

Re-positioning the self: Turning the gaze to disrupt and deconstruct understandings of cultural competence.

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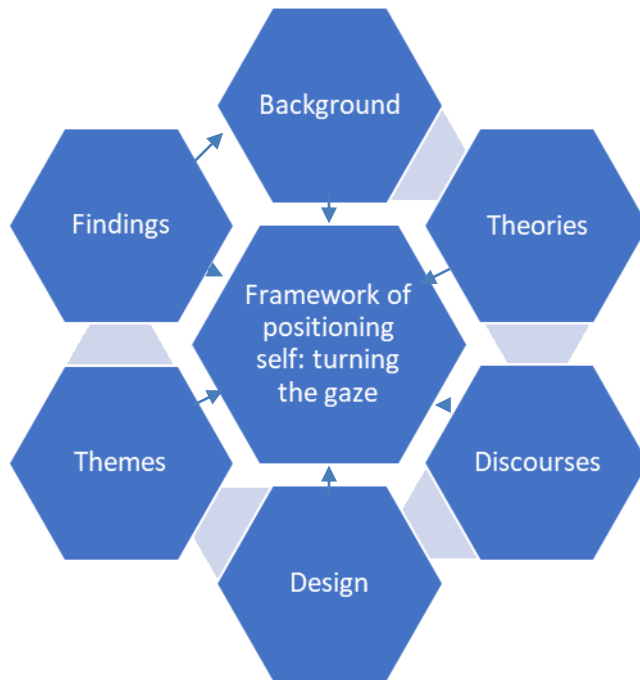


Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

EARLY CHILDHOOD AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2019

FROM VISION TO ACTION

Presentation overview



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Cultural competence in the EYLF

The EYLF contains explicit statements about expectations relative to improving outcomes for Aboriginal children.

- ‘Respect for Diversity’ as a fundamental principle; and
- ‘Cultural Competence’ as a key practice (DEEWR 2010, p. 5).
- Also a specific section for ‘growing educators’ competence in ‘working with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures’ (DEEWR 2010, p. 24).

The EYLF framework seeks to ensure that ‘we all strengthen our cultural competence’ (DEEWR 2010, p. 21) however this could be interpreted in a myriad of ways.



DR. KAREN SINCLAIR

NGARRINDJERI
LANGUAGE
GROUP



EDUCATOR



- educating non-Indigenous educators
- pedagogy = relationships + reciprocity

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

WHAT DOES
CULTURAL COMPETENCE
ACTUALLY MEAN?

• FOUCAULDIAN SCHOLARSHIP
• INDIGENOUS STANDPOINT THEORY
• CRITICAL RACE THEORY



no:ri

Theories ...

- Foucauldian concepts of normalization and governmentality (Foucault 1980); Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic 2001; Tate 1997) and Indigenous Standpoint Theory (Nakata, 2007; Walter 2010) were the ideal approaches for acknowledging the multilayered reality of cultural competence.
- Grounded in Indigenous epistemologies.
- Decolonisation: challenge 'master' narratives (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).
- Emancipation: break free to form epistemological equality.
- Indigenist research principles: resistance discourse; privileging Indigenous voices; political integrity (Rigney, 1999).



Discourses of Cultural competence

Discourse: *Systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of actions, beliefs and practices that shape reality by systemically constructing the subjects and the worlds of which they speak* (Kerins, 2012, p. 26).

Several writers (Dean, 2001; Kumagai & Lypson, 2009; Lum, 2011; Morris, 2010) are critical of cultural competence. Dean (2001) argues that cultural competence 'is consistent with the belief that knowledge brings control ... and that this is an ideal to be achieved above all else'.

Various 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980) (Closing the Gap) create an authoritative consensus of what needs to be done and how it should be done.



Research design

Two methods: Q Methodology and an Aboriginal methodology of Yarning.

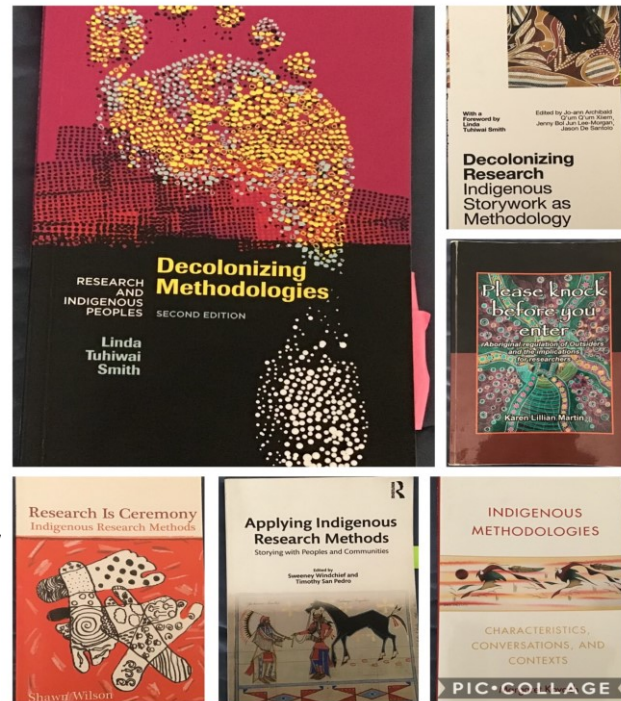
The primary purpose of utilising a mixed method approach in this research was to:

- bring transparency to complex, multifaceted discourses and constructions of 'cultural competence';
- allow participants to talk freely about their experiences, thoughts and ideas;
- complement the strengths of using a single design to explore the diverse views and perspectives of educators;
- emphasize the concept of relatedness which is a core principle of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing (Martin, 2003) and which is useful in terms of developing a shared language and vision around cultural competence.



Inspiring literature on Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM)

- Acknowledges our worldviews, our knowledges and our realities as distinctive and vital to our existence and survival (Martin, 2003).
- Respect, reciprocity, relationality guide the research (Archibald & Parent, 2019; Wilson, 2008).
- Storywork is a culturally safe, respectful and relevant research method that centres Aboriginal epistemology and relatedness (Martin, 2008).
- Stories are who we are. They are both method and meaning (Kovach, 2009).
- Draw upon the principles of Reggio Emilia to develop a pedagogy of listening, in seeking to find ways of working that honour Aboriginal voices.



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DATA COLLECTION

STAGE 1

① Beginning the journey towards cultural competence

12 participants

② Learning with Aboriginal families and communities

6 participants



9 participants
early childhood
data collected

KNOWING



STAGE 2

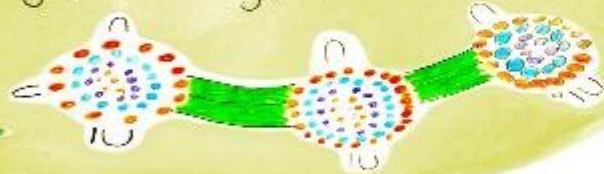
YARNING

Aboriginal Research
Methods

Research
yarn

Family
yarn

Social
yarn



WAYS OF

BEING



DOING



Themes

Ways of knowing: the normalisation of cultural competence

I feel like is that it is based around relationships. (Joan)

I think it goes deeper, I absolutely agree with growing educators' competence ... maybe it should be understanding, because understanding embraces a whole lot more than just competence. (Ruth)

I recognise I need to have the ability to understand, respect and open the channels to develop effective communication with people across all cultures. (Mary)

Ways of being: policy as paradox

'We just can't keep on going and saying oh we must do something about that one day'. (Joan)

I can attend all types of manner of professional development but does that mean I am culturally competent? (Ruth)

Cultural competence requires deep slow thinking, and honouring time to yarn about it, we do not honour that, we say we do but then we give it 5 minutes. (Laura)

I am wondering whether some people are passive in their approach to cultural competency-as if they may pick it up by osmosis. (Ruth)

Ways of doing: being open to possibilities

For me it's been much more of a journey in the last 18 months, because more specifically I have had time to talk to people ... it wasn't necessarily a prime focus before. (Kate)

My journey so far has opened my eyes and deepened my commitment to learning, respecting, recognising, and challenging myself. (Mary)

I used to think you could just get it from books or the internet ... but cultural competence is about making meaning with other people. (Joan)

I can say that in the current space and in the current time which I am at, I am open to the possibilities. (Laura)



Table 1. Framework of positioning self in relationship to ways of knowing, being and doing 'cultural competence'

	Beginning	Emerging	Evolving
Ways of knowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowing that knowledge about cultural competence is socially constructed• Building on partial understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures• Beginning to silently challenge 'regimes of truth'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowing how to begin to challenge ongoing colonial effects• Knowing about the state of unconsciousness of privilege• Knowing how to disrupt deficit discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowing about and disrupting normalised narratives• Problematising assumptions about culture and competence• Challenging reductive notions that suggest one can 'know' and 'be competent' in culture
Ways of being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unconsciously resisting dominant discourse• Engaging with good intentions and niceness• Being critically reflective by safely citing historical examples of white privilege	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decolonising selves and practices• Examining own position in society and developing a critical capacity to interrogate how privilege works• Being mindful of the great diversity of meaning about cultural competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disrupting normalised practices• Being attentive to privilege counter-stories of cultural competence• Problematising cultural competence as a competency
Ways of doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partly disrupting normalising discourses and practices• Beginning to act intentionally to disrupt the norm• Being open to sharing and exchanging wonderings and knowledge of cultural competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertaking deconstructive dialogue• Developing strong relationships with Aboriginal families and communities• Developing: an ethic of resistance; a pedagogy of listening; critical thinking and reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deconstructing issues of power, privilege, oppression and unequal power relationships• Upsetting racialised blind spots• Contributing collaboratively to systemic social change for equity and social justice

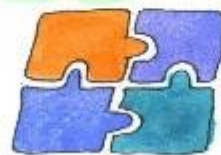
THE FRAMEWORK OF KNOWING. BEING. DOING



DISRUPT
NORMALISED
DISCOURSES



PEDAGOGY
OF
LISTENING



RECONCEPTUALISE
CULTURAL
COMPETENCE

HELP

WITH
ISSUES OF



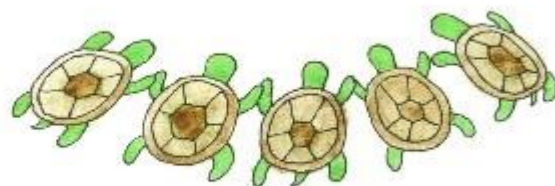
CHALLENGE

TO THINK
MORE CRITICALLY
+
IMMERSE OURSELVES

- RESISTANCE
- TRANSFORMATIONAL
PRAXIS
- CONSCIENTISATION

CO- CONSTRUCT

CULTURAL
COMPETENCE
WORK



Not another framework ...

There are 'degrees of agreement about what counts as truth' in relation to the concept of cultural competence (Barker & Galaskinski 2001, p. 66).

By all means let there be frameworks of normalisation, if these are wanted. But equally let us not fool ourselves about what they are or what they can do. Let us recognise their limitations and dangers, their assumptions and values. Let them not be at the expense of ignoring other ways of thinking" (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999, p. 116)

A structure to position oneself to be open to possibilities where there is a shift from not knowing to a position of challenging reductive notions and complexifying practices (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. 2015, p. 21).



Opportunities

- to critically reflect and realise that we can never totally see the world from the viewpoint of another, but we can be open to disrupt our present understandings of normalised concepts and to be receptive to other narratives through authentic encounters.
- authentically contextualise cultural competence by developing professional learning communities with local Aboriginal communities;
- develop inquiry-based projects using ethnography as a tool to become critical meaning makers of cultural competence;
- explore and create spaces of encounters with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with the aim of co-constructing cultural competence work.



Final comment ... Turn the gaze:

Educators who gaze upon themselves and take on a role as an 'inquisitive philosopher and critically reflective practitioner' (Jovanovic & Roder 2012, p. 140) potentially position themselves to be open to new ways of knowing, being and doing.

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