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 **Charles Darwin**
UNIVERSITY

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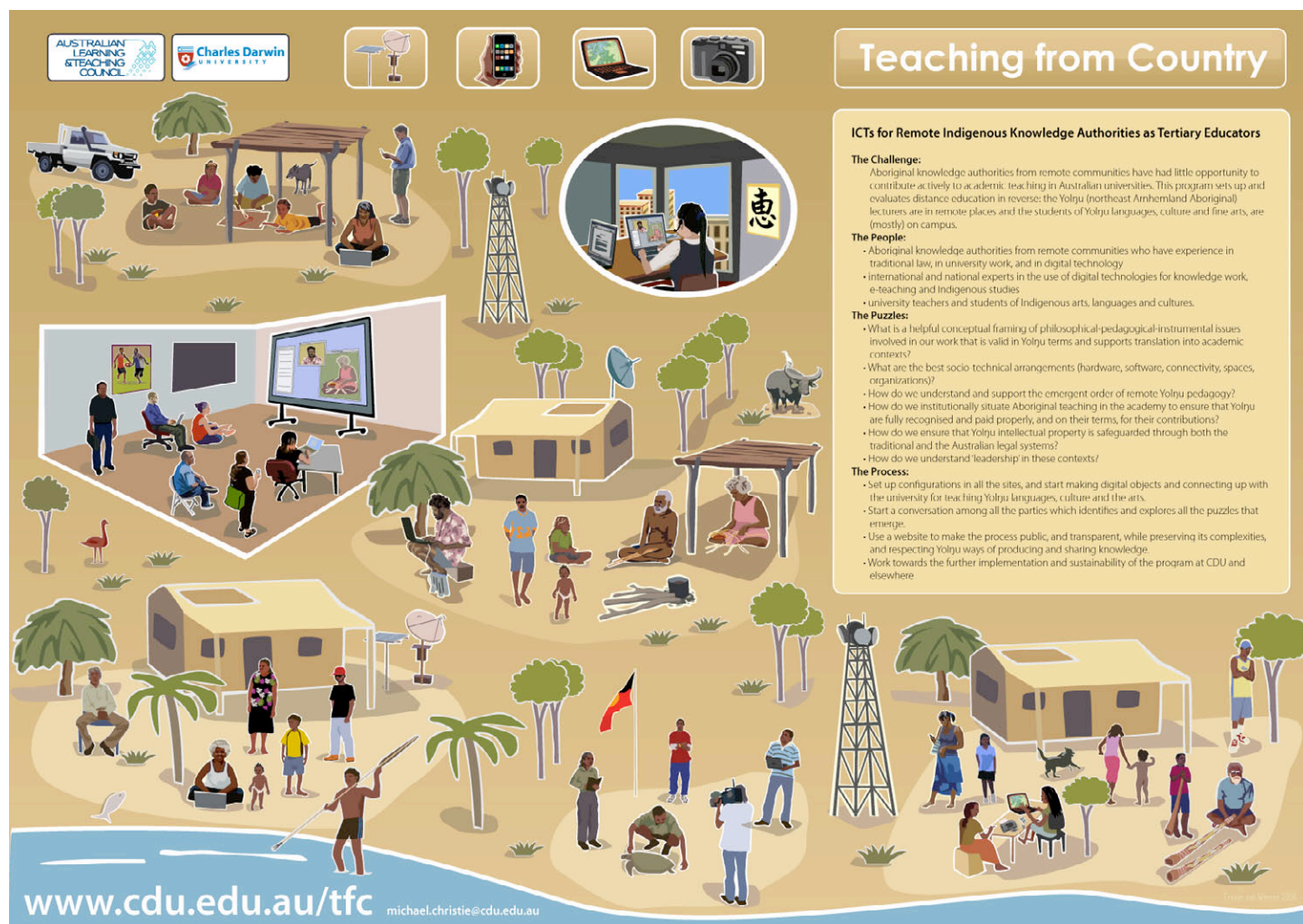
2010

Cover photos:
Dhāṅgal at Gäluru,
Yinjiya at CDU,
Gotha at Gäwa, and Students at CDU



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Original discussion poster by Trevor van Weeren



Teaching from Country: Increasing the participation of Indigenous Knowledge Holders in Tertiary Teaching through the use of emerging Digital Technologies

1 Executive Summary

Australian Aboriginal knowledge authorities from remote communities have had little opportunity to contribute actively to academic teaching in Australian universities. Yet there is widespread and increasing acknowledgement of the potential of Indigenous knowledge to enhance our understanding of the environment, and ecological systems, of linguistic and biological diversity, culture, history, art, health and much more.



National Teaching Fellow Michael Christie

This collaborative program brings together

- Yolŋu (East Arnhemland Aboriginal) knowledge authorities with developing expertise in digital technology and multimedia, some of whom have experience as higher education teachers or co-researchers. These included:
 - Dhāngal Gurruwiwi, educator and Gälpu elder from Birritjimi
 - Kathy Gothadjaka (Gotha), educator and Warramiri elder from Gäwa homeland community
 - Mätjarra Garrawurra, from Ramingining
 - Joanne Garngulkpuy, from the Yalu Marngithinyaraw centre at Galiwin'ku
 - Frank Djirrimbilwuy from Galiwin'ku
 - Other very senior elders who were drawn into the teaching included Daymanju from Gäwa, and Garanjalawuy from Gapuwiyak.
- International experts in the use of digital technologies for knowledge work and e-teaching:
 - Associate Professor Helen Verran, from the School of Philosophy, The University of Melbourne with whom we have worked for many years.
 - Professor Geoffrey Bowker, from the Centre for Science Technology and Society, Santa Clara University, USA, now at University of Pittsburgh
 - Professor Susan Leigh Star, also at the School of Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh
 - Professor Paul Dourish, Professor of Informatics at the University of California, Irvine
 - Brother Keith Warner, OFM, Center for Science, Technology & Society, Santa Clara University, California
 - Trevor van Weeren, multimedia and web designer from Merri Creek Productions.
- Higher Education teachers and students in Indigenous studies of language and culture.
 - Yinjiya Guyula, Yolŋu lecturer at Charles Darwin University (CDU)
 - Waymamba Gaykamanju, retired CDU Yolngu lecturer and adviser
 - John Greateorex, coordinator of the Yolŋu studies program
 - About 40 CDU students on campus, plus other students from Tokyo, and California who heard about the program and asked to be involved.
- A national Indigenous reference group:
 - Professor Wendy Brady, the Head of School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge Systems, at Charles Darwin University



- Professor Yvonne Cadet-James, Head of School of Australian Indigenous Studies, James Cook University, and now Chancellor of Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
- Jeanie Bell, Head of School of Education, Arts & Social Sciences, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, and
- Indigenous intellectual property lawyer Robynne Quiggin, from Vincent-Quiggin Consulting.

The collaboration developed, implemented, evaluated and reported upon systems for the properly supervised inclusion and active participation ‘from country’ of Indigenous knowledge authorities, in Australian higher education courses, through the use of emerging digital technologies.

This program focussed upon the Yolŋu Studies program at Charles Darwin University (CDU), and the fellowship allowed us to bring together an internationally significant collaboration to work through a complex range of significant questions relating to Indigenous knowledge in the academy: how do we rethink knowledge and pedagogy when divergent knowledge traditions work together? How do we rethink technology, spaces and temporalities in our work? How do we understand the experience of students – from both the Aboriginal and the academic perspectives? How do we remain attentive to issues of intellectual property and remuneration? We came together as different small groups, in different spaces, virtually and in real time and space to keep working through some of the key questions which arose, taking care to bring together all perspectives – students’ and academics’, international experts’ and local teachers’, Yolŋu and other Indigenous and nonIndigenous participants, the technical the social, and the pedagogical.



Some of the people involved with the Teaching from Country Program

2 Teaching and Learning issues addressed

The fundamental question we addressed together was

‘How can digital technologies be mobilised so that Indigenous knowledges are actively and effectively incorporated into higher education teaching programs while remaining faithful to the ancestral practices and protocols which govern them?’



With the roll-out of broadband throughout remote Australia, we are increasingly in a position to investigate carefully, ways in which knowledge owners and authorities can become actively and appropriately involved in e-teaching from very remote locations.



Satellite setup at Gotha's homeland centre, Gāwa, at the top of Elcho Island

We built upon an extensive history of research, consultancy, training and capacity building work in remote areas of northern Australia going back well over 30 years. Key Yolŋu consultants, and staff at CDU had already investigated the use of digital technologies in the intergenerational transmission of Aboriginal traditional knowledge (www.cdu.edu.au/ik), the emerging use of digital technologies in remote community sustainability (www.cdu.edu.au/inc), the professionalisation of Aboriginal knowledge holders from remote communities as bicultural consultants, teachers and advocates (www.cdu.edu.au/yaci), and the use of computers in remote places for the development of family level micro-businesses (www.cdu.edu.au/aflf). This work has been done in collaboration with the Yolŋu Studies program which won the Prime Minister's Award for Australia's best tertiary teaching in 2005 (www.cdu.edu.au/yolngustudies). The Yolŋu Studies program is supervised by Yolŋu elders, taught by Yolŋu lecturers, and is host to an on-line database of representations of Yolŋu languages and culture. It has been working successfully, without fault or difficulty, under the supervision of a team of senior Yolŋu from five Yolŋu communities for over 13 years.

So in 2008, the time was ripe for the expertise which Aboriginal elders and interpreters have developed in teaching, consulting and the use of information technologies, to be brought to benefit our University teaching programs. The program was designed to invigorate the University's engagement with Aboriginal knowledge authorities, as well as to address carefully and publicly the valuing of Aboriginal knowledge in academic contexts, and its protection in the digital and academic worlds.

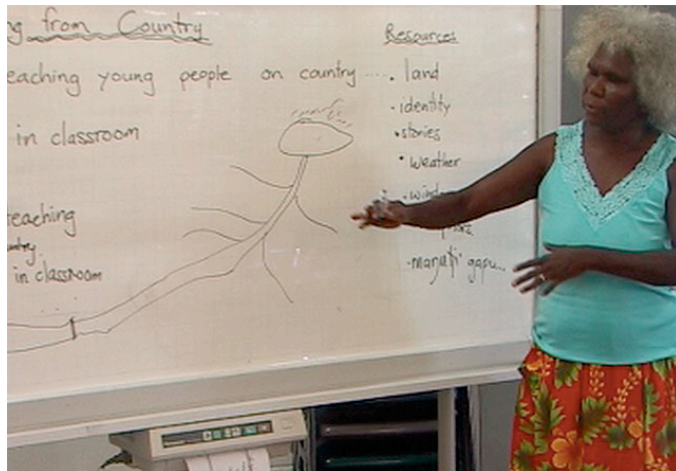
A further impetus for the program was the desire to shift at least some of the locus of the teaching of Yolŋu knowledge from Darwin (the traditional land of the Larrakiya people) to the lands to which the Yolŋu languages and cultures belong, in eastern Arnhemland.



3 Activities

The first workshop-symposium: Yolŋu philosophy and practice

A two day symposium was held in June 2008. This began with a public seminar on the Fellowship introduced by Professor Richard Johnstone, Executive Director of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, where I introduced the program and the key people involved. (See http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/docs/TFC_Seminar_PP_notes.pdf for the full text and PowerPoint slides). The University also took the opportunity to say thank-you and farewell to Waymamba Gaykamanju, the founding Yolŋu lecturer from the Yolŋu Studies program, retiring after about 12 years of active service. (She continues to participate through this program in teaching Japanese students in Tokyo, 'from country'.)



Gotha explains her Warramiri clan philosophy of knowledge through a metaphor of floodwaters

In the afternoon and during the following day twelve Aboriginal elders met with experts on information and communication technologies and academic lecturers from CDU to make initial plans. We discussed ways to bring the expertise together to address the full range of social, political, educational and technical issues. We agreed that, for Yolŋu knowledge practices and governance arrangements to be incorporated adequately and respectfully into the teaching development process, we needed to start with a richly complex set of questions and possibilities, and avoid a priori assumptions imported from conventional pedagogies and understandings of technology. Members of the national Indigenous advisory group attended.

We developed five specific questions which structured our work:

- What is a helpful conceptual framing of issues involved in our work that is valid in Yolŋu terms and supports translation into academic contexts?
- What are the best socio-technical arrangements (hardware, software, connectivity, spaces, images, voices, organisations) for each context?
- How do we understand and support the emergent order of remote Yolŋu pedagogy?
- How do we situate Aboriginal teaching in the academic institution to ensure that Yolŋu are fully recognised and paid properly for their contributions?
- How do we ensure that Yolŋu intellectual property is safeguarded through both the traditional and the Australian legal systems?

The collaborative team of internationally recognised scholars

I had invited the participation of a group of international scholars from the field of Science and Technology Studies, and Computer Supported Cooperative Work, who could help us unpack some of the assumptions we were bringing to the program, and explore with us some of the interesting questions which arose.



In August 2008, Helen and I travelled to California for meetings with the international team in San Francisco, Santa Clara and Los Angeles. We talked about the project using Trevor's original illustration (see page 2), and talked about the website as a way of keeping up with our progress over the following year. We discussed some of the work the international experts were doing in terms of the Teaching from Country program, and its five stated challenges. We agreed to ongoing discussions by Skype and blog and for a trip to Arnhemland before the International Seminar in July 2009.

The workshop in October 2008

Our first major workshop was in October. A group of key Yolŋu knowledge authorities – Gotha, Garngulkpuy, Yinjiya and Dhänggal - came to CDU for four days to learn about their new computers (which they had paid for themselves, or were in the process of paying for), to learn about web technology, and to plan for our working together in the program. They brought with them some of the new generation who were already starting to work with digital media – Gurrangurran, Zoe, Miranda, Germaine and little Ethan. Four of the participants made their own websites using 'WebPress', which ended up on the Yolŋu resources page of the website. The websites were abandoned in the teaching trials, and have been removed from the University website.



From the workshop October 2008

The software we came to use 'on country' was more flexible and friendly than these websites allowed, and teaching live – using images from one's own computer, live video and Google Earth – obviates many of the legal issues which arise when copyright images are placed on a website. We experimented with remote teaching practice: Yinjiya up in his office pretending he was in Arnhemland and we down in the seminar room pretending we were a classroom full of students. At the end of the fourth day, the Yolŋu teachers were recorded on video in their own languages, making clear some key Yolŋu perspectives on the issues and arrangements which were unfolding. (Transcriptions and translations can be found in the 'Papers by Yolŋu Consultants' section, at <http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/writings.html>). A detailed report on the workshops was the first entry on our 'trials' webpage (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/trials01.html>).

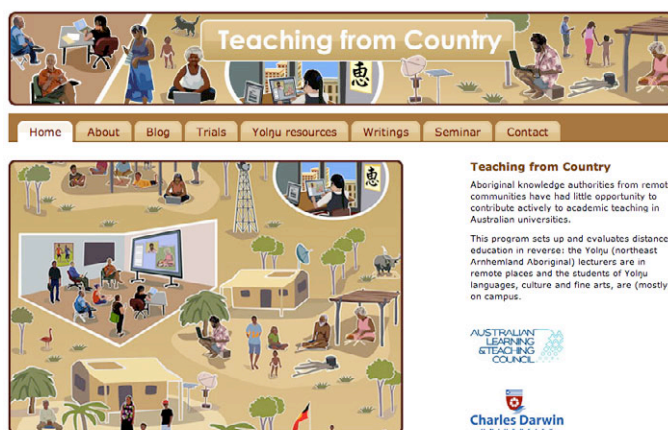
The Teaching from Country website: www.cdu.edu.au/tfc

We had in our previous research collaborations found websites (referred to above) to be an important way of thinking about and sharing our work, of maintaining its complexity while making it as comprehensible as possible, of balancing out the graphics and videos, with the texts as ways of doing our work, as well as representing it. Trevor van Weeren who has worked with us on many projects built and maintained the website, explored all the software and hardware options, and helped us think through issues to do with technology, knowledge, place, and academic and Yolŋu cultures.



The website contains

- an 'about' page
- a blog (still crawling along moderately successfully)
- a 'trials' page where we reported in detail about all the Teaching from Country trials as well as the early meetings, (this is the largest and richest section)
- a Yolŋu Resources page where some of the Yolŋu teachers began to upload some of the resources they would use in their teaching. A few of those resources remain on the website, but they never became a major part of the teaching program, as we moved towards more live presentations.
- a writing page, where we placed all the writing which was emerging from the project – including some important writings by Yolŋu theorists about Yolŋu understandings of place, knowledge, pedagogy, identity, and technology
- a seminar page where we planned for, publicised and reported on our international seminar
- a contacts page.



The trials

The first of the trials reported on the website were records of meetings where we discussed what we were going to do, and played with the technology: (The following are all separate pages in the Trials section of the website.)

1. October 2008: Notes from the workshop held in Darwin (see above).
2. October 2008: Notes from a trial from Mapuru homeland centre, to Trevor's place in NSW, October 2008.
3. 26 January 2009: Notes by John about a trial using TeamViewer (remote screen-sharing software) between CDU and Gotha at her homeland centre in Gäwa.
4. 29 January 2009: Notes on more software trials between Trevor, Michael and John.
5. Spreadsheet matrix developed by Trevor: various software and their advantages and disadvantages.

We had an international Skype conference with our international partners, we talked to the Indigenous arts lecturers hoping to enlist them in the program, and we did some more practising and setting up before the semester started:

6. February 2009: International Skype conference (MP3 file 50MB).
7. 18th Feb 2009: Notes from a trial with Gotha, John and Sylvia Kleinart, a fine arts lecturer interested in the possibilities of the program for her courses.
8. 2nd March 2009: Dhänggal practices with her new computer (screencast).
9. 3rd March 2009: John, Michael, Dhänggal and Trevor, helping Gotha at home in Gäwa, remotely, set up for teaching (video).

Then started a whole semester of trials.

10. 3rd March 2009: Gotha teaches the Yolŋu Studies class from Gäwa, telling them about her grandchildren collecting turtle eggs – screencast.



11. 10th March 2009: Dhāṅgal teaches the Yolŋu Studies class from Wallaby Beach using live video and Google Earth – screencast.
12. 16th March 2009: Skype conference, including the Yolŋu teachers and the international team in California – transcript and screen shots.
13. 24th March 2009: Dhāṅgal introduces her family from Wallaby Beach – video and full transcription.



Dhāṅgal with family members teaching from the beach at Gäluru (Trial 16)

14. 31st March 2009: Gotha talks about collecting mangrove worms – screencast and transcript.
15. 14th April 2009: Dhāṅgal teaches the Yolŋu Studies class from Gäluru in Gove – short videos including one about finding good teaching locations.
16. 15th April 2009: Dhāṅgal teaches the Yolŋu Matha conversation class about creation stories and her kin connections to various places – screencast and transcription.
17. 21st April 2009: Gotha shows places around Gäwa carrying her laptop around the community, telling its history – screencast and transcription.
18. 22nd April 2009: Mätjarra teaches the conversation class from Ramininging, with a crowd of kids and some older people, telling the news from the community that day – screen cast and transcription.
19. 27th April 2009: Trial of Carcom mobile satellite at Charles Darwin Park, Darwin – short videos and screen flow.
20. 29th April 2009: Trial with the Carcom mobile satellite from Mapuru to Darwin two short screenflows, one from each end.
21. 6th May 2009: Dhāṅgal telling of the creating ancestors – dog, pheasant coucal, quail, crocodile and python – in the country around her home at Birritjimi, most of which is covered by a bauxite processing plant. Screencast of video and Google Earth.



Dhāṅgal and family at Birritjimi



22. 15th May 2009: Yinjiya talks to Keith Warner's class in California about Yolŋu spirituality and environmental conservation – four Quicktime videos of the screenflow.
23. 21st May 2009: Yinjiya making connection from Badaypaday – his ancestral land – and Mäpuru a neighbouring homeland centre – trying the remote satellite connection and a wireless modem from a nearby telecom tower – four videos and photos.



Yinjiya with community members teaching from Dhamiyaka to California (Trial 24)

24. May 2009: Yinjiya with some of his family members, including senior elder Garaŋalawuy, teaching from the sacred water holes at Dhamiyaka to Keith Warner's environmental ethics class in Santa Clara, California – videos, photos and transcript.
25. May 2009: Gapuwiyak to Darwin testing the satellite connection – jumbled and very expensive – screenflow.
26. May 2009: Dhunumbu, Yinjiya's son, on the street in Gapuwiyak, telling his story of land, kin and work to the students in Darwin, and talking to his grandmother who is a student in the class – screenflow video and transcript.

Intellectual property workshop, 18 June 2009

The use of Indigenous ideas, stories, images, art works etc in university teaching and research is a difficult, complex and, it turned out, risky business. We had been deliberating over intellectual property issues for some years in our research reporting work. Using images on a website made the issue more complex. I was determined to use the Teaching from Country program to develop some agreed practices which would respect the Yolŋu legal traditions and protect Yolŋu intellectual property through Australian law.

We invited Robynne Quiggin, from the advisory group, to come to Darwin to work with us intensively for a couple of days. We met in the Indigenous Academic Support Unit, next to the School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Yinjiya and Wangurru brought Miranda to be a mentoree of the workshoping process. Robynne started by introducing herself, and showing us photos of the country of her people, the Wiradjuri people of central New South Wales. She explained that she is based in Sydney. She then started talking about copyright and



intellectual property in Australian law, using a PowerPoint presentation. She drew a picture of what she called the Intellectual Property Tree on the whiteboard. We had many questions and examples. At the end of the workshop, Yinjiya and Wangurru were interviewed by Trevor about Yolŋu and Australian intellectual property laws, and later in the afternoon, Trevor interviewed Dhänggal. A full report of the workshop, including videos and transcriptions of Yinjiya and Dhänggal talking about Yolŋu Intellectual Properties can be found on the website (http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/writings_ip.html). Details of the final legal advice are given on page 14 below.

International seminar

From July 27th to 29th 2009, the School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge Systems, CDU, hosted a three day extended seminar at the SAIKS Seminar Room, on the Casuarina Campus, to report on the Teaching from Country Program, and to explore issues around the engagement of Indigenous knowledge authorities in university teaching and research.

The international team came to Australia for the seminar, and for a few days beforehand we took them to east Arnhemland to visit Dhänggal at her home in Birritjimi, and to tour the sites she had shown us in the Teaching from Country episodes. We also looked around the mining town of Nhulunbuy, and went on a day trip to the homeland centre Garrthalala and learnt about its long and interesting history from senior elder, Multhara Munungiritj.



A panel session during the seminar

The seminar was held over three days and included;

- A summary of the program and its outcomes thus far, presented by me
- A detailed summing-up of the Yolŋu perspectives by the Yolŋu lecturers and advisers
- Papers by all of the international guests, reflecting on the Teaching from Country program from their various points of view
- A forum by the program's students, talking about the experience of Learning from Country
- Papers by three of the Australian advisory group, including one presentation



using Skype, on Australian intellectual property law as it pertains to the program and its website

- Papers on Indigenous knowledge and institutional knowledge, by speakers from the local CSIRO and the United Nations University.

The papers are being collected for publication in a book on the proceedings which will include some of the Yolŋu philosophical work. Full details of the program and drafts of the resulting papers can be found on the website (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/seminar.html>).

4 Evaluation and findings

The evaluation of the program continues to be negotiated collaboratively throughout the program, is ongoing, and available through the website. In the original nomination, the five areas identified for evaluation were: the technical arrangements, appropriate methods of supervision from the Aboriginal side, the use of Web 2.0 tools and collaborative software, employment and remuneration practices, and Intellectual property issues. These five elements were renegotiated as our key questions at the beginning of the program, and were a major focus of the seminar. What follows is a brief summary of this work, with references to further information, on the website and in the seminar proceedings to be published in 2010.

What is a helpful conceptual framing of issues involved in our work that is valid in Yolŋu terms and supports translation into academic contexts?



Mätjarra teaching from her home in Ramingining

The program only succeeded because of the difficult and complex philosophical work which preceded and underpinned the collaborative work. The work was fundamentally epistemological. It found the Yolŋu talking about knowledge as



distributed in the Yolŋu environment. About trees, for example, having agency in growing knowledge, about the breezes, the sounds of waves breaking, the roar of floodwater, contributing to one's learning about one's self. (Many of these references were implicitly to totemic elements in ancestral song – those parts of Yolŋu ceremonial practice which specifically define particular clan identities.) These discussions, particularly in the context of the seminar, found the International visitors talking about the always local nature of knowledge, the processes of silencing and marginalisation of knowledge, the work of the screen, and how we break down the assumed boundaries between the social and the technical, the person and the technology (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/writings.html>). (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/seminar.html>) These discussion and writings continue and will culminate in the publication of the proceedings in 2010.

What are the best socio-technical arrangements (hardware, software, connectivity, spaces, images, voices, organisations) for each context?

From the beginning, we tried not to separate the social from the technical. That division, pervasive in western metaphysics, has little validity in Yolŋu philosophy, as we came to see. The Yolŋu teachers on country were already experimenting with technical arrangements which suited their purposes (in teaching but in other ICT work as well, such as internet banking), which responded to the particular sorts of connectivity they had available, the sorts of hardware that came to hand, the sorts of software that became available, and the sorts of everyday goals of living and teaching that they find themselves addressing. As the teaching program developed, we all moved slowly from the static webpage and PowerPoint development work towards more portable formats – what Yinjiya calls 'live coverage'. It became clear that the Yolŋu participants mostly wanted to work with Apple computers, and wanted to own their own laptops. Those in larger communities particularly didn't want to ask a white person for a key to get into an office to access a computer. They wanted to be at home, or out 'on country'. By the end of January, we had begun to explore a wide range of hardware and software, so Trevor prepared a spreadsheet detailing the name, requirements, features, pros, cons, and comments about each software and some of the hardware options we tried (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/trials0.html>).

How do we understand and support the emergent order of remote Yolŋu pedagogy?

We worked to understand Yolŋu pedagogy from three angles. The first was through asking the Yolŋu teachers often to reflect upon and document their thoughts about Teaching from Country. What does it mean? What is happening? How is it different from classroom teaching? We were careful to document these important statements, and to identify how they played out in the actual teaching episodes. The Yolŋu philosophical writings were central to our work here (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/writings.html>). Our second source of understandings came from the reflections of our international colleagues, who helped us re-think some of the assumptions underlying our own, often unconscious, theories of technology and pedagogy, which may have prevented us from learning new things about Indigenous knowledge in the academy (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/seminar.html>). The third was of course, to speak to the students, to ask them to write, and reflect, evaluate the program, and make a presentation on 'Learning from Country' at the international seminar.



How do we situate Aboriginal teaching in the academic institution to ensure that Yolŋu are fully recognised and paid properly for their contributions?

For many years, we had been working with Yolŋu knowledge authorities in various teaching and research activities at Charles Darwin University. There were ongoing difficulties with payment for Yolŋu work. These revolved around the two questions of how much to pay, and how to pay. We used the Teaching from Country program to look seriously at these issues and work with the University's system to develop some agreement on processes. Through the international



Dhāngal being interviewed by John

seminar, we also found ourselves working with people from the CSIRO who were dealing with similar issues in collaborative research with Indigenous traditional owners of waterways. The 'how much' question revealed the ultimate incommensurability of the academic and Yolŋu knowledge practices, and thus the impossibility of developing a pay scale upon which Yolŋu and academic knowledge authorities could be mapped. Indigenous knowledge is too complex. The ownership, custodianship, and accountabilities are complex and need to be renegotiated for each context. We are fortunate that the work the Yolŋu consultants and teachers do is so well respected and significant that they can be paid well for the knowledge they are prepared and allowed to share. In short, we were able to work with the University to develop a payment system which suited everyone pretty well, including the University authorities who were willing to approve our process – in our special case only, not to be understood as a precedent. Complete details of this part of the program will be published in the seminar proceedings and a draft can be found on the website (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/writings.html>).

How do we ensure that Yolŋu intellectual property is safeguarded through both the traditional and the Australian legal systems?

Robynne Quiggin, Indigenous intellectual property lawyer, from Vincent-Quiggin Consulting in Sydney agreed to come on to the Fellowship's Australian advisory team. I had worked with her before, on issues to do with Indigenous knowledge in academic research. Robynne came to Darwin for a workshop where some key Yolŋu knowledge authorities – notably, Yinjiya and Dhāngal – sat down with Robynne, John, and me, and a few younger



Yinjiya and Wangurru talking about Yolŋu intellectual property laws



Yolŋu, and talked through intellectual property issues from both the Yolŋu and the Australian legal systems. Robynne told us stories we already vaguely knew about how some significant images from Yolŋu art had been stolen to make carpets and teatowels and how these cases had been important in the development of Australian intellectual property law. After the workshop, Yinŋiya and Dhāṅgal told their stories to camera and we prepared a paper contrasting the Yolŋu and Australian laws (http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/docs/TFC_IP_Yinŋiya_Dhāṅgal.pdf). Robynne presented some legal advice which amounts to setting up agreements under Australian law, between the Yolŋu (owners of particular images, sound files etc), and the University whereby the Yolŋu owner licenses the University to use a digital article for the specific purpose of the website – teaching, research etc. This will enable (and require) the University to act on behalf of the Yolŋu owner if there is any misuse of the IP by an outside party. At the time of writing, the University is considering the advice. Watch the website for developments.

5 Student engagement

Students played an active part in our ongoing understanding and evaluation of the program, and their comments about the unfolding program are recorded at the end of some of the trials available on the website. We made sure that the 31 students had a chance to present their reflections carefully and publicly at the Teaching from Country international seminar. Christian Clark liaised with students in developing a plan for the discussion and they came up with five headings which grouped their ideas. These were:

1. the empowerment of Yolŋu knowledge, learning styles and authorities in the teaching in the Yolŋu Studies: 'I felt that having predominantly Yolŋu teachers throughout the semester created a real sense of ownership and authority over what cultural and language information we were learning. Not only did this feel like we were learning cultural content, but also cultural learning processes and structures'
2. the understandings of learning and what it is to be a learner which emerged: 'I got the sense that there was an overarching something that was what was expected of us and it was us within it, engaging with the technology and what was happening, and what we got out of it ourselves, which was a very satisfying way to learn'
3. the understanding of Yolŋu pedagogy: 'demonstrators of knowledge, not so much as lecturers.', not 'just another bit of information to slot into all your other information'
4. reflections on technology in mediating and facilitating: 'the learning community was very strong and ... the technology, its successes and faults, brought people together more than it fragmented the learning environment'
5. reflections on the possible futures for the program: 'the program only worked because Yolŋu authority was properly recognised and supported by the CDU staff', 'the implementation of a similar program in other contexts like land management studies would need to be carefully planned and thoughtfully evaluated'

A lecturer in Australian languages at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies read about the program on the website and asked if his class of 22 students could be involved. Yinŋiya, Dhāṅgal and Waymamba all delivered lectures using Skype. Some of the students' comment included:

'In spite of being far away from each other, we could meet and listen to each other, which was really wonderful.'



'This program made me feel a bond with Yolŋu people'.

'I learned a new way of seeing or thinking of the world.'

'Yinjiya's way of talking was so humble and friendly that we couldn't believe he is a very important and influential person, but I like him all the better for it.'

'The fact that the great elder in Yolŋu, Yinjiya, teaches us directly makes me feel grateful and motivated.'

'It worked well for me when I knew that Yolŋu people respect their nature, history and each other because these ideas gave me chances reflecting over myself who sometimes think just of myself instead of taking care of other important things.'

'I learned a lot from Yinjiya's story, and I came to understand the importance of people helping and supporting each other.'

'Yinjiya always seemed eager to talk longer than the schedule, which made me feel his passion.' 'I came to know about Charles Darwin University.'

'I do wish keep in touch with Yolŋu people!'

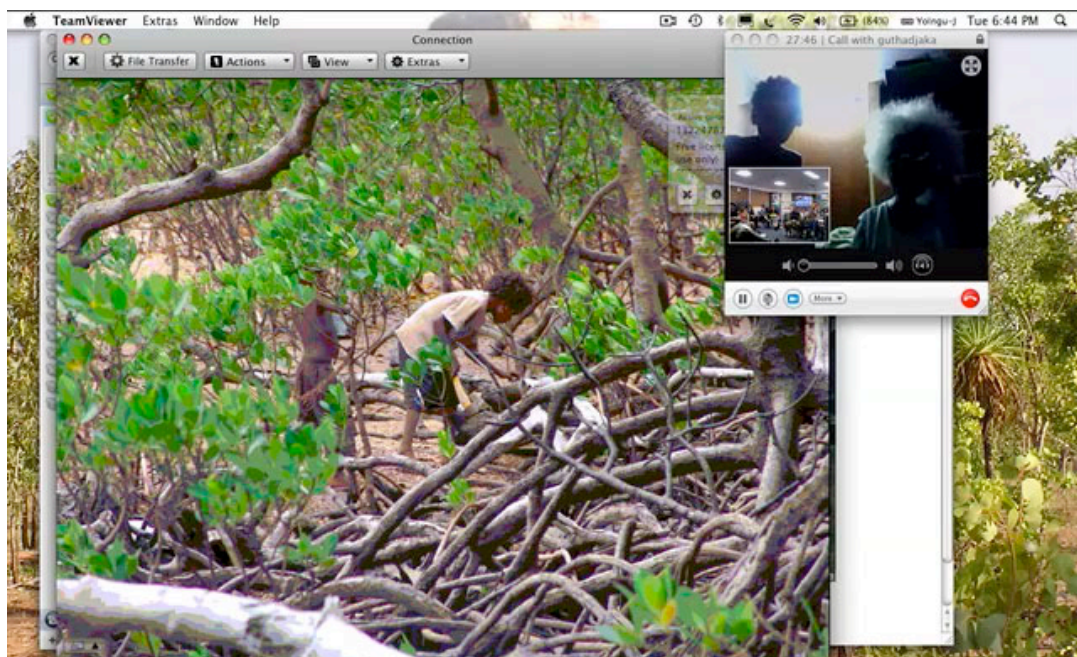
The full report from the students, as well as a summary of the reactions of the new Japanese students, can be found on the website. See

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/writings.html> and

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/seminar.html>

6 Ongoing work

Teaching from Country continues. In second semester 2009, Yinjiya, the Yolŋu Studies lecturer, started teaching to a class for Japanese students at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. We have enlisted Waymamba Gaykamarŋu, who lectured in Yolŋu Studies for 12 years before her retirement, and she and Gotha have both been teaching to Japan. The students' feedback has been extremely positive. We are working on the translation of some of the study materials into Japanese.



Screen capture from a Teaching session with Gotha; about collecting Mangrove worms



We have had one session teaching the postgraduate informatics class at the University of Pittsburgh in early 2010.

Yinjiya spoke at a NT Department of Education conference of Indigenous language teachers about his work with digital media and the benefits of Teaching from Country.

I delivered a featured paper on the Teaching from Country program at the international conference “Tipping Points – Courageous Actions, Powerful Stories” for the Australian Council for Educational Leaders in September.

Yinjiya, Dhänggal, John Greatorex and I were invited to make a presentation on ‘Teaching from Country’ at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies conference in Canberra in October 2009, on the theme ‘Connections, Reconnections and Urban Life’, which was very well received.

A lively discussion continues among all the participants as we work on the preparation of the volume of proceedings. The ongoing Teaching from Country activities will be reported on the Yolngu Studies website (www.cdu.edu.au/yolngustudies), and the fellowship website (www.cdu.edu.au/tfc) will be archived as a record of the work which was funded and supported by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

7 Acknowledgements

First, to the memory of Dr Raymattja Marika and Frank Djirrimbilpilwuy Garawirtja, both of whom were included in the original application, and whose work – (hers) in Yolngu philosophy and (his) in Yolngu multimedia – provided original inspiration the program. Both passed away during 2009.

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Special thanks to Trevor van Weeren, whose creative work on web design, whose technical work on computers and connectivity, whose thoughtful reflections on what



Screen shot of Skype teaching session from Ramingining



happens when the screen gets turned on, and whose good humour and tireless work were indispensable.

Special thanks to Helen Verran from The University of Melbourne, the chief of the international scholars, whose ideas have helped us all, Yolŋu and Balanda, see ways forward through thoughtful collaboration for more than 20 years now.

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Dhāngal teaching at Birritjimi

Photographs: Trevor Van Weeren (TvW), Michael Christie (MC), screenshot (ss),
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