AT THE HEART OF LEARNING

(SERIES: PAPER 4 OF 4)

Kuranyu-kutu nyakula nyaan nyanganyi? Imagining the future

Rueben Burton[*]

Sam Osborne[†]

Abstract

Mainstream Australian society tends to assume that the purposes of schooling and aspirations that school should enable are universal and roundly accepted. The authors of this paper examine the issues with these assumptions and consider what "imagined futures" (Nakata, 2007a) mean for young people in Anangu (Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara) schools and communities today. They pose the question, "How might remote educators enable a space for re-imagining the future on Anangu terms and what potential does remote education offer in this regard?" This paper emphasizes the strong self-determination stance and action that is required by Anangu in both articulating Anangu values in the education process and in instilling a positive perspective about the opportunities for young people into the future. The authors also interrogate the role of Piranpa (non-Indigenous) remote educators in how they might position themselves for student imagination, aspiration and hope, pointing students back to the intergenerational capacities that are critical in this regard.

Keywords

Aboriginal education, remote education, Anangu, imagined futures, aspiration

* Anangu Coordinator, Amata Anangu School; Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee Chair, Amata Community, South Australia, Australia.

† Senior Research Fellow, University of South Australia, Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia. PhD candidate, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. Email: Sam.Osborne@nintione.com.au (corresponding author)

Standing them up

In some sense, this work began in the early 1990s as we (Rueben and Sam) kicked a football around together as young lads. Now as colleagues in education and as fathers, we have been kicking around ideas instead, talking for some time about how we can support Anangu young people to "imagine a future" (Nakata, 2007a) in a time where seeing a future and pursuing it to fruition could be one of the great challenges for young people in remote communities today.

Some time ago, I (Rueben) had been observing my own children and other young people in the community and felt that perhaps the idea of kuranyu-kutu nyanganyi (looking ahead to the future) might be premature as it seems many have already given up, lying flat on their backs and looking at the sky. How can you see ahead to the future if you're not standing up? Perhaps this is where the shared task of families, education and educators begins…

In taking account of Nakata's (2007a) claim that the imagined future is critical for young Indigenous Australians in building a sense of aspiration and motivation, this paper hopes to suggest alternative ways for Piranpa (non-Indigenous) educators and Anangu community members to consider their own position and practice in terms of fostering aspiration and achievement in young Anangu, both through their education and family lives.

We have titled the four papers in the series, "At the Heart of Learning":

1. "Putuna Kulini: The Trouble with 'Hearing'" (Osborne, 2014)
2. "Witulya Mulapa Ngananna Mantjintjaku: From Cultural Devastation to Cultural Reinvention" (Minutjukur & Osborne, 2014)
3. "Kurunta Kanyintja: Holding Knowledge in Our Spirit" (Tjitayi & Osborne, 2014)
4. "Kuranyu-kutu Nyakula Nyaan Nyanganyi? Imagining the Future" (Rueben Burton & Sam Osborne)

The purpose of this series is to afford an opportunity to remote educators to kulintjaku (to hear, think and understand) Anangu (Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara) standpoints about the things that constitute "the heart of learning" from their perspective. Nakata (2007b) explains that "standpoint accounts … depend on reflexivity and the distinction between experience and standpoint" (p. 11). For further discussion on Indigenous standpoint (Nakata, 2007b), see the introduction to this series in paper #1, "Putuna Kulini: The Trouble with 'Hearing'".

Accommodation and imagination

Since contact with Europeans (and even before; see Jones, 2007), Aboriginal people have found ingenious ways to incorporate new materials, new learning and new perspectives into their own lives and cultural practices (see also Kral, 2012). Of course, in many cases, accommodation of the "other" was a forced necessity, but for desert peoples of the centre of Australia, contact with Europeans and the effects of colonization was historically later and less concentrated than coastal populations experienced, building up over time (see Duguid, 1963; Jones, 2007). As a result, remote communities tend to bring creative and imaginative alterations to otherwise "concrete" knowledge, combining "traditional knowledge" and values with Western or "scientific" knowledge (Nakata, 2007b). An example of this is the concept of "bush mechanics" (Warlpiri Media Association, 2001), emerging art forms (see Altman & Taylor, 2009; Hilliard, 1968; Partos, 1998) and creative approaches to economic development and economic opportunities. An example of this is the exploration of potential economic benefits that carbon farming may offer by recognizing traditional burning practices (see Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation, 2012). Of note, these are all examples of Aboriginal people embracing new mediums of cultural, religious and artistic expression through creative expression,

resource opportunities and economic development, but critically, these new forms of expression continue to reinforce and re-position Aboriginal values and beliefs.

Piranpa educators can benefit from exploring the longer-term histories of their community to appreciate the agency, creativity and resilience Aboriginal people have demonstrated in this regard. It can be a refreshing experience to counterbalance the feeling of failure and lack of capacity that one may sense if they are informed by the current discourse, in particular from the perspective of the media; for example, "Fear APY School Attendance Rates Falling" (*ABC News*, 2011), "Parents 'Part of' Truancy Problem" (Martin, 2012a) and "Language Skills Poor in 40% of APY Children" (Martin, 2012b).

Yami Lester (1993), for example, recalls a number of important "moments" in Anangu history and the incredible sense of agency and voice Anangu experienced in the process of winning land rights with the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act (1981), the establishment of the Institute for Aboriginal Development, the 1985 hand-back of Uluru/Kata Tjuta, and the adventures of Yami as a blind man managing the Mimili Cattle Company, taking a broke, run-down old station from "nothing" to "something". Historically, Hilliard (1968) and Duguid (1963) are both examples of Piranpa authors who prefer to highlight the capabilities and achievements of Anangu, despite the tendency for contemporaries to highlight deficit model perspectives of Anangu (see for example Bates, 1938).

As we have emphasized previously in this series, there is a great deal of (justified) concern (see Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Reconciliation Australia, & Monash University—ACER, 2009) about young people in remote contexts "imagining a future" (Nakata, 2007a) with any sense of optimism or agency in finding meaningful employment and being able to "make a difference" in their own family and community. Nevertheless, it is important that educators seek to model a sense of shared purpose and hope, recognizing, highlighting and incorporating existing family and community capacities in the process of preparing students for the future through education. It can be useful for Piranpa educators to realize that this is not an impossible dream, given the significant historical involvement Anangu have had in all aspects of political and practical community activity, and strong Anangu agency still exists in communities today. As has been highlighted in paper #1 of this series, "Putuna kulini: The Trouble with Hearing", it can be difficult for remote educators to "see" or be able to identify existing strengths and capacities, but many creative and inspiring individuals and organizations are out there and can be invited to share the duties of "educating and inspiring" students for the future.

The concept of the need to embrace cultural change and re-imagining for survival should not be seen as an "Aboriginal problem". Broader society, families, unionism, church denominations and education itself, for example, all face these challenges, albeit perhaps in more subtle forms.

So what will we do now?

Nakata (2007a) explains that an "imagined future" is critical for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth to find meaning and purpose in the pursuit of education. Hayes, Mills, Christie, and Lingard (2006) suggest that in order to provide a socially just, or "powerful" education, there must be a strong commitment to the mechanical aspects of learning; that is, the acquisition of routine "basic skills" (such as reading and writing, numeracy and English language skills), but balanced with the opportunity for students to engage in high order thinking. Students must be allowed the opportunity to consider issues of ethics, society, problem solving and creativity in order to shift in any significant way from a position of

"disadvantaged" or "marginalized". Boomer (1999) argues that in order to see students move from positions of disadvantage, "pragmatic radical" teachers must hold a sense of the utopian in one hand (what could be) whilst maintaining a strong grasp of the pragmatic (the way things are). Whilst remote teaching offers regular and frustrating "pragmatic" challenges, without a radical sense of the utopian it is unlikely that significant shifts will occur from the way things are. Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, and Richards (2003) show that in their New Zealand based research, Māori students suggest that it is the teacher that makes the most difference in the students' learning. That is, a teacher who has strong and supportive relationships with students, has high expectations, and who values the cultural identity and the lived experience of the students is far more likely to see students aspire to achieve in that class. These important themes are also affirmed by academics in the Australian context (see Beresford & Partington, 2003; Partington, 1998; Sarra, 2011).

For me (Rueben; see Burton, 2012), as an Anangu educator and as a father, it is very important that I show my children a future; that I am courageous and confident in what I do so that I can give that future to my children. This includes at work and at home, as a footy coach and with my family. This is something I've thought a lot about in going to the city. When we go to visit the city, I show my children that I can read and speak in English and that as a father and an Anangu man, I have confidence and I know what to do. I model the confidence of speaking another language in another world, being in a shop, in the hospital or in the police station, and I take the family so they're not scared and they see me as their father, showing confidence, and it makes them happy. It shows them that I know what to do and they are watching me. This confidence-building is important in the range of jobs I've done, modelling a range of skills, confidence and a willingness to work. When we show our children the goal, they want to go after it, but there are steps for us as parents to get there. We have to know how to travel, to plan the travel, organize accommodation and have confidence in using English so that when we travel together, the children are happy and confident to come back another time. This builds confidence and aspiration. I began work in the school because I wanted to keep an eye on my children to make sure they were safe and doing well at school, but I soon realized that my work as an educator spans far wider than my own family and I have to try hard to support all of the students in the same way, working equally with the students. This is an important part of an Anangu Education Worker's role, but can be daunting because it's such a big task.

The parents hold the future for the children. Piranpa teachers hold "keys" to the future, but they don't understand Anangu ways, so it's Anangu that give the future to their children. There are so many new opportunities and tools out there, and once the parents have these experiences, they will hand that confidence and "the future" to their children. They will have a language for that experience. We didn't have numbers and written history, we only had our language. We need to learn a new language to interpret these new experiences. When I went to Wiltja (a secondary boarding school in Adelaide), I was learning new language, but it was hard. Even though I tried very hard to learn, some of the things that they were trying to teach us in school didn't really make sense until much later, but now I have a language for that and I give that to my children.

This builds on the ideas that Katrina Tjitayi and Sam Osborne have discussed in paper #3 of this series, "Kurunta Kanyintja: Holding Knowledge in Our Spirit", where they highlight Lisa Delpit's (1993) claim that in educating "other people's children" (that is, children who have grown up outside the "culture of power"), educators need to explicitly teach the "codes" or rules that inform the dominant culture. Here, I am suggesting that Anangu, particularly as parents, need to also be active in this

process. Anangu educators can also help broker students back and across the knowledge interface (Nakata, 2007b) by sharing the language they have developed for interpreting social and academic experiences that are otherwise historically unfamiliar in the Anangu context.

Seeing really is believing

Edwards (1994), an Ernabella elder's narrative (Elder, 2012) and Tjitayi (2012) contain a range of Pitjantjatjara language narratives where Anangu reflect on their own learning. It is interesting to note the high frequency of learning verbs (kulini—knowing, understanding, thinking, realizing; and nintiringanyi—learning) being preceded by the verb nyanganyi—to see (nyakula kulini, nyakula nintiringanyi). So in effect, Anangu are seeing and realizing, seeing and understanding or seeing and learning. This is the case for narratives of elders that are focused on traditional skills and knowledge transmission through to more current examples of children learning. This sense of needing to "see" to "know" has implications for educators and how we introduce what "aspiration" could look like, for example.

In the elder's narrative (Elder, 2012), a senior Ernabella man describes the first time he went to teach the children to sing Pitjantjatjara hymns at the school. The children were misbehaving and caused the elders to feel quite upset with the way they rejected the attempts of the old people to teach them. The elders left, feeling upset and annoyed, but on reflection, the senior man notes pragmatically, "The children couldn't love it because they didn't really know it" (p. 10). As the story develops, it took almost a year for the children to continue to practise and observe what being in a choir is all about until the children finally join the elders for a tour to Adelaide, bringing such pride and joy to their grandparents who had cherished a long history of choral singing throughout their own lives. After a long and at times frustrating preparation, the children had taken on and excelled in choral singing, as the generations had before, but from the elder's perspective, it was premature for the teachers to expect the children to "love" singing in the choir right from the beginning until the seeing could become knowing and the knowing could be loved.

In a recent workshop focused on "aspiration", the lead authors of papers #2 and #3 in this series, Makinti Minutjukur and Katrina Tjitayi, explained that as children, their sense of aspiration was modelled by their family. They would observe a family member and aspire to "follow in their footsteps". Makinti shared the hope that in the current context, her children and grandchildren would follow and then "go beyond" and Katrina explained that for Anangu, it is most common to view "the future" through the window of your own family, rather than some view of the "big wide world".

For me (Rueben), I continued learning after attending school and continued to learn as I moved into other jobs. But here, school is based around whitefellas; whitefellas teaching Western ways. I've been observing Anangu children at Amata and I'm noticing that they are learning school-based knowledge but there are other things that they aren't learning. It seems that Anangu are not teaching them about their future. In my own experience, I have learned so much about Western things and finally I took hold of my own future, expanding my ideas, my interests and the things I'd observed from whitefellas and from Anangu. Eventually I have learned all of these things and I liked them. I really want things to be like that in the future for the next generation, to have those opportunities, to have the benefits, like cars, an income and employment, and also family. As my children see me finding my way through the two worlds, they will have a better starting point than we did. This is constantly in our minds as Anangu Education Workers as we broker two worlds and two knowledge systems. We try to give the students confidence to learn all of the

things they need to at school by showing them a way to begin.

I feel that I was able to construct my own future, Piranpa way and Anangu way. As a male, I went through ceremonies and so I had to learn both ways. This is the way it is for males and it's really important for the men and for the young fellas to see how we go about it. And right now, my children are watching me; when I work, when I get various tasks to do, when I look after things as part of the job and they pick up a whole range of things from watching me.

The need to see, then to know and then to embrace has implications both for Anangu and Piranpa. What are young people seeing in and through us? What are we modelling in terms of values and virtues? What are the critical experiences that young people need to see over and over to be able to "know" and ultimately embrace learning, knowledge and a sense of aspiration?

Virtues within chaos

The Ernabella elder (Elder, 2012) continues, recalling his own learning. Learning from his father, he developed a strong love for learning and the values that he sees his father modelling over and over. Although these values are not easily adopted by the boy (sharing the meat continually until it's all gone, for example), as an old man, the elder recalls his lifelong adherence to these values and the strength this has brought him as a result. In this narrative, he reminds the younger generation that a commitment to "learning properly" (positioning themselves to "hear" and then to follow this modelling and thinking) and adherence to the values and disciplines he held as a child will position the next generation to be strong and resilient into the future, despite the changing world it faces.

This position is also argued by Makinti Minutjukur in paper #2 of this series (see Minutjukur & Osborne, 2014) in that the challenge of living the life of a "virtuous Anangu" in the current context of Anangu communities requires a complex re-imagining where essential values of social connection and reciprocity, ecological knowledge and connection to the land remain, but these values need to be retained in the context of a "different world" to that of previous generations. "As Anangu, we have our own power that we wish to retain and this power is to be carried forward in the pursuit of the power that education offers." (p. 19)

In the United Kingdom, Bright and Pryor (2012), in the "Chaos Theory of Careers", suggest that in a complex world where change is constant and career planning is highly complex, it is increasingly necessary to move away from a linear, singular plan or goal approach to career planning and to embrace ideas such as the "skills of reinvention, change and resilience" (p. 13). In other words, they are suggesting a holistic approach that includes teaching the skills of creativity, adaptability and resilience, rather than being limited to a checklist of competencies that provide a narrow, linear pathway into employment. As the Ernabella elder suggests, a strong base of values, loving to learn and self-discipline will prepare young people for the complex environment of change and chaos so that they will be able to stand up to the challenges ahead.

I (Rueben) can see the conflict and challenges that exist that the elder describes. In the old days, Anangu wati tjuta (men) had clear and strong understandings and processes in making their spears for hunting. They had intricate knowledge of the seasons, of making spears and the timing and coordination of the hunt. This is a deep level of knowledge and experience. Today, I can't make the spears, but I can go any time with the Toyota and the rifle. We still see the tracks and follow the kangaroo, but then I can use the rifle. In the old days, the barb of the spear would be lodged in the kangaroo and slow him down, and the hunt would continue, but now we fire the rifle and go home.

This has made an easy life for us in one sense, we don't need the same level of skills and knowledge that the old men did, but now we need to have an increased knowledge and understanding of the new (Western) knowledge and processes to do the same things. We need to have a licence, go through the process with the police, wait for the gun, obtain the licence and renew the licence every few years. This costs money and requires an understanding of different things like planning, regulations and managing finances. But there are those who want to remain only on the side of the Anangu culture way. They just want to get the meat, so they borrow the gun and just get the kangaroo without a licence for the car, the gun or anything else. Sometimes people travel from long distances without a spare tyre, for example. They know that if something goes wrong, other relations will come through and help them.

This is in stark contrast to a Piranpa vehicle. They have their Toyota loaded up with every piece of equipment imaginable. They don't plan to stay still for any length of time and they plan as if they will have no one to help them. We want to embrace these new learnings and new things that come our way as the world changes, but will still want to relate to them in a way that belongs to us.

Following on from the image of the two Toyotas, modelling Western approaches to knowledge, learning and socialization is a critical aspect of providing schooling in Anangu communities, but it is important that Anangu retain a sense of agency and belonging in the process. Piranpa educators could do well to see their position shift from that of an authoritative knowledge dispenser, to that of a knowledge broker, involving Anangu Education Workers and family members in the teaching and learning process to allow space for the renegotiation of knowledge and its place in the Anangu context. Such an approach reconnects students with the footprints that they can follow in their aspirations, and privileges Anangu, their knowledge and values in the complex relationship between education and cultural reinvention (see Minutjukur & Osborne, 2014).

So let's get to imagining

There seems little logic in a secondary remote educator coaxing students towards a career that requires a university degree, for example, if the only "seen" things are (near) zero employment, low secondary retention rates in schooling, and peers running away from boarding schools within a term, vowing to never return. Is it possible that an optimistic and hopeful "imagined future" for Anangu youth looks different to the "externally imagined" linear menu on offer in the Piranpa education, training and transition to employment context? A 2013 series of Anangu student surveys in the Southern communities of the Northern Territory (Ninti One, 2013) show that many young people have a strong sense of post-school aspiration that may not necessarily include formal employment, but is expressed in terms such as "working in the community", "working with the kids" or "helping family". Mainstream policy assumptions about education are that education prepares young people for economic participation. This raises the question, "What are the purposeful and inspiring things that Anangu may consider as a post-school aspiration, either in a voluntary capacity, or as a decision of character and ethics in preference to the primary motivator being employment or career?" In other words, it may be as important to engage young people in the question of "being" as much as the question of "doing".

Returning to the frame of education as preparation for economic participation, are there new economic potentials emerging that both value and amplify "traditional knowledge" and values, but haven't been conceived because all of the "imagining" is externally originated? Alternatively, are there more effective ways for educators to strengthen identity and self-discipline in young people so that they can

take on mainstream employment opportunities with confidence and achieve "success", without undermining their sense of self and "place" in the world?

For me (Rueben), I was educated and also did some other forms of training. Looking at our children, it seems there's no future for some of these children. Some Anangu parents don't hold on to a future for their children. The parents had learning through education and learning of "traditional knowledge", but having seen some of these parents, I know they're unable or unwilling to provide a future to hand to their children.

This is a cycle that the children repeat. And this is the issue there for us, to provide them with a future and to show them where their future is. Because teachers come and talk about the children's future: "Where is your future? What is your goal?" The whitefellas talk with the children, but they can't understand. And so, they break it into their own terms and talk about work, money and other things, and they don't show them a picture of themselves and neither do the parents.

And so these are the issues I'm reflecting on: Anangu need to share these important things for Anangu. But right at the moment, our children don't have a sense of the future. Education is there, the school is there, Anangu are sending the children to school and they are learning: maths and English, writing in English, speaking English and there's all sorts of things there at the school, like computers for the children to learn, but these aren't the things that we teach the children and we must always be thinking to give them that future.

As we have discussed earlier, education in Anangu schools can simply redistribute disadvantage if we deny students the opportunity for exploration of identity, creativity and developing the skills of high order thinking (see Hayes et al., 2006). Here, we have emphasized that there is great scope for Piranpa educators to embrace Anangu values, ontologies and epistemologies, but ultimately there is a limit, or end point, to the capacity for Piranpa to inspire the deeper aspects of self, such as identity formation, imagination and aspiration. Piranpa educators are limited by their own paradigms and experiences for understanding these concepts. Ultimately, if Anangu young people are going to see their way through the complex challenges of social turbulence, cultural chaos and economic marginalization, they need to look ahead and see the footprints of those going before.

An important consideration we would like to raise here is that whilst schools tend to focus on preparing young people for economic participation in the sense that when you leave school, you get a job, there is another critical aspect of economic participation in Anangu communities that is often forgotten by schools: Anangu own the land. This means that young people need to see the wider view of the footprints that have been laid in the struggle for land rights, the establishment of Aboriginal corporations to manage the land, and the ongoing work at the board room level across a range of corporations. This is where the shared conversation about education between Anangu and Piranpa is important. In paper #1 of this series Sam Osborne (2014) describes the difficulties for Piranpa teachers in really "hearing" what is important for Anangu. The concept of Aboriginal corporations, collective land ownership and corporate governance can be completely unfamiliar to an early career teacher arriving in a remote community, but this is familiar territory for Anangu. This is also the type of focus that can provide a sense of importance and relevance to education where students can be inspired to engage in high order thinking in the context of work that affirms the identity of the students and provides an important framing for the logic of improving their skills in English language, literacy and numeracy, for example.

From this perspective, it is clear that an "externally imagined" future and identity is somewhat of a mirage, and equally a state of apathy and inaction from older family members will fail to leave footprints that lead out of

this "abyss" (Lear, 2006). This leaves remote educators and community members with some serious discussions to be had with regard to the "virtues" and capacities (in addition to basic educational "skills") that young people may need for success into the future. It also demands a deeper layer of reflection with regard to how we, as Anangu, Anangu educators and parents might be more intentional in laying footprints for young people to follow. For Piranpa educators, it is critical that they see their role shifting from that of an authoritative expert to a role of brokering and negotiating knowledge and sharing the conversation widely about the kind of future young Anangu can imagine themselves into. If young people can't "see" this in action, how will they "know", and ultimately "love" the process of imagining and aspiring?

Reviewing the series

In the first paper in this series, Sam Osborne highlighted the complex and demanding nature of the role of remote educators; in particular, principals. In order to take account of the differing values, knowledges and standpoints (see for example Arbon, 2008; Bain, 2006; Ford, 2010; Nakata, 2007b), it is increasingly difficult to kulintjaku (to listen, hear or understand) these voices as principals are caught in the middle of systemic, school-based and community demands. In leading change through education in communities, there is a pressing agenda to improve attendance, literacy and numeracy scores, retention of students into the senior years of high school, and so on. The paper explored the rhetoric/reality gap and the tendency for many remote Aboriginal people to be "supportive" (or complicit) when discussing schooling and education, but in reality, a resistance position can quickly be adopted when values are in apparent conflict (see Bain, 2006; Munns & McFadden, 2000; Osborne, 2011).

Against this backdrop, in the second paper, Makinti Minutjukur and Sam Osborne looked at how Anangu stand at a critical point in history, as the very axioms of "being Anangu" are being shaken to the point where it seems we've come to "the end" (Lear, 2006; Pearson, 2009) of the "eternally understood" "making sense" in the modern world. Despite this shift in cultural and ontological realities, Anangu retain deeply held values, although they might not always seem obvious to Piranpa educators. This supports Rueben Burton's claims in this paper that the burden of creating a future for young people remains firmly with Anangu; in particular, with the family of young people; and that Piranpa educators need to understand the limitations of their powers in this regard.

We then discussed the immense challenge, but critical need for there to be a "cultural reinvention" of sorts, where we (Anangu) retain "our power" (Minutjukur, 2012) and identity in the education process, but also actively pursue the "powerful weapon" (Mandela, 2003) of "whitestream" (Haraway, 2004) education. This is possibly the most complex and contested intersection that lies "at the heart of learning" for Anangu in a Western education setting. The authors in this series have each described things that they reflect on deeply in regards to this intersection, covering aspects such as the challenges Western education presents to Anangu power and identity, the importance of confidence and reaffirming identity in taking hold of Western knowledge, and a reminder that building aspiration and a sense of the future is a family affair.

In the third paper, Katrina Tjitayi and Sam Osborne examined the "codes of power" (Delpit, 1993). These are "rules" that are implicitly understood by people who grow up inside what Delpit calls "the culture of power". In the case of Anangu communities, these hidden understandings for success in social and academic learning need to be explicitly taught and students need opportunities to build their confidence in these unfamiliar contexts through repetition and social connection to family and familial language as a part of the learning process.

Katrina (Tjitayi & Osborne, 2014) describes the current state of Anangu education as a self-build chair that is missing small but important pieces. It seems all of the pieces are in place, but small and important pieces (implicit codes) are missing and, under the strain of weight, the chair breaks. Anangu have a certain approach in building a sense of belonging and confidence in children. The Ernabella elder (Elder, 2012) uses the image of a "Cowboys and Indians" movie to remind his grandchildren that unless they learn the values that have sustained many generations of Anangu, they will be like the Indians being slaughtered by the cowboys' bullets. They need strong values to resist the new enemies of petrol sniffing and social breakdown. A Docker River grandmother (Ninti One, 2013) uses the approach of "explaining how we're related" to encourage her granddaughter to have confidence to succeed in school, and to know that she "belongs".

In summary, the issues "at the heart of learning" from the perspectives of the authors remain the foundations of identity, belonging and having a sense that one matters in the world—that we are valued and have value in a complex and contested space where values and knowledge are constantly colliding in the interface between school and home, the wider world and the familiar context of being with family. It is hoped that in highlighting some of these reflections, stories and ideas, we might promote a shared discussion that goes deeper than the existing dialogue at all levels, a dialogue that takes account of and privileges Anangu voices and cuts to "the heart of learning".

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Glossary

Anangu	an Aboriginal person (this is the term Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people use to refer to themselves)
kulini	hearing, thinking, knowing about, feeling and understanding
kulintjaku	in order to hear, think, know about, feel and understand
Kuranyu-kutu nyakula nyaan nyanganyi?	"Looking ahead, what can you see?"
kuranyu-kutu nyanganyi	looking ahead (to the future)
nintiringanyi	learning (literally "becoming knowledgeable")
nyakula kulini	seeing and thinking/ understanding
nyakula nintiringanyi	seeing and learning
nyanganyi	watching, seeing
Piranpa	a non-Indigenous person
wati tjuta	men

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