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[McLaughlin, Juliana M. & Whatman, Susan L.](#) (2011) The potential of critical race theory in decolonising university curricula. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. (In Press)

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The Potential of Critical Race Theory in Decolonising University Curricula

(Short Title = CRT in University Curricula)

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Abstract

This paper critiques our experiences as non-Indigenous Australian educators of working with numerous embedding Indigenous perspectives curricular projects at an Australian university. Reporting on these project outcomes alone, while useful in identifying limitations, does not illustrate ways in which future embedding and decolonising projects can persist and evolve. Deeper analysis is required of the ways in which Indigenous knowledge and perspectives are perceived, and what ‘embedding’ IK in university curricula truly means to various educational stakeholders.

To achieve a deeper analysis and propose ways to invigorate the continuing decolonisation of Australian university curricula, this paper critically interrogates the methodology and conceptualisation of Indigenous knowledge in embedding Indigenous perspectives (EIP) in the university curriculum using tenets of critical race theory. Accordingly, we conduct this analysis from the standpoint that EIP should not subscribe to the luxury of independence of scholarship from politics and activism. The learning objective is to create a space to legitimise politics in the intellectual / academic realm (Dei, 2008, p. 10). We conclude by arguing that critical race theory’s emancipatory, future and action-oriented goals for curricula (Dei, 2008) would enhance effective and sustainable embedding initiatives, and ultimately, preventing such initiatives from returning to the status quo (McLaughlin & Whatman, 2008).

Key Words: Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous perspectives, Critical Race theory (CRT), decolonising, curriculum, tertiary education, universities,

Introduction

We are indebted to the contributions of our colleagues whose collaborations in decolonising curricula and embedding Indigenous perspectives have been extensive and ongoing (See for example Dreise, 2007; Hart, 2003; Phillips, Whatman, Hart and Winslett, 2005; Phillips & Lampert, 2005; & Phillips, 2007). We also acknowledge the traditional owners of Brisbane, upon whose land this knowledge has developed, discussed and communally negotiated. Our objective in publishing in the Asia Pacific Journal of Education is to engage with other Indigenous scholars globally, but particularly with Asia and Pacific Indigenous scholars who work in similar decolonising projects within their own contexts. After our years of experience in embedding Indigenous perspectives (hereafter referred to as EIP), we argue that the success of decolonisation of education depends upon the efforts of non-Indigenous peoples to re-examine their positions and the control they exert over curriculum decision-making and reform. We hope these discussions will invite Indigenous scholars of postcolonial states as well like-minded Australian scholars to critically reflect on decolonising their systems of knowledge and education by learning from the struggles of Indigenous scholars from 'settled Western nations'.

As non-Indigenous Australians, we came to work in our University's Indigenous Students Centre through different pathways, initially with similar social justice agendas. However, we have become advocates for Indigenous knowledge, decolonising methodologies, and research ethics and protocols within academia with our own awareness that Indigenous Knowledge incorporates but transcends social justice ideas. Our university is committed to embedding Indigenous Knowledge and EIP into curricula through the Queensland University of Technology's [QUT] Statement of Reconciliation (www.reconciliation.qut.edu.au). The

Statement allows the university to recognise that Indigenous Australian people are the custodians of *this* land, in accordance with their laws and customs, the importance of Indigenous cultures to Australia's heritage and the dynamic contribution made by Indigenous Australian people to the University and wider communities. Whilst there are many responsibilities which come with this recognition, our focus in this paper is upon the development of sustainable approaches to EIP within university curricula as a consequence of teaching and learning research. This reconciliation statement has provided a necessary platform from which teaching and learning and research activities in Indigenous education at our university should be conceptualised and engaged (QUT, 2001).

After a number of years of supporting various decolonising and embedding projects around the university, in earnest between 2000 and 2005 due to a number of large teaching and learning grants, we have had the opportunity to reflect upon the enduring outcomes of such endeavours around the university. Having described these projects elsewhere (see McLaughlin & Whatman, 2008), in this paper we critically interrogate the conceptualisation of Indigenous knowledge and methodology of those projects, using critical race theory and emerging understandings of Indigenous knowledge, to consider the conditions which have made those endeavours successful or otherwise. We contend that the emancipatory, future and action-oriented goals for curricula (Dei, 2008) possible through CRT would enhance effective and sustainable EIP initiatives, ultimately preventing a return to the status quo of what Moreton-Robinson (2005) described as the *a priori* of Western knowledge in universities. Hence, we conclude by suggesting a preliminary framework for future embedding projects.

Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Perspectives

Indigenous education at all levels in Australia has been a subject of countless inquiries and has inspired useful debates between and amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators (Hart, 2003; Herbert, 2005; Lampert, 2005; Nakata, 2006 & 2007). With contemporary national approaches to Indigenous education still being couched in ‘deficit’ terminology, for example, the Australian Government’s ‘*Closing the gap*’ (Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009) policy for Indigenous education, the roles of universities as catalysts for decolonising curricula by centring Indigenous knowledge remains imperative. Although decolonising knowledge in Western universities usually occurs in tension with traditional Western constructions of Indigenous epistemologies and cultures (see Battiste, 2000; Battiste & Youngblood-Henderson, 2000; Ka’ai, 2005; Smith, 1999; & Thaman, 2005), this should not deter university educators. Rather, it should be regarded as an uncomfortable, power-shifting and transformational necessity for personal and professional practice (Dreise, 2007; Phillips, 2005).

Nakata (2007) noted that within the broader discipline of Indigenous studies, rigorous debates about what counts as Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous perspectives or Indigenous studies are occurring around the world (see Agrawal 1995; 1996; & Smith 1999, 2005). These kinds of debates need to happen on the ground, within institutions, and between all stakeholders in Indigenous knowledges, before any pathway to embedding can be realistically achieved. Nakata described this meeting site as the ‘cultural interface’ which is ‘*the intersection of the Western and Indigenous domains...the place where we live and learn, the place that conditions our lives, the place that shapes our futures and, more to the point, the place where*

we are active agents in our own lives – where we make our decisions - our lifeworld” (2002, p. 285).

Nakata's (2002) theorisation of the cultural interface being a site where Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges are already in contestation and tension with each other contrasts to the representation of Indigenous knowledge as being “outside” of the academy. Smith (2005, p.86) argued that within the Western academy, Indigenous knowledge is conceptualised as “Other”, concurring with Frantz Fanon (1963) and Albert Memmi (1967). In being the “Other”, it constitutes Indigenous identities as ‘colonised’ as much as it inherently constitutes ‘Westerners’ as ‘the colonisers’. However, as Indigenous peoples knowledge systems have existed long before the ‘gaze’ of the coloniser, Indigenous identity, knowledge and perspectives exist outside of, as well as within, the coloniser/colonised cultural interface.

Indeed, the struggle of reclaiming ownership of Indigenous knowledge has picked momentum across the Asia-Pacific, by such prominent scholars such as Marie Battiste (2000), Terri Janke (2009), Tania Ka'ia (2005), Marcia Langton (1993; 2006), Karen Martin (2002; 2008), Manulani Meyer (2001), Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2005), Martin Nakata (2002; 2007), Lester Rigney (1999), Konai Thaman (2005) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999; 2005). This struggle reflects the legacy of theoretical contestation by Indigenous scholars and activists in the project of decolonising knowledge and systems of knowing; scholars and activists who consistently contested colonial forms of knowledge about Indigenous peoples and whose work made recent progress possible (Hart, 2007). We argue that this decolonising project is both political and deeply personal, as those who take up the challenge live these contestations within the epistemological and cultural interface (Nakata, 2002) and a never ending platform of political struggle (Dei, 2008).

Decolonising knowledge in universities therefore involves a deep sense of recognition of and challenge to colonial forms of knowledge, pedagogical strategies and research methodologies. Such a position draws from the critique of systems of knowledge representation from the work of Edward Said, the founder of postcolonialism, in his seminal work of *Orientalism* in 1978. Hart and Whatman (1998, p.1) contend that:

it is important that teachers, students and researchers within Indigenous studies remind themselves that much of the literature on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders can be ideologically traced back to the emergence of 'knowledge' about native peoples in the context of European imperialism and expansion from the fifteenth century. Care must therefore be taken in not conveying 'scientific' rational knowledge as perhaps the hidden agenda or notion of assumptions of European 'superiority' and non-European inferiority.

Embedding Indigenous perspectives (EIP) in a variety of disciplines in one university location cannot ignore these struggles that exist within Australian universities attempting to decolonise knowledge. A commitment to decolonising processes evolved as a way of redressing colonial processes of knowledge generation and its implications of imperialism and knowledge/power relations. Thus, decolonising curriculum at the universities requires recognition of colonial hegemony and forms of domination within academic institutions (Ka'ia, 2005).

Nakata (2004) argues that what is required is recognition of the complexities and tensions at the cross-cultural interface and the need for negotiation between Indigenous knowledge,

standpoints or perspectives and Western disciplinary knowledge systems so that meanings are reframed or reinterpreted (p.14). As Williamson and Dalal (2007) noted, attending to these cross-cultural negotiations, and the pedagogical practices they imply, are profoundly challenging for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. This statement serves as an accurate synthesis of the collective experiences of EIP into the curriculum at our university. We argue that without recognition of Indigenous knowledge, projects for embedding Indigenous knowledge and perspectives would revert back to the colonial tradition of non-Indigenous people representing Indigenous knowledges, cultures and peoples through tradition, simplistic approaches with a self-serving agenda and priorities.

The EIP projects at our university reflect the way political agendas can impact on Indigenous affairs in an Australian context. While our university's commitment to reconciliation continues to be fulfilled, our experiences of EIP strongly suggest that universities can make a major contribution to the spirit of Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and enhance race relations in Australia. However, the success of these projects depends entirely on the recognition of Indigenous knowledge in disciplines and the preparedness of non-Indigenous academics to investigate their own subjectivities, their own cultural positioning, in order to fully engage with embedding Indigenous perspectives into the content, teaching methodologies and assessments (Nakata, 2002; Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council [IHEAC], 2006). As Williamson and Dalal (2007) concluded from their embedding project, *"such approaches recognise various levels of engagement beyond the "intellectual"; they insist on a consistent unsettling of Western authority; they acknowledge Indigenous positions and positioning; and require critical self reflections"* (p.51).

Indeed, when these projects were initiated, none included a literature base that defined and signified the importance of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge. Such literature on Indigenous knowledge could have informed the epistemological and research methodology for their EIP projects. Secondly, a substantial literature review could have informed the project teams' own understanding of Indigenous knowledge and prepared non-Indigenous academics in the various faculties to negotiate the knowledge interface with Indigenous academics at the university. Thirdly, a synthesis of relevant literature in Indigenous knowledge could have provided the theoretical and conceptual platform for realistic curriculum reform (see Lampert, 2005). The EIP project discussed by Williamson and Dalal (2007) limited its own potential 'to move beyond the intellectual' because of its underdeveloped literature base in Indigenous knowledge. Without such theory, it is extremely difficult to critique the way that established Western knowledge 'about' Indigenous peoples and cultures simultaneously limits the inclusion of 'new' Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, not only 'about' Indigenous peoples but 'about' non-Indigenous peoples. Conceptualising projects without IK obscures the roles and positions of curriculum stakeholders within the cultural interface and severely undermines the sustainability of curriculum reform in the absence of an ongoing Indigenous presence (knowledge and/or people) in the faculty. The challenge to go beyond the intellectual should inspire those who consistently engage in the cultural interface to explore new and revolutionary theories that acknowledge and respect Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. It is to this exploration that we now turn.

Critical Race Theory [CRT] in Education

The experiences of the four EIP projects at our university have challenged us to look beyond the traditional theoretical understandings and methodological approaches to Indigenous Studies, such as those regularly found in the Humanities. The uniqueness of Aboriginal histories and existence necessitates a conceptual and practical distinction of issues affecting Aboriginal communities and those of other racialised communities. As Dei (2008) poignantly asserts, the epistemological and pedagogical understanding of oppression point to powerful connections of racisms and Aboriginal colonisation, as well as imperial and cultural genocide (p. 9).

Critical race theory (CRT) offers a new and revolutionary movement and puts race at the centre of critical analysis (Roithmayer, 1999). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) advanced CRT in Education from legal studies, through their publication of *Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education*, moving the pioneering work in Law by Derek Bell and Alan Freeman (Delgado, 1995). Given the history of Australian Indigenous Studies and education, CRT is highly applicable, particularly with its commitment to transforming social structures and advancing the political commitment of racial emancipation (Roithmayer, 1999, p. 1). Some of the key relevant tenets of CRT and their potential application to EIP in a university curriculum are hereby outlined.

CRT is not simply a product of the civil rights movement in the United States of America, but of critical thinking. According to Ladson-Billing and Tate (1995), Ladson-Billings (1999), Dixson and Rousseau (2005) and Milner (2007), there are a number of standpoints from which CRT is asserted. The first point concerns the ingrained nature of race and racism, which is so endemic and pervasive in society and its institutions, such as education, that it becomes normalised, especially within the curriculum. This pervasiveness requires an

acknowledgement then of the importance of narrative and counter-narrative: works that challenge the dominant ideology. Second, the naming of one's reality or voice is central to the work of CRT theorists (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Those employing a CRT approach should therefore emphasise and value multiple and varied voices and vantage points of lived experiences people of colour. As argued by critical race theorists, experiential knowledge of people of colour is that society, and its institutions such as education, is deeply structured by racism (Delgado, in Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 15).

Another key tenet of CRT described by Derrick Bell (1980) is that of interest convergence. Bell more recently argued that the interests of African American peoples will only be accommodated when that interest converges with the interests of dominant White groups privileged in policy-making positions (2004, p. 69; also see Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 14). Milner (2007, p.391) further characterises CRT as a theory that enables educational researchers to understand implications of "interest convergence" in research processes. He argues that people in power might discursively support research, policies and practice that do not oppress or discriminate against others as long as those in power do not have to alter or give up their own systems of privilege in order to fight against racism (Milner, 2007, p.391). Following on from his position in research, Milner (2008) introduces an evolving theory of disruptive movement in teacher education against racist policies and practices arguing that 'racial equality and equity for people of colour will be pursued and advanced when they converge with the interests, needs and expectations and ideologies of Whites' (p. 333). We, therefore conclude that power and interests are connected, and a CRT analysis can point to sites within university curricula where, and describe how, systems of privilege need to change.

In the pioneering work on CRT in education, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) located a set of propositions about the intersections of race and property (p.48). While this concept may be highly problematic for some critics of CRT, the argument for race as property is justifiable with Australia's history of colonisation under the proclamation of *terra nullius*, dispossession of land, stolen generations, stolen wages, and a history of Indigenous educational provision based on assumptions and models of student and community deficit. While Australia and the United States have very different histories, race has played a fundamental role in shaping relationships of power between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and the notions of citizenship through inclusions and exclusions (see McDonald, 2003). While we find these arguments for race as property highly applicable to the Australian context (see for example Langton, Mazel, Palmer, Shain & Tehan, 2006; Moreton-Robinson, 2007), the scope of this paper restricts an extended exploration.

These tenets of CRT echo those claimed by Nakata (2002, 2007) about essential debates and tensions to be explored between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within the cultural interface. An honest and forthright acknowledgement of these underpinning power and control relations is essential for sustainable action in embedding Indigenous perspectives in curricula. To generate such debates and explore these tensions in the curricular cultural interface, Milner (2007) proposed a nonlinear framework that focuses on several interrelated qualities: researching the self, researching the self in relation to others, engaged reflection and representation, and shifting from the self to system (pp. 394 – 397). In doing so, Milner circumvents pointless debate about “who” has the “right” to work and research with peoples of different cultural backgrounds:

It seems that researchers instead should be actively engaged, thoughtful, and forthright regarding tensions that can surface when conducting research where issues of race and culture are concerned. Moreover, it is important that researchers possess or are pursuing deeper racial and cultural knowledge about themselves and the community or people under study (Milner, 2007, p.388).

Indeed, CRT offers possibilities of engagement through critical self reflections in a process that is progressive toward anti-colonial education. It is imperative that embedding Indigenous perspectives in the university curricula need to be framed through recognition of Indigenous knowledge, and broader anti – colonial struggles and aspirations.

The application of critical race theory in education is slowly progressing across the globe, shifting broadly from its origins in United States legal studies arena (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Milner, 2008). Traction on critical race theory is being explored in critique of education policy and practices in the United Kingdom through work of scholars such as David Gillborn (2005, 2006). Recent projects in reforming university curricula and pedagogy through critical race theory is gaining momentum in South Africa, as evident in projects focussed on transforming future human services professionals' engagement and understanding of racial discourses (Carolissen, Leibowitz, Bozalek, Swartz, Nicholls & Rohlede, 2010). The possibility of critical race theory as theoretical and methodological tool in designing exemplary pedagogical practices for Indigenous Australian students had been explored by McDonald (2003). She argues critical race theory is relatively unacknowledged in Australian research which may facilitate how educators learn to listen to the counter-stories of Indigenous students and their families. Indeed, the potential for critical race theory in education is untapped and incomplete, but 'cannot be ignored by the academy beyond

North America' (Gillborn, 2006, p.11). We return the discussion to how critical race theory could facilitate the recognition of the place of Indigenous knowledge within the academy.

Critical Race Theory [CRT] and the 'discipline' of Indigenous Knowledge

Analytical approaches such as CRT have been previously suggested as offering an appropriate framework for understanding the project of embedding Indigenous perspectives and knowledge in education (see Hart, 2007; Watson, 2005). CRT is transdisciplinary and can illuminate the hegemonic and appropriating capacities of 'Western' disciplines and critique the dissonance that currently exists between Indigenous and 'Western' ways of knowing. Thus, the complexities of the interactions at the cultural interface and the attendant difficulties in achieving cross-cultural understandings can be negotiated. With these negotiations, the curriculum reorientations that Williamson and Dalal (2007, p.52) suggested from their EIP project could become a reality: reorientations that enable and engage alternative ways of knowing and require university students to deconstruct their own cultural situatedness in academia. Moreover, Nakata (2007, p.7) stresses the need for more research problematizing the endeavour of embedding Indigenous perspectives, as we are attempting in this paper, to grow / expand the discipline of Indigenous Knowledge within the academy.

Indeed, Indigenous knowledge is part of the struggle of self-determination, political and intellectual sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. Claiming Indigenous knowledge in the Western academy is an anti-colonial struggle for independence from exploitative relations of schooling and knowledge production. For critical learning, the strength of Indigeneity lies in the synergies of culture, history and identity. It is the search for, and the creation of space to be recognised as an Indigenous identity that exists outside of the identity that is often

constructed within Euro-American ideology / hegemony. Dei (2008, p. 10) also proposes a number of principles as a way of offering conceptual and analytical clarity of this Indigenous discursive / anti-colonial framework. He argues that land, history, culture and spiritual identity have powerful explanatory powers in contemporary communities and socio-political encounters and are sites and sources of asymmetrical power relations that are structured along lines of difference (2008, p.10). An Indigenous discursive / anti-colonial framework also critiques the assumed independence of 'scholarship', 'politics' and 'activism'. Within the cultural interface, scholarship cannot be disconnected from one's identity. Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in academia is an expression of knowledge aspirations and demands that the mainstream will perceive as 'radical', 'political', or 'aggressive', without acknowledging that White knowledge aspirations and systems are already political and aggressive. The identity of non-Indigenous people in the maintenance of White knowledge systems is just as important as the identity of Indigenous people in embedding Indigenous knowledge in university curricula but the system attempts to create an artificial separation of identity from scholarship. Thus a decolonising approach recognises the active obscuring of White identity and cultures from white systems of knowledge reproduction at the same time as it attempts to acknowledge the imperativeness of Indigenous identity and cultures in embedding Indigenous knowledge into those same systems. A decolonising approach recognises how 'messy' and 'strained' this work can become, particularly for Indigenous academics and those who work in Indigenous Centres who are overburdened with it (Page and Asmar, 2008).

The role and consequences of White identity in White knowledge reproduction was critiqued, post-project, from another of the four EIP projects reported by Carpenter, Field and Barnes (2002). This project began with a faculty-wide staff development workshop into "Whiteness"

(see Moreton-Robinson, 2005). An unfortunate but predictable consequence of this starting point was a wholesale reluctance by the mostly non-Indigenous staff to engage in EIP in any way, mired by what Milner (2007) warned was pointless debate about non-Indigenous people's 'right' to do this work. Indeed, there is the possibility of misinterpretation of Whiteness, as *'critical scholarship on Whiteness is not an assault of white people per se, it is an assault on the socially constructed and constantly reinforced power of white identifications and interests'* (Gillborn, 2005, p. 488; see also Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Hence, the next phase of the project was to hire an Indigenous lecturer, at the lowest level of academic appointment, and to encumber that junior academic with a full teaching load and responsibility for EIP across the entire faculty. Watson (2005) noted the ironic paradox – that none of the non-Indigenous legal 'experts' already within the academy had the expertise to successfully embed Indigenous perspectives into their own legal teaching practice, yet an Indigenous practitioner with the necessary expertise could only be appointed as a 'junior' academic, yet over-burdened with a senior academic workload. Analysed from a CRT viewpoint, such a practice may illustrate what Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) and Dixson and Rousseau (2005, p.12) classified as an 'apartheid of knowledge', in which dominant discourse within mainstream devalues the scholarship of the faculty of colour. Indigenous Australian scholars such as Page and Asmar (2008) described such practice as typical of the overburden placed upon Indigenous academics in Australian institutions. The lessons here for sustainable EIP relate to, once again, the need for commitment to messy, uncomfortable, power-shifting curricular work by those tenured within the cultural interface and outcomes tied to negotiated political action (Dei, 2008).

Ultimately, some key questions and actions arise as academics commence a process of acknowledging a system of White privilege as they endeavour into embedding Indigenous perspectives into their curriculum and pedagogy. Non-Indigenous scholars need to assess how they currently operate in this cultural interface, and take responsibility to accept that they should acknowledge, listen to counter-stories of through Indigenous perspectives and voices (see McDonald, 2003). They need to ask themselves how they can start this journey, particularly as it is both difficult and challenging work to embed Indigenous knowledge in their daily work as scholars and educational practitioners.

Learning from Experience – a framework for future EIP projects

We have argued previously that the sustainability of EIP projects are dependent on some common conditions and principles underwriting the nature of the processes of embedding and the intended and actual outcomes (McLaughlin and Whatman, 2008). These conditions have been drawn from extensive analysis of EIP projects at the university, by privileging Indigenous voices and scholarship, and more broadly from decolonising literature and CRT. These EIP projects are briefly discussed here in order to exemplify list of conditions and guidelines for EIP at the conclusion of this paper. For example, one of these projects was substantially concerned with curricular development and reform, and professional development of staff, predicated on a partially correct view that Indigenous perspectives were largely absent from the faculty's core business of teaching, notwithstanding an Indigenous Studies minor delivered by the Indigenous Unit. The absence of some investigations and explorations into the justification of the lack of Indigenous perspectives in curriculum, the absence of a thorough conceptualisation and theorisation of resistance to the knowledge

(Phillips, 2005, p. 3), and the absence of some understanding of staff resistance to EIP processes caused some mis-apprehension as to the goal of the projects in the first instance.

What transpired from our EIP project experiences was that these projects were outcomes – driven rather than engaged in decolonising processes, with outcomes particularly framed as graduate capacities and professional competencies. The political resolution to honour the University's Reconciliation Statement impacted on the approaches and models of teaching and learning. While it may be argued that graduate capabilities and professional competencies should be developed prior to entering the professions, the reality is that Indigenous knowledge and perspectives are not linear, thus may not be achieved at the end of the university learning experience. This does not mean that the expectations are not met in the future. As Phillips (2005) argues, it is the lived experiences, the daily lives of Indigenous peoples with whom university graduates interact in future capacities, that require recognition and acknowledgment. Without approaches that position Indigenous and non-Indigenous people into regular contact with each other, through the processes of decision-making in curriculum matters, this lived experience, and the potential for epistemological and ontological shifts to be made by non-Indigenous people now or in the future, cannot occur. Thus, projects more concerned with outcomes in a designated time period rather than processes, we would argue, are not sustainable for embedding Indigenous perspectives at the university level.

All projects but one were conceptualised by non-Indigenous academics. Indeed, the extensive consultation with Indigenous staff and community representatives conducted prior to implementation should be acknowledged as significant to Indigenous ways of being. Thus, ownership of Indigenous knowledge needs to be recognised. The worst case scenario could

be a situation which offers an “*impoverished version of Aboriginal pedagogy and the promotion of corrupted understandings of Indigenous knowledge*” (Nakata, 2004, p. 11; see also Williamson and Dalal, 2007). As Hart (2003) argues, for Aboriginal people, teaching is a personal, political and professional practice and decolonisation in action.

The following table illustrates what we believed to be the major outcomes of the four EIP projects.

(Table I here).

The asterisk above notes the tension between reciprocity, responsibility and distributive fairness, derived from the NHMRC guidelines for ethical research conduct, and the expectation that the staff from Indigenous Centres will continue to ensure faculty EIP projects continue to operate. Teaching in core units for proper remuneration is one area of tension. Getting faculties to commit to employing tenured Indigenous staff is another.

(Table II here).

This table attempts to illustrate some of the many areas requiring critical analysis and operational reform in educational settings. It clearly illustrates just how much the success of EIP is in the hands of non-Indigenous people and thus the true weight of responsibility. For example, continuing with the EIP project critiqued by Watson (2005), Positions and Duty Statements and the proper resourcing of IK are the responsibility of senior management. Academics working on EIP projects may make recommendations to senior management that incur a power shift in curricular decision-making and budgetary commitments for appropriate

staffing but will senior management action these recommendations? Is their commitment to Indigenous knowledge and EIP at the same level? We commend the power of scholarship and the academic freedom it entails, as those who commit to work in this cultural interface live these contestations in their daily projects, while unpopular to some quarters, such commitment cannot be independent from politics and activism.

Conclusion

Situating EIP and decolonising curricula alongside a broader international agenda of CRT in education represents a strategic way to achieve aspirations and commitment to reform educational and social structures for social transformation and racial emancipation. We stress that EIP does not reside within CRT, as EIP is a transdisciplinary concept and lived, holistic practice, informed by Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. Like CRT, EIP has gained momentum from a variety of civil and Indigenous rights platforms, such as the Reconciliation Movement in Australia, but it remains driven by Indigenous priorities such as cultural survival and protection and rights to land. The potential of CRT as a theoretical framework in Indigenous Studies remains unrecognised and untapped by largely a White academy.

With respect to institutional political interest and the timely fashion in which it promotes recognition of the 'other' knowledge systems, it creates the space in which radical and transformative knowledges can be generated and debated. By speaking to the academy within a framework of CRT, we aim to demystify EIP and generate a shared sense of responsibility and urgency amongst like-minded networks. EIP is not the preserve or responsibility of only Indigenous people – it is the political, personal, and reformative professional practice of all educators. For non-Indigenous scholars, it is impossible to retain

a colour-blind knowledge perspective once self interrogation of a colonial system of privilege has been undertaken, challenging education scholars to integrate / embed Indigenous knowledge into teaching and learning in universities. Embedding Indigenous perspectives in a university curriculum is a complex process as it is deeply entrenched within projects of decolonisation.

Locating these discussions of EIP alongside CRT reinforces Dei's (2008) timely reminder that we should not subscribe to the luxury of independence of scholarship from politics and activism. We must create learning and teaching spaces that legitimise politics in the intellectual / academic realm.

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Table I: Sustainable versus Non-Sustainable outcomes of EIP Projects

Sustainable Outcomes	Non-Sustainable Outcomes
Networks of EIP supporters, internally & externally (goodwill)	Publications
Webpages attached to faculty site with clear responsibility for maintenance	One-off websites/ Blackboard sites tied to grant funding
Indigenous assessment and unit pathways across existing courses	Loss of group understanding of EIP from professional development when staff move on
2 new Indigenous core units*	Limited term appointments of Indigenous academic & project staff
	Indigenous Centre staff underwriting faculty EIP initiatives*

Table II: Conditions and Principles of Sustainable EIP.

Conditions and Principles for sustainable EIP drawn from CRT and Indigenous knowledge	What these could translate into...
Personal , Professional & Institutional commitment	Duty Statements, Performance standards, Institutional commitment statements, personal initiatives & networks, Graduate capabilities
Deconstructing own cultural situatedness	Personal reflection, ongoing faculty-based staff development, assessment criteria
Acknowledging hegemonic & appropriating ways of Western disciplines	Discussing Whiteness openly, deconstructing (dismantling) previous modes of teaching “about” Indigenous peoples
Explicating their specific cultural interface – problematising (resistance to?) EIP	Uncovering all stakeholders. Regular meetings. <i>Who stands to lose if the status quo (systems of privilege) changes with EIP projects?</i>
Recognising the validity of, and Privileging Indigenous voices & acquiring Indigenous knowledge	Prescribed reading/texts, formalising partnerships, community curriculum committees, following Indigenous research protocols
Social, historical & political emphasis in curriculum , resulting in social justice action	New content, action –oriented assessment, redressing inequality within the institution (i.e. Proper resourcing of IK)