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Indigenous Knowledge in Indigenous Studies Teaching at UNSW

Nura Gili Indigenous Programs, DVC Education

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1. Executive Summary

- Summarise the project, context, priorities addressed, outputs, key findings and recommendations (if relevant)

This pilot project aimed to develop high-quality films of interviews with Indigenous knowledge holders for use in teaching for specific courses within the Indigenous Studies Major and Minor offered by Nura Gili. The project delivered a series of culturally-appropriate films which provide first-hand accounts of Indigenous perspectives on topics that are relevant to the stream and course learning outcomes in Indigenous Studies. These films are currently being incorporated into the relevant courses in lectures, seminars, and online modules. Preliminary feedback from students and teaching staff has been very positive for the first film that was used in Semester 1, and other films will be included in the design of teaching materials for Semester 2, Summer and Terms 1 and 2 in 2019. This project has been a very successful collaboration between Indigenous knowledge holders and Nura Gili academic staff, and has helped to build strong ongoing relationships with the participants. The project has also made a substantial contribution towards the UNSW 2025 Strategy priorities of education excellence and in particular, the priority focused on respecting and learning about Indigenous knowledge. It has also provided a secure foundation for continued work within Nura Gili on developing film-based learning activities which can be used in classroom and online teaching across other courses, as staff have developed skills in planning film projects and designing related learning activities.

2. Outcomes and impact

- Describe the major achievements of your project in relation to the outcomes and deliverables.
- Discuss project impact – how and to what extent has the project impacted students, staff, faculty institution, and higher education as relevant to the project.
- Include the strategic priorities addressed.
- Include the number of courses/programs/students likely to benefit from this project.

Achievements and deliverables

This project was designed to allow Nura Gili academic staff to record Indigenous knowledge as articulated by Indigenous knowledge-holders, in the environment of their own choosing, for use in courses offered in the Indigenous Studies Major and Minor. The project has delivered 5 high quality films based on 3 extended interviews. These films will be incorporated into 6 courses offered in Indigenous Studies and will be used as stimulus for tailored learning activities including group tasks, discussion and reflection. Overall, the project has delivered an enhanced range of purpose-designed teaching resources, with high production values, and this is a major achievement for Indigenous Studies at UNSW.

For many aspects of the Indigenous Studies curriculum, it is very difficult to be able to provide students with consistent learning experiences, when relying on invited guest lecturers, guided walks, field trips or excursions. Many of the film or online materials available through the library collection or in the public domain are quickly dated, poorly framed, or difficult to adapt to the content of particular courses. It is also often challenging to obtain access to appropriate materials about Indigenous peoples in the Sydney area, and this lack of local content is significant given the importance of place and location (Country) as the basis of Indigenous culture and knowledge. The impact of this project is thus significant, as it allows Nura Gili students to learn about localised Indigenous knowledge, history and culture from Sydney and New South Wales, in a format which ensures consistency across different offerings of the courses.

Strategic priorities addressed

With respect to university-wide strategic priorities, this project has helped Nura Gili Indigenous Programs academic staff to contribute to the core theme of Educational Excellence in the UNSW 2025 Strategy, through the integration of technology into teaching. This project will also allow Nura Gili to address two SEIF priorities:
- SEIF Priority 4: Demonstrate the effectiveness of innovative technologies in achieving educational outcomes, and
- SEIF Priority 6: Significantly enhance the student experience or student outcomes via any other original approach.

The high-quality films recording Indigenous knowledge and perspectives will substantially enrich the learning experience for students in the Indigenous Studies stream, as they have been specifically designed to suit stream and course learning outcomes across the Major and Minor in Indigenous Studies. Each film will contribute directly to the Indigenous Studies stream learning outcome (SLO2), Engage critically with Indigenous knowledges and perspectives. Lecturers will use the films to challenge preconceptions about Indigenous culture and knowledge in the classroom and online, and to stimulate reflection and discussion in a culturally sensitive manner. The use of additional images, location shots, music and explanatory graphics in the films alongside the explanations of the knowledge-holder will enhance learning and engagement.

The project has also focused on the core theme from the UNSW 2025 Strategy:

- B1 A Just Society: Respecting and Learning about Indigenous Knowledge

This is of particular significance for the academic staff working in Indigenous Studies in Nura Gili. This project provided a valuable opportunity to privilege and highlight Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in course materials and learning activities, and to bring the voices of Indigenous knowledge holders into the classroom.

**Description of films**

The following table provides a brief outline of the project deliverables, the films produced:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Interviewee(s)</th>
<th>Topics covered</th>
<th>Courses using content</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Norma Ingram</td>
<td>Social movements and urban activism in Redfern in the 1970s; Aboriginal migration to cities in the 1960s; establishing the Murawina preschool and child care centre in Redfern; gender in Indigenous communities</td>
<td>ATS1011 Indigenous Australian Political History</td>
<td>40 minute film, in 12 segments Interview with Auntie Norma Ingram, a Wiradjuri woman and local elder who lived in Redfern in the 1970s (recorded at Nura Gili).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brad Steadman</td>
<td>Traditional knowledge of Baiame's Ngunnhu (Brewarrina fish traps), possibly the oldest human made structure on Earth; traditional knowledge, philosophy and science; history of Aboriginal community in Brewarrina in early colonial era; local history of Frontier Wars and Aboriginal responses to colonial invasion, including details of the Hospital Creek massacre.</td>
<td>ATS1011 Indigenous Australia, ATS2015 Science of Indigenous Knowledges, ATS1017 Indigenous Histories and the Colonial World</td>
<td>3 films of 5-8 minutes each Based on interviews with Brad Steadman, highly respected knowledge holder of the Ngemba nation, at multiple sites around Brewarrina including fish traps and Hospital Creek massacre site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Karen Smith and Clair Jackson</td>
<td>Traditional knowledge of food and bush medicine in the Sydney area; Protecting and managing Aboriginal heritage in urban areas; Aboriginal heritage values; public education on Aboriginal heritage and sites; Aboriginal stories associated with place; History of Aboriginal communities in Northern Sydney</td>
<td>ATS1012 Aboriginal Sydney</td>
<td>(In post-production, estimated 20-25 minutes) Recording of a guided tour at Warriewood Wetlands with Karen Smith, Education Officer of the Aboriginal Heritage Office, and local elder Auntie Clair Jackson, as part of the Ga-mariagal Festival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of courses and students benefiting from project
As noted above, the films made through this project will be used across 6 different courses in Indigenous Studies. Assuming that 2019 enrolments remain the same as for 2018, the films will thus be used in two Level 1 courses with a total enrolment of 330, and Level 2 and 3 courses with a total enrolment of 75-80 students. This means that the SEIF funding will directly benefit a total of approximately 410 students in the first year.

Wider impact of project for students, Nura Gili staff, and UNSW
An important benefit of this project is the range of opportunities that have been provided for acquisition and development of skills for academic staff in Nura Gili. All four academic staff have now had experience in designing and conducting interviews, planning content, negotiating content and appearance agreements with knowledge-holders, working with film production company on editing and supplementing interview material, and developing interactive learning activities using the films as stimulus. This experience is particularly valuable given that Nura Gili is outside the Faculty structure and does not have access to the same technical and education development resources in the schools and faculties. It has also been timely, given the current efforts toward the implementation of UNSW3+ including the process of content redistribution. Staff have been able to design course content for UNSW3+ that makes effective use of the new film materials and will allow an equivalent learning experience for students taking Indigenous Studies courses in intensive modes (such as the Summer term and T2C August intensive) and those attending weekly classes through the normal ten-week trimester.

The positive experience from this SEIF-funded pilot project prompted staff to participate in the development of 4 more films based on interviews with Indigenous knowledge-holders, with the funding support of the digital uplift program run by the Inspired Learning Initiative team, technical support from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and some funds drawn from the Nura Gili operating budget. A number of these have focused on knowledge-holders from the Dharawal people of the southern Sydney region, close to UNSW. These films will be used in 4 of the courses in Indigenous Studies, with a predicted enrolment in 2019 of 370 students.

These additional films are summarised in the following table, and demonstrate the positive impact of the SEIF-funded project in developing skills, experience and confidence in designing and using film-based teaching materials:

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<td>4</td>
<td>Raymond Ingrey and Paul Irish</td>
<td>Uncovering hidden history: the La Perouse Aboriginal community in Sydney in the 19th century; oral history, community knowledge and transfer, relations between people and place, cultural continuity</td>
<td>ATSI1012 Aboriginal Sydney</td>
<td>45 minutes in 13 segments Interview with Raymond Ingrey, Chairman of the La Perouse based Dharawal Language Program &amp; Banyu Corporation, and Paul Irish, historian, talking about the traveling exhibition &quot;This is where they travelled&quot;, filmed at Nura Gili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bruce Pascoe</td>
<td>Aboriginal history of agriculture and aquaculture prior to European settlement, and the destruction of archaeological evidence (based on landmark book, Dark Emu, first published in 2014)</td>
<td>ATSI1011 Indigenous Australia</td>
<td>30 minute film in segments Interview with Bruce Pascoe, combined with footage from public talk based on book Dark Emu, filmed at Nura Gili</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fran Bodkin</td>
<td>Indigenous traditional knowledge of botany, bush foods and medicine; traditional knowledge of ecology and seasons</td>
<td>ATS12015 Science of Indigenous Knowledges</td>
<td>40 minutes in segments Interview with Auntie Fran Bodkin, a highly respected elder of the Dharawal nation south of Sydney, talking about Indigenous knowledge of botany and ecology at Mount Annan Botanical Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shannon Foster</td>
<td>Aboriginal experiences in urban spaces; dispelling myths and stereotypes about Aboriginality and identity; the transfer of Aboriginal knowledge and oral history; family heritage and connection to place</td>
<td>ATS11012 Aboriginal Sydney ATS12011 Indigenous Political History</td>
<td>3 segments, each 5 minutes long Interview with Shannon Foster, Dharawal educator, author of chapter &quot;White Bread Dreaming&quot; in Anita Heiss (ed) (2018) Growing up Aboriginal in Australia. Filmed in FA&amp;SS studio.</td>
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In summary, this pilot project has delivered on all of the benefits and outcomes that were anticipated at the outset, and has provided a very strong basis for future innovation in learning and teaching in Indigenous Studies.

2. Dissemination strategies and outputs

- *Describe the dissemination activities and events that have been implemented and/or being planned in the future.*
- *Describe the outputs achieved until now and that are likely to occur as a result of this project.*

The films made as part of this project will be provided to students of the specific courses each teaching session through Moodle, the learning management system, and in many cases will be used in face-to-face teaching as the basis of interactive discussions and group work.

Where appropriate, and subject to the agreement of the interviewee in each case, we will develop short extracts of the films for inclusion on the Indigenous Studies section of the Nura Gili website, which is currently being redesigned and updated with new content. Extracts of the films will provide site visitors with a sample of the Indigenous knowledge and topics covered in courses in Indigenous Studies. We hope that this will help to attract new students to the discipline, particularly from the Study Abroad and Student Exchange cohort.

For some of the films we have also agreed to share the finished product with the knowledge holders who were interviewed for the films, and this will allow them to disseminate the films through the channels of their own choice, with acknowledgement of the role of UNSW in designing and funding the films. For example, the films may be shown to visitors to the Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Museum or may be used on the website of the Aboriginal Heritage Office (Northern Sydney). This will allow the knowledge holders to share the recorded knowledge with members of their communities.

Nura Gili is in early discussions with Brad Steadman about a launch of the Brewarrina films to be held in Semester 2, 2018. It is anticipated that Brad Steadman will give a public talk and hold a question and answer session about the Brewarrina fish traps and the Aboriginal history of Brewarrina and the local region at this
event. This will be a valuable opportunity for staff and students to learn directly from a respected local community member about the Brewarrina fish traps. This is particularly beneficial for Nura Gili as we have a number of currently enrolled Indigenous students from the Brewarrina region who have been especially interested in this project. We held a similar public event for Bruce Pascoe in 2017, and also hosted the traveling exhibition about the La Perouse Aboriginal community in November 2017, and these were both very well attended by staff and students from a wide range of faculties and schools across UNSW.

Images:
Still from film about traditional knowledge of Baiame’s Ngunnhu (Brewarrina fish traps), including interviewee Brad Steadman and drone footage above the Aboriginal fish traps, Barwon River, Brewarrina

3. Evaluation of project outcomes

- Describe the evaluation strategy (formative/summative), tools and actions.
- Include any results of data collection or analysis.
- Provide an evaluation report on the approach and outcomes.

The evaluation strategy for this project relies on two key sources of information: student feedback and lecturer reflections.

Student feedback will be collected through the MyExperience teaching evaluation tool and also through specifically targeted surveys of students in the relevant classes. Given the length of time required for the preparation, filming and production of the films, only one has been used to date in the course ATSI3002, which was offered in Semester 1, 2018. For this film, student feedback collected during face-to-face teaching has been positive with respect to the content, student engagement and relevance, and this has been supported by the lecturer using the materials also. The MyExperience results have not yet been delivered at the time of writing this report. For the films which will be used in Semester 2 and in 2019, we will ensure that students provide feedback on the films and the associated learning activities, and these will be analysed carefully. Where appropriate, and where resources are available, we may use informal peer observation of teaching to gauge student engagement and effective use of the films in learning activities, and to assist lecturers to reflect on their teaching practice using the films.

Lecturer reflections: Lecturers have been encouraged to reflect critically on their use of technology in teaching, and on the skills they need to develop in order to improve the learning experience for students. The Academic Coordinator has worked closely with each of the academic staff on the design and planning of the films and has provided support and feedback as part of the skills development around using technology in the classroom. The acquisition and further development of these skills has also been addressed in MyCareer conversations with the academic staff. This pilot project has provided a solid basis for further skills development and innovation in teaching in the future.
Evaluation report on approach and outcomes
This has been a highly successful project overall, with all projected benefits, deliverables and outcomes achieved. There were some delays in the first half of the project, as noted in the Interim Report, primarily due to the time taken to identify some of the appropriate interview subjects, and the time taken to negotiate suitable times for recording interviews at specific sites. This has meant that the final interview was completed in June, and some post production work is still being finalised at the time of writing this report. There was also an unexpected overlap with some film work instigated through the Inspired Learning Initiative (noted above), but this meant that the SEIF funding could be redirected to support a longer trip to Brewarrina, with additional contextual filming and features, producing films for use in 3 courses. The end result of this SEIF project is a rich and varied collection of films which cover many aspects of Indigenous knowledge, culture and perspectives. The project has helped to establish rewarding collaborations with knowledge holders and their communities, and it has been especially pleasing to observe the generosity of the interview participants who were willing to spend time working with academics and film crew to share Indigenous knowledge for UNSW students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. It is certainly true to say that the knowledge holders who were interviewed all recognised the significant value of the project, providing an important opportunity “for young people to learn about their culture and their history” (Brad Steadman, Ngemba knowledge holder, Brewarrina).