to transform the relationship between government and Indigenous peoples and focuses on Indigenous people being prepared to conform to the rest of society.

Deborah Bird Rose puts it this way:

A moral engagement between past and present must acknowledge violence, and having done so, must acknowledge the moral burden of that knowledge… (To do otherwise) is to diminish us as human beings even (as it) may promise the illusion of a ‘comfortable’ life (D. B. Rose, 2004, p. 13-14).

Throughout this study I consciously preference Australian Indigenous researchers and activists to establish a theoretical and practical framework for my research. The analysis by Professor Lester Irabinna-Rigby that ‘Research methodologies and the protocols in knowledge construction in my country is the way the colonisers constructed it’ (Irabin-Rigney, 1999, p. 634) applies to both research and to the perspectives assimilated by learners as they move through the Australian education system. My work with PSTs suggests that the epistemological grip of ‘whiteness’ on the ways of knowing of non-Indigenous learners and educators is a powerful barrier to implementing the educational policies of successive Australian governments.

2.5.1 Post-colonial?

The question of whether we live in a ‘post-colonial’ society is contested by many Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), (Heiss, 2003), (Bradfield, 2004). Kathryn Trees and Mudrooroo Nyoongah ask whether ‘post-colonial’ suggests colonialism has passed.

For whom is it ‘post’? Surely not for Australian Aboriginal people at least, when land rights, social justice, respect and equal opportunity for most does not exist because of the
internalised racism of many Australians.... where Aboriginal sovereignty, in forms appropriate to Aboriginal people, is not legally recognised, post- colonialism is not merely a fiction, but .... is a 'white' concept that has come to the fore in literary theory in the last five years as Western nations attempt to define and represent themselves in non-imperialist terms. (Trees & Nyoongah, 1993)

As Morris notes, ‘it is important for non-Aboriginal Australians to remember that assimilation was a policy in this period (and thus part of our own distinct historical and cultural inheritance as Australians), and not simply… a 'generic' effect of any colonising process’ (Morris, 2004).

So the barriers to teacher educators supporting PSTs to include (appropriate) Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning are strong. The hidden curriculum and the conveying of the values of the dominant culture by teachers are seductive and pervasive, even when all the PSTs may not be ‘white’. By the time students have completed their Primary and Secondary schooling or even just their tertiary studies they have well and truly been subjected to the norms of the dominant paradigms. The PST survey data reported in Chapter 4 demonstrates this reality.

Indeed, for many Indigenous scholars there is a 'critical question at the heart of the Indigenous dilemma in Western education'. For Torres Strait Islander Professor Nakata

Western education demands an ongoing denial or exclusion of our own knowledges, epistemologies, and traditions and a further co-option into a system:

- that is quite different from our own;
- that is deeply implicated in our historical treatment and continuing position;
- that can never fully understand or give representation to our own histories, knowledges, experience and expression of our reality;
- which, through its discursive complexities, always circumscribes our own representations and understandings in its re-presentations” (Nakata, 2004, p. 7).

Professor Nakata warns that the power and integrity of Indigenous epistemologies may be diluted ‘in the rush to engineer a quick resolution of the intersection of these different knowledge systems’ (Nakata, 2004, p. 11).
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There is a danger that in the rush to engineer a quick resolution of the intersection of these different knowledge systems that we will bring in, for example, some impoverished and corrupted and misapplied version of something called ‘Aboriginal pedagogy’ to some impoverished, corrupted or misunderstood version of Indigenous knowledge, both of which are already circumscribed by Western understandings of them and by the Western knowledge that is also being conveyed (Nakata, 2004, p.11).

So it is imperative that teacher educators learn from and work with Indigenous educators as we support PSTs in their developing understandings of who they can become as teachers. My experience and research with the PSTs in their seminars and with the survey data, with Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues and with experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators suggests that this is an important aspect of the answer to the question posed by Haggis

how do I break my complicity in the colonising moves of knowledge production in terms of my own intellectual praxis (Haggis, 2004, p. 49)?

I raise these questions because I am committed through my research and as a teacher educator to respond to the challenge from Peter Yu which began this thesis. Working with Indigenous colleagues over many years, in the Aboriginal Services Unit at the Northern Metropolitan Institute of Technical and Further Education, in the Aboriginal History Section in the Museum of Victoria and at Victoria University, has impressed upon me the importance of listening to Indigenous educators, of following their lead and of the power of working together.

The PST comments and questions in their surveys demonstrate learned ways of ‘knowing Indigenous culture’ in schools, often limited to the anthropological gaze: reading Dreamtime ‘myths’ (sic), doing ‘dot paintings’, examining tools and ‘what they eat’. Indigenous educators challenge non-Indigenous educators to look at our own privilege so that ‘the anthropological gaze is reversed and ‘non-Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are interrogated’ and to encourage students to explore their own cultural location, ‘their teaching and learning identity and their position vis-a-vis colonial history and discourse’ (Phillips & Whatman, 2007, p. 8). They argue for the repositioning of Indigenous knowledge away from notions of ‘disadvantage’ or ‘equity’ ‘to genuinely embed Indigenous systems of coming to know the world, and Indigenous understandings and perspectives of the world, at the core of the curriculum (Phillips & Whatman, 2007, p. 2).
2.6 Listening to language

I finish this Chapter with recognition of the power of language and culture to open our hearts and minds to the resilience and celebration of Indigenous epistemologies, which continue to co-exist in the country now called Australia. The power of the music and lyrics of songmen such as Kev Carmody and Archie Roach, songwomen such as Ruby Hunter (R. Hunter, 2000; R. Hunter, Roach, & Grabowsky, 2005) and the group Tiddas (Tiddas, 1995),(Tiddas, 1996), amongst many others, to open PSTs’ hearts and minds to the stories of dispossession, survival, resistance and sovereignty, is referred to throughout this thesis. The following Section records some recent cultural representations of that resistance and demonstration of epistemological power.


The Black Arm Band is a creative meeting place for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists and producers to develop, perform, promote and celebrate contemporary Australian Indigenous music as a symbol of resilience and hope in the spirit and action of reconciliation (The Black Arm Band, 2010).

The songs and music of Dirtsong were inspired by Alexis Wright, whose works include the compelling Take power, like this old man here: An anthology of writings celebrating twenty years of land rights in Central Australia, 1977-1997 (1998) and her extraordinary Miles Franklin Award winning novel Carpentaria (A. Wright, 2006) which gives us a glimpse into the ‘the ancient stories of the ancestral creation beings that are still learnt and stored as mind maps defining the philosophical understanding of Aboriginal law, and which, taken together, embrace the entire continent’ (Alexis Wright, 2007).

Many of the pieces in Dirtsong reflect on Country, conjuring not only a sense of geographical place but also encounters, memories, obligations, community and nature, and are performed predominantly in 13 Indigenous Australian languages. By singing the songs in Language (a collective noun to describe one or more Indigenous languages), Dirtsong was a powerful statement of Indigenous survival, resilience and ways of knowing for the many non-Indigenous audience members to begin to appreciate. The audience listened to the music and lyrics on Indigenous terms, getting a glimpse of the co-existing epistemologies which continue to organise and support the
resistance and resilience of Indigenous understanding of their own sovereignty. The Black Arm Band artists presented songs that:

come up from the country – that have been coming up from the country for a very longtime. And if you listen to that country, you hear the songs, you hear that oldness, you ‘Gulpa Ngarwal’ – you start to listen deeply.

It’s not just about looking to the past and to the ancestors, it’s also happening now: we are still singing our country, but in other ways (Bennett, 2009).

I also attended Bangarra’s Of Earth and Sky (Bangarra Dance Company, 2010), the Short Black Opera’s production of Deborah Cheetham’s Pecan Summer (Corowa, 2011) based on the 1939 Cummeragunga walk-off, and a play about the life of Western Arrernte man Albert Namatjira (Big hART, 2011). Namatjira’s paintings made him famous and yet he couldn’t vote, buy land or enter a hotel. Eventually in 1957 he and his wife Rubina became the first Aboriginal citizens of Australia (ten years before the Referendum to count all other Aboriginal people as citizens). As a citizen Albert could now also buy alcohol. ‘Since it was illegal for Australian citizens to provide alcohol for wards (including Aboriginal people), when Namatjira shared a drink with a kinsman he was breaking the law’ (National Museum of Australia, 2008a). In 1958 police charged him with supplying alcohol to Aboriginal people. After two months in prison, Albert emerged a free, but broken man. He had lost his will to paint, and to live. He died in 1959 (Foley, 2011).
Many Aboriginal people refused to subject themselves to the indignity of applying to become a citizen. Punitive requirements which prevented them from associating with relatives if they ‘became citizens’ showed the inhumanity of these laws. Albert Namatjira’s experience highlighted the absurdity and inhumanity of laws which set up this divide. On the surface it is a heartbreaking story of personal suffering; underneath it displays attitudes of racial superiority and cultural intolerance (National Museum of Australia, 2008a).

Productions by Indigenous directors, producers and artists open spaces for non-Indigenous Australians to begin to appreciate not only Indigenous experiences but also Indigenous epistemologies. The scene which stays most strongly with me from the Namatjira play is when the artist described the work he was completing on a particular landscape. He tells the audience that he can paint the landscape, but not the sacred creatures who, for him, are integral to his vision, but are not for western eyes.

The cartoon below is another example of non-Indigenous awareness of, and response to, continuing colonialism. Along with the other visual representations in this study it offers PSTs a glimpse into non-Indigenous understandings of who we are as Australians which challenge the grip of the colonial paradigm that ‘white is right’.

*(Dickie Neilson), 27 February 1973*  
Reproduced with kind permission from the artist.
I have presented above some of the ethical, philosophical and political foundations upon which my commitment to pursue this research, to challenge the colonial paradigm, is based. As a non-Indigenous educator, the methodological basis for my work also necessarily involves reference to Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of understanding, to ethical considerations and to a belief in the importance of helping to create a world built on principles of social justice. I explore these methodological aspects in the next Chapter.
Chapter 3

On the path of knowledge
how might we find each other?

… when we acknowledge traditional country, as increasingly people do in Australia, it is no empty ritual: it is to acknowledge who we, the Aboriginal people, are and our place in this nation. It is to take special note of a place and the people who belong to it.

In doing that, it seems to me, all Australians might have a clearer notion of who they are and where they (original emphasis) stand in relation to their history and the land they live in. And were they to understand what Aboriginal Australians mean by country, they would have gone some way to understanding the oldest living culture on earth – which is no small thing.

By such small steps on the path of knowledge, you see, we will more easily find each other (Mick Dodson, 17 February 2009).

All research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008b, p. 5).

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the methodological terrain that provides a platform for my study on ‘How can teacher educators support pre-service teachers to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning?’ The anti-colonial analyses of Australian ‘whiteness’ theorists examined in the previous Chapter are supported by Critical Theory to provide a framework in which to challenge the hegemony of control exercised by a colonial class society with all its subtle and not so subtle mechanisms of power, which results in the dearth of implementation of reconciliatory education. The title of the chapter is taken from Mick Dodson’s challenging but ultimately optimistic speech to the National Press Club, quoted above, after his recognition as the 2009 Australian of the Year, where he entreats us that ‘If like me you believe education is the
principle pathway to reconciliation, you need to act on that belief’ (p. 10). The introductory quotes, from Professor Dodson, a Yawuru man from the Broome area of Western Australia, and non-Indigenous Professors Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, were chosen to acknowledge the insights of researchers who point to fundamental elements of the task facing non-Indigenous teacher educators seeking to implement education for reconciliation. As I argued in Chapter 2, we need to examine who we are as Australians and where we stand in relation to our history and the consequences and implications of that history, by recognising the power of the dominant paradigm to construct the Australian story. As educators we need to go beyond The Australia Book (Pownall & Senior, 1952) version of that story, with content and pedagogies, questions and resources that support authentic student research into the people, events and themes which comprise our history. I explore some of these resources and pedagogies in Chapter 7 Decolonising the classroom: Becoming a reconciliatory learner/teacher. As teacher educators we need to recognise and celebrate our commitment to believing and feeling and to taking action, to ethical considerations and to social justice. Bidjara and Birri-Gubba Juru writer and educator Jackie Huggins explains her reasons for staying involved in reconciliation, in a resource book developed for students:

It’s the heartache for our communities, and the great fear and hope for our kids, and the opportunities they will have to fulfil their potential and make a contribution to Australia.

The plight of our people does not weigh us down in this task, it drives us to find a way forward, no matter how long it takes (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2007b, p. 20).

So we need to listen deeply to Indigenous Elders and educators when they welcome us to their Countries, and when they challenge our educational philosophies and practices, so that we might indeed find each other on the path of knowledge.

3.2 Welcome to Country

The Welcome to Country referred to by Mick Dodson in the first quotation, or Acknowledgement of Country if given by a non-Indigenous person (for example at a school assembly), have been increasingly proclaimed across Australia at the beginning
of functions at national and international sporting events, in schools and Universities and at Municipal, Territory, State and Commonwealth events.

The wisdom and optimism of the following words by Matilda House, Ngamberi-Ngunnawal Elder and traditional custodian of the land on which the Commonwealth Parliament stands, in her welcoming of members to the Parliamentary sitting which would hear the Prime Minister’s *Apology to the Stolen Generations* have much to offer educators in our work with students

... I welcome you, the elected representatives of every part of this nation. I acknowledge the trust given to you on behalf of all Australians to represent our interests, to make wise and just decisions, and to honour the ancestors in whose footsteps you will follow.

With this Welcome comes a great symbolism. The hope of a united nation [that] through reconciliation we can join together the people of the oldest living culture in the world and with others who have come from all over the globe, and who continue to come.

And together, forging a united Australia, so committed to succeeding that we will not be denied (House, 2008).

The symbolic power of the Welcome to/Acknowledgement of Country and respect to Elders can also be seen in the following attempts to turn back the clock. In 2010, after the Welcome to Country was discussed on the national public Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)’s television current affairs program *Q and A*, some blog entries on the ABC website were ferocious.

I object to that Walid (sic) Aly [Monash University academic and ABC broadcaster Waleed Aly] …telling US how WE should do the “Welcome” tug o’ the forelock stuff. How dare he??? I am SICK to death of the guilt crap that is laid out to my generation & that of my children. Where do the Aborigines get off on making every meeting recite this garbage? If we continue to pander to the do-gooders who are going to bankrupt us from all the free money given in truck-loads to these people, who is going to draw the line in the sand? Politicians are too afraid to stop this blatant cow-towing so who has the kahunas to stop apologizing and stop making all Australians feel like murdering crooks? To the ABORIGINES/KOORIS whatever you want to call yourselves, GET OVER IT.
Stop living in the past. Bad stuff happens in history, so stop wallowing in victim mode Cya (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 17.03.2010).

Social media, blogs, YouTube, Facebook etc., often seem to give licence to extreme commentary. On the other hand these media are part of the public discourse and are used extensively by young people, including PSTs. They offer educators access to a huge range of resources for working with PSTs, from music videos to presentations by international academics (Battiste, 2011a), (Battiste, 2011b). The YouTube clip by Indigenous rapper Rival MC recounting his views, including a poem, of Australia Day and the dilemmas facing young Indigenous people (Leone, January 2012), is productive material for PST consideration.

In 2011 the newly elected conservative government in Victoria decided to stop Ministers and officials making an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of functions where government representatives were speaking (Australian Associated Press, 10.05.2011).

The power of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied can be seen in the social media example and in the decision to cease Acknowledgement of Country. It can also be seen in the response to that cessation by Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Joy Murphy-Wandin:

I feel like I've kind of had part of my heart ripped out but I also feel, more importantly, for my ancestors and those that were involved in that very early struggle of being given recognition, leading up to the 1967 referendum (Sexton, 2011).

This is the terrain of my thesis. Beliefs and feelings, understandings of who we are as local, national and global citizens, a commitment to social justice and ethical behaviour, and a determination to expose the unresolved dimensions of the effects of and resistance to colonisation. It is contested space. Indigenous activist Gary Foley alerts us to the danger that the ‘power and assumed authority derive[d] from white society’s own construction of history and its wealth and power to enforce and perpetuate’ that power.... ‘will constitute background interference in all attempts at communication’ (Gary Foley, 1999b). From the conservative side, the Opposition education spokesperson in the Commonwealth Parliament, Christopher Pyne sees the new Australian Curriculum as unbalanced and ‘pushing a black armband view of history’ at
the expense of ‘our British and European heritage’ (D. Harrison, 02.03.10).

3.3   Contested space

I come to this research profoundly aware that the space for a non-Indigenous researcher working towards the inclusion of Indigenous history and contemporary circumstances in Australian school and teacher education curricula is littered with methodological and ideological complexities. I am a child of the colonisers. Along with all of us who have come to this land since 1788 I benefit from that original invasion of the countries now known as Australia and from the continuing lack of agreement to Indigenous peoples’ demands for sovereignty. I can be assured of my access to the benefits – housing, health and education services which meet Australian standards that are the expected outcome of being an Australian citizen. I didn’t have to wait until 1967 to be counted in the census rather than under the Flora and Fauna Act. If I was a non-Indigenous soldier I was entitled to soldier settlement land when I returned from overseas service in World Wars One and Two, often land taken for a second or third time from the Indigenous owners. Indigenous soldiers were not eligible (Londey, n.d.). I didn’t need permission to travel, or a ‘dog tag’ which would exempt me from such onerous provisions but would thereby exclude me from contact with my extended relatives who lived on ‘Reserves’. In the face of a history of such shocking inequities, how then might Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators find each other on the contested ground of education for reconciliation?

In order for non-Indigenous Australians to take up Professor Dodson’s challenge to learn with Indigenous Australians about this country’s history and its peoples, and to create a socially just future, we do need to examine our beliefs and feelings, as Denzin and Lincoln propose. The surveys of pre-service teachers’ experiences and questions in Chapter 4 provide a snapshot of their beliefs and feelings. In Chapter 5 the collaborative self-study between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers also explores our beliefs and the feelings engendered between the three of us in our work together and with the PSTs. In Chapter 6 experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators share some of their experiences, beliefs and feelings, which shine light on the PSTs’ questions and on all our journeys on the path of knowledge.

Such a starting point for methodological considerations has developed from a recognition that most Indigenous peoples have experienced the social and physical sciences (Michael Dodson & Williamson, 1999) as arms of the colonial project.
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(Nakata, 2007), bringing surveillance, disciplining and categorising (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). So it was essential for me to use an appropriately dialogic approach, not to acquiesce to continuing a colonial relationship to knowledge propagated through disembodied research, but to give voice to Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and to the PSTs involved in this educational challenge. In this study the dialogue is between the PSTs with each other and with their lecturers responding to the data from their surveys; between the lecturers together and with the PSTs; and between the experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators reflecting with the researcher on issues that arose from the surveys and discussions with the PSTs and from the ways those educators have understood and challenged the hegemony of colonialism.

All of these considerations: feelings and beliefs, ethics, respect, understanding the power of stories and listening to the questions and reflections of PSTs and experienced educators, confirm the necessary bricolage (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008, pp. 420-426) of methods used in this research, research clearly situated in the methodologically contested present (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008a, p. 540). ‘No one method can grasp all the subtle variations in ongoing human experience’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008b, p. 29).

As Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, and Alexander note:

Methodologies and methods are not chosen in isolation from ontological and epistemological positions. Rather, the manner in which we gain access to knowledge and our choice of the techniques for collecting evidence are directly related to our image of reality and how we think we can know it (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995, p. 180).

Opaskwayak Cree researcher Shawn Wilson, working with Indigenous scholars in northern New South Wales, puts it this way:

If the ontology is that various realities exist, then you will choose ways of examining these realities (methodology) that take into account your point of view as a researcher to come up with a better understanding (epistemology) (S. Wilson, 2008, p.34).

Engaging in research that seeks to understand and contribute to the possibilities for reconciliatory education requires recognition and respect for the demands by Indigenous educators, activists and researchers to learn from Indigenous educators and to acknowledge and work with Indigenous epistemological perspectives.
As seen in Chapter 2, Indigenous scholars have challenged the academy to respond to the question of ‘whiteness’, to question how the reproduction and recreation of knowledge is related to the processes of colonisation (Moreton-Robinson, 2004a), (Grande, 2008, p. 244). My work as a teacher educator concerned to support the inclusion of Indigenous themes in University and school curricula has confirmed for me the importance of rejecting looking at Indigenous peoples as the ‘other’ as a way of responding to both bi-partisan government education policies and to Indigenous leaders’ contentions that all children have the right to know and to understand who we are as Australians and as citizens of the world. We need to examine the multi-facets of both oppression and, importantly, of resistance. What has happened, why did it happen and what has and is being done to challenge injustice and create the possibilities for justice for all peoples? I demonstrate in Chapter 5 that past and present education curriculum guidelines which purport to be inclusive of Indigenous themes are in fact excluding Indigenous themes from school curricula.

3.4 Critical theory and Constructivism

Critical Theory and Constructivist methodologies support my research. As a university student in the early 1970s I learned to understand the world and to explore ways to change the world for the better by reading and discussing Brazilian theorist and pedagogue Paulo Freire, whose insight that dialogue constitutes an epistemological relationship was powerful. Critically, he also proposed that it was important to take action; indeed, ‘To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it’ (Freire, 1972, p.61). He on to argue that “The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and recreation, is not possible if it is not infused with love….Only by abolishing the situation of oppression is it possible to restore the love which that situation made impossible’ (Freire, 1972, p. 62). Thus we can understand the words of champion footballer and Indigenous leader Michael Long on his long walk to Canberra to protest against the refusal of the conservative government to apologise to the Stolen Generations: ‘Where, Prime Minister, is the love, where is the love for my people?’ (quoted by Dodson, P., 200, in Altman & Hinkson, p. 29).

As a young teacher I came to understand that listening to students, engaging in dialogue with them with them to create authentic questions for research, not forcing them to learn set texts off by heart, was powerful pedagogy. I was inspired to develop curriculum that took students out of the classroom into their neighbourhoods to talk to people who were organising and taking action to improve their communities.
Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, as a system of ideological and cultural dominance which makes the exercise of power over oppressed peoples seem to be the normal order of things, was also significant in my developing understanding of pedagogic practices and the possibilities for social justice (Gramsci, Hoare, & Nowell Smith, 1971). His analysis that ‘every relationship of hegemony is necessarily an educational relationship’ (Gramsci, et al., 1971, p. 350) highlights the importance of the work of teachers and schools in shaping society’s understanding of itself. The hegemonic power of the status quo to control people’s ideas of what is possible, is attested to by the resistance to Indigenous demands for recognition as co-existing sovereign peoples within a state based on the colonisation of their land without negotiation or Treaty.

Critical Theorists and Constructivists both offer a direct challenge to positivism, with its assumption that only quantifiable evidence is valid, and both are aligned with post-colonial aspirations (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 p. 112), (Guba & Lincoln, 2008, pp. 257-263). The term ‘aspirations’ is appropriate because as explained in Chapter 2, when we listen to Indigenous educators and theorists, when we examine structural elements such as the British monarch as the historical but also current Australian Head of State, and the lack of a Treaty with the traditional owners of the countries now called Australia, we see continuing colonialism.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2008, pp. 404-5) describe Critical Theorists in the 21st century as engaging in social or cultural criticism, understanding that all thought is mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted and recognising that mainstream research practices are, although most often unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race and gender. I understand that the intersections of class, race and gender power are crucial sites for recognising and challenging inequality and for achieving social justice. The methodology of Critical Theory provides a framework in which to challenge the hegemony of control exercised by a class society with all its subtle and not so subtle mechanisms of power, which results in the dearth of implementation of reconciliatory education policies.

The capitalist system, and globalisation theory which speak of ethics, hide the fact their ethics are those of the marketplace and not the universal ethics of the human person. It is for these matters that we ought to struggle courageously if we have, in truth, made a choice for a humanised world (Freire, 1998, p. 114).
Raewyn Connell echoes Freire’s words in her proposition that ‘Despite popular theories of globalisation that picture us as “all in the same boat now” we are not…. Most of the world’s peoples live in societies that have experienced colonial or semi-colonial conditions in the past and neo-colonial domination or marginality since’ (Connell, 2010, p. 605). Connell’s analysis of the limitations of policy to bring about justice simply by recognising discrimination and underrepresentation is particularly relevant to my own investigation of why Indigenous knowledge and experience are not widely included in school curricula despite two decades of good policy. Nonetheless after examining the limitations Connell argues that ‘Activism, and the research that supports it, will continue to be needed for a just and survivable world’ (p. 613). This commitment to teacher activism (Sachs, 2003) is consistent with the Praxis Inquiry Protocol (PI Protocol) which underpins the teacher education program at VU.

3.5 The Praxis Inquiry Protocol

Since its inception in 1985, the VU School of Education has justified its teacher education curriculum and pedagogy by reference to three fundamental principles:

- Education as practice-theory
- Social justice as the ethical reference point, and as a result
- A commitment to support the work of teachers in schools characterised by socio-economic disadvantage and cultural diversity (Cherednichenko & Kruger, 2005, p. 2).

The PI Protocol is consistent with the methodological frameworks of Critical Theory and Constructivism in supporting opportunities for research with and by pre-service teachers (PSTs), by starting with their own questions and reflections.

...what the Praxis Inquiry Protocol does is to transfer to the practitioners – student teachers, teachers and teacher educators – the power to ask the questions that they regard are personally and professionally significant. That is, social justice will be evident in teacher education if and when the agents of education ask questions with morally informed content about their practices and of the schools and systems in which they are embedded (Kruger & Cherednichenko, 2006).
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This understanding of the power of educators, pre-service teachers, teachers and university educators, to understand their own epistemological perspectives and thereby to engage with their own and their students’ prior knowledge and to develop authentic research, sustains my commitment to finding ways to create decolonised classrooms where learners are able to explore the pedagogies and content for reconciliatory education.

The PI Protocol encourages teachers, student teachers and teacher educators to ask

**Ontological questions**  
questions about actors, their experiences and their social situations. Such questions invite practitioners to raise and question their own value judgements and to express moral commitment in and about practice.

**Epistemological questions**  
questions about the nature of knowledge valued and applied by actors in their social situations. These questions ask the practitioner to identify what knowledge stance they are bringing to the understanding of practice and to the construction of practice, in education represented most clearly in the school curriculum.

**Technical questions**  
questions about what practitioners judge ‘works’ and ‘doesn’t work’ in their social situations. These questions are cause and effect questions associated with practitioners’ interest in completing a task successfully. (Kruger, 2006, p. 2)

So we are asking PSTS to consider not only the content of their curriculum offerings, but also as educators what benefit they hope their students will gain from that content and finally what values are supported by that content. By this process of developing and analysing their own questions through the lens of the PI Protocol PSTs are encouraged to understand that while technical tasks are important and occupy a lot of the time educators spend with students, it is possible, indeed critical, to examine our values and to recognise that our choices about what questions to ask and what activities to engage in with students are based on our epistemological and ontological perspectives. As educators, we need to explore our own feelings and beliefs and continue to educate ourselves, as well as providing interesting and challenging tasks for our students which support them to explore their own feelings and beliefs. Examining our understanding of the constructions of privilege and discrimination, of power and resistance, will open opportunities to include the perspectives of those the dominant hegemony seeks to silence and disenfranchise. In Australia this necessarily
includes Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.

3.6 Research methods

As Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) understand it, research should be about documenting how oppression has been experienced and how ordinary people can understand the causes of the prejudice, poverty or humiliation. Importantly, research should lead to action to reduce the problems. This philosophy has guided my own research (C. Kelly, 1973, 1986, C. Kelly, et al., 1999)

I have used a bricolage of methods to conduct this research, including

- Historical research to explore hidden aspects of the Australian story, the omission of which leaves us ignorant of our own history and impedes the possibilities of us finding each other as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

- Consideration of the policies of Indigenous organisations and Commonwealth and State governments that call for reconciliatory education.

- Surveys of the experiences of PSTs in the fourth-year of a P-12 Bachelor of Education degree at Victoria University regarding the inclusion of Indigenous history and contemporary issues in their own schooling and in their school placements; and their questions and comments about this area of curriculum planning.

- Self-study conducted by one VU Indigenous lecturer and two non-Indigenous lecturers regarding our teaching together and the PSTs' responses to our work in a fourth year B.Ed. Curriculum and Innovation Unit.

- Conversations with experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators whose life journeys and insights throw light on the experiences and questions of the PSTs.

These methods have been chosen to explore the particular context in which the PSTs found themselves as a result of their own schooling, their school placement experiences and their work with lecturers in the teacher education program at VU. The conversations with experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators offer further perspectives on working for social justice in a country where Indigenous history,
knowledge and contemporary circumstance are relegated to the periphery. This bricolage of methods is underpinned by the notion that ‘research is an interactive process’ produced by many aspects of contexts relating to the researcher and to other actors in the process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 9). I describe my research methods in detail below.

3.6.1 Historical research

Through historical and contemporary records, including the popular media, I investigate significant events in Australian history and present issues of particular relevance to those who seek to engage in reconciliatory education.

Criticalists ask what happens ... within the larger contexts of physical, social, cultural, political economic and other dimensions of the world. Thus the particular and the whole are both valued in a complex epistemology, but always within a historical context. (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 235)

I come to this research with many years experience of being a student and an educator in Australia, a country established by an invasion that brought with it the hegemony of British law and property relations. I use the word hegemony as developed by the Italian communist and social theorist Antonio Gramsci, (Gramsci, et al., 1971) during his imprisonment by the fascist regime in Italy during the 1920s and 1930s, as a system of ideological and cultural dominance which makes the exercise of power over oppressed peoples seem to be the normal order of things.

In Australia we see still power over Indigenous peoples being exercised as physical force by the police (Farouque, 17.11.09), the courts (Schwarten, May 14, 2010) the army (Murdoch & Murphy, August 6, 2007) and the bureaucracy (Cox, 2011). And we see the cultural and ideological dominance which sanctions this power in the refusal of the dominant society to recognise and acknowledge Indigenous Australians’ demands for sovereignty and self-determination. It is this refusal that supports the continuation of colonisation, through the inability of the public imagination to come to terms with who we really are as Australians, through the lack of inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in education; and the lack of knowledge of our own history (Reconciliation Australia, 2010a, p. 45). Donald Macedo (2000), in his introduction to Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed puts it this way

The inability to link research with larger critical and social issues often prevents educators from not only engaging in a
general critique of the social mission of their own enterprise but also from acknowledging their roles as gatekeepers in reproducing the values of the dominant social order (pp xxv-xxvi).

This understanding of the limitations imposed by dominant western methodological constructs guides my research and supports my determination to privilege Indigenous perspectives so that PSTs can understand and question the role of educators as gatekeepers, reproducing the values of the dominant social paradigm by using an ‘anthropologic gaze’ to include Indigenous themes in school curricula (Phillips & Whatman, 2007).

The incompleteness of knowledge in, and problematic truthfulness of, metropolitan theory – given its hegemonic position – represents a structural difficulty in world social science (Connell, 2007, p.227). My research is presented in a variety of ways, including the written word, visual images, poetry and music lyrics – because of my strong commitment to the value of these ways of knowing for my own learning and for student learning; and in recognition of, and respect for, the variety of Indigenous representations of knowledge, for lament and celebration and for educating the non-Indigenous population. In the words of Mandawuy Djarrtjuntjun Yunupingu, lead singer of the band Yothu Yindi, whose song Treaty (Yunupingu, 1996), was the first song in an Aboriginal language (Gumatj) to gain extensive airplay and international recognition:

The struggle to explain our laws and beliefs is what you hear in Yothu Yindi’s songs today. In our songs we have found a way to help people hear us. (Yunupingu, 1994, p. 4)

Yunupingu explains the intention of the Treaty song

... to raise public awareness ... so that the government would be encouraged hold to his promise. Though it borrows from rock ‘n’ roll, the whole structure of “Treaty” is driven by the beat of the djatpangarri.... It was an old recording of this historic djatpangarri that triggered the song’s composition. The man who originally created it was my guru (maternal great-grandmother’s husband) (Yunupingu, 1996).

‘His promise’ that Yunupingu refers to was that of the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, to negotiate a Treaty between Indigenous Australians and the Australian Government by 1990, when he accepted the Barunga Statement (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2009) at a cultural festival in the Northern Territory in
1988, the bicentenary of the establishment of the colony of New South Wales (later to become Australia).

That a song with such a potent political message should dominate the music charts for almost six months was extraordinary. Nevertheless, almost all PSTs with whom I have worked admit that, although they were ‘familiar’ with Treaty and could even sing the words, they had never considered the meaning of the lyrics. In 2013 a Treaty has still not been negotiated. It is intriguing to note that Yothu Yindi sang Treaty at the closing ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games (Yothu Yindi, 2000). I often wonder if the government officials who signed off on the closing ceremony program had also ever considered the meaning of the lyrics.

The Barunga Statement is an unequivocal expression of Indigenous demands for recognition of sovereignty, a clear statement of continuing ontological and epistemological self-awareness. I have included the full text of the Barunga Statement below because of its status as a pivotal document in the Australian story, following on from the Yirrkala Bark petitions which are recognised as Founding Documents in that story (National Archives of Australia, 2000–2005):

We, the Indigenous owners and occupiers of Australia, call on the Australian Government and people to recognise our rights:

- to self-determination and self-management, including the freedom to pursue our own economic, social, religious and cultural development;
- to permanent control and enjoyment of our ancestral lands;
- to compensation for the loss of use of our lands, there having been no extinction of original title;
- to protection of and control of access to our sacred sites, sacred objects, artefacts, designs, knowledge and works of art;
- to the return of the remains of our ancestors for burial in accordance with our traditions;
- to respect for and promotion of our Aboriginal identity, including the cultural, linguistic, religious and historical aspects, and including the right to be educated in our own languages and in our own culture and history;
- in accordance with the universal declaration of human rights, the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, the international covenant on civil and political rights, and the international
convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, rights to life, liberty, security of person, food, clothing, housing, medical care, education and employment opportunities, necessary social services and other basic rights.

We call on the Commonwealth to pass laws providing:

- A national elected Aboriginal and Islander organisation to oversee Aboriginal and Islander affairs;
- A national system of land rights;
- A police and justice system which recognises our customary laws and frees us from discrimination and any activity which may threaten our identity or security, interfere with our freedom of expression or association, or otherwise prevent our full enjoyment and exercise of universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We call on the Australian Government to support Aborigines in the development of an international declaration of principles for Indigenous rights, leading to an international covenant.

And we call on the Commonwealth Parliament to negotiate with us a Treaty recognising our prior ownership, continued occupation and sovereignty and affirming our human rights and freedom.

3.6.2 Policy analysis

The policies of successive State and Commonwealth Australian governments, both conservative and Labor, since the formal if not practical end of the policy of assimilation, have sort to address the particular needs of Indigenous students and the inclusion of Indigenous history in school curricula (see Section 1.3 above) so that

All young Australians become ….active and informed citizens….
[who] understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (MCEETYA, 2008, Goal 2, p. 9).

However my research suggests that this inclusion is not widespread in Australian schools and society. In 2007 the market research company Auspoll developed and conducted research (surveys and focus groups) on behalf of Reconciliation Australia, among two separate population groups, non-Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Australians, to create the Australian Reconciliation Barometer Comparative Report 2008 (Reconciliation Australia, 2009).

In answer to the question How would you describe your level of knowledge about the history of Indigenous people in Australia? less than half of non-Indigenous Australians claimed a ‘high’ level of knowledge of Indigenous history (43%) or culture (35%) (Reconciliation Australia, 2009, p. 6). This is despite Territory, State and Commonwealth education policies having encouraged this inclusion for many years. In the VELS students are expected to ‘evaluate the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the fight for civil and political rights and land rights (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2007c).

However despite the policies an Australian story where ‘Indigenous people and their cultures, laws and languages are central to the foundations of the Nation State’ (Patrick Dodson, 2008), is likely to remain an unachievable goal until teacher educators and PSTs consider the hegemony of whiteness and privilege that has camouflaged and cast those struggles to the periphery, able to be ignored in the face of the many demands on teachers’ and students’ time in a crowded curriculum.

3.6.3 Pre-service teacher Surveys

My initial data collection began with anonymous and voluntary surveys of two cohorts
of Victoria University fourth year PSTs in Semesters One and Two, 2008 and 2009. The surveys were distributed to all PSTs and returned to a box, either completed or not, and unnamed. Thus it was not possible to identify individual respondents. It was explained to the PSTs there was no possibility that their participation or non-participation could influence their B.Ed. assessments.

The purpose of the Semester One surveys was to identify the PSTs' recollections of their learning about Indigenous history and contemporary issues in their own Primary and Secondary education, in their university studies and in their teaching placements. Also to find out what questions and issues they might have in regard to including Indigenous perspectives in their own curriculum planning. The Semester Two surveys were to record PSTs’ reflections on and questions arising from their fourth year Course work and from their experiences during their final six week full-time school placements.

The surveys were chosen as a research method for three reasons:

First, the results would provide a snapshot of the experiences and questions of the 2008 and 2009 cohorts of fourth year PSTs. ‘Surveys help identify important beliefs and attitudes of individuals’ (Creswell, 2005, p. 354).

Second, but equally importantly, the surveys would be used to provide data for discussion with those PSTs in lectures and seminars. That is, the PSTs were informed of the results of their collective insights and the range of their questions as part of their work together and with their lecturers. PSTs were able to discuss the collective experiences and attitudes and particular questions from their own cohort. This element of the surveys, that the content was used for reflection and consideration of future action, is consistent with the Praxis Inquiry (PI) Protocol, the practical/theoretical framework of the School of Education at Victoria University:

- a framework of inquiry enabling participants to recognise and reflexively monitor the structural content of education
- a framework of inquiry enabling participants to recognise and reflexively monitor their own actions and their motivations and rationalisations for action (Gudjonsdottir, et. al. 2007, p.167).

This reflection and consideration of future action also connects to Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s insight that ‘to bring about instructional reform, teachers’ potential to be thoughtful and deliberate architects of teaching and learning in their own classrooms must be tapped and supported’ (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 101). The surveys
thus also provided material for the self-study reflections of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers working with those same PSTs, reported in Chapter 5.

Third, the results of the surveys would provide questions for the interviews with the experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, reported in Chapter 6.

In 1996 the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, together with the School of Education, University of New South Wales, published a ‘Model Core Subject Manual’ for Indigenous studies in Australian schools (R. Craven & Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1996). In 2005, results were published of a survey of graduate teachers, five years after they had participated as PSTs in compulsory Indigenous Studies using the NSW materials. Teachers who had undertaken an Indigenous Studies teacher education course reported statistically significant higher scores in relation to 21 Indigenous Studies content areas measured in relation to pedagogy, history, and current issues compared to teachers who have not undertaken such courses. However no significant differences were present for teachers’ self-concepts in relation to their overall ability to teach Aboriginal Studies and to consult with Aboriginal community members:

These results seem to suggest that teacher education courses may not be assisting pre-service teachers to develop appropriate values (Craven, 2005, pp 18-19.)

This data suggests that it is not sufficient for PSTs to have just studied Indigenous subject matter. Teacher educators and PSTs need first to engage with issues of rights and sovereignty if we are really to be able to value Australia’s Indigenous cultures as a key part of the nation’s history, present and future. Second, we need to be self-aware of our roles as active professionals, helping to shape the dimensions of a pedagogy which is responsive to the needs of our students and the demands of social justice and indeed to the policies of governments of all persuasions on Australia. This means examining our privileged position as gatekeepers (Freire, 1972).

3.6.3 Collaborative Self-study

Prior to the commencement of this study I had learned the value of collaboration and reflection on shared work through a number of research projects, including The Done Thing, which explored the experiences of sixty women teachers about their lives and
careers as teachers (Teachers Federation of Victoria, 1986), an Environmental Science thesis completed with three colleagues, *Regional Agreements and sustainability: The land needs its people* (C. Kelly, et al., 1999) and Praxis Inquiry work over three years with colleagues in the third year of the B.Ed. at VU, reported in the *Transformative Pathways* journal article: ‘Our personal and collaborative learning ... has been shaped by a desire to practice and inspire others to find inclusive teaching pedagogies’ (Gudjonsdottir et al., 2007, p. 178). In discussing ‘a key aspect of self-study that is so important to developing a pedagogy of teacher education’, Loughran (2006) notes:

> Being part of the experience is crucial to the development of understanding teaching and learning about teaching … because it is about enacting practices that are sensitive and responsive to the cognitive and affective needs, issues and concerns in teaching and learning about teaching,(Loughran, 2006, p. 17).

Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers working in the two fourth year first Semester Units *Curriculum and Innovation*, and *Change and Social Justice* at VU participated in collaborative planning and reflection to understand and develop who we were becoming as educators, at the same time as we were encouraging the PSTs to understand who they were becoming as teachers. The focus in *Curriculum and Innovation* was on the inclusion of Indigenous themes and an understanding of the school curriculum as the negotiated outcome of personal, cultural and social/socioeconomic interests. In *Change and Social Justice* the focus was on investigating professional knowledge, practice and engagement from the standpoint of education for a socially just society (Victoria University, 2010, p. 144-145).

The collaboration between lecturers, which was explicitly discussed with PSTs during lectures, was also strongly encouraged between PSTs by establishing collaborative Praxis Inquiry working groups in seminars and by constructing research tasks that responded to both the aims of the Units, and equally importantly to their own questions and experiences.

Self-study research is situated within the discourses of the social construction of knowledge, reflective practice and action for social change. The strong presence of collaboration in the practice of self-study of teacher education is a natural response to this ethical and theoretical location (Bodone, Guðjónsdóttir, & Dalmau, 2004, p.743).
In their review of the methodology of self-study, Bodone, Guðjónsdóttir and Dalmau ask ‘Does collaboration narrow the world?’ and ‘What are the subtle processes of confinement of thought and action that occur in homogeneous groups’ (Bodone, et al., 2004 p. 748)? They note Tuhiwai Smith’s warning about the limitations that are likely to occur from homogeneous groups listening only to their own experiences and observations. Such cautions highlight the importance of having Indigenous educators guiding the development of curricula which include Indigenous themes and the value of the messy methods used to capture the elements that can elucidate reconciliatory education perspectives and practices: listening to the voices of the PSTs, the self-study reflections of the teacher educators working with those PSTs and the insights of the experienced educators; examining the historical context and the policy pronouncements and challenging the hegemony of the dominant constructions of knowledge and power that constrain opportunities for reconciliatory education. Such bricolage is underpinned by the notion that ‘research is an interactive process’ produced by many aspects of contexts relating to the researcher and to other actors in the process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 9). Bodone, Guðjónsdóttir and Dalmau (2004) propose that the ‘unique characterization of the "self " in Self-study’ represents a quantum leap in the conceptualization of the role of the researcher and practitioner in educational inquiry (and by extension in the nature and process of research collaboration). The locus of the study of practice has moved from the abstraction, description and analysis of professional work (through statistical, qualitative or action research), to the recognition that the personal/professional identity and action of individuals is intrinsically bound to the creation and renewal of their practice (p. 746).

My research shows there is a reluctance on the part of the majority of PSTs to accept the paradigm of Indigenous cultures being ‘a key part of the nation’s history, present and future’, a reluctance based not only on lack of knowledge but more fundamentally on the hegemonic power of the dominant paradigm to influence what knowledge is seen as valid and legitimate. It is this power which leads to a refusal to accept Indigenous sovereignty, knowledge and experience as critical elements for reconciliatory education and a reconciled society, a process whereby curricular selectivity is directly linked to broader socio-political struggles (Au & Apple, 2009, p. 102).
3.6.4 Conversations with experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators

In theorising the method I have used for interviewing participants in previous studies (Kelly, 1973, Teachers Federation of Victoria, 1986 and Kelly, et al., 1999) I was attracted to Rubin and Rubin’s concept of participants as ‘conversational partners, who have the active role of shaping the discussion and guiding what paths the research should take… as both the interviewer and interviewee work together to achieve a shared understanding’ (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 14). Wolcott (2005) nominates ‘recognising interviewing as an active and creative role’….‘talk less, listen more’ and ‘make questions short and to the point’, singling out active and creative listening as the most important element of effective interviewing (pp 104-105). These delineations of ‘conversational partner’ and being well-informed and well-prepared on the issues involved in the research, but most importantly to listen deeply (Koori Cohort of Researchers, 2011) and to follow the conversational partner where they lead through active and creative listening are at the heart of my methodological approach.

Indigenous researchers have described a process of deep listening. In the Ngangikurungkurr language of the Daly River in the Northern Territory, the word for Deep Listening is ‘Dadirri’ (Ungunmerr 2002) and in the Yorta Yorta language of the Murray River in Victoria, it is ‘Gulpa Ngawal’ (Koori Cohort of Researchers, 2011):

Dadirri is … a deep listening and quiet, still awareness…. We wait for white people to understand us better. The learning and the listening should go both ways. We would like people in Australia to take time to listen to us. We are hoping people will come closer. We keep on longing for the things that we have always hoped for—respect and understanding…..If our culture is alive and strong and respected, it will grow. We will not die and our spirit will not die. I believe the spirit of Dadirri that we have to offer all of you will blossom and grow, not just within ourselves, but in our whole country (Goreng Goreng, Atkinson, & Bolton, 2008).

Indigenous Australian epistemologies and praxis point to the critical importance of listening and of building relationships. For non-Indigenous educators this highlights the importance of working with Indigenous educators in our research and in our work with PSTs. As the Koori researchers at RMIT University explain their methodology:

The closest we can get to describing it in English is deep and respectful listening which builds community. Deep Listening
draws on many senses beyond what is simply heard. It can take place in silence.

Deep Listening describes a way of learning, working and being together. It is informed by the concepts of community and reciprocity. It means listening with a sense of responsibility to stories that are told. It also means listening and observing the self as well (Atkinson, 2001). Deep Listening involves listening respectfully. It draws on every sense and every part of our being. It can happen in silence. It takes time. Deep Listening can be used as a research methodology and as a way of being together.

Deep Listening is based on stories, silences and the spaces that lie between. As a research methodology, the practice of Deep Listening is an invitation into culturally congruent ways of learning and knowing. Epistemologically, it incorporates multiple ways of knowing and multi-vocal texts such as narrative, digital story-telling, poetic text, theatre and music (Koori Cohort of Researchers, 2011).

The preamble to the *Bringing Them Home* Report into the forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families explains why it is important to remember the past, but also to commit to positive action...

...the past is very much with us today, in the continuing devastation of the lives of Indigenous Australians. That devastation cannot be addressed unless the whole community listens with an open heart and mind to the stories of what has happened in the past and, having listened and understood, commits itself to reconciliation (R. D. Wilson, 1997)

The experience of the Stolen Generations is a critical area nominated by PSTs as shocking them into a realisation of how little they knew about Indigenous history as part of the story of Australia, a story that needs reconstructing, both in terms of what has been omitted from most school texts; and in terms of what we as a nation are going to do about it; how are we to reconstruct our identity and institutions to include, respect and honour the First Peoples of this country? In dialectic relationship with Indigenous methodologies, the framework of Critical Theory supports educators to understand the Stolen Generations’ stories as sites of survival and resistance rather than sorrow and disempowerment; which is not to diminish the grief of families being torn apart, but to challenge PSTs to forgo a welfare perspective and replace it with the lens of Indigenous strength and resilience.
The purposive (Patton, 1990) selection of experienced educators for this research is based on my knowledge of their work over many years and a methodological commitment to the power of stories to inspire positive action to contribute to social justice. All the educators have stories to tell about their experiences, attitudes and actions that have contributed to reconciliation – even though that word may not have been used at the time. I know all the educators through their work and some of them through long personal friendships. Their stories cast light on the themes raised by the surveys of the PSTs: how little exposure Australians have to respectful engagement with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge and experience; and the hegemony of the dominant discourse which results in prejudice and exclusion. Koori researchers, Rose, Bamblett and Paton, refer to the power of stories in their explanations of their Indigenous methodologies:

If the research is truly aimed at bringing about significant paradigm shifts, then it needs to be read and interpreted by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.... Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers need to draw from the pool of both western and Indigenous research methodologies.

Research which crosses the bridge into multiple ways of knowing and being has the potential to foster the development and expression of authentic identity and to make a rich contribution to our collective knowledge and wisdom (Mark Rose).

Everyone has a story and every story is important. Stories are pictures painted with words on life’s canvas and they have within them the power to transform and inspire (Esme Bamblett).

Narratives are imbued with multiple meanings. Listening to the different voices within narratives is a culturally appropriate ontology for Indigenous people.... narrative [opens] up a space for voice where power, authority and representation can be heard, in particular the voices of the most vulnerable, those most often not heard.... Indigenous narrative is not solely personal but is deeply communal (Doris Paton). (M. Rose, Bamblett, & Paton, 2012).

I am certainly not assuming by referencing the methods of these Indigenous researchers that I should or could reproduce their epistemological and ontological perspectives. I am honouring their knowledge and the insights they offer regarding the
power of stories. I am very much interested in whether we, Indigenous and non-Indigenous together, can bring about the paradigm shift that Rose posits. This big question is at the heart of my research into how teacher educators can support pre-service teachers to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum. The recommendations from Indigenous educators, Territory, State and Commonwealth policy makers, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in Custody, the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, reports and education materials from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2005, 2007a, 2007 b) all hope we can respond to Yu’s fundamental challenge (1998, p. 9). The experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators provide inspiration, through their commitment to social justice, that we will be able to find each other on the path of knowledge.

In 1999 I interviewed participants in a Regional Land Use Agreement on Cape York Peninsula for a Master of Environmental Science thesis: \textit{Regional agreements and sustainability: The land needs its people} to discover how, as representatives of Indigenous people, local and State governments, the Cattlemen’s Union, conservationists, bauxite miners and business people, and thus from apparently opposing constituencies and points-of-view, they came to such a detailed and unanimous agreement ‘to work together to develop a management regime for ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable land use’ (Kelly, et.al., 1999, p. 1). One of the most significant outcomes was that, by listening to stories of care for the land by the Indigenous members, and particularly by the Elders from different communities who came to each meeting, the non-Indigenous participants came to understand that ‘the land needs its people’. The insight slowly developed amongst the non-Indigenous members that what western eyes saw as wilderness was in fact highly managed country and, for that country to stay healthy, the rights of the Indigenous custodians must be protected and enhanced. This epistemological insight has continued to influence my appreciation of the need to listen, respect and learn from Indigenous ways of seeing and knowing and the need to hear and respond to the demand for sovereignty.

Listening to people’s stories has also provided a productive format for PSTs to appreciate the insights that can come from listening to people’s life experiences and points-of-view. I have seen initial apprehension from PSTs, when asked to interview a student or colleague, transform into a reflective appreciation of the power of research, questions, dialogue and, perhaps most powerfully, of listening.
In the conversations in this study I endeavoured to provide space for the educators to explain their experiences and reflections at the same time as responding to prepared questions which connected to issues raised by the PSTs in their surveys.

The content of the interview is focused on the issues that are central to the research question, but the type of questioning and discussion allow for greater flexibility than does the survey style interview (Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., & Alexander, L. 1995, p. 65).

My prepared questions probed the broad categories of contextual, diagnostic, evaluative and strategic as outlined by Huberman and Miles (Miles & Huberman 2002):

- **Contextual**: What are the dimensions of attitudes or perceptions that are held? What exposure to Indigenous history and contemporary themes did the interviewees have in their own schooling and what effect did this have?
- **Diagnostic**: Why are services or programmes not being used? What do the interviewees believe is impeding the inclusion of Indigenous history and contemporary themes in educational settings and in the dominant discourse?
- **Evaluative**: How do experiences effect subsequent behaviours? What inspired the interviewee to take action to contribute to support Indigenous demands?
- **Strategic**: What actions are necessary to make programmes or services more effective? How can schools and those seeking to effect positive change work towards implementing the policy demands?

In practice the conversations with the experienced educators were about listening, with the author actually doing very little talking. We understood our common ground and our common motivation towards social justice and reconciliation.

### 3.7 Authenticity, Bias and Credibility

The evidence in this study, which seeks to resist the colonial control of knowledge and its transmission, is a challenge to the bias of research that appears neutral because of its conformity to the status quo of hegemonic discourse (Carspecken & Apple, 1992).

Professor Raewyn Connell suggests that

...no one with hands-on experience in empirical research will doubt the difficulty of using complex evidence and establishing
firm conclusions. Every method in social science has its controversies. Yet even the most controversial methods – oral history, for instance – allow inference from evidence, if not always the evidence that naive positivism expects (Connell, 2007. p. 226 - 227).

The critical, collaborative research involving pre-service teachers, self-study between lecturers working with those PSTs and experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators reported in this study, presents experiences and insights from a variety of perspectives. The experiences, questions and observations of the participants in this study present a ‘shared, public learning process’ (Connell, 2007. p. 226) helping to open pathways towards learning and teaching for reconciliation. As Worby, Rigney and Tur conclude

Reconciliation is not to be achieved by recipe: add Indigenous people and stir…. [it] means working together to achieve a meeting of different but equally significant knowledges and knowledge systems, of staff sharing space, of students sharing culturally sensitive and informed and sustained Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches to learning in context, of salt water continually meeting fresh (Worby, Rigney, & Ulalka Tur, 2006).

The painting below by Victorian Indigenous artist Lin Onus shows a River Red Gum forest on the River Murray, significant to local Aboriginal communities. PSTs see the painting as suggesting the loss of pieces of the jigsaw that connects the web of life (author’s notes, May 2009). The question for teacher educators is can we recognise the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous epistemologies such that the knowledge of the Elders can help to restore sustainability? Can we, as Arabena asks us to, listen to ‘the holders of the oldest ecological knowledge in the world [who] are being forced to participate in education, political and modern systems that have little regard for that knowledge (Arabena, 2010).

![Image](Figure 22) Lin Onus 1994 Barmah Forest (Neale & Eather, 2000)
In the next Chapter I present the results of the surveys of fourth-year PSTs conducted twice yearly in 2008 and 2009 at VU and reflect on the themes which emerge from the data through lecture and seminar discussions of the experiences and questions of those PSTs.
Chapter 4  Listening to pre-service teachers

Grandfather walked this land in chains
   A land he called his own
He was given another name
   And taken into town….

Mama gave birth to a stranger’s child
   A child she called her own
Strangers came and took away that child
   To a stranger’s home….

My father worked a twelve hour day
   As a stockman on the station
The very same work, but not the same pay
   As his white companions…. 

Yeah we got special treatment
   Special treatment
Very special treatment

From Special Treatment (P. Kelly, 1992)

4.1  Special Treatment

The purpose of this chapter is to report and analyse the responses of two cohorts of pre-service teachers who completed voluntary and anonymous surveys conducted twice yearly, in 2008 and 2009, about their own educational experiences and their questions regarding learning and teaching about Indigenous Australia. The PSTs were all students in a fourth year Victoria University (VU) Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) pedagogy Unit, Curriculum and Innovation, at the Footscray Park campus. In 2009 their lecturers, who were also their tutors, were the three colleagues whose collaborative self-study reflections are reported in Chapter 5. The most important purpose for this data collection was to provide evidence for discussion with the PSTs in lectures and seminars. That is, the PSTs were informed of the results of their collective insights and the range of their questions as part of their work together and with their lecturers. PSTs were able to discuss their collective experiences and attitudes and particular questions from their own cohort. This element of the surveys, that the content was used for reflection and consideration of future action, is consistent with the Praxis Inquiry (PI) Protocol, the practical/theoretical framework of the School of Education at Victoria University, ‘a framework of inquiry enabling participants to recognise and reflexively monitor the structural content of education….and reflexively monitor their own actions and their motivations and rationalisations for action (Gudjonsdottir, et. al. 2007, p.167).

This reflection and consideration of future action also connects to Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s insight that ‘to bring about instructional reform, teachers’ potential to be
thoughtful and deliberate architects of teaching and learning in their own classrooms
must be tapped and supported’ (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 101).

The chapter begins with Paul Kelly’s song lyrics above because they speak directly to
an issue raised by PSTs in those surveys and in Curriculum and Innovation seminars
during the two years of the surveys. The lyrics challenge the stated opinions of some
PSTs, and those in the Australian population, who oppose school and university
curricula investigating the events and issues in Australian history which demonstrate
the circumstances of Indigenous dispossession and resistance and who believe that
Indigenous Australians get special treatment in the form of ‘more than their fair share’
from government ‘handouts’.

The most recent educational expression of that opposition to school curricula exploring
the circumstances of Indigenous dispossession and resistance was in the Years 9 and
10 compulsory history curriculum put forward by Prime Minister John Howard in 2007.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives were included amongst nine other
perspectives. ‘For most of the long span of human occupation of Australia, prior to
European settlement, the Indigenous experience defines Australian history. Since
1788, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives inform central aspects of
Australian history, providing a vital point of reference in understanding themes covered
in a study of Australian history’ (Blainey, Brown, Henderson, & Ward, 2007). However
there was little in the document to elucidate what those central aspects might be, or to
support an understanding of the continuing Indigenous social, political and economic
participation in the Australian story, which challenge The Australia Book (Pownall &
Senior, 1952) version of Australian history. In the end, that curriculum was never
implemented due to the conservatives’ loss of government at the 2007 election. The
newly elected Labor government had promised it would deliver a national curriculum for
Australian schools. The new Australian Curriculum will begin in 2013. In Victoria it will
be known as the AusVELS. I explore the opportunities for the inclusion of Indigenous
themes in school curricula in the Australian Curriculum and AusVELS in Chapter 7.

Kelly’s lyrics put the ‘special treatment’ of Aboriginal people into its historical context.
At the end of this chapter, the Indigenous hip hop group, The Last Kinfection, depict a
contemporary context for ‘special treatment’ of Aboriginal people in their explanation of
why they wrote their song I still call Oz home (The Last Kinfection, 2008). I have used
both these songs in my teaching to explore with PSTs the dimensions of the question of
‘special treatment’ and what it means to be ‘Australian’.

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4.2 Background

The work with PSTs being examined in this research is based on the proposition that any class in any Australian school could include Indigenous children. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Indigenous Population Distribution Map below shows that almost one third, (32%) of the estimated resident Indigenous population resided in Major Cities; 21% lived in Inner Regional areas; 22% in Outer Regional areas; 10% in Remote areas and 16% in Very Remote areas. In other words, 74% of Indigenous people live in Major Cities, Inner Regional areas and Outer Regional areas. Moreover the Indigenous population has a much younger age structure than the non-Indigenous population. At June 30, 2006 there were more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in younger age groups compared with older age groups and the median age of the Indigenous population (the age where half the population is younger) was 21 years. In contrast, in the non-Indigenous population, there were more people in the older age groups compared with the younger age groups, and the median age was 37 years. Children aged under 15 years comprised 38% of the total Indigenous population (compared with 19% in the non-Indigenous population); people aged 15-24 years comprised 19% of the Indigenous population (compared with 14% in the non-Indigenous population) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Moreover all children in Australia should know about the history and contemporary circumstances of the First Peoples of the land, as per government expectations going
Reconstructing the Australian story: Learning and Teaching for Reconciliation

back more than twenty years to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, ‘to provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989). So whilst in Curriculum and Innovation the focus of our work with PSTs was not specifically to develop curricula for Indigenous students we were certainly cognisant of the policy expectations for teachers to respond to the needs of Indigenous students, for example, Wannink: ‘Learning Together- Journey to Our Future’ (State of Victoria, 2008b), Dardee Boorai: The Victorian charter of safety and wellbeing for Aboriginal children and young people (State of Victoria, 2008a) and Balert Boorron: The Victorian Plan for Aboriginal children and young people (2010–2020) (State of Victoria, 2010). There are also a number of excellent programs we introduced to PSTs which present curriculum materials and ways of working with Indigenous children and families, such as What Works, an initiative to which Davina Woods was a major contributor (David McRae, et al., 2002). What Works is explored further in Chapter 5.

As educators we should be confident that our curriculum is inclusive of who we are as Australians and respectful and engaging for all students, including Indigenous students whose understanding of the world learned in their families and communities is often not included in the curriculum in mainstream schools (Paton, 2011). The Koorie Open Door Education (KODE) schools in Victoria, until they were recently closed, and Worawa College (Worawa Aboriginal College, 2011), provided alternative schooling for Indigenous students. Jan Muller, whose experiences are recorded in Chapter 5, was Principal of the Swan Hill KODE school from 1995-2000. Of the 8,500 Victorian Koorie students, 89% are in government schools, of which two-thirds have at least one Koorie student enrolled. In 2007, of the 1538 government schools in Victoria, 1,025 had Koorie students; 72 schools had 20 or more Koorie students and 200 schools had 10 or more (State of Victoria, 2008b). All these schools are on Aboriginal land, as per the Welcome to Country / Acknowledgement of Country and recognition of Elders given at many school assemblies. I encourage the PSTs with whom I work to include in the words that adorn their classrooms the name of the language group/Nation whose land their school occupies. For example, if the school is on Wurundjeri land then the word ‘Wurundjeri’ (‘people’) and ‘Wominjeka’ meaning ‘welcome’ could be displayed along with other significant words. One PST noted in their End of Semester 2008 Survey:

_The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags were displayed at Assembly. The students who ran the Assembly would acknowledge the Kulin nation - which_
However this response was not replicated in most of the survey returns. As noted in Chapter 1 teachers have been expected, through numerous State and Commonwealth education policies for two decades in Australia, to respond to Indigenous disadvantage and exclusion by including Indigenous perspectives in their curricula and also by providing appropriate programs and support for Indigenous children (State of Victoria, 2008b, State of Victoria, 2008a, State of Victoria, 2010). But they have had little support to do either of these tasks through university teacher education courses or through in-service professional development. The following Table shows that in Victoria a total of 5.5% of teachers in 2000 had preparation for teaching Indigenous Studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>VIC</th>
<th>QLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-S only</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-S only</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Pre- &amp; In-S</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>100.</td>
<td>100.</td>
<td>100.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Twelve years later, these teachers are likely to still be teaching and will often be in leadership positions in schools. This means that pre-service and graduate teachers will
in most cases be working with senior colleagues who have little experience with the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula.

Advice and guidance from Indigenous educators is a critical element to support that inclusion. But this is also often hard to access as the demands on peoples’ time go far beyond the time available. Sometimes this difficulty in finding available time is seen as insurmountable by PSTs and teachers. Sometimes it is difficult for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people of goodwill to understand where each is coming from.

As Professor Paul Hughes said in 1999, addressing a large group of Aboriginal teachers and community representatives at an Indigenous Education Conference in Fremantle

> Nearly all of the teachers working with our children are non-Aboriginal and that will be so in the foreseeable future. Most teachers have good hearts and want the best for all the children in their class. If you mob keep bashin’ the teachers round the head then you won’t be helping the Indigenous kids in their classes (quoted in Nichol, 2009, p.2).

4.3 Curriculum and Innovation

In 2006, the then Head of the VU School of Education approached two lecturers, the author and Neil Hooley, whose work had demonstrated an interest and level of knowledge and experience of working with Indigenous colleagues in various educational settings, to write the curriculum for the Civics and Citizenship elements of the fourth year P-12 Bachelor of Education Unit Curriculum and Innovation, to respond to the new Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), the Preparatory to Year 10 curriculum for Victorian schools. According to the Unit Outline which I participated in writing, Curriculum and Innovation provided the opportunity for ‘PSTs [to] be involved in integrating Indigenous Australian culture and history into the school curriculum’ (Victoria University, 2009) through

- an examination of how schools and teachers generate curriculum innovations which engage students in learning through the integration of multiple learning areas and disciplines
- an inquiry into Indigenous Australia with Civics and Citizenship Education
setting up the classroom for authentic inquiry-based learning (eg student groupings; individual/group/whole class activities); negotiating the curriculum;

formative and summative assessment strategies, anecdotal observations and authentic assessment approaches such as student learning portfolios and student self-assessment....

The Learning Outcomes expected of PSTs include being able to:

- Review their personal understanding and the practices of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment approaches required of the successful graduating teacher;

- Generate a personal commitment to, and understanding of, innovation in education;

- Undertake a successful collaborative curriculum/pedagogy innovation project with an explicit social justice intent including the trialling and evaluation of the resources with mentors and school students (Victoria University, 2009)

However discussion with PSTs in University seminars during 2006 and 2007, and during the period of the surveys (2008-2009), regarding their experiences in their school placements and the evidence from the surveys reported below, suggested that many teachers do not feel willing or able to teach such content. Other research supports this evidence (Clark, 2008), (Price & Hughes, 2009). ‘In the 1990’s the use of the word “invasion” to describe European colonisation in some teaching resources... sparked slanging matches in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria... [which still] reverberate today’ (Clark, 2008, p. 4).

So five years ago, when we were beginning to implement the inclusion of Indigenous themes in Curriculum and Innovation, we were faced, as non-Indigenous lecturers, with a huge task. We wanted to ensure that the PSTs were introduced to ideas and resources which explored important events in Australian history that involved Indigenous peoples and to contemporary issues of concern to Indigenous Australians. The reality that most Australians know little about many important events in Australian history concerning the Indigenous nations and peoples of this country (see the Reconciliation Barometer results reported in Chapter 2), was confronting and frustrating to the PSTs in Curriculum and Innovation. They expressed this frustration with comments ranging from ‘not the bloody abos again’ (lecture theatre, Melton campus,
2006); to ‘we know so little we can’t possibly include this content in our teaching’. These comments are part of a spectrum of denial which ranges from outright antagonism, through to resistance for a range of reasons, including ‘we already know all this’, to a supposed ‘lack of resources’. Anna Clark’s surveys of teachers and students across Australia also found similar animosity amongst some students. Prior to being interviewed by Clark a teacher talked to one of his year 12 students who said ‘all they’d had banged into them was the black armband view’, and ‘woe is us’ and ‘we’re all bastards’ (Clark, 2008, p.70). Many of the students Clark interviewed made comments like ‘Oh we’ve done it before’, and ‘we looked at Aboriginal lifestyle forever’ (Clark, 2008, p.66). ‘This general sense of disinterest was compounded by a number of students who rejected Indigenous history altogether’ (Clark, 2008, p. 69). But like the PSTs in my surveys, Clark also reports that ‘students haven’t been completely closed off from Indigenous history – it’s just that most have had very sporadic approaches to the topic, with far too much repetition and not enough material they can engage with’ (Clark, 2008, p.87).

There were PSTs in Curriculum and Innovation who expressed concern that they had not had the chance to learn about Indigenous leaders and social and political history that included Indigenous participants during their own schooling and that they felt completely unprepared for including Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning.

Such comments over a number of years, impelled me to pursue this study, to put the VU School of Education Praxis Inquiry Protocol into practice by using PSTs’ own experiences and questions to guide the Curriculum and Innovation lectures and seminars and to support them in researching appropriate content and pedagogies for the inclusion of Australian Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. I wanted to continue to strengthen my commitment to listening to pre-service teachers’ questions and to rejecting the ‘you must know these facts’ model of learning and teaching. The greatest challenge for lecturers is to resist the temptation to tell the students what they should know- what Marlowe and Page (Marlowe & Page, 2005, p. 112) call ‘the potency of teacher commitment to thinking about teaching as information dispensing’. This means encouraging the PSTs to firstly understand themselves and their own assumptions and secondly to listen to Indigenous educators, to be respectful and empathetic, to value inclusion, to want to know, and to want to change.

Teacher education always occurs in a particular time and place. The goal of reconciliation has been an ongoing moral and ethical imperative for some teacher educators and programs, and has guided the vision of quality teacher education aimed at
social justice and equity in those programs (Reid, 2009, p.13).

During this period the VU School of Education employed two Indigenous lecturers. The difference this made for non-Indigenous lecturers and PSTs has been significant (see Chapter 5, self-study reflections and Davina Woods’ story in Chapter 6). The shared commitment from Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators challenged and supported the PSTs to explore the history and contemporary circumstances of the Indigenous peoples of Australia. This theme is explored more in Chapter 5. PSTs were now asking questions such as ‘shouldn’t we be using the word invasion?’ (author’s seminar group, Footscray Park campus, May 2009). In exploring the world views (epistemologies) being called upon in debating the use of ‘invasion’ vs. ‘settlement’ we would consider the history and current understandings of the term ‘colonisation’. Prior to Federation in 1901, the British Colonial Office, headed by the British Colonial Secretary, was British government authority responsible for the affairs of the colonies of the British Empire, including the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia. The terms ‘colony’ and ‘colonial’ were official. By examining this often forgotten aspect of our history, we were able to agree in class discussions that the terminology of ‘colonialism’ is accurate and appropriate. All of this, the antagonism of some, and the lack of knowledge of most PSTs, regarding critical issues and events in Australian history, particularly involving Indigenous peoples, led me to ask them about their experiences and questions regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning.

4.4 Overview of the Pre-service Teacher Surveys

In March 2008 and March 2009 I surveyed fourth year B.Ed. PSTs, at the beginning of their final years, regarding their recollections of learning about Indigenous history and contemporary issues in their own primary and secondary education, in their university studies, and in their school placements throughout their Degrees. I also wanted to discover what questions and issues the PSTs might have in regard to including Indigenous perspectives in their curriculum planning.

In September 2008 and 2009, I surveyed the same two cohorts of PSTs, to record their reflections on and questions arising from their fourth year Course work and from their experiences during their Semester Two six week full-time school placements.
The surveys were distributed to PSTs by all the fourth year lecturers and returned on a voluntary basis to a single box under the control of the head of School, either completed or not, and unnamed. Thus it was not possible to identify individual respondents. I explained the purposes of the March surveys in Chapter 3:

- to provide a snapshot of the PSTs own school and community experiences, their experiences in their school placements and their questions regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes, of the 2008 and 2009 cohorts of fourth year PSTs.

- to provide their own data for discussion with PSTs in seminars and lectures. This purpose was the most important. That is, PSTs were advised of the results of their collective insights and questions; so that those experiences and questions informed their work together and with their lecturers. PSTs were listening to evidence from their own cohort regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes in curriculum planning. This element of the surveys, that the content was used for reflection and consideration of future action, is consistent with the Praxis Inquiry (PI) Protocol, the practical/theoretical framework of the School of Education at Victoria University.

- to support the collaborative self-study reflections of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers working together in *Curriculum and Innovation*, reported in Chapter 5.

- to reveal questions for the conversations with experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, presented in Chapter 6.

Like Clark (2008, pp. 17-18), after conducting the surveys, I embedded myself in the words of the PSTs, in their responses to the survey questions, in the consequent discussions and class work, and in the collaborative self-study conducted with colleagues in *Curriculum and Innovation* reported in Chapter 5. The data from these surveys has informed my thinking and pedagogical responses since the initial collection. As well as trying to support the inclusion of Indigenous themes in the PSTs’
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curriculum planning, I was trying to understand why, despite the two decades of policy and curriculum guidelines, this inclusion was not widely being implemented.

4.5 PST Surveys March 2008 and 2009

The March survey questions are recorded below. Six dotted lines were available below each question for PST comments.

1. What have you learned about Indigenous people, their history and contemporary circumstances:
   a) In primary school?
   b) In secondary school?
   c) Through other avenues, eg family, youth groups?
   d) Through the media – TV, film, radio, music and the arts?
   e) At University?

2. What have you learned about Indigenous people, their history and contemporary circumstances?

3. What are your questions about Indigenous culture and history?

4. List up to 3 factors beyond the classroom that you think impact on the inclusion of Indigenous culture and history in the curriculum?

5. List up to 3 examples that you have seen or experienced of positive and/or negative discrimination towards Indigenous people? How did these make you feel?

6. Describe up to 3 strong or weak examples of lessons, Units of Work and/or University classes that have included Indigenous culture and history?

7. What would you like to learn this semester about including Indigenous culture and history in the curriculum?

8. What would you like to learn this semester about inclusive pedagogical approaches that support learning for all students?

9. Any other questions/comments?
Selected PST responses to the Semester One surveys are reported below together with some self-study reflections on the data from fourth year lectures and seminars at the time. Further self-study reflections discussed between lecturers in the *Curriculum and Innovation* Unit during 2009 are reported in Chapter 5.

The Semester One surveys were conducted at the beginning of the PSTs’ final year of their four year degrees. In my experience over many years of mentoring PSTs as a teacher in my own school classrooms, of working with other teacher mentors in their classrooms with PSTs, and in B.Ed. Course work, I have observed that at the beginning of their final year, the majority of PSTs are both unsure of their preparedness to become graduate teachers and sure that they are ready to ‘step into their classrooms and shut the door’. They are both confident that they have learned a great deal in their teacher training and insecure in worrying that they have not been exposed to enough research and experience to be successful teachers.

The following themes emerged strongly from the Semester One surveys. I have reported statistical results where possible. The open-ended nature of the survey questions means that themes which emerged flowed between questions and I have reported on the major themes which emerged from the data. PST responses are italicised.

4.5.1 Little or no inclusion of appropriate Indigenous themes in Primary and Secondary schooling

- In 2008, looking back at their own Primary schooling
  - 25/107 (23%) of PSTs reported that they learned ‘nothing’ about Indigenous peoples, history or contemporary circumstances at primary school.
  - 37/107 (35%) of PSTs did ‘dot paintings’, ‘dreamtime stories’ and ‘what they eat’.

- In 2009, looking back at their own Primary schooling
  - 46/123 (37%) of PSTs reported that they learned ‘nothing’ about Indigenous peoples, history or contemporary circumstances at primary school.
  - 37/123 (30%) of PSTs did ‘dot paintings’, ‘dreamtime stories’ and ‘what they eat’.
These results can be aggregated as 67% of PSTs who returned their surveys reported ‘nothing’ or only exposure to the ‘exotic other’ perspective of events and ideas concerning Australian Indigenous peoples, history or contemporary circumstances in their own Primary schooling. This evidence supports work by Craven (2005) which also reports a lack of inclusion of Indigenous themes. The apparently incomplete numbers are explained by the fact that many PSTs did not respond to every question. I have selected results for this analysis which throw light on the work in lectures and seminars with PSTs in relation to the outcomes being pursued in *Curriculum and Innovation*. These discussions are also explored in Chapter 5. The designation of ‘dot paintings’, ‘dreamtime stories’ and ‘what they eat’ as ‘little exposure’, as falling within the paradigm of observing the ‘exotic other’ is discussed in Section 4.5.2 below.

- In 2008 (56/107) PSTs reported that they learned *nothing* or had *little exposure* to Indigenous knowledge in their own Secondary schooling.
- In 2009 (67/123) PSTs reported that they learned *nothing* or had *little exposure* to Indigenous knowledge in their own Secondary schooling.

These results can be aggregated as 62% of PSTs who returned their surveys had limited connection to Indigenous knowledge in their Secondary schooling. This is despite the precursor to VELS, the Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF), in operation between 1995-2005 when most of the PSTs were school students, expecting that Year 10 students would ‘Analyse the movement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for civil and political rights [which would be evident when the student is able to]

- identify which civil and political rights were denied the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- analyse the reasons why civil and political rights were denied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- outline the different ways in which the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities campaigned for civil and political rights
- evaluate the degree to which the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been successful in their campaigns’. (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2002c).

In fact, as shown in Chapter 5, the CSF (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2002b & 2002c) included so many other items for student learning, that Indigenous themes could easily be seen as not being able (or necessary) to be
completed within a perceived ‘crowded curriculum’. This situation was repeated in the VELS, in operation when these PSTs were in their B.Ed. school placements. I explore these curriculum guidelines further in Chapter 5.

4.5.2 Respecting Indigenous epistemologies in the classroom

The dot painting results (30-35% of PSTs reported doing dot paintings) always provoked the strongest debate when discussed with PSTs during seminars regarding appropriate content for including Indigenous themes in school curricula. Many PSTs in my seminars argued strongly that getting children to complete dot paintings was a good way for students to ‘understand Indigenous culture’. They had done this activity themselves as primary school students; they had observed it in their placements; their mentor teachers were strongly in favour; and it was ‘fun’. The question asked in seminars ‘what understanding of Indigenous culture do you learn from doing a dot painting?’ was challenging. When it was suggested that ‘dot paintings’ are representations of cultural, scientific and spiritual knowledge by custodians of that knowledge from the nations of the central desert areas of Australia; and therefore for non-Indigenous people to pretend to reproduce that knowledge for fun was not respectful – the PSTs initially struggled with comparisons to the status of other spiritual belief systems, such as Christianity, Islam or Judaism. They accepted that teachers would be concerned not to offend those belief systems; but they were challenged by the proposal that Indigenous cultural and spiritual belief systems were equally significant.

The idea that Indigenous Australian peoples’ ways of knowing are epistemological and ontological; and that their status is comparable to the previously mentioned systems, challenges the assumption that Indigenous peoples’ cultural, scientific and spiritual knowledge are ‘myths’ believed by ‘primitive people’. These discussions would continue in seminars throughout fourth year, and begin again the next year with the next cohort of PSTs. We would come to appreciate that that while no teacher would be thinking that doing dot paintings could be disrespectful, knowledge of the significance of cultural and spiritual beliefs cast a different light on the activity.

These discussions provided an opportunity to reflect on the power of the dominant paradigm whereby we accept the observation of the exotic ‘other’ as ‘learning about Indigenous people’ and instead to investigate the coexistence of Indigenous epistemologies. Certainly the visual arts provide rich opportunity for such investigation.
For example, the Koorie Heritage Trust Newsletter for Indigenous visual artists living and working in South-eastern Australia is called *No Dots Down Here* (B. Cole, 2009-10). The Trust has also produced a beautiful book portraying the diversity of Victorian Aboriginal culture through art works and stories from the early nineteenth century to the present day (Keeler, Couzens, & Trust, 2010) as well as running sessions for teachers and students. The National Gallery of Victoria also runs professional development for teachers and sessions for students to explore their Indigenous collection so it is possible to ‘learn about Indigenous culture’ by listening to Victorian Indigenous educators. I explore these opportunities further in Chapter 7.

Consideration was equally given to the proposition that getting children to write their own ‘dreamtime’ stories to ‘understand Indigenous people’ was also problematic in the same way that pretending to write a story or verse for the Bible, the Koran or the Torah would be – activities that teachers would eschew. On the other hand, listening to Dreaming stories written by Indigenous authors, learning from Indigenous guests, and talking and thinking about the ideas being presented in those stories (how the land came to be shaped and inhabited; how to behave and why; where to find certain foods, respecting your Elders, taking care of each other and the plants and animals, amongst many such themes) are respectful and engaging activities.

Education has always been an important part of Aboriginal culture. Elders passed on the culture and way of life to children through intricate stories and styles of play that developed and expanded, as the children grew older. This form of education gave the children all the knowledge and skills required to respect and care for their family, take part in ritual life, understand plants and animals, and to live in harmony with their land (Koorie Heritage Trust, State Library of Victoria, Film Victoria, & Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2007).

4.5.3 Stolen Generations as a way of knowing about Indigenous culture?

- In 2008 (56/107) PSTs reported learning about the Stolen Generations in their own Secondary schooling.
- In 2009 (63/123) PSTs reported learning about the Stolen Generations in their own Secondary schooling.

PSTs reported discussing the novel *Follow the rabbit proof fence* (Doris Pilkington Garimara, 2002) and viewing the film based on the book, *Rabbit proof fence* (Noyce,
2009) and reading the Play Stolen (J. Harrison, 2002). The Stolen Generations is a confronting issue for these young Australians who are at the end of thirteen years of schooling and four years at university and who are about to become educators themselves. In the words of one PST

Why did the ‘Stolen Generations’ happen?
How can I learn more about this part of Australian history?
Why is this not taught in more depth in schools?

While 119/230 PSTs reported learning about the Stolen Generations in their Secondary schooling, seminar groups would still express shock when they discovered the length of time and the extent of the events that took place. They had not generally understood that Doris Pilkington’s story was repeated across the country and across generations (R. D. Wilson & Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997). The opportunity to collect resources for engaging their own students in research on this topic was valued by the fourth year PSTs, especially resources for Primary school children; for example, the primary school version of Follow the rabbit proof fence written by Pilkington, Home to Mother (Doris Pilkington Garimara & Lyndon, 2006), Marj Hill’s Stories of the Stolen Generations (Hill, 2008) and Archie Roach’s poignant song Took the children away (Roach, 1990), viewable on Youtube (Roach, 2009), which has recently been produced as a children’s book (Roach, 2010) with artwork by Ruby Hunter. This song, like many of the songs listened to in seminars, surprised the PSTs on a number of levels. As well as being disturbed by the meaning of the words, they were also perturbed by the fact that they had actually not thought before about the meaning of the words. The Yothu Yindi song Treaty (Yindi, 1996) and the Kev Carmody/Paul Kelly song From big things little things grow (Carmody, 1993), about the 1966 Gurundji strike and Land Rights (National Archives of Australia, 2012) are similar examples where PSTs were taken aback by their apparently ‘knowing the song’ but not actually knowing the words or the meaning of the words.

The Stolen Generations discussions were an important place where an appreciation of Indigenous peoples resistance to invasion and its consequences could be understood. Indigenous peoples are survivors of what Indigenous activist and historian Gary Foley (Re-thinking Australian Studies lecture, VU, April 2012) calls an apartheid system of rules and punishments, for example for leaving Reserves without permission. It is the strength and resilience of the resistance to the attempts to control Aboriginal peoples’ lives, which shows itself in the literature, music and theatre we discussed in Curriculum and Innovation, in response to the PSTs experiences and questions revealed in the surveys. The stories from Davina Woods and Bruce Pascoe in Chapter 6 also offer
examples of resistance and resilience as well as offering inspiration that as educators we can reconstruct the Australian story to include recognition and respect for Indigenous knowledge and experience.

4.5.4 PST questions from the March 2008 and 2009 surveys

The second, but most important purpose of the March surveys was to provide real data for discussion with PSTs in lectures and seminars. That is, PSTs were informed of the results of their collective insights and the range of their questions; so that those experiences and questions informed their work together and with their lecturers. PSTs were listening to evidence from their own cohort regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes in curriculum planning. This element of the surveys, that the content was used for reflection and consideration of future action, is consistent with the Praxis Inquiry (PI) Protocol, the practical/theoretical framework of the School of Education at Victoria University.

_How to teach about Indigenous culture? I would like to learn about their history as I feel very unknowledgeable. I feel like people don’t know enough about it so most people don’t go near the subject because they are unsure how to approach it so I would like to learn all about it._

4.5.5 Any other questions/comments

_Please push for Indigenous peoples’ history and cultures to be brought back into schools so today’s children don’t grow up knowing as little as I do._

4.6 PST Surveys End of Semester 2 2008 and 2009

At the end of the last semester of their four year Degrees, in 2008 and 2009, I surveyed the same two cohorts of PSTs, after they had completed their final six week block school placements, particularly in regard to what they saw in those placements. The survey questions are recorded below.

The numbers of returns for the Semester Two surveys were significantly fewer than in Semester One, in large part due to the timing of the collection process. PSTs were finished their Degrees at the time they were asked to complete another survey. Those
who did take the time to complete the surveys and return them to a box, after their final assessments, clearly wanted their views reported.

As in the Semester One surveys, each question was again followed by six dotted lines where PSTs could record their views.

1. Did you find any evidence regarding the inclusion of Indigenous history in your partnership school curriculum?  
   Yes  No

   If the answer was Yes to the above question, please describe any evidence/resources/activities you found regarding the inclusion of Indigenous history and/or culture.

   If the answer was No to the above question, please describe anything you noted about the exclusion of Indigenous history/culture in your partnership school curriculum?

2. Did you have any personal experience of implementing activities/developing resources related to Indigenous culture and history into your partnership placement (and/or after school care etc.)

3. Apart from your partnership placement have you had any conversations and/or interactions around these issues? Please describe

4. Have you had any engagement with Indigenous people and/or communities? Please describe

5. How has what you have learned this year affected your thinking in regard to your work as a teacher?
   - I was surprised about
   - I was glad to find
   - I am concerned about
   - My most significant learning experience this semester was
   - I wish I had learned years ago
   - I will make sure to include ………….in my teaching
   - I disagree with

6. Any other comments.

7. The most important thing I would want children in my own family to know about Indigenous Australia is ….................................................................
8.

9. Would you refer to your knowledge of including Indigenous history and culture in a job interview?
   If No, please explain why not:

10. If your answer was yes to the above question, how would you refer to your knowledge of including Indigenous history and culture in a job interview?

4.6.1 Little or no inclusion of Indigenous themes

- In September 2008 13/17 (76%) of PSTs reported no inclusion of Indigenous themes in the curriculum at their school placements.

- In September 2009 10/19 (53%) of PSTs reported no inclusion of Indigenous themes in the curriculum at their school placements.

Although the data set is smaller than the Semester One surveys, the significant percentage reduction in the lack of inclusion of Indigenous themes in the 2009 school placements may be explained by a number of factors. 2009 was the third year of the inclusion of Indigenous themes in *Curriculum and Innovation*. It was also the year that Davina Woods worked in the fourth year program with the author and Bill Eckersley, as explored in Chapter 5. PSTs' awareness and confidence was demonstrably supported by this collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers. Also teachers in schools were developing their own awareness and confidence, supported by policies referred to earlier in this Chapter, by greater access to appropriate resources through the Internet and by the interest and confidence of the PSTs working with those teachers in their classes in VU's year long school placements. As one PST noted

> Since starting this Unit I have developed a great deal more information and knowledge about Indigenous studies. Further to this there has been a much greater public exposure to Indigenous Australians through the media and films like *Ten Canoes* (De Heer, 2007 #1016) and the *First Australians* series (Perkins, 2008b).
4.6.2 What did ‘inclusion’ look like?

- In 2008 4/17 (23%) of PSTs reported inclusion of Indigenous themes in the curriculum at their school placements.

- In 2009 9/19 (47%) of PSTs reported inclusion of Indigenous themes in the curriculum at their school placements.

There were a variety of activities that the PSTs nominated as ‘inclusion’

- My students completed a small Unit on Indigenous Australians before settlement

- Indigenous art based activities and Indigenous athletes in SOSE Unit

- Because the central idea [of the curriculum] is about ‘People and Society’, children can form an inquiry about Indigenous history

- The school I was at have the Civics and Citizenship Unit on a two-yearly rotation alternating with a Science Unit. This year unfortunately was the Science year. As a result the only exposure was through NAIDOC week where I had to push my mentor teacher to allow me to teach a series of lessons on the theme of this year’s NAIDOC week [2009 Honouring Our Elders, Nurturing Our Youth]

- The school invited local elders to share stories on Harmony day.

4.6.3 What did ‘exclusion’ look like?

It was rewarding to see that 9 PSTs in 2008 and 9 PSTs in 2009 (18/36 in total), having responded that they saw no evidence of the inclusion of Indigenous themes in their placements, were then able to answer the question about examples of exclusion they had observed. The PSTs were recognising that, as teachers, what we don’t teach is also powerful in what students learn, as well as what we do teach. The examples of exclusion they noted included

- A photocopied worksheet from a published book about the ‘discovery’ of Australia. There was no reference to Indigenous people whatsoever.

- The preps were completely unaware of who are Indigenous Australians.
During my time at a multicultural primary school in Melbourne’s West, Indigenous people and culture never came up.

This year there was no mention of Australian Indigenous cultures specifically, rather simply as a part of Australia’s past.

We had a dad bring in a didgeridoo one day. He played it and there was no discussion after it at all.

There was a Unit on transport and sustainability, so there was no direct link.

Not talked about at all from what I have seen.

Nothing was done to improve the attitudes of the students towards Indigenous Australians and/or their cultures.

There was a distinct lack of literature re Indigenous history and no topics that referenced Indigenous themes [x4 similar returns].

Nothing was done to improve the attitudes of the students towards Indigenous Australians.

My teacher was taking a Unit on ‘Coming to Australia’. I asked her if we should do a session or two on Indigenous peoples because they had been here before any other migration. She shook her head and stated “I don’t think that would fit in or be appropriate”.

Didn’t see any because it is on a two year rotation.

The fact that PSTs were able to appraise curriculum offered in their school placements as ‘exclusion’ was a significant step in their developing awareness of appropriate content and pedagogies for the inclusion of Indigenous content in school curricula. The situation of Victorian Primary schools having to alternate between Civics and Citizenship / History in one year and Science in every second year is an indictment of the levels of staffing and of in-service professional development and curriculum support for teachers.

As well as the comments above, in relation to inclusion and exclusion, across 2008 and 2009, 14/36 PSTs also answered the question on ‘what surprised’ them with further comments on how little is known in schools or the general community in regard to Indigenous issues.

In addition, 5 PSTs articulated their concerns regarding making mistakes

Saying the incorrect thing.... not being able to answer questions

Not having enough knowledge of Indigenous culture to teach it to students
Disrespecting the Indigenous community by saying or doing the wrong thing. It’s very hard teaching Indigenous themes not knowing about the topic and when I was taking lessons that included Indigenous themes I had to watch what I was saying so that I didn’t say the wrong thing.

I hope to be able to fully and respectfully raise my students’ awareness

I am concerned that teachers are expected to implement curriculum when they lack knowledge or resources

4.6.4 Multiculturalism

The understanding that Indigenous knowledge and experience is relevant across the curriculum is slow in developing as shown by the following ‘no inclusion’ responses.

No, there was no evidence of exclusion. The school was extremely focused on diversity and multiculturalism within their direct school community.

...every place has a history and a culture. I want my family to know the importance of Australia and be open to all cultures within it, past and present

As a future SOSE teacher it is important to have the extra knowledge [of Indigenous history and cultures]. By going overseas and studying about different cultures that will give me a global understanding of different cultures.

In her analysis of interviews with Western Australian School Principals about programs in their schools to combat racism Aveling points to ‘benevolent multiculturalism’ (Aveling, 2007, p. 77-78) as a paradigm from which the Principals deflected questions about specific programs to support Indigenous students and to include Indigenous knowledge in their schools.

4.6.5 Including knowledge of Indigenous history in a job interview

In 2008 8/17 (47%) of PSTs said they would refer to their knowledge of Indigenous history in a job interview.
In 2009 12/19 (60%) of PSTs said they would refer to their knowledge of Indigenous history in a job interview. The ‘Yes’ responses included

As a SOSE major and an Australian I believe it is important that students are educated on the richness of all Australian cultures as well as the true history of the Australian Indigenous people.

Referring to inclusive education programs, respecting all backgrounds/cultures/religions etc.

That it is an issue I feel I am learning about more and that the current generation shouldn’t have to wait until they are my age.

8/36 PSTs did not answer this question. Of those who said they would not refer to Indigenous themes in a job interview the responses varied from lack of confidence (6 responses) to assumptions about the relevance of such curricula.

Not that relevant in Eastern suburbs. More important things to talk about.

Never thought about it. Maybe if I was applying in Northcote, etc. It would need to reflect the school and in what area.

4.7 Major Themes from the 2008 and 2009 PST surveys

Four major themes emerge from these surveys of PSTs’ experiences, questions and reflections:

4.7.1 Little or no inclusion of Indigenous themes in Victorian schools.

Despite the expectations of State and Commonwealth education policies over the last twenty years, non-Indigenous learners in Victorian schools continue to have limited exposure to appropriate inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience in their Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education.

4.7.2 Epistemological perspectives learned from schooling and society lead towards non-Indigenous PSTs seeing Indigenous peoples as the exotic other and/or victims.
The normalising of ‘whiteness’ and the consequent exclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience from University and school curriculum are major contributors to non-Indigenous perceptions of Indigenous Australians as ‘the other’. The exposure to Indigenous themes that the PSTs did experience in their own schooling and in their school placements largely portrayed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as ‘exotic’ – with school students asked to reproduce central desert dot paintings as a ‘way of knowing’ Indigenous people; or as ‘victims’ – the Stolen Generations as a shameful event from the past rather than an example of survival and resistance, celebrated through stories and music and researched through an examination of the recommendations of the *Report of the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their families* (R. D. Wilson, 1997). There is little evidence of students being offered primary and secondary source documents to engage them in research and debate so that by the end of Primary school they can ‘use a range of primary and secondary sources to investigate the past…. frame research questions and plan their own inquiries…. comprehend and question sources and make judgments about the views being expressed, the completeness of the evidence, and the values represented…. use appropriate historical language and concepts to develop historical explanations…. present their understandings in a range of forms’ (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2007a), (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2007). The curricula studied in Victorian schools during the PSTs schooling and during their school placements (the CSF and the VELS) while apparently including Indigenous themes, in practice results in the exclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience from the central story of who we are as Australians (see discussion in Chapter 5).

### 4.7.3 Making mistakes

PSTs who came to appreciate the lack of inclusion of respectful Indigenous Australian themes in school curricula and wanted to do something constructive in response were often concerned that they knew so little that they would make mistakes. It is seen as area of curriculum that is too difficult and/or lacking in appropriate resources.’ I am concerned that teachers are expected to implement curriculum when they lack knowledge or resources’ (2009 Semester 2 survey response). This is despite the range of materials available from State and Commonwealth libraries, museums and archives of all kinds as well as Indigenous educational sources such as the Koorie Heritage Trust, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educational Website and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s Indigenous portal explored in Chapter 7. The
need for greater numbers of Education Department Koorie curriculum staff is demonstrated by this evidence. In the end of Semester 2 surveys, for which as noted there were far fewer returns, the PSTs who did respond and therefore can be seen as strongly motivated to have their views recorded, nominated ‘Saying the incorrect thing’.... ‘not being able to answer questions’ ....not having enough knowledge of Indigenous culture to teach it to students’ and ‘disrespecting the Indigenous community by saying or doing the wrong thing’ (2008 and 2009 surveys) in answer to the question about what exclusion looked like in their school placements. These comments are both meta-cognitive and epistemological. They point to understandings we were trying to encourage PSTs to engage with in *Curriculum and Innovation*, such as rejecting the colonial discourse whereby Indigenous knowledge is cast to the periphery and listening respectfully (‘not being disrespectful’). The work of the lecturers with these PSTs is explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

4.6.4 The rubric of ‘multiculturalism’

The belief of many non-Indigenous PSTs and teachers that Indigenous Australian themes should be subsumed under the rubric of multiculturalism is widespread. Both the CSF and the VELS encourage this assimilation. Indigenous perspectives are part of the ‘Cross-curricula Perspectives’ in the VELS, as one of ten perspectives, which also include Advance, Asia, Consumer and Financial Literacy, Employability Skills, Healthy Eating, Human Rights, Multiculturalism, Sustainability and Values Education. Five interrelated Indigenous themes are proposed: ‘land, culture, history, political and civil rights and Indigenous cultures today’ (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2009). However, as in the domain of Civics and Citizenship, these perspectives are easily seen as part of the ‘crowded curriculum’. The following Table demonstrates this crowded curriculum in the History domain of VELS at Level 4 (grades 5 and 6, the last two years of primary school) and Level 6 (Years 9 and 10).

**Table 2** VELS History Standards Years 5/6 and 9/10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical Knowledge and Understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Level 4, students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of significant events in Australian history including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, European settlement, the development of the colonies, the development of the wool industry, the 1850s gold rushes; the moves to self-government, Federation; and World War I. They demonstrate an understanding of the histories of some cultural groups which make up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Australia today. They make links and appropriate comparisons with contemporary Australia.

At Level 6, students analyse events which contributed to Australia’s social, political and cultural development. These events could include: European colonisation, the growth of the colonies, self-government, the gold rushes, the development of trade unions, the events leading to Federation, Federation, World War I, World War II, immigration, and the Gulf Wars. Students evaluate the contribution of significant Australians to Australia’s development.

Students evaluate the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the fight for civil and political rights and land rights. They analyse significant events and movements which have resulted in improvements in civil and political rights for other groups of Australians such as the eight-hour day and the right to vote for women, and evaluate the contributions of key participants and leaders in these events. They compare different perspectives about a significant event and make links between historical and contemporary issues.

(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2007b). (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 AU)

4.8 I still call Oz home

This Chapter concludes with the words of Naomi, a member of the Newcastle Hip Hop group The Last Kinfection, explaining why they wrote their song *I still call Oz home* (The Last Kinfection, 2008), which I have used extensively in my teaching in both *Curriculum and Innovation* and *Re-thinking Australian Studies*. The song clip (The Last Kinfection, 2007) was found on Youtube by a PST completing Assessment 2 for *Curriculum and Innovation* in 2009. My subsequent search of The Last Kinfection’s website found explanations from each group member of why they wrote their song. I use the film clip and their explanations as an opportunity for PSTs to consider young Indigenous people’s experiences of being treated as ‘the other’ in Australia. This reality is a contemporary corollary to the historical ‘special treatment’ referred to in the Paul Kelly song lyrics which open this Chapter. The following excerpt is from Naomi.

A few years ago, when I was in the duo Shakaya, we did a Christmas gig in our hometown Cairns. We performed our usual set and began to leave the location when the stage manager insisted we stay another 2 hrs for the finale which happened to be the song ‘I still call Australia home’. This was not proposed in the formal performance contract so our management agreed that there was no reason to stay.
Simone (my singing partner at the time) and I stopped off at the local IGA Supermarket on the way home. At this point we had just been nominated for an Aria award, toured with Destiny's Child and had a Top 5 song in the charts, so you could say we were at the peak of our career. The dude behind the counter was the most rude, racist, uneducated loser. He was spitting comments at me like "you're getting munchies coz you're a drunk, f*@$ing Abo" and "yeah I know what you coons are about" I was like WHAT?! He said 'I'll jump this counter and smash you'. Then a middle aged lady came in with her daughter and started joining in! Her daughter recognised me from the band and was trying to tell her but she was too busy running me down....

At this point I felt I had 2 choices. I could gather my mob up and set that F*@$ing IGA alight or the make a more positive choice. Remix the track they wanted us to sing that night in the first place "....I stayed up all night recording that track to a beat my brother Joel had sent me a few days earlier. I even sang a snippet of the Ralph Harris song Tie Me Kangaroo Down (The Last Kinection, 2008).

Naomi makes this point because, as the PSTs were shocked to find, the original words of Tie Me Kangaroo Down include the verse

Let me Abos go loose, Lou,
let me Abos go loose.
They're of no further use, Lou,
so let me Abos go loose.
Altogether now! (Harris, 1960)

The activity with the PSTs began with them watching a Youtube clip of the original Peter Allen song, I still call Australia Home, used by commercial and non-commercial producers to espouse the 'spirit of Australia'; then in small groups discussing how the clip made them feel about being Australian. Next they reported their discussions back to the whole seminar group. The responses were predictably mostly warm and fuzzy although some PSTs did notice that the original song was very euro-centric in its representation of who we are as Australians. PSTs were then shown The Last Kinection’s Youtube clip (2007), and again asked how that clip made them feel about being Australian. This time their responses were more reflective. After they reported back, discussion took place in the whole seminar group about the differences between the two versions. Then each group of PSTs were given an explanation to read from one of the three members of The Last Kinection as to why they wrote their song (The
Last Kinection, 2008). Each group of PSTs then explained to the whole class their understanding of why their particular member of The Last Kinection had written their verses, and considered the question of whether and how they could see themselves using this material with their own students.

The questions from the survey data examined in this Chapter, and the resources and activities such as the ones above, provided rich material for the reflections recorded in the following Chapter from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers who worked with the 2009 cohort of fourth year PSTs at the Footscray Park campus of Victoria University.

The final words come from a PST in their end of Semester 2 2009 survey:

_{I have learnt from a team of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators how to appropriately and successfully incorporate understanding of the history and roles played by Indigenous people in our country. Also how we can move forward as a united Australia through mutual understanding and respect._}

This comment encapsulates important elements of what we were trying to achieve in *Curriculum and Innovation*. It is an appropriate introduction to the next Chapter which consider the collaborative self-study conducted by the team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers working with the PSTs whose surveys have been the subject of this Chapter.
Chapter 5

Unity without assimilation: Collaborative self-study between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers

Reconciliation is an idea that’s still coming to be; and it touches on questions the pre-service teachers have about all of us—the connections between wanting to know what has happened and is happening; and the common elements we have as people living together wanting to be socially just and to be activist, to be really good teachers. It’s connected to Freire’s ideas on starting with experience, dialogue and learning together (Davina Woods, personal communication 21.08.09).

Self-study research is situated within the discourses of the social construction of knowledge, reflective practice and action for social change. The strong presence of collaboration in the practice of self-study of teacher education is a natural response to this ethical and theoretical location (Bodone, et al., 2004p.743).

5.1 Introduction

This study of the question ‘How can teacher educators support pre-service teachers to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning?’ is based on my experience over many years, in settings including Pre-school, Primary, Secondary, Technical and Further Education, the Melbourne Museum and in particular in my work with pre-service teachers (PSTs) and colleagues at Victoria University (VU). My experience accords with what colleague Davina Woods says above, that most teachers are concerned about being really good teachers, about being socially just teachers and about learning together. This is the philosophical basis of the VU School of Education with ‘social justice as the ethical reference point’ and a commitment to support the work of teachers ‘in schools characterised by socio-economic disadvantage and cultural diversity’ (Cherednichenko & Kruger, 2005 , p. 2).

In the previous Chapter which reported and analysed the twice yearly surveys over 2008 and 2009 in the fourth year VU Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Unit Curriculum and Innovation, pre-service teachers (PSTs) expressed their comments and questions
regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. In 2009 a
group of three colleagues, Davina Woods (DW), Bill Eckersley (BE) and the author,
Claire Kelly (CK), worked together in the Semester One fourth-year Units, Curriculum
and Innovation and Change and Social Justice, with PSTs who took part in the 2009
surveys reported in Chapter 4. We continued to work together and with those same
PSTs in Semester 2 2009. I had worked with Bill in the fourth-year Units for the three
previous years. Davina, an experienced Indigenous educator and curriculum developer
(Davina’s experiences and insights are also recorded in Chapter 6, Section 6.8), had
recently been appointed to the VU School of Education. We found ourselves forming
the 2009 teaching team for the fourth-year program at the Footscray Park campus.

This Chapter reports on the collaborative self-study between Davina, Bill and myself,
from my notes of regular Curriculum and Innovation planning meetings between the
three of us, including reflections on lectures and seminars with PSTs, reflections on the
survey data reported in the previous Chapter and from two tape-recorded and
transcribed discussions between us, edited sections of which appear in this Chapter,
preceded by our initials. The editing was done by the author and confirmed by the two
other lecturers, on the basis of the insights our collaboration gave us as to the
effectiveness of working together and with the PSTs to reject the colonial discourse
whereby Indigenous knowledge and experience is seen as peripheral, rather than
critical. This work culminated in a paper we presented to a Conference on Learning,
Teaching and Social Justice:

In Curriculum and Innovation we focused on the Indigenous
themes of Democracy, Identity, Equity and Justice, Rights
and Responsibilities, and the role of the media (Woods, Kelly,
& Eckersley, 2009).

The quotes used in this Chapter from the three lecturers are attributed to the person
who spoke the words in the tape-recorded discussions between the three of us.
Importantly, it was in the dialogue, in the discourse, in the collaborative learning
between the three of us and with the PSTs, that we were able to articulate our insights
and build our understandings throughout the year we worked and reflected together.

...the use of dialogue can be seen as a basis for making
meaning, establishing the validity of ideas, and promoting
action (Placier, Pinnegar, Hamilton, & Guilfoyle, 2005, p. 54).
5.2 Background

As noted in Chapter 1, the inclusion of Indigenous themes in Australian school curricula has been expected by educational policies at the Commonwealth level for more than two decades. State and Territory education systems, responsible for the development of curriculum and assessment in their own jurisdictions, subsequently also committed to the inclusion of Indigenous themes. In Victoria from 1995-2005, when the PSTs with whom we worked in 2009 were students themselves, the Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF) was guiding school curricula. In 2006 the Victorian Government Education Department replaced the CSF with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) as the guide to the curriculum content expected to be taught from Preparatory classes to Year 10. The VELS were in operation during the period of this research (2008-2012) and therefore during the PSTs’ school placements. From 2012 onwards the new Australian Curriculum is being implemented across the State and Territory jurisdictions. In Victoria the new curriculum guidelines, to be called the AusVELS, will begin in 2013. The opportunities and constraints for the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula offered by these new guidelines are considered in Chapter 7.

When the PSTs with whom we were working in 2009 were Primary and Secondary school students the CSF contained reference to the inclusion of Indigenous themes, although those references were limited to the History strand of SOSE (Studies of Society and Environment - which also included Geography and Economics) in the Secondary years. The CSF also included an across the curriculum domain of Civics and Citizenship which was meant to be incorporated into all the other domains where appropriate. When other domains contained material that was deemed to be connected to Civics and Citizenship themes an icon was placed next to the particular Year level Outcomes and Indicators for that domain, to indicate a link to:

- help[ing] students to become active and informed citizens.....
- to develop understanding about key elements of Australia’s legal, economic and political systems..... the history of the country .... the values that the community shares and an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of citizens
  (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2002a).

In the box below are two of the five groups of CSF Learning Outcomes and Indicators for Level 6 (Year 10) History, including that students ‘evaluate the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities’ and that they ‘outline
the different ways in which the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities campaigns for civil and political rights’ (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2002b). The inclusion of two groups of Learning Outcomes and Indicators which contained specific reference to the inclusion of Indigenous themes, amongst the thirteen Outcomes and Indicators for Year 10 SOSE (which also included four Geography Outcomes and Indicators and four Economy and Society Outcomes and Indicators) left open the opportunity for teachers to work with what they were most comfortable with and to leave the inclusion of Indigenous themes in the too hard basket of ‘the crowded curriculum’.

Table 3 Two of the thirteen groups of the Curriculum Standards Framework SOSE (History, Geography and Economics) Learning Outcomes and Indicators for Year 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two of the Five CSF Year 10 History Outcomes and Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Describe the reasons for the colonisation of Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is evident when the student is able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• examine the factors involved in the British colonisation of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• evaluate the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• analyse any one particular social or political change in a colony and its impact on people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• describe the motives, values and events behind the move from a number of colonies to one nation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analyse the movement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for civil and political rights.

This is evident when the student is able to:

• identify which civil and political rights were denied the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
• analyse the reasons why civil and political rights were denied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
• outline the different ways in which the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities campaigned for civil and political rights
• evaluate the degree to which the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been successful in their campaigns.

(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2002c) (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 AU)

The CSF domain of Civics and Citizenship was supposed to support ‘an understanding of the history of the country and its people’ (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2002c).
Authority, 2002a) yet the icon, meant to alert teachers to such a connection between the domain of Civics and Citizenship and the History Outcomes and Indicators in Figure 26 above, was absent. On the other hand in Level 5 (Years 8-9) the SOSE History Strand was entirely devoted to the study of ‘Ancient and medieval societies’. By contrast with the Indigenous themes in Year 10, which did not attract the icon denoting a connection to Civics and Citizenship, the study of Ancient and medieval societies did include the icon (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2002b).

Thus the apparent inclusion of Indigenous themes in the Year 10 CSF History domain can in fact be understood as exclusion, as part of the paradigm of viewing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as ‘the other’, as not connected to the mainstream Australian story. Indigenous struggles for civil and political rights are located outside ‘key elements of Australia’s legal, economic and political systems’, to be observed as a footnote to the ‘attitudes and values associated with developing active citizenship’ (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2002a). This was the educational context from which the PSTs with whom we were working had come from in their own Primary and Secondary schooling. The experiences of the educators reported in Chapter 6 give other examples of such exclusion of Indigenous co-existence from the Australian story. Bruce Pascoe’s example of the rejection of his submission that the Wauthurong language be funded from the pool of money available from the Languages other than English Committee, because Wathurong was not a ‘Language other than English’; Penelope Irving’s example of Indigenous families in Launceston not being acknowledged as Indigenous, at the same time as their children were being accused of ‘just going off on walkabout whenever they felt like it’; and Davina Woods’ daughter being told that ‘two [real] Aboriginal children’ would be visiting her school.

In the VELS (2006-2012), the general domain of Humanities domain replaced SOSE for Levels 1 -3 (Preparatory class to Year 4). The Humanities domain was then divided into History, Geography and Economics from Level 4 – 6 (Years 5/6 to 10). Indigenous themes were more conspicuously woven through the VELS domains, in The Arts as well as the Humanities, and particularly in the revised and expanded cross-curricula Civics and Citizenship domain.

Indigenous perspectives are an integral part of the VELS. The study of Indigenous perspectives is essential for developing student understanding of Australian history, culture and identity as well as providing understanding of contemporary society (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2009 ).
However as will be seen, whilst the VELS made stronger connections than the CSF between Indigenous experiences and the Australian story, it also promoted opportunities for exclusion in the same way as the CSF. Although the expectations expressed in the policy above appear inclusive, the curriculum is still crowded with expectations of what teachers will cover in their classes. Yates describes the expectations placed on teachers since the 1980s onwards as ‘an unmanageable array of different kinds of agendas about knowledge, change and the purposes of schools without providing a new way of conceptualising either pedagogy or curriculum and what teachers or schools might do in practice’ (Yates, 2009, pp. 25-26). This was the situation for teachers and for the PSTs they mentored in their school placements. The results of the surveys reported in Chapter 4 can be understood in this context of the exclusion of Indigenous experience from the Australian story in the curriculum guidelines in operation when the PSTs were students and in their school placements, and as supporting the likelihood of teachers continuing to repeat what they had been used to teaching, particularly without appropriate pre-service and in-service professional development. Figure 23 shows the low numbers of teachers in Australian schools who reported pre and in-service education in Indigenous themes in 2000. These teachers were working with the PSTs when they were students and later as their mentors in their school placements. This was the situation which the PSTs had come from in their own Primary and Secondary schooling and which they found in their school placements: curriculum guidelines which did not support the inclusion of Indigenous themes and teachers who had little experience in their implementation. Also between 1996 and 2007 the conservative Liberal/National coalition government held power and promulgated a notion that some school curricula were actually promoting a ‘black armband’ view of Australian history, teaching students that they had ‘a racist and bigoted past’ rather than ‘a very generous and benign one’ (McKenna, 1997, p. 9-10). This public political debate emboldened some to attack the level of funding for Aboriginal Australians (Hanson, 1966). This was the context in which we were working in Curriculum and Innovation to support the inclusion of Indigenous themes in the PSTs’ curriculum planning.

5.3 Opening spaces

In 2006 the School of Education at VU was in the middle of a five-year approved B.Ed. when the VELS replaced the CSF. The fourth-year B.Ed. Unit Curriculum and Innovation was deemed to be the most appropriate to include more extensive support
for PSTS of the increased expectation regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula. At this time there were no Indigenous lecturers working in the School of Education. So as non-Indigenous lecturers we were faced with a huge task. Could we open spaces for discussion and research with PSTs who, like teachers in schools, were being asked to take on responsibility for curriculum of which they had no experience, either as students themselves or in their school placements? The anecdotal evidence from both PSTs who were positive towards this new curriculum and from those who were antagonistic was that schools were not putting the policy into practice. The surveys of PSTs reported in Chapter 4 were intended to capture the evidence of what was happening in schools and to provide the PSTs’ own data for discussion with them in *Curriculum and Innovation*. We were supporting PSTs to develop ‘a personal commitment to, and understanding of, innovation in education’ (Victoria University, 2009), including developing critical perspectives and appropriate resources for the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula, particularly through the implementation of the Civics and Citizenship domain of the VELS. Of course it was not only the PSTs who had little experience regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes in their teaching. Most University lecturers have had little exposure to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. In those first years of *Curriculum and Innovation* we continued to build our knowledge of resources and we listened and responded to PSTs’ questions about why we were focussing on Indigenous themes. Then, the employment of Indigenous lecturers opened spaces for us to learn together about key ideas for the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and to reflect on our own and the PSTs’ learning and teaching.

The issue of ‘special treatment’ discussed in the previous Chapter remained an issue for some PSTs into 2009. One discussion stands out in my notes. In my seminar group we were discussing the definition of Aboriginality in Australia (Forrest, 1998, p.X). PSTs were considering the special conditions for Indigenous Australians, explored in historical detail by Paul Kelly in his song lyrics which introduce Chapter 4. A small number of PSTs then voiced the opinion that ‘people get free money’ when they themselves ‘get nothing’; and ‘you see the new African immigrants with wallets stuffed with money’ (author’s seminar group, March 2009). The discussion had been moved seamlessly from so-called ‘Indigenous freeloading’ to include all ‘others’ as unfairly taking from ‘real Australians’, when we had actually been exploring the reasons why official health and education forms often ask if a person is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. The explanation that statistics are collected to judge Indigenous
access to health and education programs was considered thoughtfully by some PSTs and perhaps less so by others.

One event that positively affected attitudes amongst PSTs and the general population about what has happened in our own history was the newly elected Labor Prime Minister’s Apology to the Stolen Generations (Rudd, 2008). In the previous ten years under a conservative government, the charge of ‘political correctness’ had been levelled at those who spoke in favour of looking at the hidden histories of Australia. They were castigated for promoting a ‘black armband’ view of history (Jones, Reynolds, & Windschuttle, 2001), (Windschuttle, 2002), a term brought into public use by the historian G. Blainey (1993). In fact, the first three uses of the black armband image in the context of Australian history had been undertaken by Aboriginal Australians: at the 1938 Day of Mourning, at the 1970 centenary of Captain Cook’s landing and at the re-enactment of the 1988 bicentenary of the British claim to sovereignty over the eastern Australia (McKenna, 1997). After The Apology it was more difficult to maintain a ‘white blindfold’ position in regard to the Australian story, although some conservative commentators continued to do so (Windschuttle, 2008), (Windschuttle, 09.02.08). Below Bill Eckersley reports one of the many examples of schools stopping to listen to telecast of The Apology

BE: It (The Apology) was on the radio all day. I heard an interview on the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation). A teacher from a Geelong primary school said they’d taken their children to the school hall and shown them the speech from Parliament. The teacher said ‘one of my children came up to me afterwards and said “what country did that happen to those people?” And when I said “that’s Australia”, the child burst into tears’. .... It was a powerful moment. It doesn’t change the world but it’s still really powerful.

Nonetheless the current development and implementation stages of the new Australian Curriculum have produced further protestations of ‘political correctness’ from conservative commentators and politicians (Hudson & Larkin, 01.03.10), (Harrison, 02.03.10). Windschuttle criticised the study in schools of the film Rabbit Proof Fence (an influential eye opener according to the student survey data in Chapter 4, see 4.5.3, arguing that it was ‘grossly inaccurate’ and should be withdrawn (Vasek & Perpitch, 14.12.09). In practice, the evidence from the PST surveys reported in Chapter 4, collected during the year of The Apology (2008) and the year after (2009), suggests that its effect on school curricula was negligible. Chapter 7 looks at the Australian
Curriculum in more detail and considers whether this latest iteration of Indigenous themes in school curricula offers might offer more hope of inclusion.

5.4 Working together

The two quotes which introduce this Chapter speak of the potential for collaborative self-study between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators to contribute to reconciliation and social justice, to support empowerment, professionalism, creativity and moral purpose. Davina Woods, an experienced Indigenous educator whose insights are also recorded in Chapter 6, points to a number of the powerful elements of our work together as lecturers and with the PSTs in 2009. The PSTs were listening, talking, questioning and coming to appreciate 'the common elements we have as people living together wanting to be socially just and to be activist'. They and we were 'starting with experience, dialogue and learning together'. Although I had worked with Indigenous educators over the previous two decades, this was the first time I had worked in a team-teaching situation in the same lecture theatre with an Indigenous lecturer and the combined seminar groups. In lectures, one of the three of us would take the lead in presenting Course material and the other two of us would contribute ideas and questions.

DW: The three of us had to utilise our best interpersonal and intrapersonal skills in developing the team and as a part of that we’ve come to respect our differences and see the things that we’re slightly different on as supports, as strengthening what we do with the students, because it gives them a broader perspective of the issues that we’re discussing with them.

The one hour spent together in the lectures was a time when we asked questions of the PSTs rather than just telling them ‘the facts’. We often developed those questions in planning meetings where we reflected on the issues that had arisen the previous week in the two fourth-year Units. We also encouraged the PSTs to ask their own questions and tried to ensure that they were all engaged in the dialogue. We consciously shared with the PSTs our own developing understandings of working together to put policies for the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula into practice. ‘Self-study research introduces the personal action and identity of individual teacher educators into the public discourse’ (Bodone, Guðjónsdóttir, & Dalmau, 2004, p. 773).
This commitment to listening to PSTs and working with their questions is consistent with the VU Praxis Inquiry Protocol. My research is based on the understanding that policy alone, essentially a technical tool, is not sufficient to support critical action.

How can a university construct teacher education which student teachers, teachers and teacher educators experience as authentic practice?

How can a university teacher education program initiate critical inquiry into essentially technical educational policy and practice and at the same time sustain authentic and critically theorised action by student teachers, teachers and teacher educators? (Kruger & Cherednichenko, 2006, p. 4-5)

The lectures and seminars were often challenging for the PSTs and for us as lecturers. As noted previously the expectations in the previous CSF (1995-2005), the current VELS (2006-2012) and the new national Australian Curriculum, that school curricula include investigation of Indigenous involvement in the social political and economic events of Australian history, were not being implemented when these PSTs were students and were not being implemented in their school placements. The climate of reaction and negativity cultivated by conservative political, academic and media commentators during the Primary and Secondary school lives of these PSTs also undermined the expectations of Indigenous educators and State and Commonwealth policy makers that the Australian story should include events and people who resisted colonisation. It was in this climate that the Course Aims of *Curriculum and Innovation* included:

- Generating a professional development strategy oriented to ongoing curriculum improvement and innovation

- Undertaking a negotiated and socially committed curriculum innovation which integrates Civics and Citizenship Education with an inquiry into an issue related to Indigenous Australian studies

- Using the *Praxis Inquiry Protocol* to encourage pre-service teachers to relate their developing curriculum knowledge to specific practical challenges in teaching in their Project Partnerships.

These aims generated ongoing discussion in lectures and seminars about what some PSTs saw as the privileging of Indigenous themes. There was an undercurrent of
antagonism which occasionally surfaced which was expressed as a belief that ‘all cultural differences should be investigated; so why were we concentrating on Indigenous issues?’ Russ Swann in 6.6 comments that a few of his students, often Physical Education students who professed a lack of connection between Indigenous themes and their subject area, would similarly express resentment at being ‘made to feel guilty’. Nonetheless such sentiments were not widely expressed and were often responded to by other PSTs as well as by lecturers.

As lecturers we saw the power of working together, as Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues, as a contribution to the struggle to challenge the hegemony of the dominant discourse that ‘white is ‘right’. Our aims were to support PSTs to recognise the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories, contemporary experience, ways of knowing and ways of being which include aspirations for the future. In the quotes below we reflect on issues such the amount of time needed to be spent by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators to put in place the consultation between Indigenous community representatives and teachers if schools are to connect with local people and knowledge. The question of the role of non-Indigenous educators is also explored, touching on issues of trust, responsibility, knowledge and personal stories:

DW: I see the Indigenous Australian population, you know we’re just under 3% of the total Australian population. That’s a small percentage of people to be talking about Indigenous history and current issues. ...if we don’t want to be always burdening the Elders and the leaders within the community then we’ve got to get to a stage where we can trust non-Indigenous people to do this work and the way to feel trust is to work with you to give you the knowledge and understandings that we’ve already developed through our life experiences....I don’t know whether you two want to add anything to this.

CK: I was involved in a conversation around this the other day. I asked another Indigenous educator about the PSTs “do you think that these young teachers can engage with their students on Indigenous history and contemporary themes?” And the answer was “definitely”. So here they are, the young teachers who are going into schools. If they don’t do it, then that’s a waste of opportunity for discussion and knowledge and thinking, and the steps being taken forward ....I mean I come at it from the point of view, and this is why I’m doing my research, that I’m a teacher educator. I am a passionate person interested in history and culture and contemporary issues and you know, if I don’t engage with the PSTs in my classes in thinking about it then it’s a lack, it’s a gap. So I figure as a teacher educator it’s my responsibility to work with these young teachers to find out what
their questions are to see if they can start thinking about including and responding, acknowledging the owners of the land, you know the cultures that we live with, that we get so much benefit from but we also ignore at the same time. I mean that’s the world we live in so unless that’s part of our thinking in schools and in society then what are we doing?

BE: Well I think if pre-service teachers can learn more about Indigenous history you know, that’s great. If they didn’t have this Unit they’d walk out of their Degrees a bit like I walked out 30 years ago having a bare bones knowledge, understanding and appreciation. You can hear them, after having spent this time with us, being able to articulate a view or a position about Indigenous history and the contemporary issues that are related, to themselves, to their peers and hopefully they will be confident to educate their future students. If we feel that we’ve supported them in that, in a relatively short period of time, then we’ve done a good thing. Because your question goes back to who should be teaching this stuff? So here we’ve got the three of us, lecturers with varying degrees of expertise, knowledge, and understanding in this area. So who should or can or could teach in this area?...does it mean therefore that you (Davina) should do it all? Maybe not, but certainly take the lead, help us to create the modules and the conversations. How do you share that? That’s another interesting part of this experience we’re having together... It seems to me that the way you share it is often through story-telling, personal experience, little chronological history lessons you know, and critical incidents in the history of Australia and key people whose names they sometimes were, but often were not, familiar with.

5.5 Praxis Inquiry (the PI Protocol)

In Chapter 3, Section 3.5, I outlined the methodological importance of the VU School of Education PI Protocol in this study. In fourth-year VU pre-service teachers spend one full day per week for the whole school year in their placement schools, as well as a one week block in Semester One and a six week block in Semester Two, working with a mentor teacher in a particular Year level or subject area. These placements are explicitly understood by the schools, the PSTs and the VU School of Education to be partnerships. PSTs also participate in an Applied Curriculum Project (ACP) working with their schools to develop, implement, document and review a project which supports the school’s curriculum.

Teaching practice at VU is not enacted as ‘the practicum,’ with individual blocks of time in different schools. PSTs work in teams or, following Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2001), ‘communities of inquiry’ on teaching and learning questions of
value to the school, which are directly related to student learning (Kruger & Cherednichenko, 2006, p. 6).

These projects were another element which stimulated the PSTs’ understanding of opportunities for and limitations on innovation in schools. In practice most ACPs tend to be practical support for the partnership school, particularly in literacy and numeracy or lunchtime activities for students. As the survey results in Chapter 4 demonstrate, the inclusion of Indigenous themes was generally outside the experience and perspectives of the teachers and schools in which the PSTs worked.

Two simultaneous expectations were being placed on teachers and schools. In 2008, the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) commenced in Australian schools. Every year, all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are assessed on the same days using national tests in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2011). Standardised testing beginning in early Primary school became the mode of accountability to judge the effectiveness of school curricula at the same time as teachers were being expected to develop curricula which responds to Indigenous knowledge and experience. This tendency towards homogenisation at the same time as devolving responsibilities to schools is not new (Brennan & Noffle, 2000). But the need to develop appropriate curricula, in areas where PSTs and teachers feel ill-prepared, without appropriate pre-service and in-service professional development, in many cases causes stress, resentment and resistance.

According to the Curriculum and Innovation Unit Outline, ‘PSTs work together and with their university lecturers and school-based mentors on

- an inquiry into Indigenous Australia with Civics and Citizenship Education
- integrating Indigenous Australian culture and history into the school curriculum;
- setting up the classroom for authentic inquiry-based learning (eg student groupings; individual/group/whole class activities); negotiating the curriculum;
- formative and summative assessment strategies, anecdotal observations and authentic assessment approaches such as student learning portfolios and student self-assessment....
For both PSTs and the schools in which they worked, the last two of the aims above were successful and well-explored. However the first two aims were more difficult to implement. The reality facing PSTs was that schools were not implementing the VELS expectations regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes. They actually had little opportunity to ‘integrate Indigenous Australian history and culture into the school curriculum’. In Chapter 7 I explore some examples which supported the aim of integrating Indigenous Australian culture and history into school curricula by looking at resources and activities which encouraged PSTs to break through colonial perspectives and to begin to establish decolonised classrooms.

The VU PI Protocol provides a framework to explore the opportunities for becoming a ‘teacher for social justice’ (Davina Woods, 6.8). In *Curriculum and Innovation* we investigated

- **Ontological questions - Experience, Understanding and Commitment**
  What do we believe in, what are our ethics?

- **Epistemological questions - Knowledge and its Application**
  How do we understand the world? How do children learn best?

- **Technical questions - Effective Strategy and Technique**
  What pedagogies and practices engage children in thoughtful active learning?

In our work together we explicitly rejected any model that situated Indigenous knowledge and experience as part of a deficit theory or practice of learning. We encouraged PSTs to reject the colonial discourse whereby Indigenous knowledge and experience is seen as peripheral, rather than critical, to more easily finding each other as Australians sharing the land on which we live and learn (Dodson, 2009).

DW: Our work has been about developing with our pre service teachers the meta-cognitive competencies necessary for them to be teachers who acknowledge diversity and teachers who are social constructivists who promote unity without assimilation.

The following section outlines our work with two of the *Curriculum and Innovation* Readings that particularly supported that exploration.
5.6 Colonial discourse

One of the important Readings discussed with PSTs in *Curriculum and Innovation* was Clare Bradford’s Chapter *Colonial Discourse and its Fictions* (Bradford, 2001, pp. 14-47) which begins with an exposure of the paradigm of ‘white is right’ through an analysis of *The Australia Book* (Pownall & Senior, 1952). In our planning meeting Davina and Bill asked me to propose questions for use in the seminar groups. These are the questions I developed:

- What do you think Bradford is asking us to think about in presenting her analysis?

- What are the 2 strands of discourse that Bradford analyses as the ways that Indigenous peoples are presented in Australian children’s literature? What examples have you experienced as a student, teacher or parent, that might demonstrate these strands in Australian curriculum/units of work/children’s books/cultural events or institutions?

- What do you think Bradford means by ‘socially sanctioned ways of understanding their world’ (p. 20)?

- What is Bradford’s critique of John Marsden’s *Tomorrow, When the War Began* (Marsden, 1993)? What is your response to this critique?

- Bradford proposes that ‘One of the rules of colonial discourse is that Indigenous people are never truly heroes’ (p. 26). Find and explain two examples of resistance to colonial occupation of Indigenous lands, including at least one from what is now Victoria (Claire Kelly, March 2009).

When I presented these questions to Davina and Bill the final question above was the subject of some discussion between the three of us. Would the PSTs be able to find appropriate resources to do this research? We made sure that we placed links on the University’s online learning system whereby PSTs could access library resources and links to websites such as the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (2011), the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) *Indigenous Language Map* (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2009), *The Gunditjmara land justice story* (Weir, 2009), *Indigenous Australian voices* (Sabbioni, 1998) and *Convincing ground: Learning to fall in love with your country* (Pascoe, 2007).
Bill Eckersley: Yes, the Bradford Reading was pretty powerful and it resonated with the PSTs as young teachers. It was important for contextualising the broader issues of inclusion in school curricula. Which I thought was positive, for both lecturers and students. Because they did engage with it, there were some good discussions in the tutes as a result of that.

The second Reading that was particularly appreciated by the PSTs was Larissa Behrendt’s *The 1967 referendum 40 years on* in (Behrendt, 2007). Behrendt analyses the work of Aboriginal activists such as William Cooper and Fred Maynard who led the campaign to change the Australian Constitution to recognise Indigenous people, who prior to 1967 were not counted in the Census, were subject to the laws of individual States and were denied access to industrial and welfare reforms such as equal pay with non-Indigenous workers or pension rights.

PSTs were shocked to realise how little they knew about the lack of basic rights for Aboriginal Australians and the political struggle undertaken by activists like Fred Maynard and William Cooper who ‘believed that if Aboriginal people were given the same opportunities as other Australians and could make the key decisions about their communities, their families and their lives, they would be able to find their own solutions to their problems’ (Behrendt, 2007, p.25). The Referendum Reading also provided an effective introduction to other curriculum materials available for use in school classrooms, for example the VELS Unit on *The 1967 Referendum* (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2007c), Reconciliation Australia’s *Resources for the 1967 Referendum* (Reconciliation Australia, 2007a), in particular *Women of the Referendum* (Reconciliation Australia, 2007b) and the National Museum of Australia’s *Collaborating for Indigenous Rights* (National Museum of Australia, 2008). This was important because the PSTs were not used to thinking about such events as central elements of the Australian story.

The table below shows significant dates relating to Indigenous peoples’ right to vote in Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
<th>Significant dates in Australian electoral history</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1770</strong></td>
<td>Captain Cook claimed the eastern half of the Australian continent for Great Britain.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1788</strong></td>
<td>Colonisation began. When colonising Australia, the British Government used the term <em>Terra Nullius</em> (meaning land of no-one) to justify the dispossession of Indigenous people. Traditional Aboriginal systems of tribal land ownership were neither recognised nor acknowledged. Colonial and later national development was based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>British sovereignty extended to cover the whole of Australia – everyone born in Australia, including Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, became a British subject by birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>First parliamentary elections in Australia (for New South Wales Legislative Council) were held. The right to vote was limited to men with a freehold valued at £200 or a householder paying rent of £20 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850+</td>
<td>The Australian colonies become self governing – all adult (21 years) male British subjects were entitled to vote in South Australia from 1856, in Victoria from 1857, New South Wales from 1858, and Tasmania from 1896. This included indigenous people but they were not encouraged to enrol. Queensland gained self-government in 1859 and Western Australia in 1890, but these colonies denied Indigenous people the vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Queensland Elections Act excluded all Indigenous people from voting</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Western Australian law denied the vote to Indigenous people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Commonwealth Constitution became operative – Section 41 was interpreted to deny the vote to all Indigenous people, except those on state rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>The first Commonwealth Parliament passed the Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902, which was progressive for its time in granting the vote to both men and women. It did however; specifically exclude 'any aboriginal native of Australia, Asia, Africa or the Islands of the Pacific, except New Zealand' from Commonwealth franchise unless already enrolled in a state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>The right to vote in federal elections was extended to Indigenous people who had served in the armed forces, or were enrolled to vote in state elections. Indigenous people in Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory still could not vote in their own state/territory elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Commonwealth Electoral Act provided that Indigenous people should have the right to enrol and vote at federal elections, including Northern Territory elections, but enrolment was not compulsory. Despite this amendment, it was illegal under Commonwealth legislation to encourage Indigenous people to enrol to vote. Western Australia extended the State vote to Aboriginal people. Voter education for Aborigines began in the Northern Territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Queensland allowed Aborigines to vote in State elections. Queensland was the last State to grant this right</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1967  | A Referendum approved Commonwealth Constitutional change. Section 127 of the Constitution was struck out in its entirety. This amendment allowed Indigenous people to be counted in the Commonwealth Census. Section 51 of the Constitution was amended to allow the Commonwealth to make special laws for Indigenous people. Both Houses of the Parliament passed the proposed Act unanimously; consequently a ‘No’ case was not submitted. More than 90% of Australians registered a YES vote with all six states voting in favour

(adapted from Australian Electoral Commission, 2011).

The idea put forward by Australian football icon Ron Barassi (R. Nicholson, 2009), that Australia Day should be moved to May 27 (the date of the 1967 Referendum) to commemorate the day when ninety percent of the Australian population voted ‘Yes’ to change the Constitution to allow Aborigines to be counted in the Census, was not familiar to the PSTs.

The Bradford and Behrendt Readings encompass the concurrent areas we were exploring in Curriculum and Innovation, of ways of seeing and knowing, which connects directly to pedagogical considerations, and of appropriate curriculum content. PSTs were being encouraged to appreciate that the inclusion of Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning needed less looking at the exotic other and more recognition of Indigenous peoples as central to the Australian story and particularly connected to the aspirations of the Civics and Citizenship domain.

In late 2010 Davina Woods was asked to present a paper at the Popular Education Network of Australia conference on the new second year B.Ed. Unit she was coordinating, Re-Thinking Australian Studies, to be implemented in 2011. Davina had asked me to work with her on the development of the Unit. Due to circumstances I ended up presenting the paper. In Davina’s words:

Culture is not a static entity. It is a phenomenon of everyday living and social interaction. Not all but many of the Indigenous peoples of Australia’s many countries have survived. They have survived through adaptation not assimilation and it is these adaptations that our students need to investigate and understand.

It is only through truly understanding the adaptations that the First Peoples of Australia have made post-invasion, to
maintain their identity, their connection to their community and
country and the political fights that they have instigated to win
their human rights, citizenship rights and Indigenous rights,
that our students will ever be able to contribute to
reconciliation (Woods & Kelly, 2010).

The new Unit would be part of the second year B.Ed. program and thus introduce PSTs
to technical content and epistemological ways of knowing early in their four-year
Degrees rather than in their final year. Being able to appreciate the different
perspectives, the co-existing epistemologies that are part of peoples’ cultures and life
circumstances, is critical for PSTs if they are to be able to respectfully and
appropriately include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. Below I reflect on
the influence on my own understanding of listening to stories from Indigenous
colleagues and students about their experiences and perspectives:

CK: For me a really important thing that happened was in the 1980s when
I worked in the Aboriginal Services Unit at the Northern Metropolitan
College of TAFE. The students were all Indigenous and from all over
Australia, returning to study. They ranged in age from 18 to 60 and had
so many stories to tell it just blew my mind really. It was very, very
powerful.... listening to people’s stories.....What I learnt was to listen and
to understand how little I knew. They were the things I learnt. And I was
already in my thirties and I was a history and politics teacher; but you
know, it was such a strong influence on me.

5.7. Big questions

Our work in *Curriculum and Innovation* raised a number of recurring questions from the
PSTs:

5.7.3 Why are we putting so much emphasis on Indigenous
issues?

CK: Last week someone in my group questioned why are we doing all
this. Unless we’ve got Indigenous children in our room is it really
relevant? That question keeps recurring. I think the fact that they find it
possible to ask that question is good and sometimes I feel they’re being
provocative, you know they want to talk it over because they have heard
this in their placement schools and they want to feel confident in
answering it.
So your presentation today was great Davina. When we came back to our seminar room they said “that was fantastic, that really answered a whole lot of questions that have come from what we’ve been thinking about”. The same PSTs who were saying, repeating, “why are we doing it”, were really touched by that presentation.

Davina had presented a lecture/discussion responding to the following assessment task, which was the second of two alternatives for Assessment Task 2 in *Curriculum and Innovation*:

**Table 5** VU B.Ed. 4th Year Curriculum and Innovation 2009 Assessment Task 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment 2: Engagement, Innovation and Understanding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. For this task you will work in groups of four to analyse the presentation of an Indigenous person, or an aspect of Indigenous culture as it is presented in a commercial film, television programme or YouTube video.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Following the showing of your piece of film, you will provide a succinct analysis of the degree to which stereotypes are used or avoided in this snippet, and the way in which this influences us as viewers. You will then lead a discussion about the presentation of Indigenous characters and/issues in the film media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A succinct and independent written report of the task, with literature references, will be provided by each pre-service teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To successfully complete either of these tasks pre-service teachers must:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Work effectively in a professional learning team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Plan and implement self-directed learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Employ analytical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Employ the Praxis Inquiry protocol of Describe, Explain, Theorise and Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Effectively lead a discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Must refer to specific Reading around “Colonial discourse”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrate theoretical and practical knowledge of innovation in teaching and learning; OR demonstrate theoretical and practical knowledge of the application of stereotypes in society in general and film media in particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Convey a rich understanding of innovation in education OR convey a rich understanding of the ways in which stereotypes inform and influence social perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrate the ability to make connections across issues in this Unit, and across different subject areas in your B.Ed.</td>
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</table>

The PSTs did detailed work on this task and reported back enthusiastically to their colleagues from the groups they formed to complete it. The use of multi-media materials is always engaging for PSTs and for their students. I consider some of the
opportunities for the use of such materials in Chapter 7. In 2008 one of the PST groups found and presented the song clip *I still call Oz home* (The Last Kinection, 2007) from an Indigenous Newcastle hip hop group, which we subsequently made use of in future *Curriculum and Innovation* and *Re-thinking Australian Studies* classes. In our planning discussion after the presentations of this assessment task we decided that it would be appropriate and important for Davina to respond in the next lecture to important elements raised in those presentations. One particular section of Davina’s lecture which ‘touched the PSTs’ hearts and minds’ (my notes 22.05.09) was her explanation of The Dreaming.

The question raised for discussion with the PSTs in the lecture was ‘What do you understand by the term the *Dreaming*?’ PSTs were asked to consider this in small groups then to share their thoughts with the whole seminar. They talked of stories of the past, of how the world began and of how people should behave. After that discussion Davina introduced the PSTs to the following concepts, one at a time:

- Philosophy
- Connection
- Interdependence
- Responsibility
- Reciprocity.

The idea that Indigenous Australian peoples’ ways of knowing are epistemological and ontological; and that their status is comparable other such knowledge systems, challenges the assumption that Indigenous peoples’ cultural, scientific and spiritual knowledge are ‘myths’ believed by ‘primitive people’. The issue of whether ‘writing your own Dreamtime story’ or doing an ‘Aboriginal Painting’ (a dot painting) were appropriate activities, which had earlier provoked a strong reaction from some PSTs (see 4.5.2) were seen in the context and the seriousness of the concepts Davina presented.

5.7.4 Aren’t there so many different cultural diversities in Australia that we should be looking at?

As lecturers, through our year-long collaboration, we came to understand that using Australian Indigenous perspectives within the humanities enables students to develop deep and nuanced intellectual positions and to critically and analytically engage with historical and contemporary issues in Australian society. Australian Indigenous Studies has an evolving disciplinary identity that incorporates and acknowledges diverse cultural frameworks, allowing students to consider issues from complex and
multifaceted perspectives (Kelly & Woods, 2011). This was the response we articulated to the PSTs.

DW: To me when I talk about Indigenous Australian education I’m talking about the education of our own people and when I’m talking about Indigenous Australian studies I’m talking about our shared histories. In that conversation that we had in that B.Ed. review the other day it clicked in my head about when the Reconciliation Council did the 8 booklets that were on 8 key topics (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1995) and one of them was the 'Shared histories'. And I thought ok, we’ve talked about the shared histories, now let’s dialogue and action together. That’s what’s so positive with our work this year. We have been moving from history to what we as educators (lecturers, PSTs and teachers) can actually do in schools.

As I said in the lecture ‘Australia is the only place where we can learn from the oldest surviving living cultures in the world’.

The PSTs we worked with in Curriculum and Innovation were studying in P-12 Bachelor of Education Degrees. They would become general classroom teachers ranging from Preparatory classes to upper High School, or subject specialists in Primary or Secondary schools. Some will be Physical Education (P.E.) teachers. These were often our most challenging students. The attitude was sometimes expressed of ‘what has this got to do with us?’ We would point to the first sporting team to represent Australia overseas (Australian Aboriginal cricket team in England, 1868), to Peter Norman, Williamstown High school teacher, who proudly supported his fellow medal winners, Tommy Smith and John Carlos in their Black power salute at the 1968 Olympics by wearing an Olympic Project for Human Rights badge with them on the dais. We suggested that a rained-out double period of P.E. would be a great time to play the film about that event, Salute (Norman, 2008), not just in humanities classrooms.

We looked at photographs from the Australian War Memorial of some of the thousands of Indigenous Australians who fought in all the wars that Australia has been involved in, even though they didn’t get the vote or equal pay or soldier settlement land when they returned. We explored historical events such as the 1938 Cummeragunga Walk-off, the 1938 Day of Mourning, the Freedom Ride, the 1967 Referendum, the Gurindji Walk-off from Wave Hill Station and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

CK: I think the work we did with the PSTs on events like the Freedom Ride was important. Understanding the role of leaders like Charles
Perkins challenges the image of ‘primitive people’ who ‘just let things happen to them’ to quote some PSTs. And the role of the non-Indigenous students who went on the bus with Perkins also gives the PSTs pause to think about being willing to stand up and be counted.

Chapter 7 describes another Assessment Task where PSTs were asked to visit an educational organisation in the community which promoted awareness and appreciation of Indigenous knowledge and experience. The question of ‘whiteness’ was the most difficult of the understandings we tried to explore with the PSTs, through considering their own self-awareness of the privileges that accrue to members of the dominant culture. The hidden curriculum and the conveying of the values of the dominant culture by teachers is seductive and pervasive, even when all the PSTs may not be ‘white’ but aspire to be teachers, conveyers of that culture. The professional development presented by the National Gallery of Victoria, both by their Indigenous educator and on their website, was particularly effective in offering opportunities for PSTs to consider ways of understanding personal and social identity as relevant to all of us, not just observation of the other (see Chapter 7, Section 7.3.2 below).

5.8 What Works

The title for the final section of this self-study Chapter comes from the What Works Program (McRae et al., 2002), which Davina had worked on as a consultant in one of her employment positions prior to joining VU. What Works focuses on initiating changes in teaching practices at the school level and on accelerating the achievement of educational equality for Indigenous students, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The Program also examines whole school policies and practices to promote success for Indigenous students and families. What Works is the opposite of a deficit model of learning and teaching. The strategies it proposes are:

- a very important tool for social inclusion, for developing relationships between teachers and students, and for assisting students in seeing themselves as able to operate in the wider world. Some trips to places familiar to students provide the opportunity for students to take on the role of teacher, sharing their own knowledge with others, and thus strengthening their sense of identity (Parkin & The What Works Advisory Group, 2010 p.6).

As this example demonstrates, PSTs see activities which can benefit all students arising from meeting the particular needs of Indigenous students. Having indigenous
students sharing their particular knowledge (where appropriate and negotiated with such students – and/or community members if there are no Indigenous students in a particular class) is also an example of Indigenous experience and epistemologies surrounding and including non-Indigenous ways of knowing, which I suggest in Chapter 7 as a radical possibility for developing reconciliatory education. The Table below outlines the elements that What Works proposes are important elements of a good educational program.

Table 6  What Works principles of Good Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• assumes all learners can and will succeed</td>
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<tr>
<td>• makes its demands clearly known</td>
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<tr>
<td>• includes explanations of the purpose and value of what is being learnt and efforts to ensure that they have meaning for the student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provides a series of well-structured steps relevant to the competence and background knowledge of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• searches for strategies to which students will respond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provides a maximum of explicit guidance and modelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provides opportunities for practice, and consistent useful feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• accommodates variations in pace, and pays special attention to the needs of students who don’t get it first time, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• includes a level of intensity and manageable challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• makes regular use of the life experiences and knowledge of students to make connections with other curricular content? Have you reviewed what you are doing and using now and explored alternatives to improve the relevance of curricular to students’ lives, interests, context and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uses teaching materials that deal with Indigenous cultures in an accurate and relevant way as a conventional part of the content of the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provides opportunities for cultural reference and expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provides consistent opportunities available for students to work cooperatively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(McRae et al., 2005). [CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 AU]

Similarly the Dare to Lead program (Principals Australia Institute, 2003-2009), supports schools ‘to become more effective in achieving improved outcomes for their Indigenous
students, and in understanding and supporting the wider goals of reconciliation and cultural understandings for all of their students’. In both these programs the principles developed by Indigenous educators to work effectively with Indigenous students and families are inclusive principles that can also be used for all students. The programs demonstrate universal principles and practices for good education, for the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience for all students, as opposed to the ‘look at the victims and Indigenous knowledge as deficit/loss’ (Phillips, 2011) model of Indigenous studies and Indigenous education.

We encouraged PSTs to see the co-existence and potential harmony of Indigenous and non-Indigenous pedagogies. PSTs were already familiar with Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences and the ways in which teachers can value and promote multi-literacies. We introduced them to Gardner’s commitment to the ethics of learning and teaching:

I want my children to understand the world, but not just because the world is fascinating and the human mind is curious.

I want them to understand it so that they will be positioned to make it a better place. Knowledge is not the same as morality, but we need to understand if we are to avoid past mistakes and move in productive directions.

An important part of that understanding is knowing who we are and what we can do (Gardner 1999, pp. 180-181).

5.8 The themes which emerge from this self-study

The themes which emerge from this collaborative self-study between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers developed through our work in 2009 with one of the cohorts of PSTs whose surveys are reported in Chapter 4. The themes provide further evidence for answering the research question, ‘How can teacher educators support PSTs to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning?’

Non-Indigenous teacher educators need to listen to and learn with Indigenous educators:

DW: Certainly as Indigenous educators we have been trying to say for years, that if you are going to teach Aboriginal Studies or going to
integrate it across the curriculum then please have members of our community involved and that’s part of the reason why we’ve got the state and the local Aboriginal educational consultative groups (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2013).

Teacher educators need to continuously educate ourselves:

BE: For me and for many of the PSTs, just attending this Unit doesn’t mean you automatically develop a high level of knowledge of these issues. But if we can encourage them, and us, to keep thinking ... you know, having an appreciation and an empathy about the history of this country… what is the history and what it means to us now…. then we have achieved something worthwhile. So yeah, I think we can because we’re not teaching them to be experts but to be able to question and think .... you know: ‘Is this a good question?’ ‘What are we doing?’ ‘What is our ultimate goal?’ Is it about developing an appreciation of what has happened, why it’s happened, how it happened, when it happened?

Teacher educators need to confront the colonial assumptions in teacher education curricula and in schools which lead towards seeing Indigenous peoples as the exotic other and/or victims or as invisible:

DW: When we came down to Melbourne from Queensland my daughter started at Northern (alias) Primary School.... they had a sister school in the country and they were getting all excited about their sister school coming down to visit them. The teacher said ‘there are some Aboriginal children there and won’t that be wonderful’. My daughter came home and said ‘I’m sitting there thinking, but I’m Aboriginal’. Hopefully now teachers can understand that Aboriginal children live everywhere, not just in rural or remote areas.

BE: There are many myths or misunderstandings, a lack of knowledge about these sorts of issues and that’s a good one. That all Aborigines live in Central Australia, that’s just not true.

Teacher educators need to listen to PSTs’ questions:

CK: I think the way we conducted the lectures and seminars, encouraging the PSTs to ask questions, and them seeing us doing that between ourselves as well, opened spaces for honesty and deep thinking. So the questions the PSTs asked could move from ones at the beginning of the semester about why they should have to study ‘Aborigines’ when there were so many other ethnic groups in Australia to later on wanting to know why the term ‘invasion’ wasn’t used to describe what happened in 1788. The process of the PSTs seeing Indigenous and non-Indigenous
educators learning and teaching together encouraged them to take risks themselves with the questions they wanted to ask and the research they were prepared to undertake.

Teacher educators need to encourage PSTs to see themselves as on a life-long journey in learning about Indigenous Australia:

DW: I think it goes back to meta-cognition. We’re using Civics and Citizenship to try and develop within PSTs a thinking which is more inclusive and which is very reflective ....and also to develop within them the ability to think a little more confidently. To feel they know enough to feel confident that they can go and speak to an Indigenous person. And to be able to pick up the right sort of book and read it or even the wrong sort of book and read it and think critically about it, much better than our generation was taught to think about the issues.

BE: Yes I think that summarises it in a nutshell. To be able to see examples of behaviour or literature or in the media and to be able to work with their own students to say ‘look you can understand why these uninformed opinions are being put, why people are thinking that way or are talking that way or describing it that way…. so being able to be critical and being able to be reflective of what they see and hear you know, those are probably some of the fundamental things we were aiming for in Civics and Citizenship. I’m glad we’re taping this....

Loughran emphasises the importance of teachers ‘modelling the message’ of their teaching and that the relationship between theory and practice should be apparent within the teaching and learning (1997). In 2009 we witnessed the powerful possibilities for reconciliatory education from learning together and with the PSTs, in dialogue, in making meaning, in establishing the validity of ideas, and for promoting action (Placier, et al., 2005). The PSTs saw Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers working and learning together and with them on the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula. They saw that it was possible to choose to be a teacher for social justice. In the next Chapter I present conversations with other experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators who also show that it is possible to stand up and be counted. In 2010 the VU Education Head of School asked Davina Woods to establish a new compulsory curriculum Unit for the second year of the B.Ed. which would be wholly focussed on the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in school curricula and would come at an earlier and therefore more appropriate time in the Degree. If PSTs were to have time to think and reflect and plan for the inclusion of Indigenous Australian themes then it was important for that to be addressed throughout their Degrees, not just in their final year. Davina later invited the author to join her in developing and
teaching this new Unit, *Re-Thinking Australian Studies*, which incorporated many of the learnings from our work together in *Curriculum and Innovation*.

![National NAIDOC poster 2010. Unsung Heroes: Closing the Gap by leading their way](image)


In 2010 the poster above won the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week poster competition, responding to the 2010 themes of leadership and unsung heroes. NAIDOC celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee, 2012). The poster complements Primary school student Chloe Miller’s painting for the Queensland schools NAIDOC competition which closes Chapter 1. Both posters respond to themes of leadership and unsung heroes by highlighting the importance of the role of education.

The following Chapter records the conversations between myself and six experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, offered as further evidence of the importance of reconciliatory education and of the possibilities to stand up and be counted when it comes to recognising and responding in a socially just way to the exclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience from the Australian story.
Chapter 6  

Stand Up and Be Counted:  
Conversations with experienced educators

Black fella, white fella.  
It doesn't matter, what your colour.  
As long as you, a true fella.  
As long as you, a real fella.

All the people, of different races.  
With different lives, in different places.  
It doesn't matter, what your name is.  
We got to have, lots of changes.

We need more brothers, if we're to make it.  
We need more sisters, if we're to save it.

Are you the one that's gonna stand up and be counted?  
Are you the one who's gonna be there when we shout it?  
Are you the one that's always ready with a helping hand?  
Are you the one who understands these family plans?

....

Stand up, stand up and be counted.  
Stand up, stand up and be counted.


In his book Sing for me, countryman (Murray, 1993) Neil Murray tells the story of the Warumpi Band, in a ‘fictionalised’ account. In a similar though less theorised way to Zohl de Ishtar (dé Ishtar, 2005), Murray gives the reader glimpses into the life of the community where he lived and the people with whom he lived and worked. Murray went to Pupunya in the Northern Territory in 1979 and worked in a variety of jobs, mostly as a teacher. He helped to form the Warumpi band in the early 1980s, together with George Burarrwanga on vocals and didgeridoo, Gordon Butcher on drums, Sammy Butcher on guitar and bass guitar, and Murray on rhythm guitar and backing vocals. The children’s book My island home (Murray, 2010) uses the words of the Warumpi Band song of the same name, written after Murray visited band member George Burarrwanga’s island home with him, as described vividly and poetically in Sing for me, countryman. The lyrics above absolutely engage PSTs, particularly when the
Youtube clip of the song is shown (Warumpi Band, 1985), in discussions and in consideration of the potential to use the poetry and the film clip with their own students.

6.1 Introduction

The following Chapter presents the experiences and insights of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian educators who have shown, through their willingness to stand up and be counted, that it is possible to understand and work in thoughtful and ethical ways to encourage and empower others to see beyond the dominant hegemony which excludes Indigenous peoples. These educators are inspirational and remarkable and ordinary. They have all been Primary, Secondary or Tertiary classroom teachers although some have moved into other areas of education, as writers, visual artists and people working in their communities towards social justice. They talk about their own experiences of schooling and about family stories; about events that shaped their understanding of discrimination and the silencing of those beyond the mainstream; and they demonstrate that small steps can contribute to reconciliation. In these ways they respond to the themes raised in the surveys of the pre-service teachers in Chapter 4. A summary of their responses to those themes can be found at the end of this Chapter.

In Chapter 5 the experiences and understandings that developed between colleagues Davina Woods, Bill Eckersley and myself, working with the 2009 cohort of those PSTs, were reported. We witnessed the possibilities for reconciliatory education from learning together and with the PSTs, in dialogue, in making meaning, in establishing the validity of ideas, and for promoting action to overcome their reluctance to include Indigenous themes in curriculum planning. In this Chapter the educators also talk of learning together, particularly from family members and from Indigenous colleagues. They challenge the meaning imposed by the dominant paradigm on our understanding who we are as Australians, which relegates Indigenous experience and knowledge to the periphery. They demonstrate that it is possible to support ideas and action to overcome the silencing of Indigenous voices.

As noted previously, the word ‘reconciliation’ was not likely to have been used in most of these educators’ work, given the long history of their endeavours. Nonetheless they demonstrate that it is possible to challenge the power of the
dogma that ‘white is right’ and to open spaces for Indigenous ways of knowing and being to be acknowledged, respected and to be seen as a vital part of the Australian story. These experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators were asked to share their stories, in order to inspire young teachers to appreciate that much work has been done, and to indicate that there is much still to do, if we are to engage as Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners/teachers working together towards social justice. The educators all give examples of how little exposure Australians have, particularly in their schooling and generally in education and society, to respectful engagement with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge and experience. They expose the hegemony of the dominant discourse which results in prejudice and exclusion. They talk of the value of personal friendship and the importance of listening to Aboriginal people. And they offer hope, through their commitment to social justice, that we will be able to find each other on the path of knowledge. The following educators shared their stories with me:

Bruce Pascoe  Wathurong man, parent, teacher, education consultant, author, historian, fisherman, barman, footballer and cricketer.

Lyn Hovey  Teacher, parent, artist, political activist, conservationist.

Penelope Irving  Teacher, parent, librarian, community activist.

Russ Swann  Teacher, parent, ecologist, colleague in the Re-Thinking Australian Studies B.Ed. Unit.

Jan Muller  Parent and grandmother of Aboriginal children, teacher, Swan Hill KODE (Koorie Open Door Education) school Principal, Aboriginal Health Service worker, colleague Re-Thinking Australian Studies.


6.2 The dialogue process

Before tape-recording the conversations which follow I explained verbally to each participant the purpose and scope of my research: to support pre-service
teachers to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. I explained that I wanted to present the experiences and insights of experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators in order to inspire young teachers to appreciate the work that has already been done and the work that remains to be done to engage with Indigenous demands for justice in schools and society. I discussed the Plain Language Statement for Key Informants and the Consent Form (Appendix One) with each participant and the options of them being anonymous or being acknowledged in the text. All participants decided to have their names acknowledged. Conversations were conducted in most cases in their homes or otherwise at their workplaces. The conversations were transcribed and both the transcripts and, for clarity of reading, slightly edited versions were given to the participants so that they could delete/add/approve the final version of their stories, which they did. During our conversations I tried to listen deeply (Koori Cohort of Researchers, 2011, to be an active and creative listener (Wolcott 1995) and to not ask too many questions. I was honoured that the participants shared their stories with me and that they trusted that I understood and valued what they were saying.
6.3 Bruce Pascoe

How can we understand each other if we do not know each other?

Bruce Pascoe is a member of Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, Bunurong heritage, and is a Board member of Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages. He was born on Wurundjeri country in Richmond, Victoria, in 1947 and now lives on Maap country at Gypsy Point in Far East Gippsland. Bruce graduated as a secondary teacher and taught for many years. He worked as a Curriculum Development officer with the Victorian Education Department and then as the Director of the Commonwealth Australian Studies project. He lived at the Cape Otway Lighthouse for 20 years conducting tours for visitors and also worked as a farmer, fisherman and barman. Bruce published and edited *Australian Short Stories* quarterly magazine for 16 years, and was joint winner of Australian Literature Award (1999) and winner of the Radio National Short Story Competition (1998).

Bruce has produced a history text, *Wathaurong: The people who said no* (Pascoe & Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, 2003), a language learning CD-ROM, a film and a teachers’ book. He is currently working on retrieval and teaching of the Wathaurong language and has helped develop a dictionary for the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative in Geelong, Victoria. He is about to publish a book for primary school children entitled *Dark Emu*.

In 2008 Bruce revised the original *The Little Red, Yellow Black Book: An Introduction to Indigenous Australia* (Pascoe, 2008), for the Australian Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. This text was listed as Required Reading in the new *Re-Thinking Australian Studies* Unit at Victoria University in 2011.

CK: Can you tell me what you learned about Aboriginal people when you were young?

BP: My family didn’t know anything about their heritage or if they did know, those that knew weren’t talking about it, so it wasn’t until I was 18 or so that I was made aware of it by an uncle. And it wasn’t then until I was about 30 years old that I began investigating the family history.

I suppose in some ways, when I was around about 9, I was becoming aware of the family heritage - because a lot of Aboriginal people kept on asking me about my family. One lady in the street that I lived in, which was in Mornington, she was Aboriginal, you know, she kept on asking searching questions and because I didn’t know she became a little bit annoyed at our lack of knowledge and what she perceived as a lack of interest, so she got a bit shirty with me.
And since we've begun looking for our family I can understand that now because the family was just shattered, split up, and running from one poverty-stricken situation to another. It was quite understandable why people would just say: “nah that’s too hard, we’re not even going to bother with that”.

But in later years, in talking to my father, and even from the time of when I was about 12 my father kept on introducing me to Aboriginal people, Aboriginal footballers and boxers and people that he knew and as I’ve studied more and more about the family it’s just really telling that so many of the family friends were Aboriginal families and were always in association, living in the streets with Aboriginal people and, which you could account for from living in poverty, but there must have been an element of choice there as well.

We’re still searching for family, you know, we’re finding them all over the country. There was such a blast that went through Australia at that time when people were scattered all over the place, stolen or forced off communities by government regulations. And we’re still doing that. But once you are aware, once you’ve been instructed by elders you can’t un-know your history.

And this is the advantage I had; I had older Aboriginal people sitting me down saying ‘now listen, you ignorant young man’. They didn’t ever say that, of course, but it was in their eyes and in their hearts – ‘you’re an ignorant young man, you’re not a bad man, you are bloody ignorant and you are offensive’. Because I was asking them the wrong questions and asking the questions I should never have asked them, because I was searching. But they were the wrong questions of the wrong people and I had to re-evaluate the whole approach.

They said to me ‘What do you reckon happened to your family? Tell us the story of your family’. And I would, you know, go through it. And they said ‘That point there: 1938. Do you know what was going on in 1938? [The National Day of Mourning (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2008)]. Do you even know what was going in 1946? [Pilbara strike (Hess, 1994), 1946 Strike (Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, 2009)] Do you know what was happening in 1967? [Referendum to count Aboriginal peoples in the Census (University of Queensland Library, 2012)]’ They instructed me in a whole new history of the country. And I was shamed by my ignorance and by my arrogance, you know the arrogance of the intellectual, you know the intelligentsia, because I thought I knew, and I thought I knew what the problem was and I had no idea about what dispossession does to you. How living at the bottom of the heap affects the adults and the children of those families and...So once you’ve accepted that is the truth there’s no way back. And why should you not identify with your family? It’s unrealistic to expect people not to identify with their Australian-ness.

CK: Do you mind me asking you what you thought the story was, before you were told that wasn’t the story?

Well I thought that people, Aboriginal people, had given up pretty easily. And you know I suppose a part of me was thinking that it’s their fault, you know that they had given their children away, they had left their land. Because I’d swallowed the story that there
was never a war fought on Australian soil. That you know, the loss of life in the Granville train crash was one of the greatest peacetime losses of life in Australian history. I swallowed all that crap. And now I was meeting people who when they were five years old, lost their mother and father and all their aunties. They were hiding in a hollow log just outside of Warrnambool. Not long before, Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister. And even when Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister, Aboriginal people weren’t allowed to walk down the main street of Warrnambool. That’s the country I discovered. Everyone wants to be proud of their country. I was desperately trying to be proud of my country. I wanted Aboriginal people I suppose to say to me ‘oh it’s all right’ you know like Tim Winton’s Aboriginal ghost in *Cloud Street* (Winton, 1992). And it’s not like that.

In my schooling basically I wasn’t aware of Aboriginal stories or the absence of Aboriginal stories. Which was how schools were.

The education that I had virtually just said that Aboriginal people were pretty hopeless just wandering around, had no houses, had no clothes and as soon as the white people arrived, they just turned up their toes and went into the missions. And I just believed that, my teachers were telling me that, and um, I’m still ashamed that having been a pretty good student, well not a very successful student but I was a great reader, it never occurred to me to question what I’d been told or what I’d read.

This view of Aboriginal people was reinforced by Australian literature. There’s a chapter in *Convincing Ground* (Pascoe, 2007) where I talk about Aboriginal portrayals in Australian literature and in the most famous Australian story of all time, *The Drovers Wife*, the one that Henry Lawson wrote about the Aboriginal bloke who built the wood heap hollow and it was just accepted that he was a cur because he built that woodpile hollow. And it was only later that I started to think about it that, you know, what obligation did he have to that woman, you know, for what she was going to pay him? And that she was sitting on his land anyway. Once you start thinking like that you re-evaluate everything and once you’re on that road, on that train there is only one way to go. And then you question everything and as soon as you start - it’s not a matter of being aggressively counter the Australian culture or anything like that - it’s about the fact that you let your logic take over and you apply your logic and your new knowledge to every other bit of information and it becomes obvious what is going on. You don’t have to be a genius, you don’t have to be a bleeding heart, you don’t have to be Aboriginal. You just have to look at the existing facts and apply common sense and you’ll come up with the obvious truth.

When I was at school I did start to get this feeling of what it was like to be the outsider and I found myself subconsciously identifying with those in trouble and I was just generally in trouble myself. So in during my schooling I was not identified as an Aboriginal person simply because I hadn’t gone to the trouble of finding it out and there wasn’t anyone in my family, apart from old Uncle Alf, who knew anything at all.

You know there was a lot of repression and outright bastardry by Australians toward Aboriginal people. When I went up to the Territory years later with my family and was touring around, I was shown a racecourse where the white people had their own elevated concourse so that they could get down to where the bookies were, and then they could walk back on that elevated concourse to get back to the bar without walking
through the Aboriginal crowd. And when I wrote about that for The Age newspaper, the Northern Territory police threatened to sue The Age. I had a pretty good gig writing stories for The Age at that time. The police wanted to sue and The Age said ‘Can you verify your story?’ and I said ‘My oath I can’. And I sent them all the rest of the photographs, one of which I wish I now had used in the newspaper, of the segregated crowd. And it looked like South Africa. You know, the more I think about it, that’s what it looked like most, South Africa. You know, well dressed white people elevated above the Aboriginal people and cast-offs, many of whom were the jockeys for the rich men’s horses.

CK: In the Convincing Ground you talk about working on the Commonwealth Australian Studies project.

Well, in the Australian Studies Project in the mid-1980s, we were charged with revising and refining Australian Studies education in schools. And when I got the job, my determination was that it would be about Australian history, not just about vegemite and race horses and cricket but it would be about the real history of the country. And as soon as people got a sniff that was my aim I was white-anted from that point on. Even my fellow educators were less than enthusiastic and gave me less than full support and in the end I found that my confidants were all Aboriginal people. You know, what did I expect? But I had a good friend who was on that committee and is now dead. He never left my side. And that taught me to stick, you know to stand up and not be bullied.

Our first job was to reward schools who had good Australian Studies projects and naturally enough many schools I chose were full of Aboriginal students either in West End in Brisbane or Fitzroy or Northcote in Melbourne or Yuendumu in the Northern Territory. A case in point was Yuendumu. All they wanted was a bloody decent printer to print the books that they were producing in language. So that school was my top priority; and they got knocked back instead for an elite school in Queensland, I think it was called Morningside or something like that, near Brisbane, who wanted to buy a rowing scull. You know, this was Australian Studies. I put in three hard weeks of arguing against that, with as much logic and coherence and grace as I could muster. I thought that I had won that battle. I’d spoken to the Cabinet Minister, Susan Ryan, about it. Then, when it came to the public servants’ report to the Committee meeting to decide the awards, Yuendumu was not on the list but Morningside was about 4th, and I said to my mate, I just passed him a note, which said ‘sorry brother, I’m off’. I waited until the meeting was over and I left and they were happy to see me go.

I put a similar request to a Committee for languages Other than English responsible for distributing $85 million for Greek Saturday morning schools, Italian, Vietnamese, and so on, all terrific things, fantastic things, but no Aboriginal language was being rewarded in that regard right across the country. This is before bilingual schools. And I said to the committee, look, I have this modest plea, you know it was for a couple of hundred thousand dollars, out of this $85 million, for Aboriginal language projects.

And they said, ‘Look that’s not our brief. Our brief is to teach languages other than English’. You know, these are my intellectual superiors. And I said well, ‘can you speak any of those Aboriginal languages? They are languages other English. Your brief is to fund those languages. And they just could not get it, or would not get it. Was it could
not or would not? I don’t know. But anyway now that was 10-15 years ago and we are still fighting that battle. We are getting the leftovers from that table. We are getting some money out of them. They have accepted the fact that Aboriginal languages indeed are not English. They now know that. And I don’t know when the point was, when they suddenly realised that Aboriginal languages are not English. But it was kind of like a little tiny reformation of their brains.

CK: How do you think we can encourage reconciliatory education?

I think we just have to encourage Australians to look at the obvious and not stick their head in the sand. Just look at the facts and ask ‘Now what do you think. What do you think happened? You’re an intelligent person’. When I say this to the 23-24-25 year olds at University their response is much, much different to my own generation.

I believe, I’m hoping that’s the case, because the younger people that I speak to in the community they can actually get the problem. I was at the footy with my son last Saturday in Paynesville. Orbost were playing Paynesville, Jack is playing with Orbost and one of my cricket friends from Mallacoota, who is on the right wing of just about everything in the town of Mallacoota, terrific bloke but a very, very conservative man. And while we were watching the footy, out of nowhere- well half the players were Aboriginal so you know I suppose it did occur to him that something was going on - he said ‘I’ve just read a book called Mallacoota Memories (Mallacoota and District Historical Society, 1980) and there’s a description of Aboriginal heritage in Mallacoota in there. It’s totally wrong’. He said ‘that description doesn’t sound right to me’ and I said ‘Well mate, it’s not’. And he said, ‘Well how come it’s in the book?’ I said ‘I tried to change it and they refused’.

That happened in Apollo Bay too and it’s happened here, because people are in denial and they think that what they can do is go onto the Web or go to another old book and grab out a slab and put it in the book. They think they’ve done their duty to Aboriginal people. Even if it’s wrong and they haven’t got enough inquisitiveness to go to an Aboriginal person from the area and say ‘Does this sound right to you?’ We know where that slab of stuff in Mallacoota Memories came from. It came from Howitt (W. E. H. Stanner, 1972) and Howitt got some things right, most things he got wrong and he makes some absolutely bloody clangers. And it just keeps getting perpetuating.

But there is still a long way to go with some people. Sub-consciously Australians haven’t accepted the fact that Australia is composed of many Aboriginal nations and what a wonderful opportunity that is because there is so much of worth to be discovered about Aboriginal cultures.

And a lot of the hurt is continuing to roll through Aboriginal communities is because Aboriginal people know the worth of their grandparents and their great-grandparents and their great strengths of Aboriginal culture, and it’s just hurting people that this is being denied. And the damage – and you don’t have to be a black-arm bander or a heart-on-the-sleeve campaigner to acknowledge the fact - the damage that is exhibited in Aboriginal communities is sad.

CK: Currently a number of Aboriginal people are pursuing a court case against media commentator Andrew Bolt, who has many times questioned the existence of the Stolen
Generations and also the right of indigenous Australians with lighter skin colour to claim their Indigenous heritage.

BP: I reckon I could sit down with Andrew Bolt over a couple of beers and I reckon we could agree on just about everything. I feel absolutely certain about that. Because I think he’s a journalist who’s trying to make a living in a pretty rough newspaper, so he does pretty well out of bagging everyone. The easiest people to bag are the defenceless, and he does pretty well out of that, and I reckon we could have a good yarn about that. You know, often he picks on Aboriginal people who have dropped the ball, they’re addicted to alcohol or drugs or whatever and so they’re easy targets but they’re the minority. I go into some of those Aboriginal communities and I don’t recognise them. You know, I go in there and I see parents sitting on the ground playing with their children and giving them a bath at 5 o’clock, just before tea and shortly before the children go to bed. I mean, these are not dysfunctional communities. I’ve seen some pretty horrible communities but then I’ve seen some pretty bloody horrible communities in Victoria. I used to do the census collection. I saw some of the ugliest, most dysfunctional families I’ve ever seen and, so I know what it looks like. I know how to recognise hate and despair and nastiness. I do recognise it. And I recognise it when I see it amongst Aboriginal people but I don’t see it very bloody often.

And he’s on about people not having the right to claim their Indigenous heritage if their skin colour is pale. As I said before, when you get on that train, when you investigate your own history and your understanding of a country’s history there’s no way back.

CK: Can you tell me about your new book for primary school children?

BP: One of the emblematic stories I’ve got in Dark Emu is entirely suitable to introduce to a classroom of 8 or 9 year old students - you could have a great conversation about this. It’s an extract from Charles Sturt’s diary, in central Australia, trying to make his way back to Adelaide from the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Sturt is riding through the desert with his band of men and they’ve got scurvy, very bad scurvy. They’ve got no vitamin B and C, and they’re dying. Pool has lost the roof of his mouth, it’s collapsed, because of that disease - it’s one of the symptoms of it. Sturt himself is going blind. They’ve eaten all their horses but one. And their clothes, some of them had to repair their clothes with horse skin. They are going through this endless series of sand dunes. They’ve got no water, they’ve got no food, they’re dying.

They climb a sand dune and look down. Sturt can hardly see by this stage, but they’re accosted by 1000 Aboriginal people who go ‘wayeeeeee’ – yell out to them – ‘hey what are you doing?’ You know, in language, but basically ‘What are you doing you buggers?’

And so Sturt writes that if those people had been aggressive to him that they could have done nothing, because the horse they had left couldn’t have run to save its life and they couldn’t have walked to save their lives. They were at the mercy of these people who came up and grabbed hold of them, virtually carried them down to the bottom of the dune and offered them water; and even brought cooling piti (coolamons, containers) of water to the horse, a species they’d never seen in their life and,
admittedly I think at arm’s length, they offered the horse water because they saw the horse as a dignified creature that required assistance.

And then they showed them, Sturt and his men, their village and said ‘choose a house’ and they were too far gone to bother so they had one chosen one for them, a brand new dwelling. There were nearly 1000 people living there, in this little model community with timber and thatch houses, beautiful dwellings, which Sturt describes quite well. And then they offered them roast duck and cake. You know, Sturt was dying in the desert and here’s a community thriving because they managed the resources well. They had dug a well which I think was 70 foot deep, to provide their water. You know, that’s an engineering feat. It’s not a hole in the ground. It’s a piece of engineering.

And they were growing a grain on this ephemeral river. Every time it flooded they’d wait a week and then they’d go in and sow a grain into the mud and then they’d come back and harvest the grain, and that’s what they were there for, they were there for the annual harvest. And this was about one of three villages that they inhabited.

In Brewarrina, in New South Wales, the newcomers noticed the same thing. Thomas Mitchell went along the rivers of Brewarrina and every half-day he’d pass a village that’d contain 1000 people. This was densely populated country and there they were, they had fish traps and fixed lines which were providing an enormous amount of food, but they also had cases of flour that they had milled, you know and there were tons of this flour because every time the fish harvest season came along they needed to feed all the people that came to the fish harvest. So there was this stock of flour.

This is what Sir Thomas Mitchell and Charles Sturt told Australia, told the colonial government, told the British government, told Australians. It’s in their diaries and this information has been available to Australians ever since it happened.

What I would like to ask Australian students, nine year old Australians ‘what’s going on? Who were those people? What were they like?’ And any 9 year child, boy or girl, will say to you ‘well they were kind, they were smart, they were growing grain like my father who uses a combine harvester to harvest wheat for which he needs to spread 1000s of tons of superphosphate and then poison everything else on the ground to get it, and these people weren’t destroying anything’. It’s part of the unknown story of Australia, and I think children would love to hear that story. And then there comes a point in that conversation where you have to ask those students ‘Do these people make you proud? These people, in your country, because we’re all Australians in this country, does this story of competence make you proud?’

Because it’s an Australian story and it should make Australians proud. It shouldn’t make Australians stick their head under the bed clothes and if Australians, young Australians, learnt to be proud of that they wouldn’t be jumping up and down and just celebrating you know, rowers and boxers and footballers. They’d be celebrating the history of their country, and saying we come from a country you know, that has the longest lived civilisation on earth and probably the most peaceful civilisation on earth, which holds within it the secret of peace. Because you look at longevity of Australian languages and culture and it’s unprecedented in the rest of the world that a culture could last that long and not implode, because all other cultures are done and dusted in about a few thousand years at most.
CK: In the years that I’ve been working with Bachelor of Education students on the inclusion of Indigenous themes in curriculum planning, I know it’s important for students to know more about stolen land, stolen children. And I also know that it’s important to balance these facts with the power, the resilience and the knowledge of Indigenous peoples, to celebrate Indigenous survival and ways of knowing. Sometimes students want to put their heads under the blanket because they become overwhelmed by the stories.

BP: And I think we do have to celebrate and not you know, just talk about horror all the time because I think something really, really interesting in terms of the human psyche and soul is going on in Australia. I’ve read a lot of hocus-pocus books about the noble savage in Australia. Romantic nonsense. Aboriginal people were ordinary people but what they did devise was a system of government that could accommodate difference. And they might not like their neighbours as the Bidawal did not like the Gunaikurnai and would fight each other at every opportunity they got, but not to the death, and not for their country. They might give somebody a hell of a bloody hiding for doing something that they shouldn’t have done, which was against the spirits and the law and the elders and everything, and then they would go back to their country, like nowhere else on earth.

CK: Finally, what do you think is important in working together and learning from Aboriginal people?

BP: I always say to people who ask that question: invite an Aboriginal person into your house and give them a cup of tea and a biscuit. A lot of the people who I’ve said that to have come back to me later, in tears, saying ‘that lady told me that she’d never been in a white person’s house before.’

You know, that’s what Australia is like, we don’t know each other, how can we understand each other if we do not know each other? You know, it’s no good clapping Cathy Freedman at the Olympic Games or cheering on Nicky Winmar for doing one of the most courageous and symbolic acts on earth. You have to know Aboriginal people. They are in your community. You pass 200 people in Bourke Street or going down the main street of Bairnsdale on a Saturday and you have passed 20 Aboriginal people. Now they might not be as black as hell but in the half of them who are dark you’d claim they were Indians or Fijians or something, anything but Aboriginal because you don’t want to know Aboriginal people in your community because you might have to talk to them.

Look, I want to talk to your students and through those students to other students, just to be decent and fair and generous and love your country and love your country men and women and everything will be alright.
Lyn Hovey was born on Dja Dja Wurrung country in Maryborough in central Victoria in 1950. She attended Maryborough East School Primary School and Maryborough High School. Between 1968 and 1971 Lyn studied as an Art teacher, training at Melbourne Teachers College and Prahran Technical College. From 1972 to 1982 Lyn was an Art teacher with the Victorian Education Department. Since then she has painted full-time and been involved with conservation work with a particular commitment to supporting Indigenous artists and activists, caring for Country.

CK: Can I begin by asking you about your experience of being a Primary and Secondary student, in terms of learning about Indigenous history and contemporary circumstances?

LH: I learned nothing at Primary or Secondary school about Aboriginal people. But there were definitely stories to be told.

Near Maryborough there were Aboriginal wells, little holes in the rock that collected water, and they were known Aboriginal sites. That was the only thing I knew about Aboriginal people. Except there was something that my parents and their friends talked about, which they shut up about whenever any child came into the room. It was a massacre at Deep Creek in the 1840s when thirty Aboriginal people were killed. It wasn’t until I was actually at the age of forty that someone said what was being talking about. It was shocking to me and fractured my perception of place, and of our lives within that place.

My first impression that something was rotten in the core of politics was when my father and I were leafleting for something, I can’t remember the issue. It was in about 1956 and he got arrested and taken off to the police station. He got black banned for any work in the town for being a Communist so then he did carpentering on the railways and because he was carpentering on the railways he knew a lot of people and people were coming and going and, you know, you flap your ears when adults are talking.

When I was at Melbourne Teacher’s College the Vietnam War was happening which affected our generation incredibly because by taking a marble out of a hat some of us could be sent off to kill people. I think my activism really became strong during the Vietnam War. It became this serious commitment so that in some ways, it's who I am.
During the late 60’s early 70’s the Aboriginal art movement hadn't really got going so there was no place to go to find anything but I got to know Aboriginal people on the street, that was my first contact with Aboriginal people in Melbourne.

When I was an art teacher at Thornbury High I got removed from face-to-face teaching duties because it was assumed that I had spoken about sex education. It was at the same time that Helen Garner was sacked for conducting a sex education class at Fitzroy High School. All I was doing was counselling a boy whose girlfriend had got pregnant. Then I got pregnant and left. I worked in the Correspondence School after that. We developed some materials to introduce students to an appreciation of the work of Indigenous artists. Eventually I resigned from the Department and started doing my own paintings.

CK: During 1988 when celebrations were held to mark the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet to establish a British convict colony at Sydney Cove you were involved with organising an art exhibition *White on Black* at the Northcote Town Hall in Melbourne where non-Indigenous artists responded to the Bicentenary as invasion.

LH: We felt it was important to take a stand. ‘We must listen to their past stories no matter how painful. We must work with them against present day injustices, no matter how difficult that may be’ (Hovey, 1999, p. 27).

CK: So since then you have worked as an artist and been involved with Friends of the Earth, Landcare and other conservation activities. You developed a strong connection with Arabunna people whose country includes the Mound Springs near Maree in South Australia.

LH: In 1984 and ’85 I went with hundreds of people to the desert in northern South Australia to protest the building of the Roxby Downs uranium mine. In 2010 the Roxby Downs website said the following about the mining town:

> The Past: Roxby Downs was originally a cattle station and 20 years ago the site of the town was no more than desolate outback paddocks. A few workers were the first to arrive, some with young families in tow, and they set up a caravan and tent city. Conditions were challenging but the fledgling town grew with a strong sense of community driven by an Australian pioneering spirit (Roxby Downs Council, 2010).

This short term definition of the past ignores the traditional owners, sacred sites and conservation issues. Friends of the Earth’s submission to the Inquiry to determine an expansion of the Olympic Dam mine notes the view of the Threatened Species Scientific Committee under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, that the ongoing extraction of artesian water is likely to play a continued role in the decline of the Mound Springs (Green & Friends of the Earth, 2009).

The Mound Springs, north of Maree along the Oodnadatta Track and through the Simpson desert, are natural discharge points from the Great Artesian Basin. They had allowed Aboriginal people for thousands of years to trade from Spencer Gulf into the
Centre of the country. Roxby Downs Uranium Mine was going suck water out of all the Springs and create a radioactive waste dump. They had already dried up three of the Springs and it was alarming because those three Springs were in a circle around Big Spring which is a sacred site of the Arabunna people.

The miners (originally Western Mining Corporation and now BHP Billiton) won that battle and we lost. There was a beautiful and precious little pocket in the desert, of sacred significance to the Arabunna people and with unique and endangered flora and fauna. Now it’s a gigantic mine. I knew Friends of the Earth were monitoring the Mound Springs so I became available with a bucket and a stop watch and monitored the water flow from the Springs and at that stage the mine was sucking up thirty-three million litres of water a day. So it was something you couldn’t turn your back on. The Arabunna people needed friends and so every year I’d go up with Friends of the Earth and over that time I became friends with Arabunna elder Reg Dodd, who has always been a photographer since way back. After a few years we had an idea that we would exhibit together – his photographs and my paintings.

CK: In 1995 you began a series of exhibitions of your paintings focusing on the Mound springs entitled Islands in the Desert (Hovey, 1995).

LH: Yes. Then when environmentalists and Indigenous people got together to fight the Roxby Downs mine, Friends of the Earth took one of my Islands in the Desert paintings and turned it into a poster which went out all over the place. The Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta women in Coober Pedy saw the poster and they rang me up. They had one of those speaker phones and they were all on the phone and I was on my phone.

One woman was saying ‘we want a banner’ and they had my poster and they were pointing to the colours on the poster for what things should be and they wanted it to say, No toxic, no nuclear dump in ‘Ngura’ which means, ‘My Country’.

And then they started singing and playing clap sticks and the hairs on the back of my neck stood up - it was amazing because there was a whole room of women singing to bring the banner to life.

Figure 24  No Radioactive dump in Ngura, our Country.

Banner painted by Lyn Hovey at the request of Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta women from Coober Pedy. Reproduced with kind permission of the artist.
So in 2000, when Reg and I brought our *Looking After Country* exhibition to Coober Pedy all the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta women came and sat in the exhibition for days, drinking cups of tea.

Later in 2000-2001 Reg and I toured with the *Looking After Country* exhibition, including the Counihan Gallery in Melbourne, the Powerhouse Gallery in Daylesford, the South Australian Museum in Adelaide, the Fountain Gallery in Port Augusta, the TAFE in Coober Pedy and the Araluen Arts and Entertainment Centre in Alice Springs.

CK: You have worked for many years with Indigenous artists and activists. What would you say about teaching Indigenous history and introducing children and adults to cultural aspects?

LH: The story has got to come from Indigenous people. And then in the retelling of it you have to be really careful that you’re not appropriating their knowledge. It’s the same with art. You can’t use Indigenous people’s images or use their painting or idioms for your own benefit, for your own art. I guess it’s the same with teaching, you have to acknowledge the story as being their story and tell it in their words. It can’t just be the relay of information.

CK: What do you think is important in working with Aboriginal people?

LH: We need a willingness to learn on both sides. A respect for tradition. And a willingness to allow someone to be bitter and twisted, totally and outrageously angry. I think we should allow them to be that because they certainly got the short end of the stick.
6.5 Jan Muller

The teachers who are eager, and schools that are eager to do things, find that they're frustrated because they can't proceed along the recommended pathway because the resourcing by the system is so inadequate.

Figure 25  Abschol appeal brochure, 1967.

(Riley and Ephemera Collection, State Library of Victoria, from National Museum of Australia 2007a).
(CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 AU).

Jan Muller was born in 1951 at Greensborough, on Wurundjeri Country. She attended Greensborough State School and Macleod High School. Jan has been a long time supporter of Koorie Education, beginning with her involvement with the first meetings of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group at Camp Jungai [established in 1972 in order to promote reconciliation, teach Indigenous culture and to offer a meeting and teaching place] and in her student days as a campaigner for black control of Black Affairs through Abschol and the Tent Embassy cavalcade to Canberra in 1972. Jan worked as a Resource Teacher for Aboriginal Education Services during the early 1980's, working with students in eighteen schools across the Metropolitan area and co-
ordinating programs with Aboriginal Educators in twelve schools. In 1990, Jan worked closely with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI) on the Strategy Plan for Koorie Teachers as the Teaching Union representative, and assisted with the recruitment program for Koorie Intern teachers. In 1966 Jan became the Principal of the Swan Hill KODE (Koorie Open Door Education) school. In January 2012 Jan attended the 40th anniversary of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra. Jan and the researcher worked together on teacher union activities in the 1970s and in 2011 they were part of the teaching team in a new Victoria University B.Ed. Unit Re-thinking Australian Studies, to support PSTs to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning, which was coordinated by Davina Woods.

CK: Can I begin by asking you about your experience of being a Primary and Secondary student, in terms of learning about Indigenous history and contemporary circumstances?

JM: When I was a student I grew up in an interesting area. For me, in the post-war years, the late 1950s and the early 1960s when I was at school, there was a great deal of interest in national identity in Australia. So The School Paper, a periodical magazine that came out from the Education Department for students, often had contemporary images of Aboriginal children, and I don’t know why this was the case, but there was a lot of interest in Aboriginal people. Probably because at the time there were progressive teachers who were working at The School Paper perhaps; teachers who were interested in national identity issues, and the school paper was very strong on national identity. Also the Victorian School Readers (Bradford, 2008) had a lot of stories about Aboriginal people - but they were usually the colonial perspective, you know, being attacked by ‘the blacks’. Or they had depictions of Aboriginal people as very valuable trackers in finding lost children - such as the story about children lost in the bush. In terms of how the teachers dealt with it – I don’t recall learning anything in particular - except in about Grade 3 or Grade 4, learning about Aborigines eating Witchetty Grubs and living in mia-mias. I remember that we made little bark mia-mias as a class activity in about Grade 4 at Greensborough State School.

Greensborough was a town was on the fringe of the metropolitan area in those days, so it was really rural and so there was kind of a frontier culture in the town. And the Partingtons, who’d been the first white people living in Greensborough, their house was still standing. My friend and I had a great interest in history for some reason. And the fact that Mrs Partington’s house was over 100 years old and she still lived in it, as did her mother and her grandmother before her, was fascinating to us. So we had this sense of a colonial frontier and pre-colonial times. We were greatly interested in the whole environmental, cross-cultural thing from a very early age and I really don’t know why; whether it was just the environment we were in, because there weren’t any Aboriginal families in Greensborough that I was aware of at the time but we did have an interest in Aboriginal people. That might have come through the church, because I had a religious upbringing. I was very much involved in the Methodist Church and the Methodist Church ran what was called the Australian Inland Mission which was bringing Christianity to the Aboriginal people.
CK: Did you talk about any of this at home; I mean did your parents have an influence?

JM: Good question! I don't recollect. But I do recollect later in my life, I was still in Primary school, and we had an Aboriginal pastor, or preacher, Able Morgan, come to the church for a period of time. He was there on a placement I presume. Our neighbours invited him home for Sunday lunch and my sister and I thought that would be a lovely thing for us to do as well, the next Sunday, and we approached Mum to put forward the invitation and Mum flatly refused to have him come to the house. My sister and I were very stroppy with Mum and perplexed because we didn't know that Mum was racist because we didn't have an awareness. Dad wasn't. Dad's own experience was growing up in the Western District and the North West of Victoria and he had Aboriginal friends. So he played football against the Framlingham footballers and was friends with one of the Clarks, Tommy Clark I think, and he knew the Framlingham people because he worked on his aunt's farm which was just near Framlingham. So Dad had a degree of contact with Aboriginal people that Mum hadn't had. Dad had a different perspective on life in general, actually. Dad was a very Christian in the true sense of the word; very generous, very loving, very open, very um, not at all left wing, actually very conservative, but a classical good noble person.

CK: What about at Macleod High School?

JM: Ah...no. No, nothing whatsoever that I recollect. Then I went to Teachers College straight from school. I went to university later whilst I was already teaching. Did my Degree part time over a long period, in my own time.

At Teachers College there was nothing, absolutely nothing. There were myself and a couple of other friends who started an Aboriginal support group of sorts.

CK: What was the reason for that?

JM: Good question again. Well it was immediately post the Referendum, the 1967 Referendum. Which I was not particularly involved with but my aunt was very much involved with, campaigning in favour of the referendum right through the northern suburbs of Melbourne and beyond. She and Gordon Bryant [President of the Aborigines Advancement League from 1957 to 1964 and Australian Labor Party Member of the House of Representatives from 1955–1980] and a number of others.

Jessie Macleod was her name. And Aunty Jess was very much involved campaigning in favour of the referendum. However to my disappointment I wasn't involved in that because my parents were very concerned that Aunty Jess might influence me too much in a left wing direction so I was pretty much kept away from that period, which was my last few years at high school, and so in retrospect it’s a great disappointment. Aunty Jess was always very interested in what I was doing but Mum and Dad didn’t want me to fraternise with her too much because she was a Communist. Or she had been a Communist until the 1956 Russian invasion of Hungary.

CK: So in the support group, what did you do?
JM: It’s a long time ago; but I do remember gathering up posters and getting pictures and trying to get some interest going amongst the other students about civil rights and human rights issues. It was also the time when Billy Wentworth was the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs at a Federal level and he was a... well I won’t over-exaggerate... he was a complex character, ultra-conservative and extremely paternalistic from one perspective... but in terms of getting Aboriginal affairs into the newspapers and into public awareness, I think he was significant in that regard. Whether, if I went back and looked at the sorts of things that he wrote I’m sure they would have been extremely conservative and not the sorts of things that we’d be wanting to promote, but in terms of public awareness that Aboriginal people did exist in the community and haven’t died out as it was predicted earlier, Billy Wentworth got lots of debates into the newspapers. I was in high school at the time and I used to read those articles and of course there would be counter arguments put and there would be letters to the editor and I used to read all that. But as far as having any direct contact with Aboriginal people, as I grew up, apart from the Pastor, Able Morgan, I had very little direct knowledge.

CK: So tell me about your trip to Tasmania?

JM: Oh yes, a couple of friends and I hitchhiked around Tassie. Three very young women. We were still at Teachers College. In fact I think it was our first year, so I suppose we were about 18 years old. And we discovered, unlike what the curriculum used to say - that the Aborigines in Tasmania had been wiped out - we discovered that there were in fact still Aboriginal people in Tasmania. I sort of had a sense of that myself, but I don’t know how come. This truck driver that picked us up hitchhiking one day and he was telling us ‘oh there are Aboriginal people here, they weren’t wiped out and I know where they live and they live here and there and there’. He might have even been Aboriginal himself because when I look back on it, some of the things he said and the way he said it, I suspect he may have been Aboriginal but not identifying to us as Aboriginal and telling us what he knew about Aboriginal people that were still there in northern Tasmania.

An interesting follow-up to that story was about 10 years later. My washing machine had broken down and a chap came in to fix it. On the wall I had a big map of the Aboriginal language groups in Australia. And every time he went to the laundry and back to his car, he stopped at the map and looked at it and then went on. So after he’d done this about 3 times I said ‘oh you’re interested in that map are you?’ and he said ‘yes, well my grandmother was Aboriginal. She was from Oyster Bay or Oyster Cove. She’s a Tasmanian Aborigine’. And I said ‘oh so that means you’re Aboriginal too’ and he said ‘oh no, no, I’m not Aboriginal, my grandmother was.’ And he was a Tasmanian person who had been disconnected from his identity as an Aboriginal person and had chosen not to identify with it, but he was still interested because he stopped and looked at the map several times as he went in and out of the house.

CK: What about you as a young teacher? Were you able to do anything about bringing these historical moments and knowledge that you had into your own classroom as a young teacher?

JM: Of course, but in an incidental way, all the time in incidental ways. In my early years of teaching, because I suppose I was a little bit timid, and I wasn’t quite sure how
to introduce things. So it was all sort of fairly incidental. I did it through song. I worked in a children’s home, my first appointment was at the Sutherland Homes. There were a number of Aboriginal children in the Homes actually, several of whom I still have contact with today. And once again, interestingly, while I was doing something with the grade 5s and 6s with a song with a Koori theme, one of the girls, I won’t identify who she was, but one of the Aboriginal girls volunteered that her father was Aboriginal. And interestingly enough it’s once again that volunteering of the connection. She identified that her father was Aboriginal but she hadn’t developed a sense of identity herself at that point of time because she was detached from her family because she was in the Homes.

One of my experiences in trying to get things going in schools - I was in a fairly conservative school and so I was not making a lot of progress in getting good information out - so I was having to sort of retreat to the trenches from time to time. Anyway, someone, the Principal or the Librarian, I can’t remember who, someone decided we’ll do something for Jan and we’ll get some Aboriginal films in and they got some Leyland Brother type movie in and made it a whole school activity and were sort of saying ‘look how good we are, we’re going to put this on for a whole school, for free’ And I said ‘why didn’t anyone talk to me about the suitability of this film first?’ They said ‘What’s the matter with it?’ I said ‘I have great concerns that it’s not going to be delivering the sorts of messages that I’ve been trying to, you know, get you to acknowledge.’ Oh but it’s about Aborigines.’ And I once again had to retreat to the trenches and think ‘oh my god’ wringing my hands and thinking well I’ve obviously failed miserably in trying to get the point across. And anyway, the film went ahead and afterwards one of the teachers came up and said ‘See that wasn’t too bad. What’s the matter with it?’ And I said; ‘Well it’s really about Indigenous people in the Northern Territory crocodile hunting and, you know, that was nice but how does that help our kids understand the Aboriginal kids that we have in our school? It’s completely removed, got nothing to do with it’. She said ‘Oh, you’re just crazy’.

I think one of things that you did ask me that you wanted me to elaborate was how I became so intimately involved in the community. In 1972 the attack on the Aboriginal Tent Embassy occurred (Leslie, 2012) and I travelled to Canberra on the bus to support the re-establishment of the Tent Embassy. I had met Harry Penrith, Burnham Burnham, when I was still in school, about mid high school. I spent a lot of time with him. So yes, come 1972, a group of Melbourne students, about 5 or 6 bus loads, went to Canberra to support the re-establishment of the Tent Embassy. I travelled on the same bus as Bruce McGuinness (Gary Foley, 2003), but I didn’t actually know him on a personal level at that point in time. But I had contact with him through the Aboriginal Advancement League, through Burnham Burnham.

This was also at the time that the Aboriginal community were taking control of their own affairs. There was the debate between the old non-Aboriginal people who had been involved in the Advancement League (National Museum of Australia, 2007-2008b) and the new young activists who were wanting to establish black control of black affairs which I supported and respected, so I withdrew from any further involvement in the Advancement League at that point, unlike some other white people who stayed there.
and tried to fight for their right to be a part of the organisation, missing completely the point of what people were trying to do.

I was involved in the Tent Embassy through the Australian Union of Students. I was at La Trobe Uni doing my degree and I was involved in AUS and I went to Canberra again in ‘74 as a delegate to the AUS national conference. It was at that point that Ambrose [Golden-Brown] decided to track me back to Melbourne, and over a period of time we became partners and you know the rest. We had children and I now have, oh don’t ask me the number of grandchildren... quite a number. Ali has 7, Tom’s got 2, John’s got 2.

I had met Ambrose originally at the Tent Embassy but we were all a big bunch of people, everybody was there. That was quite an interesting time too because it was also the height of the feminists struggles and the Aboriginal women at the embassy were actually at loggerheads with the feminist activists and saying ‘look our job is to support our men because our major issue is racism, not feminism’ (Cavadini, 1988) and these were, by any other definition, feminist women. I sat there and listened to the arguments. I was pretty shy in those days and I did a lot more listening than talking and that was a very rich time of debate and lots of people putting their points of view so I learnt a lot. I just sat quietly and listened. So that was an interesting time.

I was pretty much a straight up and down Christian little girl who sort of moved from a Christian position to a fairly radical left-wing position, and I was determined not to be one of those proselytes ... women who came from white middle class backgrounds who came in awe at discovering there was a whole Aboriginal community of different things and they kind of leapt in to ‘oh this is a whole new experience’. Like the rich ladies having an affair with the plumber, sort of thing.

I was determined not to be one of those people who jumped into the Aboriginal community and sort of sucked everything up uncritically. And I wasn’t that kind of person anyway, I didn’t jump into anything. I always sort of sat on the side and sort of assessed things and I don’t know why but anyway. So I was involved in supporting at a political level, political actions that were going to be beneficial to the people, to the Aboriginal people who initiated them on an agenda set by Aboriginal people.

CK: So what did that look like to you?

So there was a lot of involvement in union activities and a lot of involvement in university radical politics. And a lot of writing and leafleting and raising issues and raising public awareness. With regard to connecting the Aboriginal struggle within the union movement. I do recall that the Waterside Workers Federation was one of the most enthusiastic and greatest supporters. Ted Bull from the Waterside Workers Federation was one of the greatest supporters.

This is all during my first early years of teaching. And at the same time I was doing my degree, I was teaching full time. I took the minimal amount of time off to have children.

As far as doing things in schools, it was very difficult. And I’m talking about what was a progressive era because the 1970s and 1980s were very progressive eras in education. There was lots of innovation happening. Gough Whitlam’s Disadvantaged Schools Program did open up possibilities for activities and programmes that were a bit
different, breaking away from the old curriculum. But it didn't happen everywhere. Only some schools took the opportunity to critically consider their curriculum. The reason I'm interested in this is because I was actually a consultant for the Disadvantaged Schools Program. And the schools were invited to look at different ways of inclusion or teaching things differently, developing new programs to produce better educational outcomes for all students particularly students in school classified as disadvantaged. There was some activity in developing Koori specific programs through that funding and there was also funding specifically for Koori activities through an innovation grants program.

So that was a start of a period of rethinking the curriculum and being more inclusive of Aboriginal people and new migrants and that was also the start of the Aboriginal Education Service which was established in that period of time also.

CK: So there was concentration on supporting Indigenous students?

JM: Yes. There wasn't much about re-educating the non-Aboriginal students about social justice issues or about Aboriginal people.

CK: Or about Australian history which we didn’t know much about.

JM: Or about Australian history, yes that's right. So there was actually a focus on raising the educational levels as perceived. But even back in the 1980s, the late 70s and the 80s, it was recognised by Indigenous educators that the education of the white community was just as important as raising educational opportunities for Aboriginal kids. The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI) had that in their charter. But there was never time. And there were never resources. Never enough money.

And so much time is spent trouble shooting. And why is there so much trouble shooting needed? Because we still have this inequality in society and this lack of understanding and lack of connectedness amongst people, and a whole lot of other social reasons. I think that one of the issues here is the housing. The struggle for survival is still so intense for people on low incomes and for Aboriginal people in particular that there's not a lot of energy left over for other things.

CK: How about I ask you some of my pre-prepared questions? Ok. Some of these come from Gillian Cowlishaw (2004). Davina recommended her for me to read. So, this is a question which I found quite powerful: ‘Can those privileged by racial power divest themselves of privilege and engage in a decolonising enterprise?’ I mean it's a big formal question.

JM: It’s a big philosophical question and it’s debated ad infinitum by people from Ivan Illich (1972) onwards. That's one of the big debates of the century. Actually, I object to the wording of the question because it’s talking about racial power and I don’t believe that that's the right question: ‘Privileged by racial power’. The concept of race, see, you've asked the wrong question here because I could go into a big debate about the concept of racial power. And I think you know where I’m coming from.

CK: Alright. Tell me though...
JM: Well the crux of this question is can you actually divest yourself, and engage in a decolonising enterprise. And my argument is ‘definitely yes, absolutely yes’. But I get caught up on the debate about ‘racial’ power.

CK: I just took that myself to be that being non-Indigenous in some ways gives us a power to find our way through life whereas Indigenous people have to assert themselves against prejudice and discrimination. We’re not going to get stopped on the street like your children were and asked to explain ourselves.

JM: It’s not a power. We’re just as oppressed by the oppressors but it’s in different forms. Are we part of the dominant culture?

CK: We have a certain status because we’re not Indigenous. I mean to be Indigenous is to bear the brunt of more than just being working class or being politically of the left. Being Indigenous is more brunt to bear.

JM: That’s where I’d debate the issue.

CK: Would you?

JM: Yes.

CK: Why? You gave me an example of your children being stopped.

JM: I did give the example of them being stopped and challenged. It was outside Trades Hall in Melbourne one Thursday night. I was a delegate to Trades Hall Council and the kids were across the road having pizza for dinner. When they finished they would walk across Lygon Street and wait at the back of the Council Chamber until the meeting finished. This particular night as they started to walk across the street a police car stopped beside them and asked them what they thought they were doing, you know harassing them. John said calmly, ‘we’re going to see our mother’. The police said, oh yeah and where would that be?’ John said ‘she’s a Trades Hall delegate and she’s at the meeting right now. The police backed right off then, saying, ‘oh, oh, ok’ and drove off.

CK: So they were stopped because they look Aboriginal.

JM: Because they look Aboriginal. Yes. They had to answer for being black.

CK: Isn’t that more of a burden then, looking Aboriginal?

JM: But like I said, John handles it quite calmly.

CK: But he still has to handle it?

JM: He still has to handle it.

JM: It’s just that it’s a complex issue and it involves philosophical and political arguments which I’m sure you’re familiar with and go for hours when people start...so I just want to skip over that. But it is to do with the fact that there are the privileged and there are those who do not share the trappings or appearance of the dominant culture. I don’t see the membership of the dominant culture as being the fundamental issue. I
see inequality in society per se as the fundamental issue and yeah, I mean we've written essays, thousands of words on this. Being part of the dominant culture does give you some degree of privilege and it does protect you from some of the more blatant racism that occurs to a degree but if you're a non-Aboriginal person associated with an Aboriginal person and you do encounter some of the more racist members of society, you are not protected by virtue of your colour or your position as a member of the dominant society. You are in fact in some cases targeted worse than the Aboriginal person because you are a person who has chosen to stand in that camp. So you're not only scum, you're a traitorous scum.

And that was something that was revealed to me by my father-in-law, my Aboriginal father-in-law whose mother was white. And he said on a number of occasions, and he grew up in the early part of the last century, he was born in about 1912, and he was the youngest of a large family whose experience of cross-cultural conflict had extended back some 15 years before he was born. So he had a lot of knowledge of 1800s stuff and I told you before what his connections were. I mean he was connected with very famous people who were hounded and shot and killed by the white settlers: well they were a posse. They were a vigilante group who were hunting down Aboriginal people killing them. And did it with great gusto.

So his experience was quite horrific. But he said that his mother copped more racism than he had ever suffered and looking at young fellas and the chip on their shoulder in the 70s, he was quite critical of them, saying 'They don't know what racism is, they haven't experienced it. My mother experienced more racism than any blackfella that I've ever known'. And he grew up on a mission and lived on a mission all of his life.

CK: It's really interesting Jan. I see what you're saying. It's very complex isn't it?

JM: And to sort of do a little um, in a nutshell response to a question like that, it's just not possible because it, you need to explore a whole range of issues. And it's something that a lot of people miss and that's why I don't articulate it often because it's such a complex thing and it's easy, it's quite often easier to just let the dominant perspective prevail.

CK: I get what you're saying about underneath that question there are some incorrect presumptions.

JM: There's presumptions there, yeah.

CK: What else have I got here Jan? What do you believe is impeding the inclusion of Indigenous history and contemporary circumstances in educational settings? Because we know from the evidence that schools still aren't including those historical and contemporary themes.

JM: I think it’s laziness to some degree. Because in terms of institutional racism, a lot of that has been moved to the side and there are opportunities for people to get in there and do things There’s a sort of, not intransigence, just a sort of stuck in the mud tendency for people not to make the effort. I suppose the system can partly be blamed for not actually making teachers make the effort like they have done with other big initiatives. Some responsibility can be put back onto the Department. One of the
reasons, not main reason, but one of the reasons is that teachers who are interested in doing something feel hampered and frustrated by, a few years ago, it used to be the lack of resources; and now-a-days it’s a lack of knowing how to proceed because I think we’ve got the message across that consultation and connection with an Aboriginal community is fundamental to going down this pathway but people don’t know how to make that connection.

And, on the other hand, the Aboriginal community is busy trying to survive and make a living and so whilst we have the ideal concept of collaboration and cooperation in developing Aboriginal themes in schools, where are the people that can be collaborated with? And where is the money to assist in developing this? Because people that work as you mentioned before, people who work in Aboriginal education and the Koori Liaison Officers, they’re so busy doing the other parts of their job that the collaboration to develop particular programs in particular schools has to keep getting put to the side because this particular crisis must be dealt with now, and then I’ve got that secondary crisis and that tertiary crisis that has to be dealt with, and I’ll get to them before I get to you. But I will get back to you.

So you’ve got too many needs and not enough people and not enough resources and it’s a bit like when schools started to integrate disabled kids into schools and they started closing down the special schools and integrating kids – great concept but 20 years down the track it’s pretty much of a disaster because the resources that you need to make it effective as it was originally conceived just aren’t there and they’re not sustainable.

And I think that this is a similar situation. What we would like to see and what is the proper practice and the best practice is said to be economically unachievable. And that’s a pretty miserable state of affairs. But that’s one of the big things. The teachers who are eager, and that schools that are eager to do things, find that they’re frustrated because they can’t proceed along the recommended pathway because the resourcing by the system is so inadequate.

CK: Do you think it’s naive of me to think that doubling the number of Koori educators so that that connection with community and schools for the sake of the whole student populations in those schools, so that they’re sorted of paired with the Koori educators as they are now, that’s not a hugely expensive thing to do is it? Seems to me that that would make a huge difference.

JM: It would.

CK: Because person power is the thing.

JM: The personal stuff, it comes down to people.

CK: I mean I don’t know, are there only 30 Koori educators in Victoria? I don’t know how many there are.

JM: Well last year there was a big change in the whole structure of it and um, I can’t tell you exactly what it is now. But they’ve changed the whole system around and they’ve got um, Koori educators responsible for a range of schools rather than being attached
to an individual school so the nature of the role has changed too. And I'm not quite familiar with how it’s shaping up. But I suspect that it was an economic decision that brought that about because it usually is an economic decision by the Department. But whether it will, whether the broader role will be better or worse I don't know. I suspect not because I suspect that they will still be trouble shooters in effect, rather than developing the intimate connection with students that is needed.

In terms of how things happen in practice, kids that in strife will get attention first. Teachers wanting support to develop programs are going to be the last cab off the rank every time because there will be a range of other issues.

So it’s up to teachers themselves to take the initiative and do the best they can and get the best advice they can and this comes down to knowledge, reading and listening. That’s why I said at the beginning laziness. Well it’s probably unfair to say laziness, but everything has a time factor and everything has an effort factor and so you will always have the really enthusiastic teachers who will go out of their way and find what they need and proceed. The Department needs to support those teachers and work with VAEAI to find ways to make connections with communities.
6.6 Russ Swann

The students said ‘we know nothing about Indigenous people and it’s just fantastic to meet people and to hear about their music and about their passions and about their lives and about the Stolen Generations and all of the different issues’

Russ Swann grew up on Kurnai land in Far East Gippsland and attended Buchan Primary School. He worked originally as a physicist then taught in Victorian and Western Australian schools, Technical and Further Education and in three universities, including Victoria University where he coordinated the Ecology and Sustainability science degree. Russ worked in the new Re-thinking Australian Studies course at VU in 2011.

CK: Can we start with your own experience at Primary and Secondary school because that’s what I’ve asked the pre-service teachers themselves in their surveys so it’s interesting to know what your experience was. How much exposure to Indigenous knowledge or historical events did you get at Primary school?

RS: None in the classroom. But I did grow up with Aboriginal kids in Far East Gippsland, in Buchan. There were two Aboriginal families in town and so I was going to school with two boys my age, Aboriginal boys that I was friendly with, even though it wasn’t cool to be friendly with Aboriginal kids. My parents had a very strong social justice background and they were always looking out for the other in that quite narrow little society and that included it being fine that their sons were friends with Aboriginal kids. It was unusual for the 1950s. And then in my Secondary schooling absolutely nothing at all.

CK: Did those boys go through to Secondary school with you?

RS: No, I’d left before Secondary school. I moved to Melbourne and they would have done minimal secondary schooling if any. I heard quite a few years ago now when I was talking to Gary Foley that both those men were dead. I had Gary along to talk to my students and he mentioned how the death age of a lot of Aboriginal men was about 50 at that time. Gary and I were of that age at that time.

I had brief contacts with Aboriginal people over the following decades but it was only later when I started to teach in a University ecology subject in the Sustainability degree that I helped to set up at VU, it was only then that I looked at Massacre Maps (G. Foley, 1998-2009) and read more about it that I realised what had gone on around the Buchan area and why Butchers Ridge was so named. I’d always thought that it was because a lot of cattle that were killed there. But no, it was a massacre site (Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative, 2012a).
When I was a young teacher in my mid-20s I had hitch-hiked up to Darwin and on the way stopped off in Alice [Springs] and was just appalled at the Aboriginal people brawling in the streets and the drunkenness and you know the stereotypical stuff you’ve heard about and wondered about. I was just shocked by the brutality of Northern Territorian comments about these people, and I thought there’s got to be a reason; so that prompted my thinking. Then later in my 20s I was in Perth and I was working with the Commonwealth Government scholarships scheme for Aboriginal kids and I went to teach physics and pure mathematics to an Aboriginal girl who was, unusually at that time, studying it in Perth. I knocked on the door and a blonde haired blue eyed girl answered. I looked behind her and said ‘I’m here for the Aboriginal person’ and she said ‘well that’s me’. And that was my first understanding that you don’t judge by appearance, you can’t judge Aboriginality by appearance.

And then I went to travel and live in developing countries and work on education and social justice issues, briefly in South America but mostly in Fiji and Papua New Guinea and the Pacific. When I was in Peru and Bolivia, I wondered why so many of the religious people that I met up with were Australians, and questioned why weren’t they back home doing something with Aboriginal people. And then later, I saw my own example of doing just that and it was something to question my own thinking. So many Aussies leave Australia to do the right thing and I wonder about that at times. No answers on it.

Then I suppose the next big contact was with the subject that I helped to set up at the St Albans campus of VU. So I was a very late coming to a deeper realisation of what had gone on for Aboriginal people. I don’t have a huge knowledge, but I only got deeper knowledge about Indigenous issues when I started coordinating that subject. I would teach 2 or 3 weeks of the 12 weeks myself so there was always a history content in there that I was comfortable with talking about, but I was always really wanting to have Indigenous people in front of my students talking about their lives, that was much more powerful.

CK: So you became Head of the Science Department?

RS: I was the Coordinator of one of the Bachelor of Science Degrees at St Albans. The Degree is tagged now Ecology and Sustainability. Back then, in fact it must have been 16 or so years ago, the Head of the Department at the time and myself and a couple of others thought we needed to diversify the subjects to include more than laboratory work. One of the subjects that came up for discussion was what was eventually called Indigenous Society and Environmental Management. A bit of a mouthful but it’s still called that and still running.

CK: Can you talk a little bit about what were you trying to achieve?

RS: Well there had been some writing in the early 1990s, about how much Indigenous knowledge there was that wasn’t being tapped into from a science point of view. That was one of the drivers. The idea was to get Indigenous people in to talk about environmental management. And to make some links. Of course it was, looking back on it, it was pie in the sky because there was a limited group of science-comfortable Indigenous people and they were not always going to be available. So the subject
morphed very quickly into me coordinating people to come in to respond to the
students’ questions and statements about Indigenous issues in general. The students
said ‘we know nothing about Indigenous people and it’s just fantastic to meet people
and to hear about their music and about their passions and about their lives and about
the Stolen Generations and all of the different issues that are there’. So every 12 week
Semester we would have 9 or 10 Indigenous speakers and I quickly threw out the idea
of just science related issues and replaced it with those social issues. So it became
and still is that sort of a subject even though it’s got a tag of environment on it. We got
Beth Gott for example, from Monash University, a non-Indigenous woman in her 80s
now, who knows enormous amounts about bush tucker and bush plants and medicines
and we would get people like Gary Foley, Vicki Walker and Kutcha Edwards and just a
whole range of people every year. The students always loved it. They were like me,
they were learning along the way and saying ‘Why weren’t we told?’ You know, the
whole Henry Reynolds thing.

Just getting that ecology subject to survive was a political act and I fought like hell for
that every year and that was with Karen Jackson (Director of the Indigenous Academic
Unit at VU) helping me get people to guest speak. It was part of my teaching load but
then the administration had to pay guest speakers, so every year it came up as to the
cost factor. But no one in a power position was game enough to chop an Indigenous
subject either, so there was that card to play.

CK: How do you think that influenced those students’ work as scientists?

RS: Well, the idea behind the subject was that a lot of these young ecology and
sustainability graduates were very passionate about green issues and about
environment and animals and plants and preservation and so they were very taken by
Indigenous knowledge in that area. Then they were just floored by the politics of what
had gone on and the massive injustices and so there were quite a few every year who
were converts if you like to actually recognising what needed to be done. And some
went on and did post-graduate work, doctorates, in Aboriginal related i

CK: So, particularly as a science educator, did you feel that the pre-service teachers in
Re-Thinking Australian Studies could understand the importance of including
Indigenous themes across the curriculum, rather than just in humanities subjects?

RS: Yes, I think so, yes. Like the Health and Physical Education students. Some of
those, you’d call them the jocks, the big strapping boys who were only interested in
soccer and the footy scores and body building and such things; a couple of those
impressed me with the fact that they turned up and made some progress and that they
were shocked by the statistics, the health and the education statistics of Indigenous
people.
CK: And do you think they got to the stage of seeing why those statistics might be so drastic. I mean did they see the connection to health of people losing their land and their families?

RS: Yes, the generationally disadvantaged. Yes they did. I think the subject is really powerful. I would just like it to have had more Indigenous people teaching in it.

CK: Well we nearly didn’t manage to go on, with some lecturers not being able to continue teaching last semester. Hopefully next semester we will have more Indigenous lecturers as well as guests. Can I ask you a bit more about how you came to be a person who is open to this thinking and learning?

RS: As I said it was the connection with Indigenous friends in Primary school in Buchan and my parents. My mother particularly was very concerned about people and very welcoming to everyone. A German family arrived in town, which was unusual after World War 2, and my mother was welcoming and had them to home and things like that. So there was that obvious lesson there and deep sense of social justice I’d say from my mum especially.

CK: Are you optimistic that the young teachers we’ve both been working with will be able to contribute to and benefit from reconciliation and so on, as education policies say?

RS: Yeah, I do think it’s important that young teacher’s eyes are opened to this at University because they really have very little still at school. It’s very limited, what our PSTs know. They’ve commented in class, some of them, that this has been a life changing thing for them. They had no idea about things like the Myall Creek massacre – the Australian Story television program on that (Cheshire, 2001) affected them strongly, as did the Bringing them home Report (R. D. Wilson, 1997). It was gut wrenching stuff for me too. It’s important to get that message out and if there are too few Indigenous staff around to do it then someone should be doing it is the way I feel.

CK: One of the things that I’m interested in is how we are going to take steps to recognise Indigenous sovereignty. It’s connected to this discussion we’ve just had about acknowledging the co-existence of Indigenous realities and demands for recognition.

RS: Well there’s the symbolism and the importance of the Rudd Apology (Rudd, 2008). It’s another step along the way. And my students this year in Re-thinking Australian Studies were very taken with [Prime Minster] Keating’s Redfern speech (Keating, 1992) for example; and the language of it and the reality of what happened sinking in. Then going backwards in the Howard years. And then the mixed views about the [Northern Territory] Intervention. So these are really important things to be thinking about. But I think a Treaty is essential.

I raised in class the Amnesty International report this year on Australia and Indigenous people. There was a small newspaper article, and students were interested in that because some of them had heard of Amnesty and believed in what Amnesty was doing, and other ones said that Amnesty were a damn nuisance and that they always
just wanted money off you at the train station, but most PSTs were very supportive. They were concerned with the criticisms of the Intervention in the Amnesty report.

CK: The PSTs are being asked to do a big thing, take these ideas from University classes to putting the ideas into practice in schools.

RS: Yes we did talk about that in class actually. How schools are very conservative places, that there will be some people on board, but there will not be a lot, that you might be a pioneer there and how you are going to deal with that. There were mixed responses. Some talked about wanting to establish themselves and not to be seen as too revolutionary at the start and how can you do this. My advice, as it was with environmental people going out into schools, is that you can tag along. There will be someone else in the school community who has similar views. It might be a parent or another teacher. You might come up against a road block like a Deputy Principal or Principal; but also there will be those who might see it as being good for the school. So just like the political stuff I had to do to make the Indigenous Society and Environmental Management subject survive at VU for years, you need to be wise to the politics of a situation.

Another thing I wanted to comment on was that one or two of the PSTs implied that they were being made to feel guilty and that they didn’t like being made feel guilty. I think they expected to be treated more gently and they had the view that they weren’t guilty. They had the Howard view that they weren’t going to say sorry because ‘I’m not guilty, I didn’t do it’. I don’t know how representative they are. It’s challenging stuff. It was similar in the ecology group you know, they want to be green ecologists but they don’t want their lifestyle mucked around thanks very much, so there’s a bit of a parallel there.

CK: Having worked in *Re-thinking Australian Studies* this semester, how do you see the young teachers that we’ve got in our classes responding to the themes?

RS: Oh it’s been varied but largely I’d say really positive. And I’m just heartened by a couple in my class and then another one from someone else’s class when they were presenting portfolios, just the comments about, well my dad’s a racist but now I’m challenging him, I feel empowered enough to challenge him. And another young woman whose uncle said ‘what are you doing that subject for?’ She said ‘I was able to tell him about (the area she lives in), Lara’, and she was able to tell him about Wathaurong people and he wasn’t interested but it stirred the family to think and that’s really positive. And so many PSTs were saying how they really want to talk about this in their classes and that they will teach it and integrate it and I don’t think it was just spin, just for me. They didn’t have to do that. The integration of Indigenous issues into all subject content areas is crucial and most PSTs were keen to do that and to not have a stand-alone, one-off Indigenous lesson.

CK: Bruce Pascoe said, it always comes to my mind, ‘once you know something, you can’t un-know it’. So the power of education to open peoples’ headspaces.

RS: Yes it’s enormous. It’s huge. That’s where teacher educators have a critical role because teachers have such an important role with young people. If you can influence the teachers that’s a really important step.
At university I went to demonstrations about anti-apartheid, not things to do with Aboriginal issues or rights. It was something that I realised later - that we were in Australia.

Penelope Irving grew up in Korrumburra, Victoria, on Gunnai country. She attended Korrumburra State School and Korrumburra High School. From 1976 to 2010 Penelope worked as a teacher librarian, an English as a second language teacher and as classroom teacher in Victoria and Tasmania. In 1978 Penelope spent a year working in the Curriculum Branch of the Tasmanian Education Department developing a Multicultural Resources Directory. In 2010 she worked with the Ballarat Koorie education Coordinator on the production of a booklet called *Baarlijan Yarns*.

CK: Can I begin by asking you about your experience of being a Primary and Secondary student, in terms of learning about Indigenous history and contemporary circumstances?

PI: The only thing I can remember about Indigenous history from my schooling was something about Truganini, who was said to be the ‘last’ of the Tasmanians.

My parents did talk a bit about Aboriginal rights at home. When the 1967 Referendum happened I remember talking quite a bit about that and they were very much in support of a Yes vote.

At university I went to demonstrations about anti-apartheid, not things to do with Aboriginal issues or rights. That was something that I realised later - that we were in Australia - but I was really unaware of so much and I wasn’t aware of even having met an Aboriginal or Indigenous person at that stage.

CK: What about when you started teaching?

PI: When I was in my first year of teaching at Mt. Beauty High School Indigenous issues were not discussed. When I really did start to become very much more aware was after going to Tasmania. That was at the beginning of 1975.

In Hobart, as well as teaching English as a second language, I was involved with the Unemployed Workers Union, and the Tenants Advisory Service which I helped to establish. There was a Migrant Women’s Group and the Wilderness Society, and other groups all housed in the one building. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre was nearby. That helped our growing awareness. Then I was seconded into the Curriculum Department, as it was called at the time, to work on a Multicultural Resources Directory for Tasmanian schools.

Michael Mansell asked me to talk with some Indigenous teachers. They asked that resources addressing Indigenous themes be included in the Directory because there
was no other source of funding and it would be good to get the issues into public view. I also spoke with Michael about including the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and other cultural places and people that teachers could contact as sources of information.

I had a great deal of autonomy in many ways but when I discussed this with my senior manager he expressed surprise that I was going to include Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural resources in the Directory.

I was told that the Directory was a celebration of diversity, of how migrant cultures have contributed to and enriched our Anglo society; it was not about Aboriginal issues! As well as Aboriginal culture being seen as not part of ‘diversity’ it was also seen as ‘too political’.

Later I started teaching remedial maths and English at Launceston High School and things were said like ‘oh yes, that family, oh yes’, really dismissively towards some children; and almost writing them off because they were Aboriginal. ‘They just go on walkabout every now and then, they don’t come to school, they don’t turn up; they just go on walkabout’. This was at the same time as the official position was that there were no Tasmanian Aborigines!

The children were seen as truanting. When actually it was attention to family and to cultural duties that explained many absences from school. Because Indigenous people had been forcibly removed from their own areas they were going to many different places to fulfill family obligations, including during mutton-birding season, attending ceremonies and so on. Families had been broken up but the connections were still there. So yes, students would sometimes go off with their family for a while. But they came back.

People had to bear racism whether they looked black or white, because of their reputation, for example, as members of the Mansell family.

I became aware of things like the enforced taking of the people from their own countries and being forced on to missions and reserves in totally different areas because of my involvement with community groups and becoming aware of the existence of Tasmanian Aboriginal people, their identity and political organisation. I hadn’t known about things like that.

CK: In 2003 you came back to Victoria.

PI: Yes. When I first came to Ballarat Secondary College I was at the senior campus and I can remember asking the then Principal what the cultural mix was at the school and he sort of looked at me and said ‘There isn’t any, this is Ballarat’. That’s actually what he said. So when I was re-deployed to the Wendouree campus, the junior campus, and I was told that there were 64 Indigenous students at Ballarat Secondary College, I was flabbergasted.

CK: Can you tell me about the Baarlijan Project?

The Baarlijan booklet has stories written by Koorie students from the Wendouree campus of the Ballarat Secondary College. Jamie Lowe, who organised the project, was the Koori educator for the whole of Ballarat. Because there were a large number
of Indigenous students at Ballarat Secondary his office was there. But he worked with Indigenous students at various other Ballarat schools as well.

Jamie was the guiding light of the project. As well as my literacy work I had been asked to do Koori education support work and I came to that without any background, credibility or connection with the Ballarat Koori community, and I felt that wasn’t right. But Jamie in particular was very encouraging and accepting and I learnt a great deal.

So we collected resources and we were in contact with people in some of the KODE schools as well, including video-conferencing with Aboriginal students at other schools.

Baarlijan is the local Wathaurung word for platypus and it was chosen as the emblem or the symbol for the Indigenous community in Ballarat because the community is such a diverse group, from many Indigenous nations.

Basically we started with oral story-telling, getting one of the prominent local elders, Uncle Murray Harrison, to come and talk about his life and experiences. His grandson was one of the students. I also used excerpts from a book that was actually written by Jamie’s own uncle about Framlingham - just called *The Mish* - and that had some really good stories in it and lots of accounts of living there and what it had been like. The students were able to scaffold their own stories based on extracts from *The Mish* which we examined for sentence structure and vocabulary. Some students had never written full sentences before and by this process they were able to develop their own stories with confidence and a sense of achievement.

The Baarlijan booklet was a literacy project. But it was also to encourage the Indigenous students to have a sense of pride and interest in their heritage and to have a sense of identity through that. Although they did identify themselves as Indigenous some of the students just had other ordinary adolescent concerns and not such a strong sense of how their Indigenous heritage could be really something positive and good, something that they could draw strength from.

Some teachers still held the notion that it was a bit arbitrary, and that it wasn’t a positive thing. Many still had that attitude of ‘what can you do? ’They’re not really here because they go off whenever they feel like it’.

There was more understanding from teachers who were interested in the Baarlijan Project because talking together and listening to the students’ stories allowed us to appreciate why family and culture were so important.

The *Baarlijan Yarns* booklet was a project specifically for Koori students. But it started people thinking and talking and before I left the school, teachers began attending in-services at places like the Aboriginal Advancement league in Thornbury. I was able to present materials through the school library. And we started work on an Indigenous garden project to also include non-Indigenous children.

Copies of the *Baarlijan Yarns* were requested by the Brambuk Cultural Centre in Gariwerd (the Grampians) and by the Ballarat public library. The local Primary school took many copies as they wanted to use it as a resource for teaching reading.
6.8 Davina B. Woods

Are you just going to be a teacher for the status quo or are you going to be a teacher for positive change?

Davina B. Woods is a Kuku-Yalanji/Kuku-Djungan woman, whose traditional country is in far north Queensland. Davina has for the last 21 years lived on Kulin country. Davina has been working in education since 1980. In the School of Education at Victoria University I had the opportunity to work with her in the fourth-year B.Ed. Unit, *Curriculum and Innovation*. Davina is completing her Ph.D. which will incorporate her interest in the Arts with an exploration of her Indigenous identity. In 2009 during the dry season she was able to fulfil a promise to her mother and herself to walk on the ancestral country from where her maternal grandfather was stolen in the 1880s.

In the conclusion of an article about Indigenous literacies for the Australian Literacy Educators’ Association in 2002, Davina asks us to realise that we cannot begin to decode Aboriginal perspectives without all schools and all students having the opportunity to become engaged in Australian Indigenous studies. We should use our hearts as well as our minds to understand Australian Indigenous perspectives and to include music, poetry, painting, sculpture and film; traditional and classical forms of literacy standing side by side with the contemporary and futuristic.

When originally planning my article I thought I would write about a large number of Australian Indigenous artists. However, I believe that the essential qualities and extent of their works are reflective of each other. The inspiration and essence for each is their Aboriginality and the unique vision that their Aboriginality brings to their work. Australian Indigenous artists are expressing themselves, creating meaning using their Aboriginality. The audience must decode their meaning. Such decoding or reading can only occur when the audience understands the Australian Indigenous perspective. Therefore, I believe it is an imperative that all Australian schools teach Australian Indigenous studies for it is only through identifying signs of life that literacy is truly achieved (Woods, 2002; p. 2).
I first met Davina Woods in 2008. At the time Davina was preparing an audit of curriculum offerings with Indigenous themes across the School of Education at VU. In 2009 we found ourselves on the same teaching team for the fourth-year Bachelor of Education Units, *Curriculum and Innovation* and *Change and Social Justice*. Since then we have worked together developing and teaching a new second year B.Ed. Unit *Re-Thinking Australian Studies* and writing together.

Davina has taught me many things in the five years of our working together, in particular the reality and strength of Indigenous ways of knowing, and the importance of examining my own privilege, as a non-Indigenous Australian. Davina’s work at VU has been transformative for many colleagues in the School of Education. At the same time there continues to be resistance, in the form of inertia if not direct opposition, to calling into question the dominant epistemology, that ‘white’ is right.

In 2006 Davina wrote a poem, *Urban Songlines* (see Appendix 1) after the 2006 NAIDOC March in Melbourne. We included this poem in the course materials for *Re-Thinking Australian Studies*. One of the first homework tasks PSTs were asked to bring to class was research on one of the leaders named in the poem. They were invariably stunned at the role these leaders played in the history of Australia and their own lack of knowledge of that history.

DW: Having read books such as *Victims or Victors* (Victorian Aborigines Advancement League, 1985), viewed videos such as *Lousy Little Sixpence* (Morgan, 1982) and researched pre-invasion as well as colonial life in Victoria, it became clear to me that poetry is the perfect genre for retelling the story of the Victorian-based activists of the 1930s and before. Our beautiful tidda (sister) Lisa Bellear, along with her brother John Harding, had for many years encouraged me to do something with my poetry. With her passing, I thought it was time I committed *Urban Songlines* to paper and release it for community reflection – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

CK: Can we talk about your own early experiences, the purpose of this study being to encourage pre service teachers include Indigenous history and contemporary themes in their curriculum.

DW: I started my career by doing a 3 year Diploma of Teaching at what was then called the Kedron Park Teachers College in Brisbane, in Queensland, in the 1970s.

With regards to the content of our courses, the closest we got to it was when I did a major in Australian History. And I was introduced to Geoffrey Blainey’s book, *Triumph of the Nomads* (1975), which was earth shattering for its period. He pointed out how, if people go along with the western euro-centric scientific idea that Aboriginal people had to have travelled here from somewhere else rather than coming from the land, then we would have needed absolutely magnificent maritime and navigation skills. So it was
great for me to read that book because it had a lot of positive things to say about Aboriginal people pre the colonisation of Australia. And then that was it. That was all there was in my teacher education course.

Later when I did my Bachelor of Education, I was doing that part time externally; I was working at the Aboriginal and Islander Education Unit within the Queensland Education Department in the 1980s. I was enabled by my forward thinking lecturers to focus my assignments, my assessment work on Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies.

Though now I look back on it and I feel very reticent that I have even mentioned Torres Strait Islander studies because really it should have been Martin Nakata who was writing that work. The closest that I have in relationship to the Torres Strait is the beautiful woman who is the wife of my eldest son, she’s from the Torres Strait but anyway, that’s the way it was back in those days before I started thinking more critically. But it was a good experience that way, with regards to curriculum.

Then at the end of the 80s, I went back into classrooms and found that my colleagues were very clearly interested in including Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies because the schools that I taught at had both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. But the other teachers felt inadequate. So it became a case of ‘Davina could you come and do my social studies lesson and I’ll take your science or your art or whatever’; so I would be teaching across the school at all levels and focusing on Aboriginal perspectives.

And, then in the 1990s when I came down to Melbourne to work as the Federal Aboriginal Education Officer for the Australian Education Union I was invited to participate in a project run by Eleanor Bourke (see http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/stories/s2890148.htm) out of the University of South Australia where they did an audit of all the universities in Australia and what was offered in PST education for non-Indigenous people, for all people really, to learn about Indigenous Australia.

The audit came back fairly negative, saying that nothing was being done in universities. So through the South Australia Education Department the Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum (APAC) program came out. SA has always been very strong in including Aboriginal perspectives and in having a Unit within their Education Department that actually supports people who want to teach Aboriginal perspectives. APAC was then replicated in WA and TAS. NSW was doing its own thing. Queensland since then has also done its own thing.

So that was very positive, but now that I’ve started working more within the teacher education area, I see again the story of a lot of colleagues who would like to do it but don’t want to do it the wrong way and therefore are feeling a bit concerned about how they do it. That’s why what we’re doing here at VU working on the new Unit Re-thinking Australian Studies is so important.

I’m trying to focus the work on developing cognitive practices, which will include looking at the decolonisation of the mind, examining whiteness, as well as examining evidence
such as Australian Bureau of Statistics data. It’s the metaphor of the drop of water on the rock. We’re getting better, but we still have a long way to go. I agree with Gary Foley, we were both at that VU lecture by Gary, that reconciliation does not equal social justice, but I think that reconciliation is a step towards social justice.

Unfortunately, having been from Primary school on, a survivor of racism, I know that it still exists. Then also with my children, for example my youngest one who’s 16 and in Year 11 and you know, one of the top 3 students in that year level at his school, being asked by a new teacher to the school who knows about his Aboriginality but doesn’t know him says, ‘oh I’ll come and give you some extra help with your school work’ and he looked at her and said ‘why?’ coz he knows he’s doing very well, and she says ‘oh well, because your Aboriginal’ and understanding that somehow or other we still have got to get beyond those negative stereotypes.

CK: Can we go back and talk a little bit about your own personal experience as a student in Primary school?

When I was a child I didn’t know that being who and what I was, an Aboriginal person, was seen by the majority of people as negative until I started primary school.

In my own PhD work I am examining the development of my identity. I mean identity is such a multi-faceted thing, but part of it is those first few days at school, having a boy shout at me and call me ‘little black Gin from the bend’. Now I analyse, looking back and having the skills to analyse it, I was the little black Gin from the bend coz I had an older female cousin at school. Why he had to add in black to the word ‘Gin’ I don’t know because I sort of thought they meant the same thing, and the bend was the area we lived at, you know? And I didn’t really know what he meant by his words but I knew what he meant by the look on his face, so we had a fight, a physical fight, and I ended up sitting outside the Principal’s office. I don’t know how long I had to sit there for, it might have only been, you know only half a lunchtime, but for me it seemed like months. I guess in analysing my own identity, that was the first point of construction from the outside world. My identity had now become black and had become that of a fighter.

My mum was a very good athlete and very proud of her father who was also a very good athlete. My matrilineal grandfather is my Aboriginal grandfather, so she presented the school with a trophy for the House that came first in the sporting carnival and it’s a boomerang shaped trophy dedicated to Granddad. I suppose we fitted in to that stereotype of the Aboriginal family in the area that is really good at sport. I remember playing Vigoro and having the teacher who was organising us, we were at practice and then she was organising us for our game on Friday saying to everyone “oh don’t forget your hats and your sunscreen-oh Davina, you don’t have to worry about it” which, you know, is such an ignorant thing because I have had sunburn and all that sort of stuff.

So, there was a definite identity that we had at school but Aboriginality wasn’t reflected at any way at the school in a positive manner.

My cousin, my male cousin, who attended at the same time as I did, he was sent to do the gardening and the maintenance because, even though genetically we are basically the same, our mothers are sisters, our dads are both non-Indigenous men, he is much
more stereotypically Aboriginal in appearance than I am. And he wasn’t allowed to learn, you know. So yeah there wasn’t anything positive.

I remember going home to mum after someone talking about ‘desert people’ and there she is at the kitchen table peeling the vegetables for the night and I said ‘you know they were talking at school today about how Aboriginal people eat yams and witchetty grubs’ and she said ‘Well you know I suppose the sweet potato we grow in the backyard could be called yams but we don’t eat witchetty grubs, we’re having chicken tonight’, so it was a bit confusing, very confronting and nothing was positive.

We had a teacher who had adopted two Aboriginal children, and she must have been travelling around different schools and, I mean I was thrilled at the time to see Aboriginal people at the school who ‘looked’ Aboriginal because I wasn’t perceived to look Aboriginal. They were there for a couple of weeks, but it seemed like this teacher, this woman who had adopted the children, and I’m sure like so many people who do the wrong thing had done it for the best intentions, was going around the schools in the area with her adopted daughters and talking about Aboriginal children and making the kids who she spoke to more aware that the continent wasn’t all just whitefella sort of stuff, and she spoke positively but I can’t remember what she said, I just remember feeling good. But then they left and now that I look back with an adult mind I can see the problems with what she was doing as well.

And then I can’t remember whether it was she who spoke about the yams and witchetty grubs or whether it was someone else, but I know that the only conversations that we ever had were about the people from the desert. There was no recognition of coastal people or people down south.

I think that reconciliation is a good thing. That it wasn’t marketed properly. My understanding of where it came from was from two Aboriginal men who I met through the union movement - Kevin Cook and Kevin Tony - who were very much involved in the organising of the Building Bridges concert, on the 26th January 1988. And that the discussion documents that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Robert Tickner, then put out used the title Building Bridges so the two men thought, well you know, if nothing else we’ve given the politicians a bit of something to think about. And they would argue against the Indigenous activists who said ‘oh but it wasn’t our idea’ and say ‘yeah it was actually, we planted the seed so we should actually really do something with it’.

At a recent summit I went to called The new way Aboriginal summit there were many people from the left, both black and white. And there was a man who came and spoke to me at a morning tea break- I don’t think I had spoken on that day so he obviously wasn’t sure whether I was Aboriginal or not-and he said ‘oh so how come you’re here?’ and I said ‘oh because I’m a member of the local Koori community’. He said ‘oh, I suppose I’m the enemy?’ and I said ‘What do you mean?’ and he said ‘Because I’m ANTAR (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, 2011) and, you know, the way these other people are speaking, it’s like whitefellas are the enemies’.

And that has always disappointed me because from the very earliest days, although I would always acknowledge that our own people have to be acknowledged as the people who have started stuff. We have had the intellect and the emotional power to
self-determine things. But there have been great supporters too, such as Ann Bon who supported Barak in his trips to Parliament for Coranderrk in the 1870s and at the Commission of Inquiry in 1881 (see http://ilbijerri.com.au/productions/project/coranderrk-we-will-show-the-country/). And at the time leading up to the 1967 referendum, you look at FCAATSI and at Jessie Street and other non-Indigenous women who supported Aunty Pearl Gibbs in getting a lot of that work done.

Indigenous people are at maximum 3% of the population and therefore we need to find those people who have the mind-sets to work with us. As Aunty Lillian Watson once said at a feminist rally in Queensland – I can’t remember her exact quote – but it was, you know, “if you’ve come here to help me then I don’t want you. If you’ve come here to support me, to work with me, then that’s a different thing”. And that’s what I think reconciliation should be about. And I think that also a lot of people have seen reconciliation as something that “oh the black fellas have got to educate us about them” rather than looking from that perspective of “oh, I’m a privileged white person. What can I do to change the power balance between myself and the Indigenous peoples of this place? What’s the very first small step that I can make?”

So I would like to think that reconciliation is something that Australia will achieve, but I also agree that social justice and reconciliation are not the same thing. And that the whole thing about people having to look at their mindsets is really important.

CK: Thank you Davina. This is sort of related, but not necessarily an obvious flow-on question. In terms of non-Indigenous people teaching Indigenous history and an appreciation of current Indigenous struggle and so on. I mean, it’s a difficult - I understand it’s problematic in some ways and I’d be really interested in what you think about it.

DW: It is problematic but we’ve got to look at the practicalities of the demographics. How many Indigenous people do we have? I mean even if we’re not asking people to have the same qualifications as non-Indigenous people and I agree with those who argue that our Aunties and Uncles who have the wisdom and the knowledge of the millennia that have gone by and been passed onto them, don’t need those qualifications. But how many times can we go to those people and spread them so thinly, asking them to do this work. So that’s why we need to be able to support people who have a good mindset to work with us.

I believe the way that you and Bill and I have worked as a team with different perspectives on some issues but always the same basic principles is the right way to go.

CK: Can we talk about the education for reconciliation policies that in most cases have been developed through negotiation with Indigenous educators and activists.

DW: The national reconciliation schooling strategy that Robert Tickner put up in the 1990s was actually putting in place a lot of things that had been asked for since the 70s and 80s by the various national bodies representing Indigenous people in education, and via the State bodies. There were also things such as the sister school programs where just having the students from schools that were predominantly non-Indigenous
and schools that were predominately Indigenous corresponding with each other, opening up a conversation with each other, was a very important thing.

CK: So if those policies are going to be put in place, you know integrated into all school curriculum, then non-Indigenous teachers do need to take up the challenge to do it.

DW: Absolutely, yes! And non-Indigenous people need to understand that Indigenous Australia is across all of this continent and the nearby islands that are referred to as Australia and governed as Australia.

And that often people are like me, refugees living on someone else’s country. And that we can only go so far with regards to that country and that people need to respect our protocols with regards to going to the traditional owners of a place and the recognised elders of those traditional owners to seek information and validation from.

CK: There’s a map on the Australian Bureau of Statistics site of the location of the Indigenous populations and the hotspots are the capital cities of course. There are dots, each dot is 100 people, and there are dots right across the map, but the eastern seaboard and all the major cities are the places where most of the dots are. I’m working on the proposition that teachers should assume that any class might have an Indigenous child in it, as the very first starting point, and we should be able to know that out curriculum is respectful and inclusive of that, and also that we all should know our own history and appreciate the amazing survival and wisdom and knowledge and all that stuff. And to understand that there were horrors and there’s resistance and joy as well and that’s sort of, that’s what being Australian entails.

DW: I guess that’s what I think the reconciliation process is about. Yes, people have to know what can be seen as the horror stories; about the massacres, the poisonings, the taking away of the children, the raping of people, etc, etc, the imprisonment for no good reason, which unfortunately with regards to the deaths in custody and the imprisonment issue, still seems to be a problem, but we also need to be able to look at the values and principles of our reciprocity and rights and responsibilities that are the foundation stones of Indigenous cultures across Australia. And I say cultures because there are different ways of expressing those basic principles for different groups and that’s why I say cultures. But the principles are very much the same. And they are those three Rs: reciprocity, responsibilities and rights. And if we could all, sort of, understand and share those principles then we might be able to value them as the foundation stones of an Australian culture, since there’s so many diverse cultures in Australia.

When you were talking about not recognising Indigenous students in our classrooms, my youngest son is more visibly stereotypically Aboriginal than any of my children and therefore he’s not ever had issues to deal with not being seen as Aboriginal. My eldest, my daughter, is very fair and she has a terrible story that she tells about how she was in, I think Year 2 here in a school here in Melbourne, and they were talking about ‘oh yes, and we’re having this school come down from the country, and they’ve got real Aboriginal children with them’ and that term ‘real Aboriginal’ is just so grating and she’s sitting there in the first or second row saying ‘I’m Koorie! You know, look at me!’
CK: So there’s two things here? There’s the knowledge that there may well be Indigenous children in any class and everybody should also have the opportunity to know this amazing stuff about who we are who live here together.

DW: Yes

CK: Of all the things you taught me last year, and they were many, the particular thing that I am very aware of, is that I always put an ‘s’ on everything now. You know, Aboriginal peoples, or cultures. I think I knew it before but I wasn’t as careful to make sure I did that as I am now.

DW: I think that’s actually a really powerful sort of marker of understanding more complex things, because our language reflects our mindsets.

CK: In regard to the surveys of the fourth-year PSTs. One of the things they show is a spectrum of responses to the inclusion of Indigenous themes from what I call ‘from resistance to reluctance’. There is a small but loud group who say ‘oh not this again’ and, and there are those who say ‘the more I learn the more I feel anxious and I don’t think I’ve got the skills to be doing this’. Why do you think people are reluctant?

DW: Fear. Everything has to do with fear. If a person doesn’t want to do it, it’s because they fear it. They fear either stuffing it up and I really want to do it properly, or fear they that if I do this properly then I’m giving power away to someone else.

Racism and sexism and homophobia and all that sort of stuff, I think it’s all based on fear. And humanity as a whole, we’ve got to be a lot braver than we are. The only way that we can be braver than we are is for individuals to find their own bravery. Which is what you’re doing with the work you’re doing. Because you know that you’ve been criticised from both sides but you’re still continuing. Congratulations.

CK: Thank you. It just doesn’t seem possible not to; what can you do but to proceed to do something about it?

DW: You’ve been given a calling. Not everyone’s thoughtful enough to be able to receive that sort of calling.

CK: If we think about the PSTs, I mean 20 years ago there weren’t many curriculum materials available, but now there is a huge amount Davina.

DW: And the curriculum materials that were available were inappropriate and this is where I’d like to talk about the work of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, who in the 1970s and 1980s put out two publications critiquing resources for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary institutions (Hill & Barlow, 1985). Then that work was followed up by a brilliant Indigenous academic by the name of Dr Kaye Price who’s now working with the new Australian Curriculum group. Kaye did work for the Curriculum Corporation and developed a guide, a very simple guide for teachers to evaluate their resources to see if they would be suitable for using in classrooms (Curriculum Corporation, National Aboriginal Studies and Torres Strait Islander Studies Project, & Price, 1995). I’m incorporating that into the Unit that we’re doing next year. So hopefully if they have resources and a bit of knowledge teachers are going to feel a
lot more secure, they’re not going to be fearful that ‘I’m going to stuff this up and someone from the local Koori community’s going to come with their nullanulla and bash me because I said the wrong thing’.

The other thing is too, that people if they could talk to members of the local Koori community, and people can do that through finding out from the Education Department about who to talk to about teaching Koori studies in schools. The Department should link them up with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI) and the local Aboriginal education consultative groups or Aboriginal people who are teaching or working as support staff in schools.

CK: And is that realistic in terms of how many people are employed to do that work or who are available?

DW: Well that’s why I’m looking at the different levels. Whether you feel that you comfortable enough going to the local Aboriginal co-op and saying ‘look I would like to do this in schools’ and understanding that sometimes people’s workloads are so immense that you’re going to do this 12 months in advance and they might be fearful of you, and so you have to build up a trust relationship here. So you don’t just go there asking for stuff, you go there also offering. And you don’t offer stuff like the beads and mirrors stuff from Batman, you go in with an offer of ‘look, I’m a teacher. I’m interested in doing this work with my students. I need your help in this. What can I do to pay you back for this?’ And if people say cold hard cash, then you go and get a grant for it. If they say something in kind, then you work towards fulfilling that request. So local co-ops, Education Department, Education Department Unit, people employed by the Education Department who are Koori, VAEAI, local Aboriginal education consultative groups, Elders, probably not really enough people to do a lot of that work so that’s why this is important in teacher education but even when we’ve got it all in teacher education I think we still need to pay the respects at least to the Elders of the area and even if the only thing people do is to give that person a quick phone call or a nicely written note to say ‘just wanted to let you know’ and the other thing is that the 80s we talked about ‘let’s do case studies’ and the reason why we wanted to was so that people would understand that there is, you know, Aboriginal history right under my feet here and not just history either. Look across the street, there’s a Koori flag flying, why is that? So that they would explore their own area, find out about the contemporary life of Aboriginal people in that area and also the joint histories and then perhaps they might even be able to find out some archaeological information and find out about Aboriginal life before the joint history.

And if the joint history is one of conflict then they have to be honest about how they present that in classes.

CK: Yes. So, with say VELS, and the new Australian Curriculum, it says that teachers should be teaching this content. It doesn’t say, and if you’re going to do that you should be consulting with Indigenous educators. That’s a specific difficulty for PSTs. They say ‘I know I’m supposed to consult but how am I supposed to do that?’ With your detailed knowledge you can list off the things, but it’s harder for the PSTs, and teachers generally to know how to. When we discuss this in class I say ‘well I understand that one of the principles that Indigenous educators put forward is there should be guidance
about how this is done from the local Aboriginal community. That doesn't mean that you need Indigenous guide in every classroom, but it does mean that you need someone involved in the planning. But there are tens of thousands of teachers out there, and they not all aware. How can we get them to know it?

DW: Well, I guess it's the usual political activism stuff isn't it? And you know, getting onto the Minister and saying hey, this is a big fault here. Please get your public servants to fix it up.

CK: I always say to my students 'you're going to be leaders. You might think this will be really hard, and of course it is worthy of a great deal of thought and care, but you know a lot more than many other teachers and you can be leaders and that's something that you can take on and work on with colleagues'.

DW: I'm working with first years, and did last year as well, and for every lot of first years I try and get across to them at the very beginning of their journey towards being a teacher or of being a teacher, is that you've got accept the fact that you have the power to be change agents. Now are you just going to be a teacher for the status quo or are you going to be a teacher for positive change?
Reflections on the themes explored by the experienced educators

The Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators above speak of experiences which influenced their commitment to social justice and in particular their appreciation of the importance of acknowledging and respecting Indigenous knowledge, experience and centrality to the Australian story. Davina Woods was always aware and proud of her Indigenous heritage but still suffered the barbs of lack of knowledge and respect from the schooling system. Bruce Pascoe did not find out about his heritage until he was an adult although in hindsight there were clues all around him, from where his family chose to live to the people they knew. Still it took a good talking to from the Aunties for him to realise he had been asking the wrong questions up to that point, he had been accepting the non-Indigenous perspective that the deficit was with Indigenous people, rather than that the colonial hegemony which dismissed the discrimination and the struggles for recognition as outside the Australian story. For the non-Indigenous educators it was also through their families that they had some exposure to ideas about social justice in general, which influenced their ability to listen to Indigenous demands for recognition and respect when they became adults themselves.

Like the PSTs, both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators had almost no exposure to appropriate knowledge about Indigenous history or contemporary issues in their Primary and Secondary schooling. Indigenous peoples are outside the mainstream representations of who we are as Australians. Epistemological perspectives learned from schooling and society lead towards non-Indigenous PSTs seeing Indigenous peoples as the exotic other and/or victim. The Indigenous educators talk of ‘being invisible’ both at school and in the public discourse. The non-Indigenous educators talk of initially not seeing Indigenous people, to use Penelope Irving’s words ‘of not realising that we were in Australia’. Russ Swann had Aboriginal school friends, but as he said, their schooling had no Indigenous content and they didn’t talk of such matters together. It was many years before Russ knew the reason why the local East Gippsland ‘Butcher’s Ridge’ got its name – as a massacre site.

Bruce Pascoe gives stunning examples of the power of the dominant paradigm, of colonial constructions of who we are as Australians, to affect educational outcomes. Wathurong was not accepted as a ‘language other than English’ for funding purposes and an Australian Studies committee chose to fund a boating skull for a rich private school over supporting the purchase of a printer for the publication of student work at a remote Indigenous school. Davina Woods’ daughter was told that ‘real Aborigines'
would be visiting her school, perpetuating the myth that Aboriginal people live somewhere else, in the north. Penelope Irving talks of teachers accusing certain students of 'just going on walkabout whenever they felt like it' (as was said to me as a Primary school student decades earlier) at the same time as those same teachers were denying that there were any Indigenous people left in Tasmania.

The educators demonstrate that we can choose to respond to the Indigenous themes in education policies rather than see them as too difficult or too time consuming. We can recognise that we live in Australia, we can engage with Indigenous educators to guide our programs and resources and we can make the effort to use the resources developed by and with Indigenous educators. Jan Muller’s experiences as a teacher, curriculum support worker and as a Koorie Open Door school principal promoted her to lament the lack of financial and people resources to implement the policies that PSTs and teachers are supposed to be putting into practice, so that we can all be enthusiastic teachers who will go out of their way and find what they need because the system is actually supporting that effort. Davina Woods also talks of the importance of systemic support as necessary if the policies are to be put into practice.

In some ways this final theme, the lack of appropriate support, seems the most simple to overcome. Indigenous educators have developed many resources for use in schools. In other ways it is the most difficult. Resources are not enough. Appropriate pre and in-service professional development which challenges colonial paradigms is necessary if the anthropological gaze is to be overcome. Also it is necessary to be brave enough to put oneself out there, to accept as Lyn Hovey says, that Indigenous people should be allowed to be bitter and twisted, totally and outrageously angry because they certainly got the short end of the stick. Teacher educators can educate ourselves to hear the stories of Australian history across the millennia and including the present and future, understanding that we are privileged to share with this country with Indigenous peoples who for millennia sustainably managed the continent and the surrounding islands, so that our work with PSTs is informed by that knowledge. In the end though if we are achieve de-colonised classrooms we will need to work together. As Davina Woods says, we can choose to be teachers for the status quo or we can choose to be teachers for positive change. In the following Chapter I consider the implications of the understandings from this research and present some of the resources which I have found to be useful in working with PSTs to respond to the themes above.
Chapter 7

Decolonising the classroom: becoming a reconciliatory learner/teacher

7.1 A radical possibility

In the previous Chapter Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators shared their experiences of recognising the continuing strength and resilience of Indigenous co-existence within historical and contemporary Australia. Like the PSTs in Chapter 4, they noted that the curriculum in their own schooling lacked Indigenous content. They demonstrated nonetheless that it is possible to take small steps on the path of knowledge by choosing to acknowledge the resistance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to colonial assimilation and by recognising the importance of Indigenous knowledge as a critical element in understanding who we are as Australians. This Chapter considers the possibilities for non-Indigenous educators to support PSTs to work towards reconciliatory education in decolonising classrooms. A majority of the references used in this Chapter are educational resources prepared specifically for student research, mostly by Indigenous educators, sometimes with non-Indigenous colleagues. Many of those resources are clearly appropriate to the curriculum domains of Civics and Citizenship, the Humanities and Studies of Society and Environment. Arguably the resources are also relevant to the other domains of the current Victorian Essential learning Standards (VELS) and the AusVELS, the Victorian version of the new Australian Curriculum: The Arts; Communication; Design, Creativity and Technology; English; Information and Communications Technology; Interpersonal Development; Languages; Mathematics; Science; Thinking Processes; and even that

Figure 26

© courtesy of Freddie Timms and Warmun Art Centre
particularly specific domain of Health and Physical Education (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2012b). For example in the domain of Health and Physical Education ‘Students investigate and evaluate the policies and practices in their school in relation to sexual and racial harassment, homophobia and/or discrimination, and consider their rights and responsibilities in these areas.... they describe social and cultural factors, such as family, the media, community expectations influencing the development of personal identity’ (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2009a). The film Salute (Norman, 2009) tells the story of the black power salute on the 200 metres podium of the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games, when the silver medallist, Williamstown High School Physical Education teacher Peter Norman, supported the protest of the African-American athletes, Gold Medallist Tommie Smith, and Bronze medallist John Carlos by wearing the Olympic Project for Human Rights badge. PSTs were taken aback by the realisation that here was a Victorian State High School Physical Education teacher taking such a public stance on social justice and human rights and they knew nothing about it. They always agreed that the film was a valuable resource, perfect for a rained-in double Physical Education lesson, as well as for humanities education.

This Chapter responds to questions and comments from the PST surveys in Chapter 4 regarding lack of appropriate resources. It expands on some teaching examples from Chapter 5 and is informed by the insights of the experienced educators in Chapter 6. The misapprehension by PSTs regarding lack of resources is compounded by the scarcity of pre-service and in-service educational support for educators, together with a lack of recognition of the hegemony of the colonial constructions of who we are as Australians, in which we are immersed and which blind us to seeing the possibilities for reconciliatory education.

Most Australians will understand the painting at the beginning of this Chapter to be unmistakably an image of the bushranger Ned Kelly, who fought police in his iconic iron armour and helmet at the siege of Glenrowan, Victoria, in June 1880. The armour and helmet are on permanent display in the State Library of Victoria. Kelly is also famous for writing the Jerilderie letter where he admits to crimes during the 1860s and 1870s but claims he was forced into them by a corrupt police force. In the letter Kelly demanded that squatters share their property with the poor (N. Kelly, 1879). In 2003 the State Library of Victoria requested five artists to respond to the theme 'Kelly culture: Reconstructing Ned Kelly'. Aboriginal artist Ngarrmaliny Janama (Freddie Timms) interpreted Kelly from the perspective of his resistance to British authority, through his
(Janama’s) grandmother’s association with the Aboriginal bushranger, Major (State Library Victoria, 2003).

I have placed Janama’s indicative work at the beginning of this Chapter on becoming a reconciliatory learner/teacher because, like other visual representations in this research, it inspires contemplation of the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous epistemologies. Janama’s painting is a striking image of Indigenous iconography surrounding non-Indigenous iconography as a radical possibility, the possibility of Indigenous ways of knowing organising the educational spaces for learning, as in the 8 ways pedagogical principles outlined in section 7.5 below, rather than the assumption that Indigenous knowledge will be included in (surrounded by) the dominant paradigms currently presented in school and university curricula.

The evidence from the PSTs surveys, the collaborative self-study between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers working with those PSTs, and the experiences of the experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, demonstrates that the dominant paradigm represented by The Australian book (Pownall & Senior, 2008) which casts Indigenous knowledge and experience as peripheral, as outside the Australian story, has a tenacious grip on the possibilities for reconciliatory education. Without recognition of the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, which goes hand-in-hand with the lack of educational recognition of co-existing epistemologies, we are left with the continuing intractability of being unable to confront Indigenous exclusion from that story. The activities and resources explored in this Chapter offer opportunities for learners/teachers to appreciate Indigenous demonstrations of continuing sovereignty and to recognise co-existing epistemologies.

Ned Kelly has also been incorporated into the stories of a number of Aboriginal cultures in north-west Australia. Deborah Bird Rose describes how the story of Ned Kelly has become part of the stories of the Yarralin and Lingara peoples.

Aboriginal people in the Victoria River District have analysed Ned Kelly’s actions and found them to be purely moral. And in indigenising him they have declared him to be not truly other, but truly us [my emphasis]. In fact Yarralin people take it further. Through Ned Kelly an equitable social order is established as an enduring principle of life. Captain Cook was an invader who had no place here, and, as Yarralin people assert, he is dead now. Ned Kelly is Indigenous; he is resistance to invasion and injustice (D. B. Rose, 1988, p. 23).
Janama’s symbolic surrounding of the Kelly armour by the Aboriginal motif can be seen as symbolising the possibilities of learning together, of taking up Davina Woods’ challenge to understand the adaptations the First Peoples of Australia have made post-invasion. Rather than continuing to assimilate Indigenous knowledge and experience, as educators can we find ways to become ‘not truly other, but truly us’?

As the Yarralin people say, Captain Cook was an invader who had no place here and is now dead. So too one of the early Irish/Australian convict balladeers, Frank the Poet (Francis McNamara), in his epic poem *A Convict’s Tour to Hell* (1839), describes all the ‘legions of traitors’ who ended up in Hell, including

Cook who discovered New South Wales  
And he that first invented gaols  
Are both tied to a fiery stake  
Which stands in yonder boiling lake (Gregory, 2011).

Davina Woods’ poem *Urban Songlines* (Appendix 1) evoked a positive response from PSTs when they researched the Indigenous leaders named in the text. They were yet again surprised by their ignorance of these leaders, the movements they led and their significance in the story of Australia. Similarly, Frank the Poet’s *A Convict’s Tour to Hell* (Gregory 2011), provides rich opportunity for student research on early colonial historical figures. The interconnections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous resistance to tyranny offer many possibilities for reconciliatory education. Recognition of Indigenous epistemologies and leadership in our understanding of who we are as Australians would be a radical response to the evidence from this research which demonstrates that epistemological perspectives learned from schooling and society lead non-Indigenous PSTs towards seeing Indigenous peoples as the exotic other and/or victims or as invisible. The evidence from the PST surveys demonstrated that they had little exposure to Indigenous themes in their own schooling and in their school placements. The data from the surveys, the self-study between VU lecturers and the conversations with experienced educators expose pervasive undercurrents which constrain many educators from engaging with Indigenous knowledge and experience. The most pervasive of all is the sometimes explicit though usually unconscious epistemology of the dominant paradigm which understands ‘white’, colonial perspectives to be normal. In the political sphere this perspective has lead policy makers to support assimilation. The Minister for Territories in the Commonwealth Parliament in 1963, at a time when the policy of assimilation was being pursued (National Museum of Australia, 2008c) said ‘We do not want a submerged caste or any
other social pariahs in our community but want a homogeneous society’ (Michael Dodson, 1996, p. 2).

7.2 From Colonisation to Social Justice

The contemporary pressure to subsume Indigenous Australians under the rubric of multiculturalism has been felt in different forms throughout the history of colonisation. Government policy from ‘soothing the dying pillow’ (Perkins, 2008a) to so-called Protection Boards, to assimilation, to the Northern Territory Intervention, can all be understood as systems of control attempting to deliver an homogenised society which might ‘forget’ its own history. Many responses from the PST surveys in Chapter 4 promoted the idea of multiculturalism as a paradigm in which to understand Indigenous Australia. In a speech to the Multicultural Development Association, launching their Reconciliation Strategy, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission explained why Indigenous educators reject multiculturalism as ‘an inadequate response to the history of dispossession and exclusion that Indigenous peoples have faced in Australia’:

Firstly, the devastation caused by policies aimed at colonising Australia, including the policy of assimilation to ‘breed out’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, were far worse in their severity and scale than the systemic and individual discriminatory practices used against migrants and their families seeking to settle in Australia.

Secondly, the claims for social justice and human rights by Indigenous peoples originate from a different source, both historically and in international law, than claims by other minority groups in Australia.... best articulated through the articles contained in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially Article 3 that asserts the right of Indigenous peoples to self determination (Calma, 2008).

These commitments by Australia to international Conventions are important resources for student research so that students are able to

... use current political, legal, national and international issues as springboards for understanding and critical thinking about a range of concepts such as the rights and responsibilities of citizens, values that are important in a democracy, and the role
of the Australian government as a global citizen (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2012c).

As teacher educators working with PSTs we need to continue our own life-long learning about our local communities, including the particular Indigenous community where we live and work, through to our rights and responsibilities as citizens of the world. We need to be aware of local and international policy commitments such as *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948), the *World Declaration on education for all* (United Nations, 1990), the *Dakar framework for action, education for all: Meeting our collective commitments* (United Nations World Education Forum, 2000), the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2008) and the *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2010), all of which note the importance of recognising, respecting and actively supporting Indigenous knowledge as vital to the education of all peoples. If we are to be successful in establishing decolonised classrooms we need to listen to Indigenous educators and to local Indigenous community representatives. We need to pressure education authorities to support teachers and schools to make contact with Indigenous educators and community representatives so that respectful, appropriate content can be included in educational programs, as recommended by the experienced educators in Chapter 6.

Forming partnerships with communities is recognised by State and Commonwealth bi-partisan policy as important to ‘support young people to participate in schooling and contribute to broader local and global communities’. Partnerships ‘maximise student engagement and achievement…engender support for the development and wellbeing of young people and their families and can provide opportunities for young Australians to connect with their communities, participate in civic life and develop a sense of responsible citizenship’ (MCEETYA 2008).

Developing partnerships between schools and teachers with students, parents and communities that have been marginalised is recognised as particularly important for the success of the marginalised (What Works, 2012). Such partnerships can also offer pathways towards reconciliatory education for the benefit of all students, as envisaged by Indigenous educators. The Victorian Education Department has recently consolidated Koorie education positions in its workforce but these positions are all directed to outcomes for Aboriginal students (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2013). While this is an important priority the support for teachers and schools who want to implement appropriate curriculum for all students
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has little support on-the-ground. The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) also concentrates mostly on Koorie students but has recently put out a paper calling for the piloting of pre-service teacher training, professional learning for all education staff and the embedding of Aboriginal Studies across the curriculum (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, 2011). VAEAI envisages Indigenous community involvement in such pilots but without the support of Education Department Koorie curriculum staff it is likely that too few people, as Davina Woods and Jan Muller noted, will be asked to spread themselves too thinly and will get burnt out.

As noted in Chapter 1, policy alone will not bring about social justice. The latest United Nations agreement, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples regarding the rights of Indigenous peoples contains the following articles relating to rights to country, resources and Indigenous knowledge (articles 25–32):

- Rights to maintain and strengthen our spiritual connection to country.
- Rights to control, own and develop our country.
- The right to ensure that governments develop systems for the legal recognition and protection of our country.
- Where we no longer possess our country, we have the right to have this addressed through some form of compensation.
- Rights to the protection of the environment on our country.
- The right of protection of our cultural heritage and traditional knowledge.
- The right to determine how and if our country is developed (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010).

However these ‘rights’ are the terrain of ongoing struggle. Since 1846 when Aboriginal Tasmanians petitioned Queen Victoria (National Museum of Australia, 2008d), Indigenous peoples have been using the laws and the parliamentary system of government brought by the British in their attempts to regain land (National Museum of Australia, 2007-2008a). As seen in Chapter 2 Indigenous leaders and communities continued to organise to defend their rights during the times of the Missions and Reserves (Koorie Heritage Trust, 204 #903), the events recorded on the Collaborating for Indigenous Rights site (National Museum of Australia, 2008b) through to the Mabo Native Title case (Clarke, et al., 2000), (Hughes, 2007), (Perkins, 2008c) and the most recent opposition to the Intervention in the Northern Territory (Kunoth-Monks, 2011). These struggles are pivotal events in the Australian story. They are rich opportunities
for student research, particularly for exploring the domain of Civics and Citizenship.

In Civics and Citizenship, students investigate how, in a democratic tradition, informed and diverse contributions and participation by citizens are important. They learn about, contest and enact the values that are important to be an engaged citizen within a community. They are provided with opportunities to investigate and participate in activities that support sustainable practices, social justice and underpin the future wellbeing of societies from a local to a global level (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2009b).

In the new AusVELS which, as the name suggests, combines the Victorian Essential learning Standards with the new Australian Curriculum, ‘the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander [cross curriculum] priority provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world’s oldest continuous living cultures. This knowledge and understanding will enrich their ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia’ (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2012a). Connell inspires us to engage with this terrain of the struggle for justice and rights:

Education has fundamental connections with the idea of human emancipation, though it is in constant danger of being captured by other interests. In a society disfigured by class exploitation, sexual and racial oppression, and in chronic danger of war and environmental destruction, the only education worth the name is one that forms people capable of taking part in their own liberation (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, & Dowsett, 1982, p.208).

For teacher educators and teachers this means we need to work with our students to explore the events, people and movements which have created the Australia we live in now and the Australia we would hope to inhabit. Kerry Arabena, the inaugural Chair of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, which replaced the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) as the new national Indigenous representative body (Department of Housing, 2010), outlined her view of what reconciliation could mean in her 2010 Reconciliation Lecture Using Science to reframe the Reconciliation Professor Arabena, a descendant of the Merriam people from the Torres Strait and a health scientist, proposes going beyond ‘normal’ reconciliation to do with rights and recognition to:
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post-normal reconciliation [where] we will be part of the global infrastructure that facilitates a transition from a period of human devastation to a period of time when all humans are living on the planet in a mutually beneficial manner (Arabena, 2010).

Arabena, like non-Indigenous Professor Deborah Bird Rose (see Chapter 2), wants us to listen to ‘the holders of the oldest ecological knowledge in the world [who] are being forced to participate in education, political and modern systems that have little regard for that knowledge, and almost always no regard for their country'

Humans prior have not dealt with anything comparable to the toxins in the air, the water, the soil, or with the immense volume of chemicals dispersed throughout the planet.... the extinction of species or the altering of climate on a scale such as our present concern....

We have … to change the soul of the modern world, not just technologically, not just to get higher wages, or to even get physically improved conditions for Indigenous peoples but to change our inner world, to have a vision of a world transformed through stories that we created to positively impact on each other and the planet, for all of our sakes.... [through] the environmental, Earth science and quantum physics stories of ourselves, our planet and the Universe (Arabena, 2010).

Like Connell, Arabena argues for a radical change in the way we understand the world and our role as active citizens who are ‘capable of taking part in their own liberation’ (Connell, et al., 1982, p. 208). This notion of active citizenship is woven through educational policies, from the curriculum guidelines meant to define what students learn in Primary and Secondary schools to the policies of the bi-partisan Ministerial Council of State and Commonwealth Ministers which define the overarching principles of education in Australia to the State and Territory jurisdictions. In the sections below I offer some examples of resources and activities I have found to be valuable in offering opportunities for reconciliatory education, of learning about active citizenship and of working towards decolonised classrooms. I also look in the last section at the new Australian Curriculum (and AusVELS in Victoria) and argue that without appropriate pre-service and in-service support which challenges the perceptions that Indigenous themes are peripheral, then rather than supporting the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience as central to the story of who we are as Australians, those curriculum guidelines will continue to lead to the exclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience.
7.3 Epistemology rules

Before presenting some of the resources which have proved supportive for working with PSTs in breaking through the anthropological gaze I consider three examples which evade the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives. These examples illustrate the critical condition necessary for non-Indigenous educators to go beyond that seductive circumstance: awareness of and explicit consideration of our epistemological perspectives. The first two examples concern one of my own and my children’s favourite books to read together when they were young: *My Place* (Wheatley & Rawlins, 1987), winner of the Children’s Book Council Book of the Year for Younger Readers in 1988, the year of the Bicentenary of the establishment of the Colony of New South Wales, on Cadigal country, in what is now Sydney, Australia. Each double page of the book opens to one of the consecutive decades from 1788 to 1988, starting with 1788 and the First People whose land is the site of the book, through successive occupations of that same land by migrants from different countries, up to the final double page when the inner city terrace house built on the land has an Aboriginal flag hanging from its balcony. The first example of evasion concerning this book was when I began working with PSTs on the inclusion of Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. I discovered that there was a *My Place teacher’s book* (Recht, Wheatley, & Rawlins, 1990). I was keen to read it. However I was disappointed to find that of its 104 pages of discussion and activities, only half a page (p. 88) was devoted to the question of the land having traditional owners. Interestingly that half page was headed *Pay the Rent*, part of the title of the poster reproduced in Chapter 2, whose full title is *Pay the Rent: You are on Aboriginal Land*. Perhaps the authors of the teachers’ book were inserting a reference to that slogan or perhaps the small section was some recognition of the content of the original book which makes the connection between the past and the present through beginning and ending the story by recognising continuing Aboriginal occupation of the land. The puzzle reminded me of the organisers of the Sydney Olympics choosing Yothu Yindi to sing *Treaty* (Yothu Yindi, 2000), their anthem to the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty, at the closing ceremony in 2000.

The second example was a 2009 ABC commissioned children’s television series called *My Place*, based on the above book, as a story of 20 children who all lived on the site over 120 years (Australian Children’s Television Foundation, 2009). However the television series only went back to 1888 and thus omitted the 1788 pages, when the First People lived on their land, although it did include an Aboriginal family living in the terrace house in 2008. PSTs were fond of the series and its accompanying website as
a way of engaging their students with the ‘Australian story’ because of the everyday life of children aspects of the website materials. I was disappointed that the potential offered by the original book to consider the question of land rights, by beginning in 1788, was not taken up by the television series. Thankfully in 2011 the ABC screened a second *My Place* series, this time including three episodes about Indigenous children in 1788 (Australian Children’s Television Foundation, 2011a). The *My Place for teachers* website now includes a comprehensive range of engaging activities, responsive to themes from the series, including Indigenous perspectives (Australian Children’s Television Foundation, 2011b). Clips from the series are available for viewing which also respond to the themes with a wide range of questions and connections to other sites for student research and which heed the principles expected by Indigenous educators, for example:

> Remember that when teaching and sourcing Indigenous stories to be respectful of their significance and meaning. Students should understand that they can’t copy Indigenous stories or artworks as these may have special cultural meaning to the community and to individuals. If you are in doubt about how to teach Indigenous perspectives, connect with your local Indigenous community to discuss and share their ideas about such issues (Australian Children’s Television Foundation, 2011c).

The third example of evasion of the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives is from the United States of America. In a popular education resource, the *Oregon Trail 11* interactive CD-ROM (Minnesota Educational Computing Corporation, 1994), students become members of families and wagon trains crossing from Missouri to Oregon in the 1840s and 1850s, with activities which blend reading, writing, history, geography, maths, science and health. They choose a particular character and act as if they were that character, learning a great deal about the details of life for trekkers to Oregon, just like the first *My Place* website discussed above. According to Bigelow however, while ‘…the game has a certain multicultural and gender-fair veneer that, however limited, contrasts favorably with the white male-dominated texts of yesteryear…. In fundamental respects, *The Oregon Trail* is sexist, racist, culturally insensitive, and contemptuous of the earth. It imparts bad values and wrong history…. Without acknowledging it, *The Oregon Trail* manoeuvres students into thinking and acting as if they were all males ….. Black people are present, but their lives aren’t…’ (Bigelow, 2009). Bigelow also notes Lakota scholar and activist Vine Deloria Jr.’s analysis that people coming in on the Oregon Trail ‘simply arrived on the scene and started building.'
If there were Indians or previous settlers on the spot they were promptly run off under one pretext or another. Lawlessness and thievery dominated the area’ (Deloria, 1977, p. 53). Such resources evade the realities of colonialism on which so-called ‘settler societies’ were built and therefore fail to engage students with considerations of democracy and citizenship inherent in the construction of those societies whereby the colonised are excluded and women and slaves are relegated to observers.

7.4 Authentic student research

The Praxis Inquiry (PI) Protocol outlined in Chapter 3, which underpins the work of PSTs and lecturers in the School of Education at VU, entreats educators to begin with students’ questions. In the Curriculum and Innovation Unit, one of the assessment tasks involved pairs of PSTs investigating an organisation, suitable for a student excursion, which included Indigenous perspectives and website resources for pre and post-excursion research. If possible PSTs were to interview an educator from the organisation and report back to their seminar colleagues on what they discovered and what that meant for them as teachers wanting to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning. PSTs were offered examples of organisations where Indigenous educators run such programs, including the Koorie Heritage Trust (Koorie Heritage Trust, 2012), Bunjilaka at the Museum of Victoria (Melbourne Museum, 2008), the Royal Botanic Gardens Aboriginal Resource Trail (Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, 2010), the Burrinja Cultural Centre (Burrinja, 2009) and the Indigenous collection at the National Gallery of Victoria (National Gallery of Victoria, 2011b). PSTs were not being encouraged to develop lists of facts that so often become the stuff of worksheets with self-contained answers for students. Rather they were being asked to talk with Indigenous educators in the community about how those educators understood the opportunities and constraints for cross-cultural learning.

Michael Apple analysed the ways that schools not only reproduce the inequalities associated with class but also how schools create and recreate forms of consciousness which maintain the hegemony of symbolic property, of cultural capital. Apple proposed three mechanisms which need to be examined: (1) the school as an institution, (2) the knowledge forms, and (3) the educator him or herself (Apple, 1979, p. 3).

Rather than accepting the categorisation of Indigenous peoples as the observed other (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), as educators we need to support PSTs, and thereby their work with their own students in schools, to challenge the imposition of the dominant paradigm by offering content and assessment tasks which require the inclusion of
appropriate Indigenous content. Equally importantly we can explore with PSTs, Apple’s third category above, the educator him or herself (McIntosh, 1988, Nicoll, 2004) as also envisaged by the PI Protocol. What are our goals, values and ethics and are we willing to become teachers for social justice?

In the *Curriculum and Innovation* Task above, where PSTs researched and visited organisations where Indigenous educators presented Indigenous perspectives they were provided with opportunities to explore both Indigenous knowledge forms and ways to think about being educators who challenged and supported their own students to break away from looking at Indigenous peoples as the exotic other. All the organisations mentioned above gave PSTs insights into those opportunities. In 2008 and 2009 the presentations given in *Curriculum and Innovation* seminars were particularly insightful by PSTs who chose to visit and talk with Indigenous educators from the Koorie Heritage Trust and the National Gallery of Victoria. In addition, there are texts available for university and school students which explore the field of Indigenous Studies, in particular those by Kaye Price (2012), Neil Harrison (2011) and Rhonda Craven (2011).

### 7.4.1 The Koorie Heritage Trust

The Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT) is a not-for-profit Victorian Aboriginal community organisation which as well as being a keeping place for Indigenous cultural artefacts, paintings, photographs, written works, and oral history recordings, aims to ‘raise awareness and appreciation of the cultural diversity of Koorie culture and work towards the broader goal of reconciliation for all Australians’ (Koorie Heritage Trust, 2011). The Trust organises programs for students, including cultural tours of places of particular Indigenous significance in Melbourne, led by an Indigenous educator. They also provide curriculum support, professional development and resources for teachers (Koorie Heritage Trust, 2012). I have taken many groups of PSTs to the KHT and they always articulate their appreciation of the glimpse offered to them, not only of practical, historical (technical) aspects of the Melbourne they thought they knew but also of epistemological perspectives about the meaning of knowledge. The KHT *Mission Voices* portal supports respectful, engaging and meaningful student research into the experiences and voices of Indigenous Victorian peoples during the period when they were confined to Missions and Reserves. Oral and transcribed interviews with Indigenous Elders, photos, archival footage and timelines are available, together with further readings and material organised around themes such as fighting for Country,
work and wages, everyday life and the Stolen Generations (Koorie Heritage Trust, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, & Film Victoria, 2004). For PSTs a visit to the KHT is the beginning of an appreciation of Indigenous experience and knowledge which can then be supported by the materials available on the web and further collaboration with Indigenous educators.

The time of the Missions and Reserves was also the time of the Stolen Generations. The Stolen Generations is a topic which shocks PSTs on a number of levels, even when they have studied the issue at school. They are often unaware of the length time – one hundred years – when Indigenous children were stolen from their families and of the pervasive extent of the practice across Australia. Figure 22 below was published in a Darwin newspaper in the 1930s.

The caption reads:

A group of tiny half-caste and quadroon children at the Darwin half-caste home. The Minister for the Interior (Mr Perkins) recently appealed to charitable organisations in Melbourne and Sydney to find homes for the children and rescue them from becoming outcasts.

The hand-written note reads ‘I like the little girl in centre of group, but if taken by anyone else, any of the others would do, as long as they are strong’. The question we asked PSTs to consider, working with them on teaching about sensitive and contentious issues, was ‘Why must the child be strong?’ This question confronts the reality that children were being taken to become domestic servants and farmhands rather than to become members of ‘white’ families. It provoked many questions from PSTs, including whether the stories of the Stolen Generations are suitable for Primary school children. Resources such as Stories of the Generations (Hill, 2008), Archie Roach’s Took the Children Away, in musical (Roach, 2009) and book form (Roach, 2010) were appreciated, as well as film material such as Land of the Little Kings (Roach, Roberts, & Raymond, 2000), which has a Study Guide (Carrodus, 2000) offering educators extra information and questions to use with students.
Figure 28 Homes are sought for these children

(From National Archives of Australia Exhibition *Between Two Worlds: The Commonwealth Government and the Removal of Aboriginal Children of Part-descent in the Northern Territory*).

7.4.2 The National Gallery of Victoria

The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) also provides excellent student research and excursion opportunities attached to their Indigenous collection (National Gallery of Victoria, 2011b). The Gallery eschews the reproduction of ‘Indigenous art’ as a valid student activity and instead gives PSTs an opportunity to see what respecting Indigenous epistemologies in the classroom might look like. Through their website and the work of their educators, in particular the Indigenous educator Brian Mckinnon, the Gallery offers an authentic response to the PST’s questions about why ‘doing dot paintings’ was not an appropriate way to ‘learn about Indigenous culture’ (see the discussion of PST responses to this question in Section 4.5.2, Respecting Indigenous epistemologies in the classroom. In the Identity section of the Tradition and Transformation NGV website (National Gallery of Victoria, 2011a) it is noted that ‘In the past there was no Indigenous word for art and objects made by Indigenous peoples were used for a wide range of cultural purposes’. Students are encouraged to explore the web resource and to think about ‘Why are maps, artworks, artist interviews, film
and video included? Discuss and record your responses. Reflect on the ways Indigenous artists show their identity. Think about how you might define your identity. They are then asked to consider

How important is place, ethnicity and gender in shaping identity?

- Reflect on the significant events that have happened in your lifetime.
- Discuss your understanding of community.
- Consider local, national and international "communities".
- Describe different activities that take place in your local community, noting the location, purpose and people involved.

Do you belong to online communities, how are these virtual communities different to the physical community in which you live? How do you communicate across these communities? How is your class a community? (National Gallery of Victoria, 2011b).

These questions open authentic spaces for PSTs to reflect about ‘whiteness’ and privilege in ways connected to their own experiences. PSTs who visited the NGV Indigenous collection and participated with school students in a professional development activity with the Indigenous curator, were inspired by the insights offered by the visit. A common question asked of the curator by PSTs was ‘Can you give an example of an activity students can take part in to learn about Indigenous art?’ The answer given was that ‘In the workshop at the NVG, Primary school students are asked to create a variety of symbols for events and places in their own lives. Students also create a symbol that their family would recognise them by and that represents them. The symbols are arranged in a pattern which links them together. The students then explain the ideas behind their art work’ (author’s journal, multiple entries, Semester One 2008 and 2009). A number of PSTs provided art materials for doing this activity in their Curriculum and Innovation seminar when they reported back to colleagues. They were able to articulate the importance of listening to Indigenous educators, their developing appreciation of Indigenous epistemological perspectives, the deep thinking the activity engendered for them and their belief that they would be able to bring to these perspectives to their own students.
7.4.3 Audio-visual resources

One of the most engaging mediums for PSTs in considering the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience in their curriculum planning is the material available through Australian Screen, operated by the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA). The site brings together material from the collections of the NFSA, the National Archives of Australia, the ABC, SBS, and AIATSIS. Under various tags, including ‘Indigenous’, the collection offers three to five minute clips from Australian films, many with Education notes that identify and describe the educational values of the film and the clips. These Education notes come from The Le@rning Federation, an initiative of the State, Territory and Federal governments of Australia and New Zealand, producing online curriculum content for Australian and New Zealand schools. The ability to show students whole films and then look a number of times at the clips and investigate issues with the help of the notes provides great opportunity for detailed research.

An early film which intrigued PSTs was Bitter Springs (Smart, Danischewsky, & Lipscomb, 1950), a depiction of the land grab by white farmers of land in central Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Pitjantjatjara and Kokatha Mula languages are spoken in the dialogue between the Aboriginal characters and also with the non-Aboriginal character Ransom, a government patrol officer. Ransom speaks the poignant lines, ‘one day a bloke walks into the Land Office in Adelaide 800 miles away, puts 80 quid on the table and bang the [Aboriginal people] haven’t got a tribal home anymore’; to which the squatter says ‘well if they don’t like it they can get themselves another waterhole’. But as Ransom then says, ‘no, there’s a tribe on every waterhole; two tribes can’t survive on one waterhole’. According to Mick Starkey, the current senior ranger at Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park, the language, body painting, dancing and war shields shown in the film are all authentic. Starkey also believes the film itself presents a fairly accurate picture of what happened between squatters and Aboriginal people. ‘That is what happened all over the western desert – they pushed us off our waterholes’ (Byrnes, 2006). The content tags for Bitter Springs include ‘Water rights’ as well as ‘Indigenous Australians’. When we first began to implement the incorporation of Indigenous experience into Curriculum and Innovation we were trying to encourage students to include Indigenous knowledge and experience in all their curriculum planning. One particular student, who genuinely wanted to include Indigenous themes in his Unit on Water for his Grade six class at his school placement, had added information on didgeridoos, clap sticks and stone tools as a stand-alone lesson (my
journal notes 2007). Clearly we were not offering adequate research guidance and resources to support appropriate curriculum planning. This incident spurred me to research the breadth of resources that were available and to begin this current study by asking PSTs and Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators about their experiences and questions. In the six years since that Water Unit, more and more resources have become available. For example on YouTube, Dean Stewart, the Education Manager at the Koorie Heritage Trust, offers the story of Birrarung, the river named ‘Yarra’ by the first Europeans, as a resource for PSTs and teachers wanting to include Indigenous knowledge and experience in the study of water (D. Stewart, 2008). Teacher educators need to support PSTs to develop their understanding of appropriate curriculum planning which will make it unthinkable not to include such material in what they offer their own students. This means not only becoming familiar with available resources but, importantly, examining and understanding our own epistemological perspectives and rejecting colonial paradigms so that we understand and appreciate the value of such resources.

Many films offer great opportunities for PSTs and students to consider issues relevant to Indigenous perspectives. *Harry’s War* (Frankland, 2000), a film by Richard Frankland, formerly a senior advisor to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, about Indigenous soldiers and the reasons they joined the Armed Services even though they were mostly not entitled to vote in Australian elections, be counted as citizens or to move around without permission, is another example that captures PSTs’ imaginations about their knowledge of the Australian story of which they are unaware and inspires them to think about engaging resources to include in their curriculum planning. The issue of Indigenous soldiers fighting in all the wars in which Australia has been involved is an eye-opener for PSTs.

Rachel Perkin’s *One night the moon* (Perkins, 2001), filmed on Andyamathanha land in the Flinders Ranges South Australia, is another example of material which always engages PSTs in considerations of the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. A young child goes missing and the police come to look for her with a black tracker who is told by the father, played by Paul Kelly, to leave his land. Available on Youtube, the song, *This land is mine* (P. Kelly & Carmody, 2001), poignantly and powerfully conveys the Indigenous perspective that ‘this land is me’ and the white farmer’s refrain of ‘this land is mine’.
The First Australians (Perkins, 2008b) website provides brilliant opportunities for PST and student research by offering a search function which delivers three to five minute clips from the six hours of The First Australians in response to various search terms, so that PSTs and their students, after watching the series can then develop their own questions and put together video presentations on those questions.

7.5 Reconciliatory Pedagogies

As a non-Indigenous educator the challenges of writing this thesis have gone to the heart of my own understanding of who I am as an educator. I have learned over many years of working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues, about the construction of the Australian story to exclude Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. My grandmother’s recognition of the importance of Albert Namatjira helped me to glimpse a world which existed within Australia but was outside my experience. As a high school teacher I was aware of the dearth of resources regarding Indigenous themes. Like the PSTs I work with today, without pre-service or in-service support, the task of including Indigenous themes seemed daunting. But appropriate resources alone will not be enough to fracture the anthropological gaze. We also need effective pedagogies that encourage PSTs and students to see themselves as participants in the learning process, not empty vessels waiting for knowledge to be poured in.

The title of this research consciously references the pedagogical principles and resulting strategies outlined in the Victorian Education Department’s Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT) developed by experienced teachers (State of Victoria, 2006a). In PoLT Unpacked examples ‘illustrating what each component is and is not were developed over time by a consultative process that included educators from a variety of key learning areas’ covering the following Principles:

1. The learning environment is supportive and productive
2. The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self motivation
3. Students' needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program
4. Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application

5. Assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning

6. Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom (State of Victoria, 2006b).

The PoLT Principles are an excellent example of pedagogy which supports student engagement, deep thinking and authentic tasks which go far beyond ‘chalk and talk’. However it has been possible for PSTs and teachers to use PoLT to great effect and yet to not consider the inclusion of Indigenous themes. PoLT recommends specific strategies such as ‘Students in Chinese language classes design appropriate questions for interviewing elderly Chinese people in Nursing Homes about the daily routines of elderly people’ and ‘A history unit on medieval Europe includes substantial discussion of the way young people would have experienced life at that time’ and other subject-based examples. However the one reference to Indigenous content is ‘Students arrange a traditional indigenous (sic) games afternoon at a local sports carnival’ (3.1), falling back on the ‘good sportspeople’ image of Indigenous people and yet again a missing an opportunity to encourage inclusion of Indigenous themes across the curriculum.

Figure 29 below represents an example of Indigenous pedagogical principles and practices developed by the Western New South Wales Regional Aboriginal Education Team, James Cook University School of Indigenous Studies and the NSW Department of Education and Training. The 8 Ways team offer their work to other educators through a wiki

The 8 ways can be used by anyone, to work with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students [http://8ways.wikispaces.com/8way+-+Our+Protocol+for+using+this+wiki](http://8ways.wikispaces.com/8way+-+Our+Protocol+for+using+this+wiki)

The team only ask that if educators take something from the 8 ways, that they ‘put something back’, that is, share the learning that came from using the pedagogy back into the wiki.
The 8 ways team also explain that

The joining lines are as important as the pedagogies themselves. Values, protocols, systems and processes refer to the ways of valuing (ontology), ways of being (ontology - protocols are rules for how to be), ways of knowing (epistemology) and ways of doing (methodology). When you engage with Indigenous communities at this level, you truly have the potential to embed broad and deep Indigenous perspectives.

For depth of Aboriginal perspectives, we employ four elements of Aboriginal epistemology/ontology ... identified as aspects of Aboriginal ways of valuing, being, doing and knowing (which relate to Indigenous perspectives, rather than Indigenised content) (Yunkaporta, Shillingsworth, Kirby, & Turnbull, 2009).
The breadth and depth of the ways of valuing, being, doing and knowing represented in the 8 Ways are matters for serious and respectful consideration by non-Indigenous educators. The 8 Ways team asks that educators ‘should take the time to ensure integrity and relevance…. Currently most Aboriginal content is tokenistic, separated from the core content and treated as an interesting or fun activity. This only marginalises Aboriginal learners further from mainstream education’ (T. Yunkaporta, Shillingsworth, Kirby, & Turnbull, 2012). Such tokenism also continues the positioning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the exotic other, as peripheral to the Australian story. Guidance and support from Indigenous educators again comes to prominence.

In arguing for a narrative of survival rather than a narrative of cultural loss Nakata posits that:

> What is needed is a reconsideration of a different conceptualisation of the cross-cultural space, not as a clash of opposites and differences but as a layered and very complex entanglement of concepts, theories and sets of meanings of a knowledge system (Nakata, 2004, p. 14).

These considerations, resistance and survival rather than loss and devastation, cross-cultural exploration rather than blinkered epistemologies, are signposts towards reconciliatory education, learned from and with PSTs and from the experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues and other educators reported in Chapters 5 and 6.

In 2001 the Australian Broadcasting Corporation produced a half-hour Australian Story called Bridge over Myall Creek (Cheshire, 2001), about the massacre in 1838 of at least twenty-eight women and children and elderly men in northern New South Wales. Gary Foley’s Koori history website provides information on Victorian massacre sites (G. Foley, 1998-2009). As demonstrated by their discussions, this half-hour telecast stuns PSTs, for whom the massacres of Indigenous peoples are definitely an unknown part of our history. At the beginning of the telecast a descendant of one of the murderers says that he was shocked to find out what happened but it was a long time ago and so not really connected to him. At the end of the half-hour this man is shown speaking to primary school children about how important it is that we acknowledge shocking events such the massacre so that we can really understand our own history.
It is clear from these experiences of working with PSTs to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning over the last seven years that appropriate content and pedagogy are critical. But that also

Breaking down existing barriers will require careful, strategic education and activity. White Australians in particular, are invited to look inward and examine their own history, identity, culture and privileged position.

This is what true reconciliation is about; being reconciled to the self first and then going about building relationships which are based on respect and equality (Malin & Ngarrirjan-Kessaris 1999).

7.6 The Australian Curriculum (AusVELS)

In 2008 the newly elected Commonwealth Labor government embarked on consultations, open to interested individuals and organisations, which began the process of establishing a national curriculum to be implemented across Australia. The name was soon changed to the Australian Curriculum. A heated debate has continued amongst politicians and in the media, particularly in regard to the amount of Indigenous content. (Libby Tudball, 02.03.10), (Penberthy, 02.03.12). In particular there was political concern expressed by the conservative Opposition that ‘the draft curriculum had 118 references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture but none of the Westminster parliamentary system or the Magna Carta, on which Australia's laws were based’ (Hudson & Larkin, 01.03.12). In the words of their education spokesman, Christopher Pyne

Grade 9s will consider the personal stories of Aboriginal people and examine massacres and ‘indigenous displacement’ (sic), without any reference to the benefit to our country of our European heritage and the sacrifice of our forebears to build a nation (D. Harrison, 02.03.10).

Blog entries were almost universally opposed, but that seems to be the way of blogs:

Yes kids need to be taught history and yes it should involve indigenous Australians, but for crying out load (sic), we don't have to put sorry day and other recent events into our history lessons. Children also need to be allowed to learn in more than
Historically the States and Territories have Constitutional responsibility for curriculum. State Education Departments developed and managed content and assessment for their jurisdictions. In Victoria the curriculum guidelines which will replace the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) will be known as the AusVELS. Other States are also amalgamating their existing guidelines with the Australian Curriculum for implementation in their own jurisdictions. In 2008 a *National History Curriculum Framing paper* was released which includes ‘historical empathy and moral judgement’ in its eight descriptors of historical understanding. These elements are ones that PSTs often referred to in *Curriculum and Innovation* and later in *Re-Thinking Australian Studies* as imposing ideological values onto students. Particularly in the first seminars of a Semester there would be agitation and resistance expressed by some PSTs towards ‘too much emphasis on Indigenous issues’ and ‘trying to make us feel guilty’. Their stated point-of-view was that values had no place in teaching students. The National Curriculum Board is clear in its view that there are roles for values and ethics in the study of history, to support a capacity to enter the world of the past with an informed imagination and ethical responsibility. The discipline of history constrains the practitioner from imposing personal preferences on the evidence but all meaningful historical accounts involve explicit or implicit moral judgement, and historians require an awareness of their own values and the impact of these values (National Curriculum Board, 2008, p.5).

[History] allows the emergence of key principles of citizenship, the arguments they engendered, the changing institutional forms of government and civil society, and the circumstances in which they have flourished or failed. The skills of historical understanding equip students to make informed and morally responsible judgements (National Curriculum Board, 2008, p.8).

Indigenous struggles for social, economic and political rights fall squarely into such a framework. The challenge for teacher educators is to support PSTs to become aware of their own values and the impact of these values. In 2012 the Australian Curriculum, Reporting and Assessment Authority (ACARA) published a paper for consultation towards the implementation of the new curriculum. It included as the fourth element of the thirteenth aim of fourteen aims for the study of Civics and Citizenship:
13. An Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship will:

(d) build an understanding and appreciation of Australia as a multicultural and multi-faith society and a commitment to human rights and intercultural understandings, with particular consideration of Aboriginal Peoples’ and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ historical and contemporary experience of, participation in and contribution to Australian civic identity and society (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012a) p.6.

As in the CSF and the VELS, the Australian Curriculum is crowded with aims which PSTs and teachers will be able to continue to overlook, given the resistance evidenced in many of the survey returns reported in Chapter 4 combined with the lack of appropriate professional development. If the new Civics and Citizenship is to operate successfully as an effective cross-curriculum domain it will need resources and pre-service and in-service professional development under the guidance of Indigenous educators.

In the Australian Curriculum, Year 3 History is the stage of schooling in a domain which may or may not get any time allocated to it where students are introduced to specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themes. Table 4 below describes the ‘Historical knowledge and understanding’ required in a Year 3 History study. The links in the Table take the user to resources meant to support the aims of the Content Descriptions. However, for PSTs and teachers without pre-service or in-service professional these resources are in danger of being unused, again within a very crowded curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>Australian Curriculum Year 3 History Content Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historical Knowledge and Understanding</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community and Remembrance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The importance of Country and Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who belong to a local area. (This is intended to be a local area study with a focus on one Language group; however, if information or sources are not readily available, another representative area may be studied) [ACHHK060]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ONE important example of change and ONE important example of continuity over time in the local community, region or state/territory; for example, in relation to the areas of transport, work, education, natural and built environments, entertainment, daily life [ACHHK061]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. The role that people of diverse backgrounds have played in the development and character of the local community (ACHHK062)

4. Days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia (including Australia Day, ANZAC Day, Harmony Week, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week and National Sorry Day) and the importance of symbols and emblems. (ACHHK063)

5. Celebrations and commemorations in other places around the world; for example, Bastille Day in France, Independence Day in the USA, including those that are observed in Australia such as Chinese New Year, Christmas Day, Diwali, Easter, Hanukkah, the Moon Festival and Ramadan (ACHHK064)

Along with these curriculum guidelines ACARA has also provided student work sample portfolios, ‘designed to illustrate satisfactory achievement in the relevant aspects of the achievement standard’ (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012b). For Year 3 History the portfolio comprises:

Sample 1 Report – Local building
Sample 2 Narrative – Delivering the mail
Sample 3 Inquiring about local history – Transport.

The topics above are again evidence of the same exclusion of Indigenous themes in the new Australian Curriculum as there was in the CSF and the VELS. The provision of portfolio evidence for student learning to highlight ‘The importance of Country and Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples’ would be a step towards encouraging educators to see the possibilities for implementing the stated aims of the Australian Curriculum. ACARA does say that ‘as the Australian Curriculum ... is implemented by schools ... the work sample portfolios will be reviewed and enhanced by drawing on classroom practice and will reflect a more systematic collection of evidence from teaching and learning programs’ (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012b). For now PSTs and teachers will look at Local Building, Delivering the Mail and Transport to provide information on what a Year 3 student’s History work should look like. Again Indigenous themes have been excluded. Hopefully effort will be made in the near future to develop samples which model the inclusion of Indigenous themes. However this is clearly a difficult task. Schools are not providing work samples and the challenge remains to support teachers to break through their reluctance and unpreparedness.
In Victoria the AusVELS will deal with Indigenous themes in the curriculum by students ‘examining historical perspectives from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewpoint …prior to colonisation by the British, the ensuing contact and its impacts.

They will examine key policies and political movements over the last two centuries. Students will develop an awareness of the significant roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people in Australian society (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2012b, History, Cross-curriculum priorities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, p. 8).

As well as these expectations in terms of curriculum content, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs has approved National Standards for Teacher Registration for implementation from 2013 (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). The Standards mirror existing Victorian Standards for Teacher Registration (which they will replace), except for two significant additions. The Table below shows those additions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8</th>
<th>Strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and for reconciliation in the National Standards for Teacher Registration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Professional Standards for Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1 – Know students and how they learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus area 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Design and implement effective teaching strategies that are responsive to the local community and cultural setting, linguistic background and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Accomplished</td>
<td>Provide advice and support colleagues in the implementation of effective teaching strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students using knowledge of and support from community representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Develop teaching programs that support equitable and ongoing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by engaging in collaborative relationships with community representatives and parents/carers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Professional Knowledge

**Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus area 2.4</th>
<th>Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Accomplished</td>
<td>Support colleagues with providing opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Lead initiatives to assist colleagues with opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These new Registration requirements place further expectations on teachers to respond to the particular needs of Indigenous students and also to provide opportunities for all students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages. The More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI), a four year (2011-15) program to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering and remaining in professional teaching positions in Australian schools, based at the University of South Australia, is designing and trialling a Unit outline and content to support the provision of teacher education to support these registration requirements (More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative, 2013). The trial will conclude on 31 May 2013.

The evidence in this research demonstrates the technical and epistemological difficulties facing teachers and schools regarding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum/AusVELS and the new Registration requirements. Chapter 8 summarises the evidence and those difficulties. It notes limitations to the study, opportunities for future research and points to the possibilities for learning together to challenge colonial paradigms and develop reconciliatory epistemological perspectives and practices.
CHAPTER 8
Inclusion not exclusion

This study offers evidence of the grip of continuing colonial epistemological perspectives on the imaginations of non-Indigenous educators which blocks access to a path of knowledge that we might walk together with Indigenous educators. When I began this study a spectrum of denial had been evident in seminar discussions in the three years I had worked in the B.Ed. at Victoria University, particularly in the fourth-year Unit *Curriculum and Innovation*, where lecturers were supporting PSTs to be ‘involved in integrating Indigenous Australian culture and history into the school curriculum’ (Victoria University, 2009). That spectrum ranged from outright hostility, through to resistance, to concern that the area was too difficult for non-Indigenous educators. I wanted to explore why this was happening and whether it was possible to reconstruct the Australian story so that learning and teaching for reconciliation could be implemented. In particular I questioned how teacher educators could support PSTs to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning.

For two decades Commonwealth, State and Territory bi-partisan educational policies have expected that Universities will develop teacher education courses to promote greater sensitivity towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They also expect teachers to include understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages in schools curricula to educate ‘all young Australians to acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians’ (MCEETYA 2008). The evidence I have presented here shows that in Victorian Primary and Secondary schools, despite such policy commitments and apparently inclusive curriculum guidelines, for a significant number and cross-section of teacher education students in this study, Indigenous knowledge is still being excluded from learning and teaching. I argue that without confronting the normative power of ‘whiteness’, as an insidious, mostly unrecognised epistemological standpoint which constructs non-Indigenous perspectives of the nature and content of knowledge about the world, we will continue to reproduce a colonial construction of the world which excludes Indigenous perspectives. In this study I have focused on Victorian PSTs and educators, both because that is where I live and work and also in recognition of Indigenous educators’
perspectives that in universities and schools it is important when dealing with Indigenous issues to begin with the local then expand out into state, national, international examples — depending on what is under discussion (Yunkaporta, et al.. 2012). This analysis has connections with international perspectives such as those articulated by Tuihiwai Smith (1999 & 2013) and Battiste (2011a & 2011b) about what can be known, how knowledge can be organised and what forms of knowledge are legitimate and credible.

My research demonstrates that the exclusion of Indigenous knowledge is correlated with two key issues. First, the lack of relevant personal experiences of pre-service teachers (PSTs) and teachers who, in their own accounts, say they have learnt little about the richness and complexities of the Australian story in their own schooling, where Indigenous knowledge and experience were rarely explored and celebrated but rather omitted altogether or presented within a paradigm of looking at the exotic other or as victims. Second, the successive curriculum guidelines (which outline what teachers were expected to present to their students) in operation during the PSTs own schooling and during their school placements, have encouraged the exclusion of themes to which teachers are either resistant or are not confident about, by crowding the curriculum, by not providing appropriate professional development and by not situating Indigenous struggles for civil, political and economic rights as an critical part of the story of who we are as Australians.

This study offers non-Indigenous teacher educators, seeking to support PSTs to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning, documented evidence of the epistemological perspectives learnt through our schooling which prevent the inclusion of accounts of Indigenous resistance, resilience and recognition of Indigenous peoples’ central place in the Australian story. I examined literature which explored the paradigm of assimilation and continuing colonialism and significant events in Australian history in order to contextualise the research and I presented the analyses of primarily Australian Indigenous theorists who demonstrate the existence of the paradigm of ‘white is right’, the children’s history book story of Australia, the story of *The Australia Book* (Pownall & Senior, 2008). The Praxis Inquiry Protocol which guides the work of the School of Education at VU supports PSTs to consider their own epistemological perspectives in their work with students and provides a basis for understanding and challenging colonial paradigms if teacher educators are prepared to learn from and with Indigenous colleagues.
My conclusions are drawn from my analysis of the intersections between two years of data from surveys of PSTs’ experiences and questions about the inclusion of Indigenous themes in curriculum planning, collaborative self-study reflections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers working with those same PSTs and conversations with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators who shared their own experiences and elucidated the themes which emerged through the study. The collaborative self-study reported in Chapter 5 explored the learning and teaching shared between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers working together and with the 2009 cohort of PSTs to develop critical perspectives and appropriate resources for the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula, specifically through the VELS domain of Civics and Citizenship. We were particularly concerned that PSTs move away from any notion of Indigenous education being a deficit model, both for Indigenous students and throughout the curriculum. However, as Moreton-Robinson (2004a) suggests, and my own examination of the curriculum guidelines demonstrates, the concept of citizenship in Australia is overlaid with colonial assumptions. PSTs were faced with school experiences which largely did not recognise this epistemological connection between citizenship/egalitarianism/mateship and ‘whiteness’, so that Indigenous struggles for social, economic and political rights were able to be seen as an optional extra in a crowded curriculum. PSTs actually had little opportunity to integrate Indigenous Australian history and culture into school curricula.

The stories told by the Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators also expose examples of how epistemological perspectives lead towards Indigenous peoples being seen as the exotic other and/or victims or outsiders. They described examples of their own schooling where Indigenous knowledge and experience were either omitted altogether or presented within a paradigm of ‘white is right’, where the hegemony of the dominant discourse resulted in prejudice and exclusion. But they also showed through their personal journeys that we can educate ourselves to hear the stories of Australian history across the millennia, including the present and into the future, to listen to Indigenous educators, and work together as non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples; that it is possible to take steps on the path to reconciliation, to stand up and be counted. Without such dialogue we diminish our opportunity to know who we are as Australians and to ‘bequeath to our children a nation united where its Indigenous people and their cultures, laws and languages are central to the foundations of the Nation State’ (Patrick Dodson, 2008).
The possibility that Indigenous epistemologies might organise the educational spaces for learning, rather than the opposite assumption that Indigenous knowledge will be included in (surrounded by) the dominant paradigms presented in school and university curricula is a radical possibility but one that offers constructive possibilities for sharing Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives in education. The curriculum materials developed by mostly Indigenous educators and filmmakers and the community education organisations which I found opened spaces for PSTs to think about their own unconscious assumptions about the construction of knowledge and how it might be possible to include appropriate Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning show that there are in fact many opportunities to listen and learn together.

The growth of Indigenous scholarship and documentation available publicly, means that there is no longer an excuse for non-Indigenous teacher educators not to take up the challenge to support PSTs to include Indigenous knowledge and experience in their curriculum planning. It is unfair to expect this work to be done only by Indigenous colleagues. The academy should ensure that their contributions are recorded and valued but that time is also provided for supporting their own communities and deciding on priorities in terms of knowledge generation.

### 8.1 Limitations of the study

This study was limited by the difficulties for a non-Indigenous educator in throwing off her own blinkers learned from being an inheritor of the privileges which accrued to the colonisers. Working with Indigenous colleagues over a number of years and particularly through learning with an Indigenous colleague over the five years of this research have helped to address this limitation but colonial heritages of white privilege cannot be overturned easily. No doubt there are vestiges which Indigenous and other colleagues can identify in this work. I was also gifted with the conversations with the experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. All this has further opened my eyes to many subtle and not-so-subtle restrictions and blockages that Indigenous Australians need to overcome in order to overthrow the consequences of the ‘special treatment’ of the Paul Kelly song which opens Chapter 4 (P. Kelly, 1992). However I am aware that many Indigenous educators suspect that non-Indigenous people still wish to control Indigenous knowledge and contribute to compliance with the continuing dominance of non-Indigenous epistemologies.
The limitation touched on but not resolved by this study is the lack of connection for most non-Indigenous Australians with Indigenous Australians. The experienced educators in Chapter 6 all talked of this lack of knowledge and personal connection at points during their journeys and the difference that personal connections made to their understanding and their ability to work towards inclusion, not exclusion. Making those connections is the hardest part. In Australia we actually have little experience of such connections. That is why learning from Indigenous educators and community representatives is critical and needs support from ‘the system’ if we are to succeed in putting the education policies and the teacher registration requirements into practice.

A further limitation of this study is that it occurred within a single program at a single institution. The final section of this study proposes that future research with graduate teachers on putting the policies into practice, within a framework that recognises the importance of first examining our own epistemological perspectives, offers potential to build on this initial investigation.

### 8.2 Future research

A number of the PSTs with whom I have worked in the past few years have indicated their willingness to be involved in future research regarding the inclusion of Indigenous themes in school curricula. Working with them as graduate teachers in developing their questions, strategies and community connections regarding the Australian Curriculum/AusVELS expectations about the inclusion of Indigenous content would offer productive opportunities to map that development and the resulting needs of teachers and schools. The new National Standards for Teacher Registration, as noted in Chapter 7, place further expectations on teachers to respond to the particular needs of Indigenous students and also to provide opportunities for all students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages, with an emphasis on collaborative relationships with community representatives and parents/carers. Initiatives such as The More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI) program to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering and remaining in professional teaching positions in Australian schools and the work they are undertaking on appropriate content to implement the Australian Curriculum/AusVELS, and also to support the new registration requirements, will offer Indigenous guidance and support. But we
will all need to be willing to learn from these initiatives and to support teachers in schools to put the policies into practice. How teacher education can contribute to this remains a key concern.

Cooperative research by Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues on curriculum materials that respect and include Indigenous issues and perspectives in curriculum offers hope for change. This study’s approach to learning together will need replication or modification to understand the relative contribution of institutional practices, knowledge of Indigenous education issues and interpersonal relationships to ensure culturally safe spaces in teacher education for Indigenous colleagues in universities. Developing, trialling and sharing further resources and curriculum materials in teacher education that can challenge colonial epistemological perspectives will also need further research.

For non-Indigenous teacher educators to support PSTs to include Indigenous themes in their curriculum planning we need to understand the circumstances of our own privilege and the power of the dominant paradigm to construct an Australian story which allows the exclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience from University and school curricula. We need to recognise and celebrate the co-existence of Indigenous epistemologies and ways of understanding and acting in the world which value Philosophy, Connection, Interdependence, Responsibility and Reciprocity (Davina Woods lecture, *Curriculum and Innovation*, May 2009). We can choose to be teacher educators for the status quo or we can choose to be teacher educators for social justice.
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In 1938 our Elders, statesmen and women of high degree
Cooper, Patten, Briggs and Tucker, working for us to be free
Along with others like Ferguson, organised and set a date
January 26, Australia Day they did re-designate
No longer commemorating British invasion
Now a day for Aboriginal political persuasion
A Day of Mourning it was called
A day supported by those appalled:
At Black soldiers not yet citizens
Although their families for generations were called denizens
Elders denied the old age pension
And to add to the tension
Our most precious resource
Not land nor sea, but our children of course
Stolen, forced into domestic servitude
Taken to be raised as non-Indigenous in someone else's brood

In other cities, towns and States
Prohibitions people did hate:
Included bans on walking city streets
Wages less than others each week
Children not taken were not to be educated
And this was never allowed to be debated
Children were not even allowed in schools
And definitely not in the local swimming pools

That date in 1938 was then sown
Moved in the calendar year, and grown
Now we call it NAIDOC Week!
It is a time to gather, celebrate and speak
Speak of the Elders and their fights
Speak of the Elders how they achieved our rights.

On the Friday of NAIDOC Week we celebrate NAIDOC Day.
Each year our communities gather at the beginning of the way
The beginning of the path, we travel celebrating our urban Songlines
Each knows what others think and outcomes the chanted lines
“Extra! Extra! Read all about it!
This is our land and there’s no doubt about it!”

Along city streets past parliament and the mall
We step out, a gathering of people walking tall
We do this every year, rain or bright sunlight
Community: Black, Brindle and family Whites
Following our songmen and women with their megaphones
We march, we chant, we make no bones

“What do we want? Land Rights!
When do we want them? Now!
What have we got? Nothing!”

A pause today as people think, ‘We have more than just bread and butter’
Some of the young, very strong and proud are heard to mutter
‘Nothing’ may not be quite right
For us urban dwellers, Land Rights; might be a lost fight
Some of the Stolen Gens, may not know the right land to kiss
But let the very strong, proud and young think on this
Government rifts? Yes; No SORRY, No ATSIC election rights
Government gifts? None; nothing without our Elders’ fights
It is good to know your rights
But don’t forget who put up the fight
For citizenship, for Native Title and more
Don’t forget who established our political core
Cherish the young so they can always be proud
Remind the young why we can, gather as a crowd
Why we are free to follow our songmen and women with their megaphones
Free so we can chant, our urban Songlines and make no bones
“Always has been, Always will be, Aboriginal Land!”

In 1938 our Elders; statesmen and women of high degree
Cooper, Patten, Briggs and Tucker, working for us to be free
Along with others like Ferguson, organised and set a date
January 26, Australia Day they did redesignate
And even before the Day of Mourning came a petition
And before even the petition was Barak wishing
Wishing when he and his men arrived at parliament in possum skin cloaks
That the parliamentarians and others there would not have seen them as a joke
Any rights we have today we owe to those who have gone before
It is through our urban Songlines that we applaud them with an encore

“Always has been, Always will be, Aboriginal Land!”
Each face is smiling, each body erect does stand
For this chant is ridgy-didge, real, correct, genuine and true
We love our land and we have no desire to mount a military coup
But our Elders, statesmen and women of high degree
Have fought the good fight to make sure we are free
We still battle to lower our incarceration rates
Unemployment and morbidity are still pet hates
But we are free to march, to chant, to absolutely make no bones
“Always has been, Always will be, Aboriginal Land!”
Appendix 2

**RMIT HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

*Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires, Focus Groups or Disclosure of Personal Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PORTFOLIO OF</th>
<th>Design and social Context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL/CENTRE OF</td>
<td>Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Name of participant: 
Project Title: Reconstructing the Australian Story: Learning and Teaching for Reconciliation

Name(s) of investigators:  
Claire Kelly

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire involved in this project.

2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me.

3. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.

4. I give my permission to be audio taped  
   - Yes  
   - No

5. I give my permission for my name or identity to be used  
   - Yes  
   - No

6. I acknowledge that:
   a) Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.
   b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
   c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me. The privacy of the information I provide will be safeguarded. The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law. If I participate in a focus group I understand that whilst all participants will be asked to keep the conversation confidential, the researcher cannot guarantee that other participants will do this.
   d) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be a PhD thesis for RMIT, a Report for VU and possible Journal and Conference publications. Any information which may be used to identify me will not be used unless I have given my permission (see point 5).

*Participant’s Consent*

Name:  
Date:  

(Participant)  

(Witness to signature)

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. Details of the complaints procedure are available at:  
http://www.rmit.edu.au
Appendix 3

Permission to reproduce Freddie Timms *Ned Kelly (2000)* which introduces Chapter 7.

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School of Graduate Research at RMIT University
E: Claire.Kelly@rmit.edu.au

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   Natural ochres on linen
   Private collection

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Date: 18/12/12

Counter-signature
I agree to the terms and conditions of this Licence:

Signed: ____________________________

On behalf of: CLAIRE KELLY
Date: 18/12/2013

Signed in the presence of: JUSTINE SMITH

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Locked bag 24 Warmun (Turkey Creek) via Kununurra WA 6743
ph 08-9168 7496 fax 08-9168 7444
ABN 15 031 420 980

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Warmun Art Centre 18/12/2012