

## **Chapter 4**

### **Challenging the myth that ‘the parents don’t care’: Family teachings about education for ‘educationally disengaged’ young people**

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#### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on families as sites of pedagogical work. We take up a focus on the pedagogical work of families in relation to formal education and educational exclusion. When describing families’ pedagogical work in relation to formal education, we pay particular attention to their teachings about the school and university. Family pedagogies that impact upon educational participation and exclusion are important to consider in parallel with this book’s focus on family pedagogies in relation to health. This is because there is a close relationship between levels of educational attainment and health; the more years of formal education that a person experiences, the better their health outcomes (ABS, 2013; Cutler and Lleras-Muney, 2010; Egerter et al, 2006). Our aim is to demonstrate that family pedagogies of formal education are key to practices of educational inclusion and exclusion and as such they are important to understand, and to reconsider in educational theory. It is simply not the case that all young people who are disengaged from education (either not attending at all or attending sporadically) have a background lacking in family pedagogies connected with education.

Young people who are educationally disengaged or at the margins of formal education are rarely consulted in educational literature and policy-making (Bland, 2012; Duffy and Elwood, 2013; Harwood and Allan, 2014; Morgan et al, 2008). It is not surprising, therefore, to find that while there is a rich literature on families’ pedagogical work on young people’s position in education (Brooks, 2003; Lucey et al, 2006), less literature is available on pedagogical work of families of young people not engaged in education (Stein, 2006). This lack of attention is

gradually being redressed. Yet there are assumptions we encounter anecdotally in our experience with teacher education students (in the UK and Australia), that these parents 'don't care' or they set 'bad examples'. Such anecdotes echo literature that describes teachers' deficit understandings of socioeconomically disadvantaged and 'disengaged' children and young people (Comber and Kamler, 2004; D'Addio, 2007; Machin, 1999).

This chapter seeks to contribute an understanding of the pedagogical work of families of young people who are currently disengaged from or at the margins of formal education. The young people in our study are, hereafter, summarily described as 'disengaged' from education because they all experienced precarious relationships with mandatory schooling, further and higher education. The school-aged participants were not attending school or attending sporadically, they were excluded from schools, or they were pursuing alternative education programmes. Those participants who were legally old enough not to attend school were also not participating in further or higher education. Whilst we are not claiming that post-school pursuits other than further or higher education lack value, we can state that participants were not involved in post-school formal education options and so may still be described as not educationally engaged.

We discuss how these educationally disengaged participants' family pedagogies relating to education are not homogenously negative. We will argue that their pedagogical work is varied, complex and often positive. Following a brief description of the study, the chapter is structured into three sections that reflect the findings from our data: families as sites of pedagogy and learning about 'education'; families' *implicit* teaching about education; and lastly, families' *explicit* teaching about education. Theoretically, we use Cambourne's (1995) Conditions of Learning to think through the family's explicit and implicit teachings.

### **The study**

Our purpose in this study was to understand how university was imagined by educationally disengaged young people from disadvantaged communities.<sup>1</sup> The research project was funded by the

Australian Research Council (DP110104704) and involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with two hundred and fifty young people in five Australian states (New South Wales – NSW; Victoria – VIC; Queensland – QLD; Tasmania – TAS; South Australia – SA), over the years 2012–2013.<sup>2</sup> All of the young people interviewed lived in socio-economically disadvantaged communities and experienced problematic relationships with education. The disadvantaged community settings included urban, suburban and regional communities. These communities were chosen because: they were identified as low socioeconomic status (ABS, 2013; Vinson, 2007); had high rates of school behavioural problems, school non-attendance and non-completion to year 12 and featured attendance and absenteeism intervention programs (DECS, 2010; NSWDET, 2009; Stehlik, 2006); and experienced disadvantage in terms of health, community safety, economic and education factors (Vinson, 2007). Here health is conceptualized in terms of seven indicators: ‘low birth-weight, childhood injuries, immunisation, disability / sickness support, life expectancy, psychiatric patients: hospital / community, suicide’ (Equity and Diversity, UWS, 2015, citing Vinson, 2007). Youth settings such as youth centres in these communities became the sites for the interviews. Participants were recruited via these youth centres, with youth professionals often joining the interviews.

*Table 4.1* Search words for coding family data (\* indicates truncation)

| <i>Famil*</i> | <i>Father*</i> | <i>Pa</i> | <i>Sibling*</i> |
|---------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Mum           | Brother*       | Pop       | Daughter*       |
| Mother*       | Sister*        | Aunt*     | Son*            |
| Dad           | Gran*          | Uncle*    | Parent*         |

Families’ pedagogies regarding education and exclusion were discernible in our interview transcripts. In these transcripts the young people’s feelings and stories of their families stood out to us, prompting us to conduct a closer analysis. Analysis of the transcripts

was computer assisted using NVivo software. The word 'family' was one of the top fifty most frequent words in the NVivo dataset. This was surprising to us because the only direct question about families in our interview schedule was: 'tell me a bit about your family's education'. This question was designed to collect simple demographic information, not to generate detailed discussion about family. In order to capture and analyse this extensive 'family' data, we purposively searched our transcripts for terms that would indicate references to family (these terms are listed in Table 4.1).

Excerpts featuring these terms then underwent logico-inductive analysis (Kervin et al, 2006). The emergent themes featured discernible family pedagogies. These themes were then further analysed in terms of their relationship to an existing theory of pedagogy, Cambourne's (1995) Conditions of Learning.

### **Families as sites of pedagogy and learning about 'education'**

When talking about family pedagogies, we are leaning on definitions of pedagogy as 'the art, occupation or practice of teaching' (Oxford University Press 2015) to conceptualize families as sites of 'teaching and learning' about education. Despite their own, troubled relationships with education, our dataset repeatedly showed how the participants valued learning about education from their families. For example:

I: You've already mentioned TAFE – is that where you go after high school to get an education?

J: Go to your parents. They know enough. I: They might teach you some stuff?

J: They taught me a lot.

(Janis, 16 years old, outer city NSW)

Here, Janis clearly identified his parents as connections to and providers of further education. Extended family, especially uncles and aunts, were also identified as valuable sources of education (e.g., group interview, 13 year olds, outer city NSW). In this sense family is

construed by the young people as a valued site of *explicit* learning about education.

The perceived importance of families' teaching and learning about 'education', was described by some of the young people who were already in parenting roles. Two examples of this strong belief in education are included below, examples that reveal an *implicit* approach to family education. Teah, a young woman who lives in a suburb that is statistically considered one of the most disadvantaged places in Australia,<sup>3</sup> states her firm belief in the importance of school selection because of the 'area' in which she lives:

I don't want to encourage that unemployment that's in the area so I'm looking at the opportunity to send her [my daughter] to a private school so the people she's friends with have working parents that understand if you want to get somewhere you need to work hard ... all the feedback I'm getting from people that I explain it to is that the education starts at home.  
(Teah, 21 years old, outer-city SA)

Here Teah demonstrates not only her beliefs about the family and education, but also her awareness of the importance of social capital (Winkworth et al, 2010), namely the school and the friends and family with whom her daughter interacts.

Teah was not alone in holding strong views about education and the role of family. Perhaps the most poignant story of education and family shared with us during our interviews occurred with Krissie, an Indigenous young woman who had two very young children and was also involved in caring for her partner's 16-year-old younger brother. Krissie spelled out to one of the authors just how crucial family is, and as has been discussed with South Australian colleagues, Faye Blanch and Simone Tur,<sup>4</sup> the failure of schools to recognise and build on this valuable family network of support (Harwood et al, in press):

K: Me and my partner – he's 17 in a couple of weeks – we've been looking after Jye, his little younger brother for the last three years because his mother moved away to Queensland in the outback, in the bush, where they didn't even have a house to live in. They

were in caravans with no running electricity and Jye has difficulties when he goes into a classroom, with trying to settle in with students and teachers.

I: How old is he?

K: Jye's 16 now and we thought it would be best to have him down here with us where we could slowly get him back into schooling.

I: So you're being a teacher?

K: Yes. Just slowly getting there because Jye's had a lot of trouble since he was a young boy. Since primary school – since the age of eight – Jye's been in and out of programmes – not actually mainstream. Schools for kids that have troubles being in classrooms where they might be really disruptive, get into trouble a lot or just didn't attend; he's been put into a lot of them and they've never worked out, sometimes because of other students – he doesn't get along – and he might get banned from there or he just might not attend.

Jye doesn't have a lot of confidence in himself; he thinks he can't read and write but he can. I've seen him – he can write fine on Facebook. That's when I say: 'You can read and write fine on Facebook; that means you can write and read a piece of paper.' It's the same words, it's just not on a computer screen and it doesn't have Facebook written in the corner – it's just on a piece of paper.

(Krissie, 18 years old, outer city SA)

Again, we have an interview with a young person who became disengaged with schooling, and for whom family and education has retained a significant level of importance. As Krissie explains in the interview excerpt below, she connects with Jye in her role as his Aunty:

I: You're pretty young to be such a big mentor

K: A lot of people put him down.

YW (youth worker): That's because a lot of ... just as another idea – throwing it out there. The importance of extended family [in]

Indigenous culture because you are just expected to take on ...

I: Oh because you're Aunty? Is that why?

K: Yes.

(Krissie, 18 years old, outer-city SA)

Because so few of the participants in our study were parents or caregivers, these interview transcripts are unique because they discuss participants' family pedagogies from the parental perspective. Unlike the first two quotes which made reference to families as sites of explicit teaching and learning, the above two interviews demonstrate how families can 'teach' *implicitly*. For Krissie and Teah, this meant enacting a certain ethos and values of 'getting Jye slowly back into education' and that 'education starts at home'. This also meant creating opportunities for children and young people to learn from immersion in certain types of experiences and observations, as well as 'clever pedagogies' that made literacy connections between activity on Facebook and the concept of 'writing'.

Thinking through this data on 'family as teachers', we suggest a useful way to consider the pedagogical work that families do regarding education is to think explicitly about the young people as 'learners'. To this end, our analysis is, in part, framed by 'Conditions of Learning', a naturalistic learning theory developed by Brian Cambourne (1995).

Although now widely used in primary and secondary teacher education as a theory and method for constructivist classroom teaching and learning, Cambourne's (1995) Conditions of Learning were originally derived from longitudinal ethnographic work with families that focused on trying to understand how very young children successfully learned to talk. In this sense, it is a theory of learning that directly theorises learning and meaning making with and from family, family environments and family interactions.

From his studies of young children learning to talk at home, Cambourne (1995) found that there are eight interrelated conditions for successful learning:

1. immersion;
- 2 demonstration;
- 3 engagement;
- 4 expectations;
- 5 responsibility;
- 6 employment;
- 7 approximation;
- 8 response.

A brief description of these conditions is available at Table 4.2.

*Table 4.2* Cambourne’s Conditions of Learning (a summary)

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Immersion</i>      | <i>The state of being saturated by or enveloped in that which is to be learned.</i>   |
| <i>Demonstration</i>  | <i>The ability to observe (see, hear, witness, experience, feel, study, explore) actions and artefacts.</i>   |
| <i>Engagement</i>     | <i>Immersion and demonstration are necessary conditions for learning to occur but they are not sufficient (they must be engaged with). Principals of engagement include: the learners belief that they are capable, that the learning is valuable, the learner is free from anxiety and that they admire, respect and trust the person giving the demonstrations.</i> |
| <i>Expectations</i>   | <i>Messages that significant others communicate to learners. They are also subtle and powerful coercers of behaviour.</i>   |
| <i>Responsibility</i> | <i>Learners are permitted to exercise choice regarding what they engage with and what they ignore.</i>  |
| <i>Approximations</i> | <i>‘Having a go’ (i.e., attempts to emulate what is being demonstrated).</i>  |
| <i>Employment</i>     | <i>The opportunities for use and practice of the content being learned.</i>   |
| <i>Response</i>       | <i>The feedback or information that the learner receives from the world about their learning</i>  |

(Source: this table is synthesised from Cambourne (1995) & Harris et al (2001))

We contend that the conditions that relate most closely to the implicit and explicit teaching and learning about education described in the



data are 'immersion', 'demonstration', 'engagement' and 'expectations'. While the purpose of this chapter is not to use a learning theory to explain how young people learn about education from their parents, Conditions of Learning can be used to provide a shared language for explaining the pedagogical role of the family in these educationally disadvantaged young people's meaning making, especially around notions of school, education and university.

We have established that the young people involved in our research tended to value their families as educators and position themselves as learners from their families, we have also gestured towards a theoretical lens that renders this as reasonable and offers a language for discussing it. *So, what are families teaching about education to these young people who experience difficult relationships with schooling, and to what effect?* The rest of the chapter will describe the explicit and implicit teaching and learning about education discernible in the young people's talk.

### **Families' implicit teaching about education**

To understand the implicit teaching families do (or don't do), we will first consider Cambourne's condition of *immersion*. We do this by illustrating the 'educational worlds', or educational contexts of the participants' families. The young people in this study recounted facts and narratives regarding their family's experiences of education. The stories often featured descriptions of how much schooling and/or further and higher education family members had achieved. Statements about immediate family members' education levels varied greatly: few family members left school in primary school while many left before completing high school. Only a few completed high school and fewer still went on to further education.

Overwhelmingly, the participants' families' stories included accounts of not completing schooling. Not completing school was most often referred to as 'dropping out'. Reported reasons for 'dropping out' varied. For instance, there were stories of having to leave school due to illness, disability, financial hardship and immigration. However, these stories did not always imply a lack of agency. The 'dropping out' stories could infer an element of family members' reasoning and

choice. For example, there were stories of family members' choices to leave school in order to pursue paid work, trade qualifications and to prioritize caring for family members.

Contrasting to stories regarding choice, the young people themselves spoke of being almost 'forced out' of schooling, especially by their teachers (McMahon et al, 2015). Likewise, there were stories that pointed to family members' systemic educational exclusion and being 'kicked out' or excluded from school:

All four of my brothers got expelled so their education is shit.  
(Xavier, 17 years old, regional NSW)

My dad got kicked out and then my mum left in year 10.  
(Sakara, 17 years old, outer-city NSW)

In many respects, education emerges from recounts of family members' educational experiences as something that is beyond their biographies and something that excludes them. These commonplace stories of family members leaving schooling early (whether seemingly by their own choice or via school exclusion) also point to a lack of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1979) for these young people (for further examples of the role of social and cultural capital in schools and education, see DiGiorgio, 2009, and Smyth, 2004). As we noted above, despite participants such as Teah being aware of the value of her daughter mixing with children with 'working parents', in the main the participants in our study did not describe having connections with people who have had positive and uninterrupted experiences of education.

Within this broader context of *immersion* in the educational biographies of families, other implicit teaching about education occurs. This additional implicit pedagogy most clearly links to Cambourne's condition of *demonstration*. The young people report observing family members 'doing' things and listening to family members' talk that either supported or discouraged the young people's educational participation and engagement.

## Positive messages

Without expressly stressing the importance of education, our data features stories of families *demonstrating* support for their children's current educational pursuits. For example, there was talk of parents making sure kids get ready for school in the morning (Bella, outer-city NSW) and parents turning up to parent information sessions at the school regarding university (Lexi, 15-year-old, regional TAS).

Families were also reported to connect young people with places of further study by accessing university campuses for leisure purposes. This may be interpreted as asserting the *expectation* that it was okay to go to a university campus. Examples of this included, one parent taking her son for a 'drive around' a university campus after a swimming competition there (Susan, 13 years old, regional NSW), another young man's dad taking him to a university that had a Marine Studies school and took his surfboard to check out the university boats and 'test out the water' (Ashton, 14 years old, regional TAS). In these cases there was no explicit message that universities should be attended for study, but there was a concerted effort from these parents to show their children what a university was like and that these could be positive spaces to be in.

Accounts of families implicitly promoting education also rested on notions of *engaging* with both families' shared interests and their success stories of education. There were stories of family members making explicit links between encouraged family-based hobbies and education. Examples of this include a young man noting how his sister encouraged him to study IT because of the family's shared enjoyment of computer gaming (Sebastian, 11-year-old, outer-city SA) and another young woman's wish to study mechanical engineering stemming from her family's shared interest in 'fixing cars' and their acknowledgement that she was talented at this (Kim, 15 years old, regional NSW). There were also instances where the young people looked to members of their family as inspiring role models for engaging in education:

K: No. Haven't had that much luck with a lot of people actually completing school in my family; my mother did and that's probably

about it because a lot of them have gone to maybe year 10 or 11 and just dropped out.

I: Will you be one of the first to finish?

K: Yes. I won't be the first because my mother completed it. I: Congratulations. You'll be the second.

Like your mum.

K: Yes, follow my mum. That would be nice.

(Krissie, 18 years old, outer-city SA)

Here we see one of Cambourne's (1995) key principals of *engagement* at work. Krissy was directly linking her aspirations and responsibility to engage with education to the educational success of her family members (in this case, her mother) whom she respects and wishes to emulate.

### **Mixed messages**

Family members' educational engagements were not always positive *demonstrations* for the young people. There were several instances where the young people described close family members' experiences of TAFE and university as non-ideal. There were multiple stories of family members getting into TAFE or university and then dropping out before completing their studies, which we argue compounds messages that education is 'not for them'. But, even for some family members who experienced success in these settings the young people sometimes read their success negatively:

I don't know how my dad could have managed because he had to write thousands of words of essays and he's a very slow typer.  
(Group interview, 15-year-olds, outer-city SA)

My mum does at-home uni; it's very stressful ... she's really stressed.  
(Tilly, 15 years old, outer-city SA)

Well I know my sister went to Swinburne and did her language degree there ... and my brother did study to be a teacher through Deakin up in Burwood. I don't know. I don't really pay much

attention to what they say because apparently all it was just lectures and assignments ... it just sounds like high school but the casual clothes so it's like [trails off].  
(Bronwyn, 15 years old, regional VIC)

Here we see young people garnering understandings of university as difficult, stressful and all too similar to the school education they had already disengaged from. These understandings were not explicitly taught by family members. Instead, these messages were implicit in the young people's observations or 'readings' of their families' *demonstrations* of successful educational engagement offered by their family.

Another 'grey area' of 'mixed messages' regarding families implicit pedagogies about education was family members' *demonstrations* of educational disengagement. Families' educational contexts of disengagement from formal education (e.g., not completing high school) served as both a potential example to follow and inspiration to do differently:

If I do go to university, out of my whole, entire extended family, I'll be the first person in my family to go to university. ... my dad and one other uncle only went to year 12. My brother, out of us kids, was the only person to complete year 12 so far, which is another reason I want to do it. Mum dropped out in year 9 – pregnancy. My sister Tiyaana, she dropped out in Year 8 for very bad reasons. And then me, but I left to do another education. A lot of people are leaving earlier now and having families that have left school earlier, you don't really have a goal to look up to. It's like 'Oh, you know, I want to do what you've done. I want to be like mum.' You can look at it and go 'I don't want to end up like that' and then you think 'Oh, if I try, what's the point, she couldn't do it – why should I be able to do it' and things like that.  
(Eileen, 18 years old, outer-city NSW)

The above quote is one of the few clear examples of contemplation whether or not to follow the families' *demonstrations* of educational disengagement. More often there were accounts, similar to this one,

of determination to defy such *demonstrations* of educational disengagement and be the 'first in family' to complete year 12 and go on to further studies and employment. This quote and, indeed this entire subsection, is important: it shows how families' complex and implicit teachings about education are always complicated further as each message may be interpreted and felt differently by individual young people.

### **Families' explicit teaching about education**

As demonstrated in the previous section on implicit teaching, explicit family pedagogies also generate messages that are positive, negative and confusing in regards to understanding education. Like the previous section on implicit teaching, families' explicit pedagogies regarding education can be understood in terms of Cambourne's conditions of *engagement* and *expectations*. The distinction between explicit and implicit family pedagogies rests in their different modes of Cambourne's condition of *demonstration*. Unlike the *demonstrations* describing implicit teaching that the young people observed and experienced, explicit *demonstrations* were heard, almost exclusively, as direct speech from family members.

### **Positive messages**

The families in these interviews are often described as explicitly verbally encouraging young people to complete high school and further education (either in trades or at university):

I wanted to study tourism after school and so I will and mum told me about this [course currently studying]. My aunty told me about the [course] too.  
(Edith, 17 years old, regional QLD)

Well like my dad said, 'You always want something behind you', like at the end of the day once you know your trade you can do whatever else you want but you've got something to fall back on.  
(Jarren, 14 years old, inner-city TAS)

B: You've got so many parents and adults telling you 'Stay at school.'

...

E: Like I've sat there for years and listened to my parents go 'Look I dropped out of school at this age; I want you to continue your education instead of ruining your life.'

...

I: So it's always been there has it – the idea of university? B: Yes, it's always been there.

(Bethany and Eileen, 17 and 18 years old, outer-city NSW)

These interview excerpts directly challenge popular discourse that cast families from disadvantaged communities as 'not caring' enough to do the concerted work that middle-class families do to further their children's education. Indeed, beyond merely being 'told' to pursue school, trades and university, there was acknowledgement of a forcefulness to these messages:

I always wanted to do music but my auntie's pushing me more towards speech pathology.

(Kaye, 15 years old, regional NSW)

Mum used to pressure me to try and go to uni but I used to go 'No.'

(Mara, 16 years old, outer-city SA, emphasis added)

This sense of feeling 'pushed' and 'pressured', we contend, points to the importance that families give to promoting education and university. Beyond such explicit promotions of educational engagement, the data also showed how parents' positive *expectations* positively influence educational aspirations.

I just want to finish year 12 and prove my point.

I: Your point about?

My point about being a young mum and still being able to finish your education.

I: Yes. Have you guys seen that *Plumpton Girls High*? There's like ... Yes, I've seen that.

...

Yes, dad's got all of them for me. He brought them when we found out I was pregnant.

I: What's that?

- *Plumpton High*.

I: *Plumpton High*. It's a school that's in the suburbs of Sydney and ... a pretty cool principal set up a school and he said 'No ... girls that are pregnant don't have to leave; they can stay' and it was pretty radical.

(Group interview, 14- to 25-year-olds, outer-city SA)

I: Yeah. Can you imagine yourself at uni?

C: I can, 'cause both my parents really want me to go.

(Cameron, 15 years old, regional NSW)

I don't know what I'm set for [in my career] and my dad thinks I'm smart enough so I'm going [to university].

(Group interview, 16-year-olds, outer-city NSW)

These statements clearly show how parental belief, support and encouragement, as opposed to 'bossing' or 'instructing' a child to attend university, actually work to instil beliefs that young people can achieve post compulsory education.

### **Negative messages**

For the most part this article has focused on the positive pedagogical work of families of educationally disengaged young people in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. We did find rare data that aligned with popular discourses of families that 'don't care' about their children's education. This data may be understood in terms of Cambourne's (1995) condition of *expectation*. Family members reportedly articulated low *expectations* of young people's educational engagement and success. For example, there were reports of family members explicitly telling young people not to go to school or supporting their non-attendance. Low *expectations* also manifested in reports of family members telling young people they were not capable of engaging in the educational pursuits they were contemplating:



I did [know what I wanted to study] too but then my aunty told me it's hard so I said, 'No.'  
(Group interview, 15 years old, regional TAS)

B: It is very hard being a returnee at 18, going back into school because it's a lot more discriminating because a lot of the students look at it and go 'Oh you're stupid, you can't do it' and things like that which makes it even harder for you. And you're trying to push yourself through to prove yourself while being told you can't.

...

E: You get not only your parents say it but some of your close friends say it. (Bethany and Eileen, 17 and 18 years old, outer-city NSW)

While there are clearly less instances of active discouragement, we are very aware that the barriers to higher education facing the young people in our study are large. Even those who are actively encouraged by their families do not have a huge amount of financial support and practical support with their homework. As such, the impact of the negative talk performed by parents and peers is potentially very big.

## **Conclusion**

Our research into the family pedagogies of higher education for disadvantaged and low socioeconomic status students shows that there is no one 'true' situation characterising the pedagogical work undertaken in and by families. There are many messages transmitted about University education and these range in kind. This said, it is clear that families really matter in terms of teaching young people about higher education and shaping the possibility of educational achievement for youth. The father who bought his daughter the DVD about pregnant girls succeeding at school had clearly instilled in her the belief that she could complete her high school study. Our fieldwork also shows that the positive educational pedagogies which occur in family settings are not limited to parent-child relationships. Siblings, aunties, uncles and extended family members all have power to positively impact on young people's education. What is clear is that,

while there is no 'best way' or 'right' way to encourage young people to explore university options, positive discourse about Higher Education and belief in young people's capacity to achieve are powerful educational tools.

## Notes

1. This research focus of 'imagining university' generated interview discussions centred mostly on educational contexts such as compulsory schooling and university. The analysis in this article thus tends to mostly feature data regarding school and university attendance. There is no intention to frame the university, particularly, as the most appropriate, desirable or only means of engaging with education post-school. The absence of data about other post-school educational and non-educational options, in this chapter, is mostly because this was not the topic of the semi-structured interviews.

2. The CI for the ARC Discovery Project is Professor Valerie Harwood (UOW). The semi-structured interviews were conducted by the second and third authors of this chapter and also by five research assistants. For information regarding semi-structured interview methods, Galletta (2013) offers a comprehensive description of the method, albeit within a psychology discipline focus.

3. The location is not specified in order to protect anonymity

4. Colleagues Faye Blanch and Simone Tur from the Yungorrendi First Nations Centre, Flinders University, collaborated with Harwood and Allan to analyse Krissie's transcript. As they explain: "In the process of responding to Krissie's narrative around her relationship with Jye, there is a greater need for other interpretations and analysis that privilege the worldview of Indigenous participation and engagement within the schooling sectors. Therefore sections of this paper occur through a collaborative analysis through the lens of an Indigenous pedagogical praxis that speaks to family, community, and Indigenous ways of being and doing. Our scholarly engagement is contextualized within an intellectual space that signifies education as key to empowerment, agency, success and the possibility of transformative lives for Indigenous students. Working within the higher educational sector, as teachers, academics and community members we teach mainly non-Indigenous student teachers, to understand Indigenous students in the schooling context"(Blanch and Tur, cited in Harwood et al, in press)

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