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Sidney Myer Rural Lecture 3

Red Dirt Curriculum:
Re-imagining Remote Education

Presented by

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In English, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara

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The four Sidney Myer Rural Lectures are designed to engage and inform individuals, communities and the wider public about the issues, opportunities and importance of rural areas for the future of Australia.

Vibrant, productive rural communities are integral to global sustainability. Population growth and an increasing preference for urban living linked with the challenges of food security, water supply, energy sufficiency, environmental health and territorial security inform and reinforce this position.



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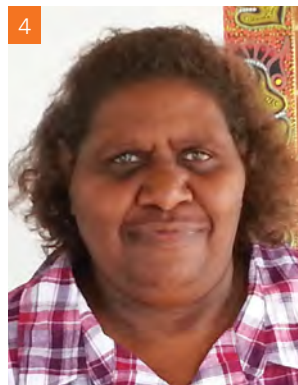
Sidney Myer Rural Lecture 3

Red Dirt Curriculum: Re-imagining Remote Education

With the nationalising of curriculum, teacher standards and measures of student literacy and numeracy achievement, the value and relative success of remote community education is framed within a homogenous, metro-centric understanding of achievement and success.

Increasing and (at times) competing system pressures and policy demands have amplified pressure to pursue educational achievement in western terms, relative to the rest of the Australian population. But is this pressure achieving the desired outcomes in academic, social and political terms, or indeed from the perspective of increasingly marginalised voices of remote communities themselves?

In this lecture, four remote educators pose the question, 'What knowledge matters for young people in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in the remote north-west corner of South Australia?' and, 'What would a contextualised, 'red dirt' curriculum look like if we were to re-imagine the core elements of a remote education?'



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Introducing Red Dirt Thinking

The Remote Education Systems project within the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation is a five year project designed to investigate how remote education systems can best respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community expectations, aspirations and needs. It will identify strategies and models that will improve outcomes for students and their families. The project team, based in Alice Springs, is working to engage with a wide range of remote education stakeholders, with a particular focus on the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia.

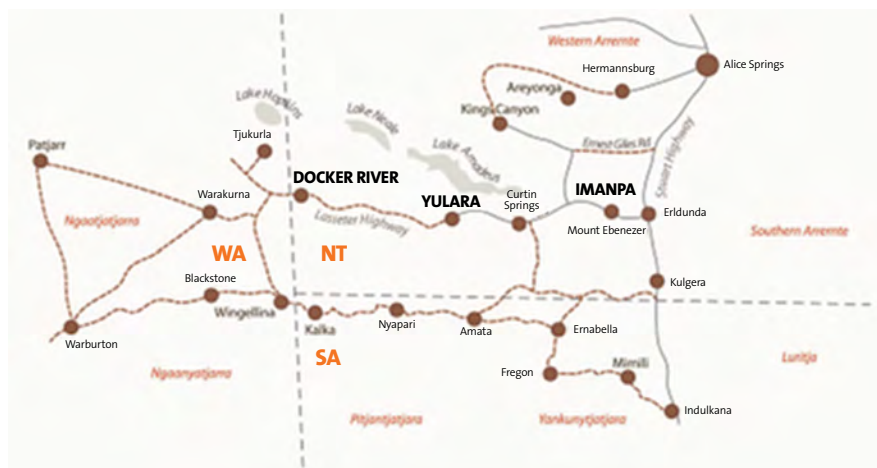
In recent months, we have commenced a series of workshops and papers based around the concept of 'Red Dirt Thinking'. When we think of innovation, we have come to know the concept of 'blue sky' thinking where we are able to dream about what might be possible without limitation or constraint, to let our ideas loose into the realms of possibility, but as we look to the pragmatic task of taking a first step, actioning the thinking, it is the red dirt beneath the feet that beckons an impression in remote communities right across Australia.

The focus of tonight's lecture is to re-imagine a curriculum that holds 'blue sky' thinking in one hand but firmly grasps a sense of the pragmatic in the other, and importantly, proposes what the core elements of a 'Red Dirt' or locally imagined

and relevant curriculum might offer. Red dirt can be found across a range of landscapes and languages; from salt water country to the deserts and all points in between. Tonight, we will be focusing on the tri-state remote region of Central Australia, but in particular, the APY Lands of the North West region of South Australia and the Southern region of the Northern Territory.

The term *Anangu* is used to refer to a Pitjantjatjara or Yankunytjatjara person, but also connects to a much broader region of family relations and interconnected languages across the tri-state remote region of South Australia, the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

In recent years, remote education has been brought more closely into the broader national focus on uniform measurement of student attainment in English language literacy and numeracy, national teacher standards, and the introduction of the Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012a, 2012c; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). This focus on nationalised approaches to standards, testing and performance has directed the attention of remote educators and remote education systems away from localised approaches to curriculum and education more broadly.



Points of philosophical, epistemological and ontological difference

The education system in Australia is informed from a western, neoliberal philosophical position where broadly, the purpose of education is to achieve the goal of economic participation where finding a job, building a career and achieving personal financial independence is an important mark of educational success. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics such as Nakata (2007, 2007b), Rigney (1999), Arbon (2008), Ford (2010) and others highlight that the western philosophies that underpin mainstream Australian society and the broader education system are at odds with the axiologies, epistemologies, ontologies and cosmologies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, particularly in the red dirt contexts of very remote communities. It is a critical point to understand in seeing very remote communities as part of the national collective, but with marked and distinct differences at their heart and foundation. This means that as non-Indigenous, 'Red Dirt' educators, we cannot assume that our students and their communities share our sense of the purpose of education and our 'common sense' assumptions about what education should prepare us for.

More recently, nationally compared measures of attendance and NAPLAN (National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy) results (benchmark testing on English Literacy and Numeracy) has highlighted the relatively poor performance of very remote schools in comparison to other schools across Australia (COAG Reform Council, 2013). Policies such as 'Closing the Gap' (COAG, 2013) and the rhetoric of addressing disadvantage have again directed attention towards improving outcomes for what is a very narrow perspective on what constitutes a good education. Although I want to spend time highlighting the strengths and capacities of Anangu communities, we need to recognise that very remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities continue to face significant challenges in relation to high levels of unemployment, self-harm and substance abuse amongst young people, family violence and concerns about the wellbeing of children and young people (see Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, 2013). These are very real and ongoing issues for remote communities as well as education.

Some early findings from the Remote Education Systems project lay an interesting foundation for

tonight's presentation. Since the introduction of nationalised testing and data comparison some five years ago, there has been little or no improvement in relation to attendance and NAPLAN scores for very remote schools. In fact, the gap between very remote Indigenous students and other Australian students has increased (Guenther, 2013). In very remote schools with over 80% Indigenous enrolment, there has been no statistically significant change in NAPLAN scores except for year 3 maths, which has in fact, gone down. We know that NAPLAN is a crude instrument in terms of measuring student performance in very remote schools, but it is worth remembering that these are the measures that establish very remote schools as being behind, or failing, and this influences the priorities that remote education systems adopt (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012a).

School attendance is another important measure of educational success. The graph below shows attendance figures from 2008 to 2013 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (see Guenther, forthcoming-1). As you can see, where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment is below 80%, attendance figures have remained static at around 88%. But in schools where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment is over 80%, there has been a slight variation across the 5 year period, but 5 years on, the attendance rate, despite all of the focus, all of the campaigns, programs and slogans, attendance rates remain about the same as 5 years ago in 2008.

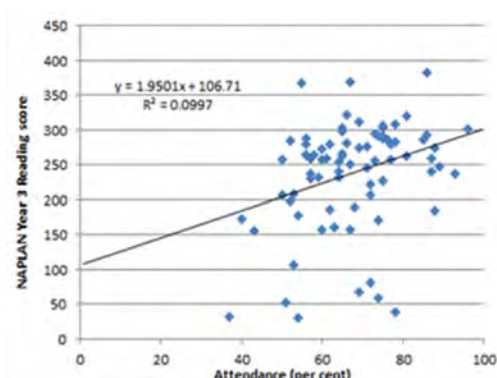
Very little has changed.



(Graph adapted from Guenther, forthcoming-1)

I'm not suggesting for a moment that school attendance is not important for a whole range of reasons, but as we'll see, we might need to re-think our assumptions about what improved attendance means for very remote schools.

*Attendance vs NAPLAN Year 3 Reading Score, 2012
very remote schools >80 per cent Aboriginal or Torres Strait
Islander students (n=80)*



(Guenther, forthcoming-2)

Across Australia, data suggests that there is a very strong relationship between attendance and performance, but in very remote schools where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment is above 80%, the data shows a relationship between attendance rates and NAPLAN scores that is so small that attendance explains less than 10% of the variance in NAPLAN (Guenther, forthcoming-2). In other words, more needs to be done than purely focusing on attendance to improve NAPLAN scores.

Other data shows that very remote non-Aboriginal students in the Northern Territory perform on par with their Darwin based peers in NAPLAN results (Guenther, 2013). This suggests that factors such as remoteness, distance and race don't matter so much in terms of NAPLAN results, but the distance of things like language, culture, values, ways of knowing, being and doing from the western philosophies that inform schooling are what determines the 'gap' against these assessment measures.

In effect, this positions schools located in Red Dirt communities as an island of culture, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can feel somewhat alienated despite being so close to home.

To improve remote education outcomes, current priorities include: improving attendance, introducing teacher standards, teaching a national curriculum, increasing student numbers attending boarding schools, improving employment opportunities, pre-employment education and training options and an early childhood focus, among others (Standing Council on Federal Financial Relations, 2012, 2013).

In western terms, education and the economy are closely related (Becker, 1993). There is a philosophy that a community is built around economy. Every so often, rhetoric about remote communities being 'allowed' to exist or continue to receive services being conditional on their economic viability reminds us of this fact (Tudge, 2011). This logic may ring true for pastoralists, for example, or mining companies who

would walk away from their cattle station or mining operation if there was no longer any money to be made, but Anangu communities, for example, are firmly rooted in a significantly different philosophical, historical and relational position in regards to land and the reason to be on country.

This positions Anangu students in a significantly different way as to the reasons and motivations for engaging in school or getting a job.

Nonetheless, the logic for educational success is repeated by teachers across remote schools: if you come to school every day, you can learn to read and write, finish school, maybe go away to boarding school or university and then you'll be able to look after yourself and come back and help your family and community (see for example Burns, 2012; Elks, 2011). But through interviews and discussions held with remote Aboriginal community members, we continue to see that this thinking can be somewhat foreign and the value of learning, knowledge, aspiration, imagining and identity remain firmly grounded in the Red Dirt context of the community.

This disparity in ways of being, knowing and doing leaves educators feeling frustrated by poor attendance and engagement, particularly into the secondary years that are so important for transitioning into employment and further learning.

There have been a suite of initiatives and reforms affecting remote education including partnership agreements, testing regimes, national standards, national curriculum and declarations, but when looking at the 5 year picture, it shows that very remote schools have not closed the gap, despite concerted effort on the few key measures of attendance, English language literacy and numeracy benchmark scores (COAG Reform Council, 2013).

So what do Anangu say about what matters in an education and what Anangu students should be learning as part of a Red Dirt education?

Tonight, Makinti will speak about the importance of acknowledging and retaining the power that Anangu hold and carry into the process of pursuing the power that western education offers.

Katrina will discuss the importance of building confidence in Anangu students and the importance of re-thinking learning and Closing the Gap in the Anangu context.

Karina will highlight the importance of language maintenance and development as a critical foundation for identity and future opportunities in education and employment.

Finally, I will suggest some different ways we might reimagine a Red Dirt curriculum that allows students to find their element in their experience of education.

(List of References available on page 22)





Makinti Minutjukur

Our culture, our language and our stories; we must hold onto tightly and not let go because these give us strength. When we travelled to another place, we didn't leave it behind because it is our culture as we live on our own land that gives us life, with strong thinking, strong language.

But this has all changed. A new and important way has arrived. Education is important for our children to learn these new things better. We are really happy about this and we want our children to gain understanding so that they can enter into this new world.

It seems that we are continually behind. But now we want to go forward. The government has given us this opportunity for our children to get better knowledge and we really want this.

But we don't want to leave behind all our strengths and our power in order to receive this new knowledge. We must keep our language, our stories, our lands and our family connections. These are things that give us power in our land.

If we only learn this new language, English, we will lose our culture, our land and our stories. And later if we go back and try to search for it, we will not find it again. It will be lost forever.

But if we hold onto our strengths and as we go, learn new strengths, we will hold onto both strengths and keep strong in both Anganu way and Piranpa way.

I believe that education will open many doors for us to enter. We are looking forward to these important changes, but we must never forget what belongs to us. We must hold onto our strengths always. We don't want to forget our culture. It is important for us to know that our culture has been there in the past and will there in the future.

Let us all lead our children together on the two ways – the old Anganu way, and the new Piranpa way.

Nganana witulya nganampa nyanga palunya witira kanyinma. Nganana ngura-kutjupa kutu ankula wantikatinytja wiyangu ma-katipai. Panya witulya nyanga paluru nganananya kunpu kanyini kulintja kunpu, wangka walytja kunpu nganampa ngura-nganampa manta, nganampa tjukurpa.

Nyangatja kuwari kampa kutjuparinyil ara kutjupa kuwaritja pulka wirkananyi. Panya Education tjitji nganampa tjuta nintiringkunyjtaku munu nintintjaku mula mulangu–pulkarangku. Kala nyanga palumpa pulkara mulapa pukularinyi munula patani nganampa tjitji tjuta ma-tjarpanyjtaku world–kuwaritjangka.

Panya nganana tjinguru malarinyi rawa munula kuwari ma-pitjanytjikitja mukuringanyi nyanga palumpa. Government-angu nganananya unganyi nganana mula mula nintiringkunyjtaku munu nganampa tjitji tjuta nintiringkula nintipuka mulapa nyinantjaku kala pulkara mukuringanyi nyanga palumpa.

Kala pulkara mulapa mukuringanyi–nganana nganampa witulya–tjara waninytja wiya–kutjupa kuwaritja mantjintjikitjangku–palu kanyintjikitjala pulkara mukuringanyi nganampa wangka, Tjukurpa–ngura titutjarangu munu walytjapitiku. Panya nyanga paluru tjana witini kumpungku nganampa manta.

Nganana wangka kutjupa pulkara nintiringkula mantjirampa nganana ma-kawalinkuku culture nganampa, manta nganampa, Tjukurpa nganampa. Kala ngula malaku ankula putu mantjilku putu ngurilku ka kawaliriku alatjitu titutjara.

Palu nganana nganampa witulya-tjara ankula witulya kutjupa mantjira kutjaratu witilku, kampa kutjaratu titutjarangu kanyirala kunpu titutjara ngaraku.

Ngayulu wangkanyi Education nyangangu alalku door tjuta nganampa nganana tjarpanyjtaku. Ka nyangatja tjukurpa pulka mulapa nyanga palunya nganana witintjaku palu nganampakula watarkurinytja wiyangu witulya kanyinma alatjitu titutjarangu. Panya nganampa ara tjuta culture iriti-nguru ngarakatinytja munu ngaraku rawa kuranyu kutu ma-ngarinyangka.

Wanyula uwankarangku tjungungku ma-pitjala katima tjungu kutjaratu Anganu ara tjuta tjara munu kuwaritja Piranpa ara tjuta-tjara.

There are lots of new changes coming to our children in Anangu schools and we are very happy about these things. But now the Australian Curriculum is expected to be taught in Anangu Schools and this is very difficult for them to learn properly. At this rate, perhaps we will continue to fail year after year.

We need to find a new road to get to the learning that we need by changing the curriculum to an Anangu curriculum.

When I was a child, I would go out together with my parents and learnt by watching them. They taught me to hunt, gather bush foods, build shelters and be safe in the bush so that I didn't get bitten by snakes or burnt by fire or lost in the bush. They taught me how to recognise a healthy fat animal from a skinny one and to gather bush fruits when they were ripe and not ripe. I learned the names of my grandfather's and grandmother's country. It's not written on paper, it's in my heart. These are the things that I learned about and that I teach to my children.

When I went to school, it was a bilingual education at Ernabella. I learned my language first and then English. When I was 16 years of age it was my family's decision that I would have to go away to school in Adelaide at Gepps Cross Girls High School. It was my parents who pushed me and helped me through. The two years of high school weren't easy. It was hard. It was lonely with all of the white students around me, but because my dad was strong, he kept saying to me, "You have to stay and learn."

I stayed and learned new things away from home in a new place and environment and the most important thing that my parents wanted me to learn was to learn to speak English. I'm still learning today and every day. This is my education experience.

Like my father did for me, it's important that family should encourage and push their children to learn new things and not give up. Our parents and their generation had incredible knowledge about all sorts of things even though they didn't understand how schools work, but they still supported us to learn in schools.

We have excellent schools in our communities and it can be hard to understand why children aren't going to school all of the time. Schools make a big effort to make sure children get to school. We need to think about how we as the older generation can be strong and encourage our children in their learning too. We know that this is difficult but it is the right time for Anangu to speak up for their children and help them get stronger in their education.

Tjukurpa kuwaritja tjuta wirkananyi nganampa Anangu tjitji schoolangka kala pukularinyi palu Australian Curriculum ngangatja tjarpanyi Anangu schoolangka ka witu witu pulka nyanga palula-wanu nganana tjukaruru nintiringkunyjtaku putula tjinguru arkalku, ka tjinguru year tjuta ngaraku.

Palu iwara kutjupa wanungkula tjinguru nganana arkalku curriculum nyanga palunya Anangu Way Curriculum tjunkula.

Ngayulu puti kutu ankupai mamangka ngunyjtungka tjungu munu nintiringkupai. Palunya pulanya nyakulana nintiringkupai. Kuka ngurira mantjintjaku mai putitja tjutaku ngurangka nyinara putingka yuu palyantjaku wankaru putingka para-ngarantjaku. Lirungkatawara mungangka warungku kampanytjaku tawara. Kuka kanpi pulka ngurkantankuntjaku nyurka nguru. Mai kuru kutju mantjintjaku muntu wiya. Nyanga palumpa tjanampana nintiringu mununa ngayuku tjitji tjuta ma- nintilpai.

Ernabella-la bi-lingual Education school-angkana tjarpangi. Ngayulu nintiringangi ngayuku wangkaku nyakula wangkanytjikitja munu walkatjunktjikitja. Palu wangka walytjana Pitjantjatjara wangkangi. Ngayulu year 16-ringu ka ngayuku mamanku ngunyjtungku mukuringu ngayulu ankula school pulkangka tjarpara nintiringkunyjtaku Adelaide-ala Gepps Cross Girls High School-angka. Palu ngayunya untuningi pulkara munu alpamilanini palu witu-witu ngarangi Adelaide-ala ngayuku. Ngayulu Anangu kutju nyinapai Piranpa tjutangka. Palu ngayuku mama kunpu mununi wangkangi "Nyuntu ma-nyinara school palangka nintiringama!"

Kana patu nyinara nintiringangi kuwari kutju nyakula panya ngura pulka wali tjuta tjara. Palu panya ngayuku mama munu ngunyjtungku pula nyangangi waintara alatji ngayulu school pulkangka nintiringkunyjtaku English wangkanytjaku rapangku munu ngulu wiyangka. Kana nintiringanyitu kuwari. Rawana nintiringanyi waakangka waakarira. Nyanga palulanguruna nintiringanyi tjintu kutjupa tjintu kutjupa.

Nguyunyani ngayuku mamanku alpamilanu school-angka tjarpanytjaku. Ka alatji palyantjaku ngaranyi kuwari walytjapitingku alpamilantjaku tjitji walytja walytjangku school-angka tjarpatjura wiru tjutaku nintiringkunyjtaku munu watarkurira ngarakati wiya untunma titutjarangu.

Nganampa walytjapiti tjutaya kulinytja palyatjarangu wiru tjuta kulilpaingku alpamilanini munulanya untuningi nganananya school wirungka tjarpara nintiringkunyjtaku. Tjana school mulata nintiringkunyjtaku wiyatu palu tjana nintingu nyangangi nganana school-angka mulamula nintiringkunyjtaku munu ngula nintingu waaka tjutangka tjarpanytjaku munu nintipuka nyinanytjaku.



Katrina Tjitayi

Tonight there are four main things I want to talk about:

1. Building the learning on a strong foundation
2. Learning in their spirits
3. Building the child's confidence
4. Closing the gap for our children

Building the learning on a strong foundation

If a tree is not growing properly, we have to seek really hard to find the problem. When we look at the tree, we see only the top part but we need to look deeper at the roots. We must look deep inside to see what is not working. In Anangu education, sometimes we spend all of our time looking at the leaves and the branches, but we need to look well below the ground to understand what it is that is really happening for our children.

When a tree grows from a seed, sometimes it needs help. If a tree isn't strong enough to stand on its own, it can't grow. It needs to be tied to a stake so that it can use the strength of the stake to stand and grow so that eventually it can stand as a strong tree on its own. We need to see the education process as beginning from a seed and think about how we support the growth of our children to stand strong on their own.

Learning in their spirit

In the past we learnt from all of our family as we listened to their stories over and over and camped together and went hunting.

Every day we learned about hunting kangaroo, gathering the woollybutt seeds, and cooking the kangaroo and the woollybutt damper.

We learned the process of how to do these tasks correctly. This is the way they learned in the past. But today they learn through books, though reading books.

Nyangatja ngayuku tjukurpa ngayulu wangkanyi kuwari nyurala.

NYANGATJA TJUKURPA MANKURPA:

1. Building the learning on a strong foundation
2. Kurunta tjukurpa tjuta nintiringanyi
3. Rapa kurunta kunpuringkunyjtaku
4. Waltjapitingku iwara patira wanani

Pulkarala ngurinma punu putu pulkaringkunyaangka nyaanguru nyanga alatjirinyi. Anangu education nyangangu kutjupa ara titutjarangu punu parka munu nyalpa tjuta kutju nyakupai, palu utila manta unngutja kulu nyangama, nyaaringanyi nganampa tjitji tjuta. Panya punu katutja kutjula nyanyangi, palu utila iwiri unngutja nyangama, unngu mulapa nyaa putu warkarinyi. Munula nyara palula ngurulta nyakuku nyaa tjuta nganana changes palyalku tjitji tjutaku kuranyu kutu.

Panya uninypa nguru punu pakalpai, ka nyanga palunya nganana alpamilanyjtaku ngaranyi. Tjinguru punu nyanga paluru kunpu wiya ngarala paluru putu waltja ngaranyi munu paluru putu waltja kunpuringanyi munu pulkaringanyi, kala uti nganana punu kutjupangka tjungura pulanya karpinma ka punu palula tjungu ngarala palula wanu punu panya kunpuringkuku paluru witira kanyinyangka, nganana education nyanga palunya nyakunyjtaku ngaranyi uninypa nyanga tjukutjuku nguru pulkaringkunyjtja purunypa, munu nyakula kulira nintiringama yaaltji yaaltjinkula nganampa tjitji tjuta alpamilalku tjana kunpu ngaranyjtaku munu waltja pulkaringkunyjtaku kunpu ngarala.

Panya nganana waltja piti tjuta wanu nintiringu pulkara tjanala tjukurpa tjuta kulira kulira, tjanampa ngurangka kulu ngarapai, kuka ankula ngurangka nyinara, mungangka kulu.

Tjintu winkiya nintiringkupai kuka malu paunyjtaku, mai wangunu mantjinyjtaku ka malu paunyjtaku mai wangunu paunyjtaku.

Uwankara order ngarinyi tjukarurungku palyanyjtaku. Kaya alatji nintiringkupai, palu panya kuwari nganampa tjitji tjuta nyiri wanu nintiringkupai nyiri tjuta nyakula.

So it would seem that learning today is more difficult. In the past they learnt by watching, listening and practicing what their family taught them. Their families were very knowledgeable about the Anangu way.

This is ongoing learning. In this way our children grab hold of the learning with their spirits and hold on to it forever.

But today the parents are at a distance and are not involved in what is being taught to their children. In the past when everyone lived in waltjas, all the family were close together. But now things have changed and we are living in houses and are no longer living close to one another.

Children learn well when people continually talk to them. The words that are spoken are received by the child's spirit when they are spoken gently and with patience. It is this spirit that gives the child confidence. The learning enters into his spirit and remains with him. It is not on paper, but in his spirit.

It is in this way that I learned to search and dig for honey ants. All of this knowledge is in my spirit. It is there for always. I don't need to look up the instructions in a book. It is deep in my spirit.

In this same way, we must carefully watch over our children's spirits. We shouldn't keep telling them that they are dumb. Don't wound them. It is this same spirit that is working in the child to make him strong.

Building Confidence

We must build confidence in the children's spirits so that they will try new things. Children grow more confident when they start slowly with easy things and practice by touching and writing.

But we keep teaching them Piranpa way and they just can't get it. In the Piranpa way everything works around a timetable. So it might be maths 30 minutes, literacy 30 mins, reading 30 minutes. The children don't get enough time to carefully finish their work. In that 30 minutes, the child is trying really hard to understand the teacher and then he just starts his work and the teacher says "Okay, it's time to pack up". So his spirit just gives up trying. In this way, we are closing the door to his learning. We must give them plenty of time for our children to learn and have the confidence to try.

It is only when they are confident that they will be able to open all these closed doors. They will only come into the school and learn when they have confidence. Without confidence, they will be always afraid.

If we want to build the child's confidence we must talk gently to him and keep helping him. We must

Ka tjinguru wituwitu nguwanpa ngarapai tjukurpa kuwaritja tjuta nyakula nintiringkuny tjaku. Palu panya iritiya arkara palyara nyakula kulira nintiringangi waltjapiti tjuta wanu munu tjananya waltja ninti ngarangi kutjupa kutjupa tjutaku panya Anangu way tjutaku.

Panya nganampa tjitji tjuta nintiringkupai tjukurpa, ara tjuta kuruntu mantjira kutju munuya titutjarangku kanyilpai.

Palu kuwari nguny tjuta patu nyinanyi munu tjungu wiya tjana kuulangka nintiringkunya ila ngarany tjuta wiya. Panya iritiya waltja tjutangka tjungu ila nyinangi waltjapiti tjungu, ka kuwari kutjuparingu panya nganana kuwari wali tjutangka nyinanyi munula kuwari patu patu nyinanyi ila tjungu nyinany tjuta wiya.

Tjitji tjutaya pulkara nintiringkupai Anangu tjutangka ilatu ilatu tjanala wangkanyangka, panya tjana tjanala rawa wangkany. Kaya tjana tjukurpa tjana wangkany tjuta kuruntu mantjilpai purkarangku kulira atatjura wangkanyangka. Panya kurunpa nyanga paluru tjitji kanany-kanany palyalpai tjitji nintiringkuny tjuta wiru ngaranyangka. Panya nintiringkuny tjuta tjitji kurunta tjarpanyi munu titutjara ngarinyi tjitjingga kurunta unngu, nyiringka wiya palu kurunta.

Panya ngayulu tjala tjawany tjaku nintiringu, mununa ninti yaaltji yaaltji nguriny tjaku, munu tjakarurungku nyakula wanantjaku, munu tjawara mantjiny tjaku, uwankara ngayula kurunta ngarinyi, titutjara alatjitu. Nyiringka ngariny tjuta wiya nyakula tjawany tjaku, palu kurunta unngu.

Ka nyanga palu purunypa ngarany nganana purkarangku tjitji tjutaku kurunpa nyakuny tjaku, titutjarangku ngurpanmara wangkany tjuta wiya, pikantankuny tjuta wiyangku wantima, kurunpa pala paluru tjitjingga unngu warkarinyi, munu kunpu palyani.

Rapa Kurunta Kunpuringkuny tjuta

Tjitji tjutala kurunpa rapa palyanma tjana waltjangu kuwaritja tjuta arkara palyany tjaku. Tjitji tjutaya rapa ngarapai tjukutjuku tjuta purkarangku, arkara, pampura, walkatjura, tjana alatji nintiringkupai.

Palu nganana rawangku Piranpa way tjunanyi nintinytjikitjangu ka tjana putu alatjitu mantjini tjukurpa tjuta. Panya Piranpa way tjana time-ngka kanyini, kula uwankarangka, panya alatji tjinguru maths 30 minutes, literacy 30 mins, reading 30 mins, ka tjitji tjutaku time wiyangarany purkarangku arkany tjaku, uti tjana time pulka ungama tjitji tjuta purkarangku arkany tjaku, panya tjana 30 mins nyanga palula tjitjingga kuruntu pulkara waltjangu warkamilani nyaa tiitjangu wangkany munu nintini munu tjitji paluru tjaraira arkani munu kulini, ma-palyani warka panya palunya, ka tiitjangu wangkapai palya pack up time, ka paluru kuruntu ma-arkara ma-nyatarangany. Ka nyanga alatji palyara nganana tuwa purunypa patini, time pulkala ungama tjitji tjuta nintiringkuny tjaku, tjana kurunpa rapangku arkany tjaku.

strengthen his spirit with kind words and not keep telling him he has made a mistake, especially in front of others. Don't keep telling him to show his work to the others, but wait until you are alone with him to talk about his work and encourage him to try different ways to learn. If he can't learn, don't frighten him, but try to find other ways to teach him. This will strengthen the child's spirit and he will be brave enough to come to school and learn.

We can change the way the children think and understand by changing the way we teach. We mustn't keep doing the same thing. If we teach a lesson and a child doesn't learn, we need to try to teach the lesson a different way.

Teaching in our own language, teaching Anangu culture and teaching the children to read and write in Pitjantjatjara / Yankunytjatjara will also open up their spirits (down deep in their roots) because this will give them the courage to try new things for themselves. It will help their confidence also when they have someone close by and continually supporting them.

We should be inviting Anangu from the community to come and teach Anangu culture. The Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) and Anangu teachers should be teaching them to read and write in the local language.

If you are worried about a child, don't say anything in front of him because he will know and he can recognise your body language, your face, your eyes and your lips and if you shake your head. But keep your face happy and try something different. Even when he makes a mistake, say positive things to him.

Re-thinking 'Closing the Gap'

There are many gaps in our children's spirits and they can't close them on their own. Schools can do much to help all the children, both young and older. Children can't find their future on their own. They just can't do it. It is as if their spirits are wandering around a very steep cliff. When a child is afraid, he can't learn. This is the way we can close the gaps.

The child is in the middle and his family are around him. When the family surrounds the child, they can help him. Only his family can help him to change to a positive way of thinking. When the family watches over him, the child feels secure. The mother and father can help the child to be brave and to learn new things.

Our children need to learn together with us as one spirit. Our spirits are like a solid rock for them to stand on. It is only when they are standing together with us that they can stand firm without falling.

Rapa ngarala kutju tjitji tjutangu waltjangu tuwa tjuta alani pati ngaranytja tjuta. Kuulaku tjarpapai rapa ngarala kutju munu nintiringkupai. Palu rapa wiya ngarala tjana rawa nguluringkupai titutjara alatjitu, munuya putu tjarpanyi kuulangka.

Rapa palyanytjikitja mukuringkulala uti tjitji tjutangka purkara wangkama munu ilatu ilatu alpamilanma, munu wiru tjuta kutju wangkara tjitjiku kurunpa rapanma. Ngunti ngunti palyanyangka wangkanytja wiya tjutangka mirangka, pulkara wituwitunytja wiya tjanampa warka nintinytjaku ngula palula kutjunga kutju wangkama palumpa warkatjara, purkarangu wangkara rapa palyanma, munu kutjupa wanungku arkara palyanma paluru kunpuringkunyutjaku. Putu nintiringkunyangka ngulutjinyanytja wiyangu wantinma tjukurpa kutjupa ngurila paluru arkara palyanytjaku. Ka tjitji tjuta kurunpa kunpuringanyi rapa kuulangka tjarpanytja munu nintiringkunyutjaku.

We can change the way that the children think and understand, by changing the way we teach arangkutu ngaranytja wiya. Tjinguru lesson tjana nintini ka tjitji putu nintiringanyi, ka lesson panya palunya arkala kutjupa way-ngku munu nintila, ka tjitjingku kulilku.

Panya nganampa wangkangu, Anangu Domain, munu reading and writing, Pitjantjatjara phonics, sound, nyanga paluru tjana kulu tjitji tjuta kurunpa unngutja iwiri panya palunya rapa palyani arkara waltjangu kuwaritja tjuta ngulu wiyangu ma-arkanytjaku kurunpa raparingkula, panya kutjupangu ilangu rawangu alpamilanyangka kulu.

Uti Anangu community nguru pitjama munu nintinma Anangu culture, Ka AEW-ngku munu Anangu tiitja tjutangu kuulangka nintinma ritamilanytjaku munu walkatjungkunyutjaku.

Tjingurun tjitjiku worry ngarala tjitjingka mirangka wangkanytja wiya, panya tjana ninti munuya nyanganyi putu nintiringkupai tjutangu body sign yunpaku, kata urinyangka, kuru, winpinpi, palu yunpa pukulpa kutju nintinma munu warka kutju kampakutjupanama palumpa, munu putu arkanyangka palunya mirawanima alatjitu. Tjitji tjutaku ala tjuta ngaranyi tjanampa kurunta ka tjana waltjangu putu patini.

Kuulangka unngu nintiringkunyutja pulka mulapa ngaranyi tjitji tjutaku, tjitji tjukutjuku tjutaku, munu tjitji pulka tjutaku kulu. Tjitjingku putu waltjangu future ngurini munu nintiringanyi, wiya alatji. Panya tjanampa kurunpa para-ngaranyyi puli warara pulkangka purunypa. Nguluringkula tjitji putu nintiringkupai alatjitu. Ka alatji ngaranyi tjitjiku kurunta nganana para patira wanantjaku.

Tjitji ngururpa ngaranyi ka waltja-piti tjutangu tjitji alpamilaipai. Tjitji ngururpa ngaranyangka waltja piti tjutangu para ngarala wanara tjitji alpamilani Waltja pitingku kutju kulinytja kampa kutjupankupai wirura kulintjaku. Waltja pitingku alpamilanyangka nyakula tjitji kanany kananyaripai. Ngunyutjungku mamangu tjitjiku kurunpa rapalai kuwaritja nintiringkunyutjaku.

The mother and father are the solid rock for the child and it is from them that they find the strength to try new things. It has always been this way that our families are our rock and we have held our stories in our spirits and grew up strong and confident with our stories intact.

But our way is very different. We don't have only a father and mother. Our children have lots of family. They have sisters, brothers, uncles and aunties and grandparents and other close family. This is the way we protect our children.

Our children will grow strong in their learning at school when their families stand with them as that strong solid rock. They will be strong and confident through our spirits. We are using our spirits as a foundation for the children. If the child's parents are weak, then the extended family will come alongside him to support him.

Anangu have important stories for the children to learn, the dreaming tjukurpa, the land, family connections, culture and other learning. This is our foundation. If we are going to teach this new curriculum we must build it on top of the foundation that is already there. When we bring these two together, we will make it easier for our children to learn. Our children must learn our way first and then later they can learn in the different language. So if we want to close the gaps, we must change the way we teach the curriculum and this will help the children to learn.

Our children are well able to learn new things. We must come together, the AEWs, Teachers, Principals and families and close these gaps that are stopping the children from learning. We just need to look at the way we are teaching and discover the ways that the children learn and don't learn. The schools should have the family trees for all of the children in the school.

We also need to provide a room at the school where the family can come and feel comfortable to come and discuss their children. There is often no room available at our schools for family and they can feel that the schools are only for the white people and the staff. When the parents and family come to the school they feel embarrassed and afraid. Our schools must be open for everyone.

Red Dirt Curriculum

We've already got a Red Dirt curriculum and it's always been there. The strength and foundation of our language and culture is still there and we need to build our curriculum from that foundation.

Tjitji tjuta ngananala kurunpa tjungu nintiringkunyitjikitja mukuringanyi, panya nganana kurunpa tjungu ila, panya nganampa kurunpa tjanampa walu purunypa ngaranyi. Tjana ngananala tjungu ngarala kutju witu ngaraku punkanytja wiya rapa. Panya mama munu ngunyitju tjitji tjutaku walu tjana nyara palula tjanala wanu witungka ngarala kutju kuwaritja tjuta ma-arkalku. Panya iriti nguru alatjitu nganampa waltja piti tjuta nganampa walu purunypa ngarangi, kala tjukurpa tjuta kuruntu titutjarangu kanyiningi, munula rapa kunpu nyinara pulkaringu tjukurpa winkitjara.

Panya nganana ara kutjupa alatjitu nganana mama ngunyitju kutju wiya, tjitji tjuta waltji piti winki tjara, kangkuru, kuta, kulypalpa, kuntili, kami, tjamu, munu waltja ititja tjuta kulu. Nyanga alatjingku nganana tjitji atunymananyi.

Panya tjukurpa paluru ma- pulkaringkuku panya kuulangka nintiringkunyitja waltja piti kurunpa kunpu walu purunypa ngarala, ka tjitji tjuta kunpu ngaraku tjanala kurunta walu purunytja munuya rapa nintiringkuku nyuntumpa nganampa kurunpa wanu. We are using our spirit as a foundation, tjinguru mama, ngunyitju upa nguwanpa ngaranyi ka waltja piti kutjupa tjuta ila ngaranyi tjitji panya palula.

Nganampa tjukurpa pulka ngaranyi tjitji tjuta nintiringkunyitjaku Anangu way tjukurpa, manta - land, families, culture, and learning ka nyanga paluru nganampa foundation ngaranyi, ka tjinguru curriculum kuwaritja tjuta palyarampa foundation nyanga palula katu piruku palyala nganampa tjukurpangka katu panya nganampa foundation already ngaranyi ka curriculum nyurampa katu tjura munula tjungura kunpu palyala tjitji tjuta nintinyitjikitjangku. Panya nganampa ara wanu kutju tjitji tjuta wangka kutjupangka mala ma-nintiringkupai.

Ka ala nyanga palunya patinyitjikitja mukuringkula nganana curriculum nyanga palunya kampa kutjupa wanu palyala munula pulkara alpamilala tjitji tjuta, munula ala tjuta patila. Nganampa tjitji tjutangku kuruntu tjukurpa kuwaritja tjuta mapalku alatjitu mantjilpai.

AEW, Teachers, Principals, family, tjunguriwala munula ala tjuta patira wanala, Tjanampa nintiringkunyitja wanungku kutjula nyawa munula purkararira nyakula kulila, munula ngurila tjitji tjuta wanungku tjana yaaltji yaaltji nintiringkunyitja, munu putu nintiringkunyitja. Nganana uti family tree tjukurpa tjara kanyinma tjitji uwankaraku.

Munu ruuma kanyinma family tjutaku pitjala tjunguringkula nyinara wangkanyitjaku tjanampa tjitji tjuta tjara, Panya Anangungku tjinguru ruuma wiya nguwanpa ngarapai kuulangka, ka Anangu tjutangku kulilpai alatji tjinguru kuula palatja Piranpa tjutaku kutju munu warka tjutaku, Ka ngunyitju mama waltja piti tjuta pitjapai kuula kutu pitjapai kunta kunta, munu ngulu ngulu, ka uti kuula uwankara ala kanyinma uwankaraku.

Panya Red Dirt Curriculum nganana kanyini alatjitu. Ngaranyi nyanga paluru, panya nganampa wangka munu nganampa ara tjuta nyanga paluru ngaranyi kunpu, kala uti curriculum nyara palunya pulkanma alatjitu curriculum nganampangka tjungura.



Karina Lester

MANTANGURU NINTIRINGANYI RED DIRT CURRICULUM

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Arrente People of the Alice Springs region as the Traditional Owners of this country and acknowledge other Aboriginal people who are here this evening.

Ngayuku ini Karina-nya ka ngayulu kuwari mukuringanyi tjuku-tjuku wangkanytjaku munu ataka wangkanytjaku Red Dirt Curriculum. Ngayulu pulkaringu Pira Mimilila, ngura wirungka. Ngayuku Ngunyntju mamangka munu Kami Tjamungka wirura nintilkatinyi ngayuku Anangu ara.

My name is Karina Lester and I would like to say a little on and speak clearly about Red Dirt Curriculum. I grew up at Pira Mimi (Mimili Community) in a beautiful place. With my Mother and Father and my Grandparents beautifully teaching me Anangu culture.

This topic is very close to me and I have so many thoughts on it but I only have a short amount of time to speak on this but hope to raise a few important points to think about. This very issue of education raises many, many issues of survival and just getting through one day at a time.

When Sam Osborne approached me about this opportunity to meet at one of his 'Thinking Outside of the Tank' sessions I was only going to come and listen but as we got talking about this I realised I had something to say about it and that it was very important to speak from an Anangu perspective.

So tonight I'd like to share with you all some of my experiences as I was growing up on the APY Lands, Alice Springs and then later in Adelaide.

As I mentioned I grew up in Pira Mimi located in the very beautiful Everard Ranges on the APY Lands. It was there that I, along with my older brother and older sister spent time with our

amazing parents Yami and Lucy Lester and elders Tjamu Kanytji (Yankunytjatjara man) and Kami Pingkai (Pitjantjatjara woman) and the extended family. Hearing them speak their Yankunytjatjara wangka, seeing how they communicated with others, how culture was so important to my Anangu family and that knowledge of your Wapar (Wapar is the Yankunytjatjara term used to explain their Ancestral Stories that teach them the skills of survival, about morals and respect) is knowledge of your country and understanding your roles and responsibilities. I was very privileged to grow up and experience life on a cattle station.

I look back over those years and realise that those years were the years my parents and Kami (Grandmother) munu Tjamu (Grandfather) grounded me and taught me about my Wapar, country, family and the skills of survival. It was in those years that I learnt my language and about how important it is, how communication is significant to knowing who you are.

We later moved into Alice Springs and as my brother said to me once "to get edumecated". That was a turning point for me. New way, new language, new life, new culture and country for me to adapt to and learn, and my brother was right because we did get EDUCATED. I have some very fond memories of this place Mbantwe (Alice Springs).

Both my parents were very influential in our lives; not only in our Anangu culture but also in the three of us understanding the importance of getting a Western education. It was important to them that we gained the skills to also survive in this new world that existed and that we also understood how to move between the two worlds. Today I look back over those years and am very grateful that I was supported during this

time and given this wonderful opportunity to broaden my view of the world that I was living in, between two very different cultures.

Today in Adelaide I am working at the University of Adelaide as an Aboriginal Language Worker and Co-Manager for a small team known as the Mobile Language Team supporting South Australian Aboriginal people with their Language Programs. Working in this area has allowed for me to continue to work with my Yankunytjatjara Language and be a voice, as my parents were, to advocate the importance of language to Aboriginal people. I work alongside some great Professors and linguists and Aboriginal Language Workers all working for the purpose of language revitalisation and maintenance of South Australian Aboriginal languages. Working at the University of Adelaide has made me think intensely about my Anangu culture and my Yankunytjatjara language and the direction it is going in, but also about the quality of education children on the APY Lands are getting and struggling with every day.

Very recently I was on the APY Lands and had the opportunity to deliver a Pitjantjatjara/ Yankunytjatjara Language Training course to Anangu Education Workers. Many of the participants struggled to understand the grammar of their language, but were in the classroom teaching language. It got me thinking about the children in the classroom about how they were understanding or not understanding about both languages Pitjantjatjara / Yankunytjatjara and the English language. "What are they learning in the classroom?"

Today many Anangu kids growing up on the APY Lands are challenged with many issues such as remoteness, low socioeconomic status, poor health and well-being, environmental (family, physical and foreign); various forms of abuse and the list goes on. The one place that they should be able to get some peace of mind is also very challenging for children as they are forced to think and learn in a very foreign language, English. For many kids English is a second language or even a third or fourth language and so the level of learning in the English language is limited and the kids struggle to use and understand this language on a day-to-day basis. Subjects are taught in the English language and most of the time, it seems irrelevant to the Anangu child.

Teach what is relevant

Educating a child and teaching his or her place in the world they live in is to the child's understanding of his or her place in their society. These are challenged every day. Why?

Are the children on the APY Lands learning about what is relevant and important to them in a school context?

Such as:

- » Identity and belonging
- » Which family they belong to and how to relate to walytja piti and extended family
- » The Land Rights movement, which is so critical to understanding how they got to be living in the 'Red Dirt'
- » Ernabella Mission and the role it played in the 30's, 40's and 50's. Surrounding communities such as Mimili and its history
- » Tjukurpa / Wapar

This knowledge is shared knowledge and can be passed onto them by their own people as well as their teachers and explained to them by their own people so they grow and build their understanding of kinship and the importance of kin, law and culture.

This grounding in the Red Dirt grounds children in their knowledge of language, law and culture. Having this knowledge children know where they belong and how they relate to their communities whether it be in their remote community or the wider Western Desert community and beyond.

Children need to be taught about their country, know their language and its place in their world and then to learn about their place in the wider world. We need to support them and encourage their learning to be relevant to the life they live in their communities. Learning about their communities makes it easier for children to understand their place in their community.

Understanding:

- » Family
- » Community
- » Surrounding communities
- » The APY Lands
- » The Far North Region of SA
- » South Australia
- » Other States and Territories
- » Australia
- » The World

Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Language Immersion School

So I have spoken about the need to make learning in remote Anangu communities relevant for young Anangu children, but not about what I would like to see there on the APY Lands for Anangu children. The idea of a Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Language Immersion School that currently doesn't exist on the Lands has been at the front of my thinking for quite some time. The Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Language Immersion School would be a school driven by the community, run by Anangu, with an Anangu Principal leading the way for the Anangu children of the APY Lands. Central to all this for Anangu to be playing an active role in their child's education. Getting involved and participating whether it be teaching because of their own personal knowledge or experience or volunteering in the school environment.

The school would be based central on the APY Lands and be co-ed, "none of this rotation of girls one week boys on the next week." Anangu children need to learn about how to relate to one another, how to make decisions together and build their skills in communication and "quite simply to build a respect for one another." The curriculum would be built together by Anangu, our Anangu teachers with the support of non-Aboriginal people encouraging and drawing out great ideas with a focus on only the best outcome for the child. Central to this process is Anangu leading the way and being inclusive, having the control of the decision making and driving it, Anangu Way.

The purpose of this approach would be to mould and shape young Anangu into competent bilingual, motivated, driven and focused young adults with a strong sense of purpose in life, to confidently function and operate in two worlds, using this strength to establish a solid grounding for the future generations. Strong in Kamiku (Grandmother's) Tjamuku (Grandfather's) ara (way). This curriculum includes the skills and knowledge related to specific sites they are culturally connected to regional understandings, understanding the context of the State they live in, the neighbouring Aboriginal groups, other States and Territories and Australia as a whole and then the rest of the World.

We Anangu often talk about wanting our children to be confident in both worlds but what we struggle with is guiding our children in this complex world when we are also struggling with it too. Let us take a step back to refocus ourselves and think carefully about the path we want our children to travel on, the future we want and the growth we want to see, not only in ourselves, but also across the region and the whole of the country, rippling out to the world.

To have a Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Language Immersion School in the APY Lands, teaching the grammar of our Anangu language(s) and the very skill to teach this to our own would be incredible. High levels of skill in our language underpins critical knowledge for teaching subjects such as land management, biology, ecology, anthropology, art and performance, kinship and astrology, just to name a few. This school would seek to work to establish career pathways and open new network opportunities not only in the APY Lands but also linking with schools both nationally and internationally. We need to aspire to providing a balanced and achievable education that is both grounded and aspiring; an education that privileges Anangu language, knowledge, community members and our collective identity in the education process.





Sam Osborne

Ken Robinson's (2009) book 'The Element: How finding your passion changes everything' describes the 'element' as the point where natural talent and personal passion meet. Here, he highlights story after story of young people who were failing at school; disengaged, turned off and for so many of them, their sense of self-worth ground to dust. And yet, these names are household names as geniuses in their field: Paul McCartney (guitarist and vocalist with the Beatles), Matt Groenig (creator of the Simpsons), and Albert Einstein are notable examples where traditional school-based teaching methods of music, art and maths for example did not inspire, or light the imagination, but instead, built frustration and a sense of failure. This did not mean, of course, that these people did not possess a genius of intelligence, creativity, imagination and passion or that they were unable to learn.

Reading this book left me thinking about Anangu youth who are frequently disengaged from school and according to nationally compared data, 'failing', or 'behind' (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012b; Hughes & Hughes, 2012). I began to reflect on the natural talent and passion that does exist and how Anangu schools might make room for students to find their element in their experience of education. I found myself asking the question, "What do Anangu do when no one (like schools and service providers) is looking because they love it and feel successful? On reflection, I realised that Anangu engage in a hugely diverse range of activities, although they may not necessarily fit into the formal 'learning or earning' frame. Many of these activities can happen without teachers being aware of them going on or fully understanding them.

For example, Anangu continue their ceremonial traditions at certain times of the year, connecting with communities across thousands of kilometres. There are currently focus groups across the APY Lands working on translating parts of the Old

Testament into Pitjantjatjara language during school holidays and as ongoing workshops and activity. Anangu regularly run church services in their communities, in homes and at homelands relatively independent of external supports to do so. These services don't look much like a metropolitan church service, but young people write and perform their own songs, and services are conducted in two or more languages.

Art centres remain a creative, dynamic and vibrant centre of intergenerational knowledge transfer, social and cultural engagement... Oh, and they also make incredibly inspiring works of art. Football and softball teams load up and travel to the far reaches of other desert communities to participate in sporting carnivals. Sporting events are also forums where local bands are showcased.

People hunt, produce bush medicines and spend weekends with the family digging out honey ants and witchetty grubs, allowing adults and children alike to clear their thinking and be in a completely different and positive space. This is critical to the wellbeing of families who continue to face significant stresses and challenges within family and community life.

Anangu regularly attend meetings that deal with complex issues of policy, service provision, community safety, health and education. There are a whole host of Aboriginal Corporations under ORIC (The Office of Registered Indigenous Corporations) or ASIC (the Australian Securities and Investments Commission) comprising a membership base where Anangu sit as directors, members and stakeholders.

Anangu attend AGMs, engage with lawyers and legal processes, finance reports and financial processes, deal with anthropologists and complex cultural overlays within the business of the corporation, engage in broader national social policy debates and advocate for the membership and the community more broadly.

Anangu engage in high level politics and with senior political leaders. A complex and dynamic Aboriginal political landscape is alive and well, following a strong tradition spanning thousands of years.

And all of this whilst teachers are busy teaching.

Turning the economic participation paradigm on its head

An often touted phrase is that 'there is no economy in remote communities'. 'Economic participation' remains a strong focus for the Closing the Gap initiatives and creating and supporting pathways to employment remains a goal for education. The logic is: You go to school and when you finish school, you get a job. And yet, economic participation in the Anangu context needs to be seen in broader terms than the relatively narrow frame of simply getting a job.

The 1981 APY Land Rights Act, the 1980 Katiti land claim and the 1985 hand back of Uluru Kata Tjuta, among others, mean that Anangu sit as land holders under the various agreements, providing significant economic and social opportunities as alternatives to more traditional learning or earning pathways.

Anangu own the land... we need to remember that.

This turns the economic participation paradigm and the power relationships that exist in relation to economies on its head. Makinti has reminded us this evening that for Anangu, education and economic challenges are as much about power as they are about learning or earning.

This is not a startlingly new revelation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, including Noel Pearson, have long argued for the economic potential of land ownership to be realised (Pearson, 2011; Altman, 2005; Bradfield, 2005). But education systems, schools and school leaders can live an existence that is quite separate from the world of Aboriginal corporations, corporate governance and the potential economic and social benefit that these structures offer. As a result, schools are generally not positioned well to prepare students for informed engagement at the board room level. This increases reliance on the professional competence and personal ethics of the generally non-Aboriginal management of local organisations and shifts the locus of power away from the local community.

This is where a 'Red Dirt' Curriculum can come in.

Red Dirt Curriculum; making room for the element

I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't encourage students to succeed in boarding schools or seek trade training opportunities or get a job; in fact it is very important that our current efforts are vastly improved in this regard. But if we are to make room for Anangu students to find their element in education and economic participation, we need to see the essential elements of relationship to the land, intergenerational social relationships, language, ecological knowledge and Anangu histories as important in a dynamic curriculum, as the women have eloquently described this evening.

The concept of a 'Red Dirt' Curriculum can be a challenge in the current political climate where so much public scrutiny exists around the narrow measures of attendance rates and NAPLAN test scores. Widening our view of what a good education is in the Red Dirt context of Anangu education takes courage and needs to be re-imagined from the inside out. I'm also not advocating that we ignore or dismiss the Australian Curriculum, or that classroom by classroom, teachers should begin rewriting the curriculum as they see fit. There is scope within the Australian Curriculum to pursue localised values, knowledge and language and link it back to the broader aims and outcomes of the Australian Curriculum.

I am suggesting that innovative approaches such as building regionally based partnerships for the development of language, knowledge and curriculum could be worth pursuing.

Rather than simply demanding that schools deliver a Red Dirt Curriculum, engaging local organisations, schools, universities, training and employment service providers and Anangu elders as partners and teachers would build capacity into the system to assist local schools to ensure that a Red Dirt Curriculum is a first class curriculum. Such an approach builds opportunities for training and employment for Anangu, but importantly, privileges Anangu, their knowledge and experience as valued and valuable in our schools as part of a Red Dirt education.

This begs the question of what an Anangu education should be for. As a corporation interpreter, I regularly work with Anangu who sit at meetings as traditional owner representatives,

corporation directors, corporation members, advisory board representatives as well as community members. These roles demand complex, high order thinking skills that are applied across the complex cultural landscape.

In these capacities, Anangu make important decisions about so many aspects of community life and it stands to reason that schools should make space to prepare young people for this type of work. Even though it may not constitute formal employment, it certainly engages Anangu at the threshold of economic participation with opportunities to influence economic and social participation into the future.

I wonder how many of you here this evening from city homes have been involved in stakeholder meetings in the last 6 months to discuss the service delivery agreements about providing your home with power, water treatment, law and order, attendance rates at the local school, the legal tenure of the land you live on or the vexed question of what on earth is happening with young people in the community?

A Red Dirt curriculum should not attempt to mirror a mainstream curriculum, but needs to unashamedly amplify Anangu knowledge and the things that are important to Anangu, building confidence to then take on the other aspects of western knowledge, skills and social norms. Scaffolding from one knowledge system to the other and back again may well be important pedagogical innovations in this type of approach. Such an approach can still be linked to or embedded within the broader Australian curriculum, but needs to be well supported and intentionally resourced to bring these teams together to assist schools and teachers to engage students in this type of learning approach.

In terms of the potential negative impacts that prioritising local values might have on remote schools, it could be fair to say that if attendance and NAPLAN results are the measure of our success, we couldn't really do any worse than we currently are, so why not give it a go?

Historically, Harris' (1990) concept of 'two way' schooling and Yunupingu's (1999) 'both ways' concept advocated an approach that worked from local language and knowledge and scaffolded students across into engagement with western knowledge, but the systemic and policy priorities

in remote education over the last decade have shifted to the point that many current remote educators would not understand the fullness of what was proposed some 20 – 30 years ago. This has occurred to the point that terms such as 'bi-lingual', 'both ways' or 'two ways' are woven into curriculum and pedagogical approaches that are perhaps better described as 'one way' in both their intent and in practice. It could be worthwhile revisiting the historical knowledge and curriculum debates in informing future planning and innovation. Katrina has argued this evening for the need to work from a position of affirming students and building their confidence as a foundation for embracing new learning and social contexts. This is an important insight.

The recent opening of the trade training centre at Umuwa and the semi-residential boarding innovation at Nyangatjatjara College in Yulara provides opportunities to bring students together to engage in relevant topics and meet with expert teaching teams. Schools might be thinking, "Where will we find people who can teach all of this 'Red Dirt' stuff?" In the first instance, evolving technologies have something to offer alternative delivery models. Short term intensive delivery of curriculum also provides further opportunities to make this possible. We need to remember that Land Councils such as APY and the CLC (Central Land Council, Northern Territory) employ Corporation managers, anthropologists, interpreters and linguists, environmental scientists, legal advisors, accountants and community development managers. This is part of the suite of professionals that seem to sit in isolation to schools.

In addition, Art centres stand as an incredible educational and knowledge asset. Organisations such as interpreter services, media organisations and bible translators have the skills and knowledge to bring together teams to deliver a range of language based curriculum where capacity is otherwise lacking at the local school level. The resources are there to build mutual educational and economic benefit, but we need to see knowledge and expertise in far broader terms than the school based teaching staff.

In short, we need to re-imagine education delivery and who it is that constitutes our teaching staff. This can present challenges for education systems and perhaps independent school structures are best positioned to adopt some innovative and

alternative approaches to curriculum delivery, although structural reforms such as we are seeing in the APY lands may offer opportunities to reposition the system to be able to deliver education and curriculum under a more flexible approach in regards to industrial arrangements, curriculum delivery and the kinds of subjects and knowledge that constitute an Anangu education.

Fundamental to all of this is the need to bring the intergenerational assets that exist in the community inside the metaphorical school walls and the concept of what school business really is.

That is, Anangu need to be front and centre in Anangu education.

When we synergise the knowers and the knowledge of both Indigenous and western knowledge, education can offer students a much broader experience.

Consider what a year 8 or 9 subject in Anangu history might offer. Firstly, I think many young people in Anangu communities would be largely unaware of their grandparents' struggle for land rights. This is important to know and they need to hear it from their elders as well as from a western knowledge perspective.

Secondly, land rights as a historical focus, opens a wonderful entrée into Red Dirt legal studies, where the legal implications of existing land rights agreements should be taught and explored.

Thirdly, Red Dirt economics could explore the economic implications of Anangu histories and land holder agreements. The business of corporate governance should be offered and linked in practical pathways opportunities to Aboriginal corporations, much like work experience.

Involving the wider community as part of an expert teaching team allows subjects such as the arts, language and translation, cultural studies, environmental science and connecting education with Anangu ecological knowledge to become possible. Learning about the land, the environment and the ecology is a critical part of the education and economy relationship for Anangu into the future and an Anangu education needs to make room for ecological knowledge in the teaching and learning process. Engaging a wide circle of knowledge and expertise into our teaching teams

is common practice in schools to deliver specialised programs such as football programs, mental health and wellbeing curriculum and so on. By privileging Anangu as specialist experts in Anangu education, these types of partnership approaches can help to deliver specialised curriculum such as the language focus Karina has suggested.

Both Ways as an alternative structure

What if a 'Red Dirt' curriculum could also open up new economic and knowledge exchange opportunities for communities and engage Anangu students more effectively with western education and social contexts? Most Anangu communities have exchange relationships with urban schools. What if mainstream students in these exchange schools could enrol in Red Dirt subjects such as environmental science, Anangu histories or 'Red Dirt' legal studies with a focus on land rights, land tenure and Aboriginal corporations, for example? Working from the inside out, these students could attend a semi-residential workshop in Anangu communities and could host a return visit at their school, building stronger reciprocal relationships with Anangu schools and students.

If, as is currently the case, the success of Aboriginal corporations and community organisations depends so heavily on finding competent, committed and ethical managers, it would seem sensible to be investing in educating future teachers, nurses and managers from a Red Dirt paradigm. And if, as Nakata et al. (2012) suggest, there are critical tools for non-Indigenous educators to successfully position themselves at the cultural interface, then perhaps we should be proactively equipping and growing the kind of 'help' we would like to see in the future.

Education structures in Anangu schools across the tri-state remote region are currently undergoing significant changes. This offers opportunities for positive change, but in spite of the ebb and flow of systemic and policy restructure, we hope you have been able to acquire a strong sense of the important principles that need to guide educators, leaders and education systems in preparing young people in Anangu schools for a future that finds them in their element; confident in their own knowledge and in engaging with Western knowledge, and capable in their leadership of generations to come in the Red Dirt context of Anangu communities.



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Red Dirt Curriculum

History in concentric circles – local, regional, national, global:

- » Language, culture, contact history, contact and community history, (Ara irititja and oral histories as a resource)

Legal studies in concentric circles:

- » Land rights and the legal/economic implications of land tenure
- » Corporation law, government and governance/decision making, Aboriginal corporations, trust arrangements, tax/tax law (eg. PBI status) etc.
- » Understanding legal agreements/MOUs (memorandum of understandings)

Economics in concentric circles:

- » Land tenure and economic models, enterprise models: tourism, hospitality, cattle, service delivery, carbon economies etc.
- » Financial aspects to corporate governance: budgeting, auditing and accountability, asset management, investment
- » Personal financial literacy

The Arts in concentric circles:

- » Traditional music, western music, sound engineering/recording, performance
- » Visual media, multi-media, technology based media
- » Dance
- » Visual arts

Cultural studies in concentric circles:

- » Language, Tjukurpa, wellbeing, connecting to country
- » Translation and interpreting
- » Understanding 'both ways' approaches to knowledge

Research in concentric circles:

- » Ethics, purpose of research, power and research, understanding data for informing action

Ecological knowledge in concentric circles:

- » Connecting with traditional knowledge, land management, ranger work
- » Tourism
- » Environmental studies and sustainability





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