



The Fallacy of Cultural Inclusion in Mainstream Education Discourses

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Abstract

In Australian education discourses, Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islanders' socio-cultural perspectives are *included* in the national curriculum. This happens via curriculum content made palatable for a largely non-Indigenous population. As the focus of increasing Indigenous content remains a primary objective, power/knowledge process determines what knowledge is legitimate while relegating *other* perspectives to the periphery. In this chapter, we employ a poststructuralist framework through the lens of social justice to interrogate how teachers *include* Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspectives of Australian history. Aligning our discussions to the United Nations Sustainable Goal 4: Quality

education, we present a triangulation of scholarly discussions, author reflections, and research data to explore how Australia's education system assists learners in acquiring knowledge and skills required to promote a culture of human rights and cultural diversity. Interviews with history teachers and local Elders highlight a reliance on textbooks over trans-generational knowledge as the primary source for *inclusive* teaching. Despite increasing social and political pressure for reconciliation, constitutional recognition, treaty, and sovereignty, the *inclusion* of *other* cultural perspectives in textbooks remains largely absent. As teaching occurs from such monocultural education tools, cultural *inclusion* of Australia's Indigenous peoples, cultures, histories, and perspectives will remain a *fallacy* within mainstream education discourses.

Keywords

Indigenous education · Australian history · Cultural education · Post-structuralism · Curriculum and pedagogy

While Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is the preferred and culturally responsive nomenclature when speaking about Australia's First Nations peoples, being aware of the socio-political discourses, Indigenous has been used hereafter throughout the chapter

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Author Positioning Statements



My name is **Sara**, I am a non-Indigenous woman of German, Scottish, and Welsh descent. I grew up in Warrnambool on Gundijtmara Country; a Country rich with living and archaeological evidence of Aboriginal knowledge and history. Growing up, I knew nothing about the Aboriginality in this part of the world; it was not visible. Later I came to understand that this was because it was hidden behind paleness.

My name is **Kym**. I am of Aboriginal, Scottish, and Irish decent. I do not fit the stereotypical archetype of an Indigenous person. I am of Caucasian appearance. During my education, I was privy to students' and teachers' unfiltered perceptions of Indigenous culture, which demonstrated a peripheral understanding at best. I now understand that this is because Indigenous history, culture, and perspectives were presented within the education system to fit an Anglocentric, socially accepted narrative which failed to acknowledge the rich and sophisticated histories and culture of our nation's First Peoples.



7.1 Setting the Scene

In this chapter, we present a personal and scholarly informed discussion of how Australian Indigenous content is included with Australian education discourses, curricula, and systems. We align our discussions to the United Nations Sustainable Goals, in particular Goal 4: Quality education, to explore how Australia's education system is making progress towards achieving target 4.7: ensuring all learners acquire the knowledge and skills to promote ... human rights, a culture of peace and non-violence ... and appreciation of cultural diversity, or not (United Nations (UN) 2021). From our unique positionality and experiences, we draw on the body of established literature to examine how Anglocentric onto-epistemologies have influenced the ideology of an inclusive Australian education experience all-the-while creating a fallacy of cultural inclusion. Acknowledging that in doing so, we step beyond familiar academic modes of communication, while also illuminating how our individual identities and experiences are intertwined with the study. We use icons to define and clarify who is speaking (Pappaluca 2018), connect our experiences, and interweave our voices with the scholarly literature in a purposeful manner. We posit that our own experiences of the Australian education system, how Indigenous content has been included from our multiple perspectives—student, parent, teacher, Australian citizen, and critical educational researcher—have been the driving

factors leading us to this investigation and our ongoing commitment to critical analysis in this field. It is interesting to note that despite our individual circumstances and educational trajectories, we have experienced similar failings of the Australian educational system and consider such connectivity more than mere causality.

In 2008, the Australian Education Council met to determine Australian curriculum directives, across all educational levels, for the future of education in Australia. This resulted in the publication of the Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians (MDEGYA) (Australian Curriculum Reporting Authority (ACARA) 2016) which reflected directly the Rudd government's *Closing the Gap* initiative to improve the educational, health, and welfare outcomes of Indigenous students (Australian Government 2018). While created at the same time as the release of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2021), the key aim of MDEGYA was to create an education system that ameliorates discrepancies of academic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. However, it was through the newly established Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2020) that this aim was to be achieved via integration of Indigenous perspectives into mainstream curriculum content and connections with local Indigenous communities. Yet, no concrete framework was offered. Rather, onus was placed on individual schools, and by

extension individual teachers, to interpret the cross-curriculum priority intent and implement them appropriately within curricula. By orchestrating this educational process, the Australian government negated any real responsibility to provide all learners with the knowledge and skills to understand and appreciate the cultural diversity on the Australian continent (United Nations 2021), and rather, shifted blame for lack of progress onto the shoulders of teachers and schools.

How these knowledges, practices, and skills are centralised within a particular category is what we now know as disciplines (Foucault 2004). In twenty-first century schooling, while educators are guided—first, through initial teacher education programmes, and subsequently, through established pedagogical practices—to incorporate Indigenous content into curriculum, it must be understood that they do so within western ways of thinking (Nakata 1997). According to Lowe et al. (2021), the presentation of Australia’s curriculum



Once I completed Secondary Schooling—the first person in my immediate family to do so and graduate with a Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)—I worked different service-based jobs for a number of years. Growing up in a lower-socioeconomic status family and just surviving on the poverty line and seeing myself heading down the same track in adulthood, I felt unfulfilled. I wanted to make a difference in this life, I wanted autonomy and freedom, and I wanted to learn. This all led me to start my Education degree in Victoria in 2015 as a mature age student

After successfully completing Year 12, I immediately began my family and did not pursue further education for many years. I enrolled in a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care as a mature aged student and upon its completion enrolled in a Bachelor of Education (Birth-Year 6) as I felt strongly that I wanted to make a real and tangible difference to the lives and educational outcomes of disadvantaged children.



In Australian education discourses, Indigenous socio-cultural perspectives are *included* into an Anglocentric national curriculum. This curriculum is built from western historical roots of empirical scientific knowledge and coded in relation to constructed disciplines (Nakata 1997). The power of such disciplinary structures determines what content can be included and excluded, what thoughts and skills are considered normal practice within the discipline, what type of knowledge is given precedence over others.

and teacher education, mediated through an Anglocentric monocultural lens, suggests that the building of socio-cultural capital and appreciation for Indigenous peoples, cultures, and practices through education, is a piece meal practice at best. On a more sinister level, the prioritisation of western onto-epistemologies in curricula while *including* other perspectives is a purposeful but subtle hamstring manoeuvre to addressing the United Nations (2021) calls for more sustainable, culturally responsive, and respectful citizenship.



Throughout compulsory schooling, I received what can only be explained, at best as tokenistic settler-colonial whitewashing/supremacy teaching of Aboriginal peoples, histories, cultures, and perspectives; boomerangs, nomads, dark skin, extinct, archaic, made-up Dreamtime stories, super-athletic individuals. I grew up seeing—but not understanding why—the kids from Framlingham (Gundijmara) were constantly in trouble, removed from school, bullied (subtly), avoided, or blamed for all the crime in the town.

At high school, History classes informed me that Indigenous people were untamed savages who were saved by white occupation, presenting a mono-faceted and whitewashed perspective that propagated narrow and stereotypical understandings of Indigenous culture and history. By contrast, during my Diploma studies I observed a subtle cultural shift towards acknowledging and seeking an understanding of Indigenous cultural perspectives. In this environment, educators were scaffolded to develop pedagogies that supported Indigenous ontology and epistemology and their integration into planned educational content.



The established body of literature has highlighted that the lack of pedagogical framework and responsibility on individual expertise for implementation has compromised authentic and effective integration of Indigenous perspectives into curriculum from the primary to tertiary levels of education (Lowe and Yunkaporta 2013). Robust discussion exists exposing how Australia's national curriculum was developed to foreground and promote the notion of European supremacy and authority while simultaneously silencing and/or relegating Indigenous voices to the margins (Hughes 2020; Weuffen 2017). As Nakata (1997) argues, Indigenous knowledge is

situated in “relation to what is known by [non-Indigenous peoples]” (p. 24). Such scholarship highlights how the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives occurs via a *diversity* of curriculum content in ways that are made palatable for a largely non-Indigenous teaching population via the determination of cross-cultural curricula. We contend that the construction of such curriculum directives has occurred because of a monocultural ignorance held by the Australian government and misinformed attempts to remedy and address Indigenous disadvantage and academic disparity.



The educational silence around Indigenous perspectives, voices, histories, and cultures persisted until the 3rd year of my Bachelor of Education degree when I was enrolled in the one-and-only compulsory course of study relating to Australia's First Nations peoples. It was only once I began this study that I questioned, “Why wasn't I told about this before?” I felt cheated, angry, saddened, and yes, an undercurrent of white shame.

Over the duration of my degree, I only had one assignment that focused on Indigenous learners. This course primarily targeted inclusion strategies for children with physical, intellectual, and/or cultural impediments to their learning, placing a negative connotation on each barrier, therefore, firmly positioning Indigenous learners in a deficit frame. Rather than acknowledging and celebrating the capacity of Indigenous learners to achieve, a persistent undercurrent of ingrained racism and white supremacy permeated the fibre of the assignment, reinforcing the notion of Indigenous inferiority.



In the compulsory years of schooling, where educators have attempted to and/or do include Indigenous perspectives into classroom content, evidence demonstrates that this occurs overwhelmingly in vague, non-specific, stereotypical, and/or a peripheral manner (Austin and Hickey 2011). Perhaps this stems from the historical positioning of teachers within the education space being the possessor but passive conduit for

that continue to impact the lives of Indigenous Australians today (Buckskin 2015; Bunda 2015; Nakata 1997). By stating these points, we do not seek to place the blame for poor/non-inclusion on the shoulders of teachers solely, rather, we seek to illuminate how social understanding of the teacher role, associated pedagogies, and curricula is cultural by-products of an Anglocentric education system.



During the single compulsory education course focused on First Nation perspectives, I became aware of proactive, assertive, and eye-opening accounts of Aboriginal peoples' contribution to Australian society delivered by a non-Indigenous male lecturer. This lecturer was obviously driven, invested, and committed to positive portrayals of Aboriginal peoples and their critical analysis and reflection to speak back to the dominant discourse of deficit was infectious. It was what had been missing from any of my previous learning. The seemingly simple act of flipping the lens on European supremacy to Aboriginal people's ingenuity and contribution to life on the Australian Goldfields was a turning point for me wanting to teach better than the education I had received, speak back to deficit and prejudice, and provide a style of education for every student that is inclusive, socially just, positive, and success-orientated.

At university, I was mentored by a non-Indigenous academic who had developed through extensive research an in-depth understanding of Indigenous perspectives and was passionate about creating equitable educational experiences for Indigenous students. Under her mentorship, I have developed the drive to create awareness of the need for a fundamental shift in the content and context in which Indigenous perspectives are delivered in Australian educational settings. Tokenistic and vague mentions of reconciliation and Indigenous perspectives in guiding curriculum documents do little to enmesh authentic representations of Indigenous histories and culture into classroom experiences. This in turn perpetuates peripheral understandings of the complexities and nuances of Indigenous culture that feed subtle prejudices. As a teacher, I consider it my role to advocate for Indigenous culture and histories being examined as equal to, rather than inferior to, Anglocentric ones.



knowledge transfer and acquisition by students, despite contemporary discourses of teachers as critical participants and change agents (Weuffen 2018; Yates and Collins 2008). Henderson (2009) argues that the Anglocentric nature of Indigenous inclusion within the curriculum at the school level is due largely to the absence of teachers' pedagogical skills, knowledge, and critical thinking where such content is concerned. Such deficits constrain how teachers and students may explore critically significant moments of intervention and injustice in Australia's history

In the past five years, there has been an observable and marked increase of educators wanting to engage with Indigenous content and perspectives. This has given rise to a whole suite of teaching-ready resources and curricula, often developed by Indigenous peoples solely, or in collaboration with non-Indigenous authors. Along with Lowe et al. (2021), we argue that the increasing social and political pressure of reconciliation, constitutional recognition, treaty, and sovereignty are the external drives to such demands. It raises the question of whether such

interest is genuine—in that educators wanting to enact deep change—or whether the *inclusion* of Indigenous content is an Anglocentric approach to reconciliation where non-Indigenous peoples attempt to acknowledge and rectify the wrongs of the past. In this climate, *inclusion* as a pedagogical strategy assumes the supremacy of western/Anglocentric onto-epistemologies over Indigenous ways of being and knowing. In doing so, the sophisticated linguistic, social, and cultural nuances that are at the foundation of Indigenous cultures are picked apart, deconstructed, and remoulded in order to be understood by, and palatable for, non-Indigenous educators and students.

education systems fail utterly to meet, and even start the journey towards addressing, the United Nations Sustainable Goal for all countries to deliver quality education to all of its citizens (United Nations 2021). The curriculum, in its current state, renders impossible the mobilisation of “knowledges and skills needed to promote ... human rights, ... a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity” (United Nations 2021). Not only does the Australian curriculum, and associated teaching practices, fail to support non-Indigenous student engagement and understanding of Indigenous perspectives and cultures, they continue to marginalise Indigenous students and



Due to the lack of pedagogical rigour to including First Nation’s content throughout my undergraduate degree, during my time teaching within the secondary education sector, I didn’t know what I, as a single teacher, could do beyond the tokenistic teaching I received to make meaningful change. I used textbooks, google searches, or largely relied on the knowledge of more experienced teachers.

As an Indigenous woman, whose compulsory educational experiences presented Indigenous people as intellectually and culturally inferior, promoting the notion of white supremacy, I am invested in presenting an alternative view to my students. I am driven to break down the unspoken and systemic racism that runs as undercurrent through the planning and delivery of classroom content. By designing and delivering content that places focus on Indigenous cultures and histories via a lens of ableism, celebrating the diversity they represent and the rich contributions that Indigenous peoples have made to Australian history a shift in students’ perceptions can be achieved. In this way, the long-held and pervasive view of white supremacy may be diluted as students are afforded the opportunity to develop an alternative view.



Given the Australian curriculum operates within an established set of western principles to guide content inclusion across all subject areas (ACARA n.d.), it is perhaps little surprise that *inclusive* pedagogical practices, to date, do not support non-Indigenous students’ responsive understanding and appreciation of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies; essential threshold concepts to exploring cultures, languages and histories more deeply (Lowe et al. 2021). Rather, Indigenous perspectives are added indiscriminately to educational content in order to force compliance with Anglocentric educational agendas. Delivered in such a manner, the Australian

place them at risk of educational disadvantage by rendering invisible their unique onto-epistemological experiences and/or cultural and linguistic diversity (Gray and Beresford 2008; Pearce and Flanagan 2018; Wigglesworth et al. 2011). The absence of culturally nuanced pedagogical knowledge, skills, and critical thinking at all levels of Australian education has culminated in a systemic culture of fear, avoidance, misdirection, and tokenism all-the-while subtly avoiding any collective responsibility for taking and/or leading action. The systemic social and pedagogical undercurrent of fear and shame that has precipitated the insatiable market for teaching-

ready and *black*-approved content not only reinforces Anglocentric supremacy but becomes the smoke and mirrors of cultural *inclusion*.

7.2 Examining Culturally Inclusive Pedagogy of Australian History

The *data* presented in this chapter is drawn from a Victorian cross-site case study (Weuffen 2017). This Ph.D. study received ethics approval from the University of Ballarat (A13-121), the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (E018/21022014), the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2014_002306) and was endorsed by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Incorporation (28/03/2014). The main aim of the study was to determine how Indigenous peoples are represented in curricula through teachers' pedagogical practice, and ways in which local Koorie¹ peoples may be able to influence such practice. The Year Nine Australian History Curriculum was chosen because of the time period under investigation—1750–1918. This period in Australia's history was when race-based interactions between Anglo-Australians and Indigenous peoples of the Australian continent were impacted significantly by governmental assimilation policies. The outcome of these often violent and culturally destructive interactions caused considerable physical, emotional, and spiritual trauma for Indigenous Australians, the effects of which are still being felt today (Smith 2008).

In this chapter, we reject the notion of *data* as disembodied and objective information. Rather, we consider *data* as a descriptive term that captures the deep and rich stories, perspectives, voices, and experiences held by participants (Talja 1999) in relation to learning and teaching about Australia's history. Semi-structured interviews were held with $n = 6$ non-Indigenous teachers and $n = 4$ Koorie peoples. These

interviews were transcribed and analysed using grey methodology (Weuffen and Pickford 2019) — a combination of Foucault's notion of power/knowledge relations (1972) and Nakata's Indigenous Standpoint Theory (IST) (2007b)—to determine the interconnectedness and disconnections of cultural knowledge made visible by statements, language, expression, and silences as they relate to Australia's shared-history.

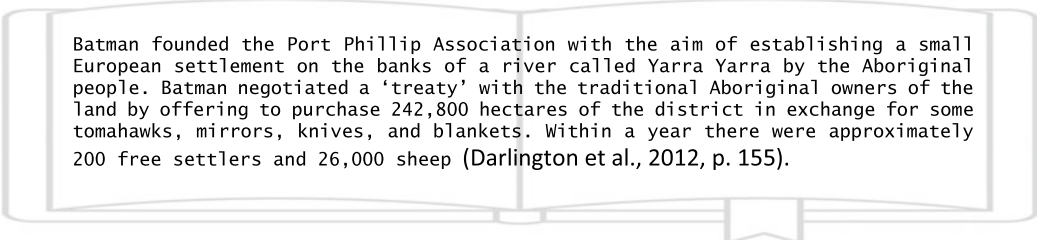
To examine how Indigenous perspectives are *included* into Australian curricula, within this chapter, we employ a culturally interfaced post-structuralist framework viewed through the lens of social justice. Taking up the notion that knowledge, language, attitudes, perspectives, and practices of teaching are encapsulated within discourses (Foucault 1972), we interrogate how teachers are constructed to comply with, or resist, Anglocentric ideologies of supremacy within Australia history curriculum. Because discourses define knowledge about particular topics and construct understandings through language, rules of engagement, normative positioning, and power/knowledge relations (Foucault 1972), an examination of Australian history discourses indicates that Anglocentric practices are privileged, English is the primary language used for communication, and systems of government, society, discipline, and education reflecting European practices and traditions reign supreme. Working from a culturally interfaced framework, we are cognisant not to frame discussions as “just white or black” (Nakata 2007b, p. 8), rather we view the teaching of Australia's shared-history as “a contested space between two knowledge systems” (Nakata 2007a, p. 9) and “a site of historical and ongoing intervention” (Nakata 1997, p. 26). Therefore, employing a grey lens (Weuffen and Pickford 2019) enables us to consider equally the interconnectedness of Indigenous and non-Indigenous onto-epistemologies and methodologies to “further develop understanding of how research itself can be used proactively to speak back to the deficit discourses [and] challenge the societal norms” (Hogarth 2017, p. 32) and avoid marginalising the voices and complexity of participant cultured experiences.

¹ Koorie/Koori is a contemporary collective or group term used to denote Aboriginal people whose traditional lands and waters exists within the boundaries that today frame the state of Victoria (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc., 2015, p. 2).

7.2.1 Learning from Participants' Stories

Analysis of interviews indicates varied but Anglocentric approaches to the teaching of Australia's shared-history, despite recognition and centring of a social justice perspective. There was a strong reliance by the non-Indigenous teachers to use prescribed textbooks as the starting point for historical investigation with attempts made to move beyond and extend student thinking through independent inquiry. Discussions about the importance of professional development sessions as key to increasing their own knowledge also emerged but pointed to lack of advertisement and/or time to attend them as barriers. By contrast, conversations with Koorie people highlighted—perhaps unsurprisingly—a depth, richness, and counter-narrative embedded deeply within history, Country, and community that challenges the dominant knowledge about Australia's Indigenous peoples. Yet, these same participants experienced a resounding silence and lack of engagement from schools in their regions about their peoples' perspectives, histories, cultures, and stories.

John Batman's Treaty



Batman founded the Port Phillip Association with the aim of establishing a small European settlement on the banks of a river called Yarra Yarra by the Aboriginal people. Batman negotiated a 'treaty' with the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land by offering to purchase 242,800 hectares of the district in exchange for some tomahawks, mirrors, knives, and blankets. Within a year there were approximately 200 free settlers and 26,000 sheep (Darlington et al., 2012, p. 155).

Teachers

This was the land around Melbourne and Geelong. My understanding is that the traditional owners felt they were signing over the use of the land, but not ownership of the land. Remembering that they were people that had no concept of ownership of land, they used the land or part of the land, but they didn't own it, and

7.2.1.1 Exploring Counter/Narratives

In this section of the chapter, we present a range of counter/narratives about events between 1750 and 1918 in Australia's history. To foreground how the dominant discourse of Australian history is presented as the control against participant's comments, and ensure the trustworthiness of the *data* collected, excerpts of specific events have been taken from the prescribed textbook in each of the research sites: *Jacaranda Humanities Alive* (Darlington et al. 2012). It is interesting to note, that only 33 out of 280 pages of the *Jacaranda Humanities Alive* textbook mentions explicitly content relating to Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives. Stating the frequency of references is important because this resource is used as the centraliser to pedagogical practices, as many teachers made comments such as, "*I just start with the textbook ...*". Excerpts from the textbook are presented without amendment before contrasting against participant comments presented as portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis 2002; Smyth and McInerney 2011; Weuffen and Pickford 2019). To ensure confidentiality, comments have been amalgamated into two broad categories, teachers, and Koorie peoples.

Koorie peoples

One of our ancestors was at the signing of the treaty, and the treaty was all bullshit. He was a bloody land grabber. He came over on behalf of the Van Diemen's land company to look for extra land because they'd used up all the arable land in Tasmania and they needed to expand their operations, so he came up over

therefore how could they sell what they didn't own?

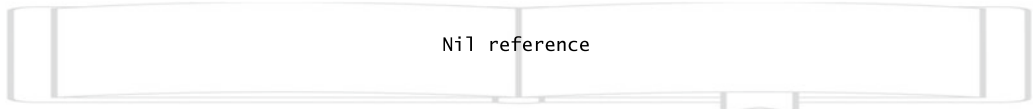
I think that Batman treaty is very interesting example in concepts of ownership; white people there saying we can purchase this off you and the Aboriginal people saying you can use it, but you can't purchase it. They felt they were giving permission to use, rather than to purchase.

From the perspective of the way Indigenous people were seen at the time, Batman's treaty was not accepted because Indigenous people didn't have any rights to make a treaty.

here to look for extra land, and tokenistically did a treaty. It got knocked back because the New South Wales government at the time said, "no bugger off, you're just a bloody land grabber". They don't tell people this.

Seems strange that treaty, all the signatures, all the names of them are the same, all the signatures, all the x's are exactly the same. They don't tell you that the ceremony he participated in was Tanderrum which is a Welcome to Country, a rite, an invitation to use the resources of that country temporarily; then you're supposed to bugger off again. How, in one day, was he supposed to have ridden nearly 100 miles on horseback; it says in the journals that he actually rode the boundary. Crap. He couldn't ride the bloody boundary if you paid him to.

Australian Football League / Marn Grook



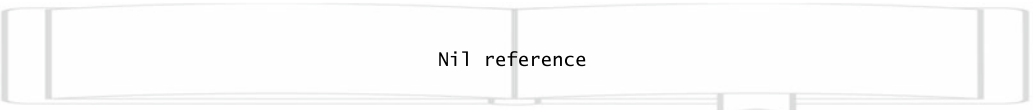
Teachers

No. Sorry. We haven't covered that. I'm not a football person so I sort of avoid that one

Koorie peoples

The story about AFL isn't really told. It isn't really acknowledged where it came from. It was a mongrel compilation of two sports; soccer and rugby, after guy watching people at Horsham playing Marn Grook. But they don't tell you it is a rip off of an Aboriginal game.

William Buckley



Teachers

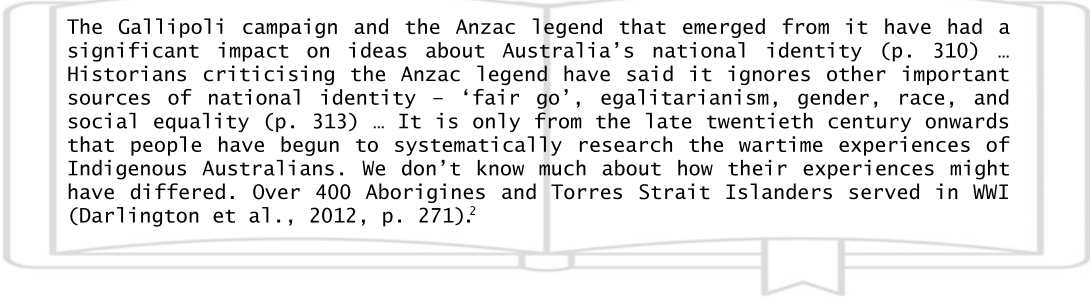
No. No. It's something I'd like to do but haven't done as yet

Koorie peoples

I will talk passionately about William Buckley when people stop saying how Buckley *survived* with the natives. He was kept alive. He was treated like a king. He did survive, he was hand-fed, he was nurtured, clothed, and given wives. He was spoilt rotten. Then what happened? The first time he had the opportunity to stand up for black fellas, he did a runner.

When you hear about the Aboriginal history of Geelong, what do they talk about?

Buckley. Not about Wadawurrung, but Buckley.



The Gallipoli campaign and the Anzac legend that emerged from it have had a significant impact on ideas about Australia's national identity (p. 310) ... Historians criticising the Anzac legend have said it ignores other important sources of national identity – 'fair go', egalitarianism, gender, race, and social equality (p. 313) ... It is only from the late twentieth century onwards that people have begun to systematically research the wartime experiences of Indigenous Australians. We don't know much about how their experiences might have differed. Over 400 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders served in WWI (Darlington et al., 2012, p. 271).²

*World War One*²

Teachers

We've got a fantastic text on it. I don't know what it's called, but, we look at why they enlisted, reasons for enlistment, their different duties, if there was any racism within that or whether they were just treated as a normal soldier.

We look at the European perspective mostly. I'm not really knowledgeable about Indigenous soldiers. I know they were involved, but I couldn't tell you who, when, where, why, that sorta thing. We do talk about the fact that Indigenous people were asked to participate and were not treated that well.

Koorie peoples

I wish I could say yes, ["I know family who were involved"], but I don't know. I know Nanny's Brother was in the war, he's in one of the memorial things. There were certainly Aboriginal people from Victoria involved in World War I and actually at Gallipoli. And every war since, and what do we get for it? Nothing. They were not even allowed to walk into the RSL (Returned Services League) to have a beer with their mates after the war. I've got a booklet on Aboriginal soldiers that went to war, and there's a couple of women in there.

² A selection of excerpts from the n = 59 references

One thing I remember learning about World War I is that a lot of traditional owners, or Aboriginal people, signed up as races other than Aboriginal. That really shocked me. I think I've been told in the past, that there were a number of Wathaurong soldiers who went over to fight, and then came back and were denied soldier settlement as well. The one thing that's really stuck in my mind is the fact that these people who were invaded only 100 years earlier were still proud enough of their country and who they were to want to go away and fight for it. Yet, we weren't proud enough that they wanted to fight for their and our country, that we could acknowledge them for who they are and still haven't even acknowledged them in the Constitution. It's ridiculous that we're sitting here in 2014 and a lot of—you can't obviously judge people in the 1800s by today's standards, I know that's the wrong thing to do, but to me I just—sitting back you think to yourself, how can you allow people to fight for your country but then not actually give them any rights when they come back?

7.3 Implications for *Inclusive Teaching*

These counter/narratives provide insight into the strongly Anglocentric Australian history discourses permeating the education of secondary education students across the two Victorian research sites. It is clear from reading through these pages that Anglocentricity occupies the dominant space. Promotion of an adversarial positioning of *us* versus *them* is evident and reinforced further by the History disciple approach of compare and contrast. Such practices are cemented further in the textbook where cultural relations are considered from an Anglocentric position through the use of phrases such as: “attempts to ‘civilise’ Indigenous people” (Darlington et al. 2012, p. 138); “Aborigines: exploitation” (p. 144); “massacres by colonists” (p. 133); “race relations in colonial Australia following initial British occupation” (p. 125). As official instruments

across the teaching disciplines, textbooks such as this one become the mode through which the narrative of Australian History is taught from “the ships of England rather than the shores of Australia” (Craven and Price 2011, p. 59). They are the origin point from which further Anglocentric exploration is promoted.

Conversations with teachers indicated that while they used textbooks to guide curriculum, most of them addressed knowledge deficits by self-sourcing supplementary information. This occurred mostly via google searching, existing shared databases, and drawing upon their own higher education studies. As two teachers said:

We do have a textbook and so we use that as a guide, but in terms of where I find resources ... I guess I Google a lot of stuff ... a lot of [time] is my own sitting down at a computer Googling, you know, and just making my own resources to go with what I find ... but I haven't found a lot of — there's not one place that you can go like a database that you can go, ok, this is a good resource. We use the textbook, but I [also] take readings from certain [other] texts and then I make up my

own activities based on those reading. I don't – I never use, or rarely use, the questions in the textbook ... because ... I don't find them very useful.

However, without exploring the codes of language surrounding such texts, and the undertaking of extensive inquiry around privileged beliefs, “change in [pedagogy] without regard to teacher ideology is doubtful for many, if not most teachers” (Zahorik 1991, p. 195). Perhaps, the deeper level of educational inquiry promoted by postgraduate degrees may offer a glimpse into how teachers may be able to tackle the ideological assumptions of the dominant society. As one teacher with a Masters' degree said:

Textbooks have improved when it comes to Indigenous [content] ... but I feel more confident in my own knowledge, so I use that. I have looked at resources before ... I've read through them and thought ... well there's a bit missing there in the explanation or in how it's being portrayed ... this really needs to be added to.

Even though teachers expressed a desire to extend curriculum inquiry beyond textbook content only, in using this device as the protagonist for learning, they take up and disseminate the shared-norms in discourses of Australian History, whether they are aware of/comply with it or not. While further education has been argued as a successful strategy for educators developing their knowledge and skills for working with Indigenous perspectives (Wolfe et al. 2018), this is not always accessible or attainable avenue for all. Rather, as Sarra and Shay (2019) along with Tualalelei (2021) proposes, teachers ought to participate in the purposeful targeting of scaffolded professional development activities on a continuing basis to develop culturally responsive pedagogical practices within the context of schooling.

Dominant discourses of Australian History posit Anglocentric superiority encapsulated within Anglocentric onto-epistemologies. This means that the ways in which history is thought about, approached, tackled, investigated, and discussed, occurs from a non-Indigenous lens where centuries of social structure, knowledge formation, and understanding underpin all inquiry. This non-Indigenous lens—while slowly changing—sanitises Australia's shared-and-brutal-history

overwhelmingly, and in doing so, relegates the oppressed voices to the margins, or silences them. As a Wadawurrung Elder expressed:

You don't hear [our] history because Australia does not want to delve into Aboriginal history because of the dark side of it since settlement. And government does not want people to know that there's a huge dark history. Yeah, they don't want to take responsibility for it, but nobody, as far as I know, wants people to shoulder the blame. What they want to do is to get them to know it and acknowledge it and ensure it doesn't happen again.

Whether textbooks or independently sourced information is used for the teaching of Australia's history, Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013) argue that the curriculum itself “does little to provide content that enables exploration of the social context in which knowledge is developed, and the possibility that Indigenous knowledge has its own ontological validity independent of the ‘hard’ sciences” (p. 8).

The centuries of Anglocentric onto-epistemologies being privileged has cemented the belief that the printed word is more powerful, more accurate, and at less risk of interpretation than other modes. Once again, it reinforces the adversarial positioning of *us* versus *them* by suggesting oral storying—the central onto-epistemological process of knowledge transaction among Australia's Indigenous Nations—is questionable, unreliable, and open to high degrees of variance—the foundational ideology of distrust exemplified in the game *Chinese Whispers* (see for example Bainbridge et al. 2013; Battiste 2002; Harrison and Greenfield 2011; Whap 2001). However, it is interesting to observe that over the past decade, Indigenous pedagogies—8 ways pedagogy, storying through video content, experiential activities, and working with local Indigenous communities—are increasingly being used in mainstream curriculum, albeit, in relation to Indigenous content and curriculum (Burgess et al. 2019). While these pedagogical approaches are methods for teachers wanting to develop their practice, acknowledgement that the privileging of the written word leads to non-Indigenous understandings where there is “a lack of priority given to the position of [Indigenous] speakers and

therefore little understanding of the history of language” (Nakata 1997, p. 93 ought to form the foundation to developing knowledges and skills. This is of utmost importance because as Nakata (1997) says, if this is “not factored into the primary standpoint, then knowledge about their [stories] is diminished” (p. 93). As this happens, the dominant ideological beliefs about knowledge construction underpin exchange to a point where the notion of a society “with no written historical knowledge is [seen as] a one based on myths, folk-tales, totems, and kinship systems” (Nakata 1997, p. 185). It creates an almost unavoidable position for teachers where, while seeming to permit individual pedagogical choice, cultural *inclusion* becomes a fallacy constrained by the very system in which they operate.

It from this space that we observe from interviews and scholarship that Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives are *included* within mainstream education settings. The curriculum positions *inclusion* as a key target for education outputs by first accepting that Indigenous perspectives have been an area of inattention previously before providing visibility of specific ways in which it can be addressed, albeit from the dominant Anglocentric position. It suggests that an overarching cross-curriculum priority area, as well as content descriptors, elaborations, and work samples is all that teachers require to ensure student cultural competence. Yet, this mono-dimensional Anglocentric understanding and approach fails to acknowledge the complexity of Indigenous knowledge tied to culture and in doing so, leaves teachers inept and feeling unsupported to educate in culturally relevant, responsive, and meaningful ways for all students (Guenther et al. 2019). This is despite a wealth of knowledge held within local Koorie communities as expressed by the following Yorta Yorta Elder:

There’s a problem with schooling and what this means for our kids ... [We have an] amazing DVD [about our mission]. Just to sit back and listen to your Elders, [It’s] very emotional because some of those Elders were talking about my great grandmother when we lived on that riverbank.

The lack of participation by teachers and schools with local Indigenous communities

illuminates the legitimacy of avoidance posited by an ideological monocultural education system where inclusion is concerned. Yet, over the past several years, schools and individual teachers have been working with local Indigenous communities on a regular basis to design and deliver curriculum, albeit once again in direct relationship to *cultural* material. While this is one step towards a more inclusive education system, Lowe et al. (2019) encourages teachers to think beyond tokenistic moments—such as Acknowledgement of Country, reconciliation week, and the Arts and Humanities disciplines—to involve local Indigenous communities and/or representatives on a regular basis and at all levels of the school. Having said this, schools need to acknowledge also the cultural fatigue—the emotional and mental exhaustion—that many Indigenous peoples experience as a result of repeated requests for foundational assistance. To combat this, non-Indigenous peoples ought to tackle their white fragility, do the heavy lifting, and undertake independent research to developing knowledge about Australia’s Indigenous peoples. Failure to do so will reinforce a system of educational practices where ignorance about Indigenous cultures as a foundation, or the complexities of associated systems for more nuanced understanding, is validated. By extension, it ensures that any type of educational practice where some type of Indigenous practice, knowledge, or peoples are addressed appeases the sense of duty to cultural *inclusion*.

7.4 Moving to a More *Inclusive* Space?

While scholarship and evidence from this study indicate clearly that current Australian educational practices are not as culturally *inclusive* as they profess to be, we question whether this has been a purposeful strategy of relegation or lack of knowledge about the consequences of a monocultural Anglocentric education space. Despite education being labelled as a sustainable development goal globally, it is interesting to note that during the last six years, there is a

resounding silence about any progress indicators relating to the target of 4.7: ensuring all learners acquire the knowledge and skills to promote ... human rights, a culture of peace and non-violence ... and appreciation of cultural diversity (United Nations 2021). While there was an acknowledgement that “lack of trained teachers ... are jeopardising prospects for quality education for all” (United Nations 2021), the lack of reports for this target since 2016 indicates that either there is an absence of research to report on progress, or that this target is a tokenistic inclusion in the sustainable development goals on a global scale. Whether an outcome of omission or purposeful strategy, without acknowledging the realities of the Australian education system, and the impact of a monocultural lens, we argue that there will be a persistent obstruction to obtaining, and sharing, of deeper knowledge and understanding of Australia’s shared-history inclusive of the sophisticated traditional cultural, linguistic, and historical perspectives of Indigenous Australians. It will continue to position Indigenous peoples, the Indigenous teacher, and Indigenous onto-epistemologies in an othered space where Anglocentric curriculum reigns supreme.

It is clear from the *data* presented in this chapter that systematic work is required in the space of critical pedagogy. In the absence of an Indigenous-embedded curriculum, such as *Kaupapa Maori* in Aotearoa / New Zealand (Smith 1997)—an issue beyond the scope of this chapter to explore or draw parallels to the Australian context for a whole range of reasons already discussed by other scholars (Bunda 2015; Koerner and Pillay 2020)—in order to move forward at this present time, greater attention ought to be paid to exposing the *fallacy of cultural inclusion* within the current Australian curriculum, and working towards more culturally responsive pedagogies. This could be addressed immediately by the current teaching workforce in the form of critical questioning such as “whose perspective/voice is present here?”, participation in more regular professional learning activities, undertaking of independent research, integration of Indigenous pedagogies into mainstream

classroom practices, and increased relational pedagogies where meaningful and deeper connections with local Indigenous communities are fostered. Far from progressive, these strategies that have been suggested by numerous scholars over the past decade as a starting point for making visible the monocultural and Anglocentric Australian education system (Bunda 2015; Guenther et al. 2019; Koerner and Pillay 2020).

Without critical pedagogy and commitment to developing knowledge, avoidance of any collective action by non-Indigenous organisations, governments, and policies, to take responsibility and/or lead action on more culturally inclusive education for redirection towards Indigenous-led pedagogy, the smoke and mirrors of reconciliation will remain (Lowe et al. 2021). It will continue to disempower Indigenous students and impede their capacity for upwards socioeconomic mobility offered up by equitable and quality education (United Nations 2021). It will ensure the rhetoric of epistemic inertia (K. Lowe, personal communication, June 23, 2021)—*inaction due to being afraid of getting information wrong*—as tied inextricably to the historically unresolved and underlying social conflict between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians will continue to be validated. Ultimately, it will provide the space by which the authority of Anglocentric power/knowledge relations for cultural *inclusion* in the Australian curriculum will continue to be a *fallacy* so long as cross-cultural complexity, sensitivity, and ignorance is legitimised as an excuse for inaction. We put forward, that the first point of call for creating a more culturally inclusive Australian education space begins with non-Indigenous peoples understanding and critiquing their positioning within the dominant Anglocentric society and affirming a commitment to learning about Australia’s Indigenous peoples, cultures, histories, and perspectives. It is from this space, that deeper, critical, and more meaningful conversations about cultural *inclusion* may emerge.

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