

**Relationships with Tracey Bunda**  
(T: Tracey Bunda, K: Katelyn Barney)

Welcome to Indigenising Curriculum in Practice with Professor Tracey Bunda and Associate Professor Katelyn Barney.

T: Hi everyone. I'm Tracey Bunda, and welcome to our podcast series Indigenising Curriculum in Practice. I'm a Ngugi Wakka Wakka woman and the Professor of Indigenous Education at the University of Queensland. I'd like to start the podcast by acknowledging country and the various countries from where you, our listeners, are located, and pay my respects to elders past and present. I acknowledge the ongoing contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to society at local, national and international levels. You may very well ask what is the connection between acknowledging country and Indigenising Curriculum? It's important for us to think about Indigenous knowledge systems that have helped inform practice on country, and that's exactly where Universities are located, they are located on Aboriginal country. And the knowledge that we bring to our students about country will enable those students to have a more meaningful relationship with this country.

I'm joined by my colleague and co-host Associate Professor Katelyn Barney.

K: Hi everybody. I'd also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we're recording and also where you're listening from. And pay my respects to their ancestors and their descendants who continue to have strong connections to country. I also want to acknowledge that where a recording has always been a place of teaching and learning. I'm a non-Indigenous woman living and working in the engine.

In this series Tracey and I are interviewing Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics about how they're Indigenising Curriculum at the University of Queensland.

T: Together we are going to ask questions to unravel the why, the how, and when of Indigenising Curriculum.

K: Our theme for this podcast is based on the principle of relationships and our format is slightly different because I am interviewing my co-host Professor Tracey Bunda. Welcome.

T: Very weird to be the one that's going to be interviewed.

K: Thank you Tracey. Can you talk about the process of Indigenising Curriculum at UQ? Where did that process start, and what do you see as something that you've achieved that you're really proud of?

T: The University had a Reconciliation Action Plan, the Innovate Wrap, there's a number of objectives within the Innovate RAP and one of them was with regard to Indigenising curricula. So we needed to be able to have a process by which that could happen. There were forerunners where it was discussed in the University as having set courses, and here at the University they talk about courses rather than subjects, set courses that every undergraduate student would need to complete before exiting with their degree.

What we did, or what I did, is because this comes under the banner of teaching and learning we worked with our Institute of Teaching and Learning. They were most familiar, and embedded in terms of governance and infrastructure that's inherent within the Institute to be able to reach out to all of the teaching academics within the, and the Deans, Academic Deans to be able to bring those changes forward. Because it couldn't be an ad hoc process, it would fall down. It had to be embedded right from the beginning.

There was this, you could say that Bronwyn at that time, as Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous, and Doune McDonald as Pro Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning, they both championed a process by which Indigenising curriculum could be implemented within the University.

A couple of years down the track now, maybe two and half, three years down the track since we commenced this process one of the things that I'm really proud of is the fact that there are many people within the University, in spite of their own fears and anxieties have taken up this responsibility and have done so with a level of seriousness to incorporate indigenised curriculum within their degrees. So I'm really proud of that. People don't have to do that; we've already got a very crowded curriculum irregardless of where we're located within the University. You know we're all still on a learning curve, but we're getting there.

K: Yeah, it's been really great to see people pick up that work across many different disciplinary areas and you know, as part of our work we're doing a Handbook of Indigenising Curriculum, and to see all those chapters coming in across all different subject areas, and the important work people are doing in the space, I think is testament to your work and people really coming along on the journey.

T: The Handbook is quite critical for me as I move to the next stage of my life, which is not to be within the University anymore and retire and be much more with my family and community. But it is legacy work to leave that Handbook behind to show others that this work can be done irregardless of the discipline in which you may be located. So you know you're right, you know, we have articles, chapters from science, as much as we have chapters from arts and humanities, it's going to be great.

K: And you know this podcast, as well as the Green Paper focussed around the UQ Indigenising Curriculum design principles and that is centred in the middle on Country. So I wondered if you could talk about why did you centre Country right in the centre of teaching?

T: When I commenced this work one of the things that I did was a desktop search of what other Universities were doing, you know, just went to that adage, you know, don't reinvent the wheel. So I had a look at what the Go8 Universities were doing in this space, I had a look at the other larger Universities what they were doing. It became evident to me, there's great work out there can I just say that, it also became evident that in spite of the fact people were framing the work around a number of principles no-one had actually named Country as a principle in and of itself. And I thought that was really important. If we, and I know this is controversial within this nation at the moment, by some political persuasions, seeing that an acknowledgement of Country, or a welcome to Country, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to non-Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people as something that is controversial, waste of time, unnecessary.

For me, here I'm quoting Aunty Mary Graham, that Country is the source of our knowledge, and so it was really important for me to centre country then as a principle because all of the other values that are associated with Indigenising Curriculum derive from our relationship with country. As Indigenous people what is it that we say to each other to identify as Indigenous people to each other? Who are you in terms of what's your family, who is your family, who are the people that you are connected to, and where do you come from, what country do you come from? That's always been the mark up for the way in which I was raised of your Indigeneity. And so for me that aligns some very fundamentals of our knowing of ourselves as Indigenous people with a value system that needs to be taken up. And it is, you know there are many non-Indigenous allies who have relationship with, and concern for country in much the same way. Maybe not in the same way but are coming to know and understand why that is important.

K: You mentioned relationships and the importance of non-Indigenous allies, and relationships is one of the other Indigenising Curriculum design principles, you and I have been working together for the last six years or so and that's been for me a really joyful part of my career being able to work with you as well. Can you talk about what do you see as the benefits of collaboration and Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working together in this Indigenising curriculum space?

T: It's really difficult for one Indigenous person to be, to know all. And you wouldn't want to set up Indigenous people in that particular way anyway. There's a real failing with that. For example, we have a very strong cohort of Indigenous academics that are situated within the health and behavioural sciences space, can these academics speak in to an engineering and technology space? Of course not, you know, where it's knowledge that it is very different where we've been trained. And so we need to be able in all of this to be able to have a language that allows us to speak from that discipline base but also speaks to some of the common objectives that we want to teach, that we want to be able to reach through Indigenising curriculum.

Collaborations become really important, whether they're across the discipline or outside of the discipline where you bring other types of knowledges to bear. I think, you know, some of the more obvious ones, say the discipline of history, that is relatively easy to be able to look at what the phenomena of Australian history and say, how can I include an Indigenous lens in this place? I think that's relatively easy. But in IT or say engineering, you know what do we really need to think about here, and we need to think quite deeply, how are we going to change this discipline to be able to bring the Indigenous lens here? Why is that important for the non-Indigenous, primarily non-Indigenous students, who are learning this? What benefit could there be for their own knowledge, for their own training in this discipline once they go out into the larger world? And I would argue it's at that point their knowledge comes into play if they've had an indigenised curriculum during the course of their degree.

So those relationships are just critical. I think they're core, they're central. I think we should be thinking about them all the time.

K: That's a really important point. And of course, in terms of Indigenising curriculum it's important for Indigenous students to be able to see themselves in the curriculum as well.

T: The majority of our students, Indigenous students here at the University are located within the arts and humanities degrees. Outside of that our students, the next largest cohort of students are located in health and behavioural sciences. To me that's not a mystery. It starts to reflect what's happening outside of the community, outside of the University into the community, and where our people are being employed.

You can actually go through the whole of schooling in Australia and never have Indigenous studies. Here I'm talking about Indigenous students. And I think that's really quite sad because even though there is Indigenous perspectives within the primary and secondary curriculum it's not compulsory. And so that says to me the teaching of Indigenous studies is very much dependent upon the goodwill of non-Indigenous teachers who want to champion this as important knowledge for our students to be able to have.

And for me there are two knowledge systems within this nation. There is an Indigenous knowledge system that has been here since the beginning of time, and there is a non-Indigenous knowledge system that came 240 years ago. Also I think that those two knowledge systems need to be able to work together to be able to resolve some fairly serious issues that this country is suffering from. I think sending the next generation of Indigenous students out into the world, not ever seeing themselves within the curriculum, and not having a voice replicates a colonial relationship, or a colonising relationship with education with their colleagues. And that goes the same for non-Indigenous students. If the only relationship that you have with Indigenous knowledge is just an extractive one then we haven't shifted the relationship between black and white in this country and that's problematic.

K: What about plans for the future, and where would you like to see this process of Indigenising Curriculum going? So here at UQ I know an important step has been the formation of a sub-committee as a governance strategy for Indigenising Curriculum, and that's starting in 2025, and that'll report to a Committee for Academic Programmes and Policy. What other things would you like to see happening going into the future?

T: In many ways for the advances that we've made here at the University there's also a reflection that we've only just started. It's sad to say, 2024 going into 2025. But I think we've started with some good foundation. I'm really pleased with the way in which there is an Indigenous team engaged in the library, and the library can be a key source of support for academic staff. I think we need to build that much more. I do understand, you know, with a 40 odd year career under my belt, I do understand how we as academic teachers we need to be able to go to the detail. So if we are able to organise the knowledge and information that we need for teaching within the library in such a way that that makes life a little bit easier for academics within disciplines then that's great. Ideally one of the things that we will have to do is build our own resources, and we can do that through what the University offers through Teaching Innovation Grants. I think that's an important piece of the infrastructure.

In the Green Paper I also point to a Green Paper which is a White Paper now I would presume, I also point to the importance of really thinking about engaging with Indigenous people within the community, on the ground, you know our community practitioners. And whether that be elders as senior knowledge holders, or our younger members of the community who are doing work to build the community. So in thinking about that relationship, and this was an important consideration when I was talking to Indigenous academics at the very beginning, so it's really important for us to be able remunerate our members of our community. Because we don't have enough Indigenous academic teaching staff within the University. So how are we going to do that? How are we going to work out a system whereby we're paying elders appropriately? Do we pay an Elder at a academic Level A, casual appointment? I don't think so. I think that would be insulting for the Indigenous community. So we need to think about those sorts of things.

I know you're working with our colleague Deanne Gannaway to look at the ways in which Indigenous members of the community can receive accreditation through advanced higher education. And I think that that is a really good thing. There're many thousands of Indigenous people who have come into the University and shared their knowledge, and neither been remunerated or accredited for the work that has been done.

Building those resources. I think faculty having a budget that is specifically set aside, and certainly this will be part of the work of that sub-committee that you mentioned, which will have oversight of Indigenising Curriculum in the University, so that we have the right sort of budgets for faculty to be able to engage in the work that needs to be done for Indigenising curriculum. Those professional development opportunities to continue through our circles of practice that we've got, communities of practice that we have operating at the moment I think. We need to acknowledge non-Indigenous academic staff for the work that they're doing as well within this space, and so there can some accreditation for them as well.

I mean part of the reason why we're doing the Handbook, if I could loop back to the Handbook, is because we don't write enough about what we're doing in the teaching space. And so this is important work, and Indigenising curriculum is just the conduit through which we're going to talk about our teaching, our critical teaching within the University.

K: Yeah. I think resources that, you know, you and I have been working on, as well as many other colleagues across the University are really important to keep developing those resources, and of course, thinking about how we really engage with community, and of course, the importance of payment of people is something we need to keep thinking about and making sure that people are being paid appropriately.

T: One of the things I would like to be able to say too Katelyn is give praise to the many people who've formed the initial Working Party for Indigenising curriculum. There are a number of people around the University, representatives of the faculty, who came and sat, and we talked, and we worked out exactly what we should be doing and how we should be doing it, to be able to drive the objectives Indigenous academic staff wanted to see happen within the University. So that was really great. And critical to those, to that working party and to the conversations and to the behind the scenes work were

people such as Karen Benson, the Director of ITaLi, and foremost Deanne Gannaway. Deanne couldn't be with us today, yeah, I particularly want to acknowledge the work that Deanne has done and continues to do as we move towards the first meeting of the sub-committee that will have oversight of Indigenising Curriculum.

K: Yeah. Deanne's been a fantastic colleague to work with over the years and continues to work with us as well. So we want to acknowledge her in this conversation.

T: If I did think about what I would like to see in the future of course you know you and I have a Teaching Innovation grant at the moment where we're looking at where Indigenising curriculum isn't happening and what kinds of supports need to be put in place to give all of those disciplines confidence to be able to introduce Indigenous perspectives. So that's been interesting. We've been working quite closely with science, we've been working with geography, we've been working with vet science, music as well. And maths and physics as well. Who'd have thunk.

K: And engineering.

P: And engineering. Yeah. Everybody's there. And that's been really interesting I think. If I talk about the future I think you know, of course we'd like to see more Indigenous academic staff within the various parts of the University employed, not to just only teach, you know, Indigenous studies, critical Indigenous studies, but perhaps too based on experience be a bit of a guiding, guidance there for the various faculties. I also think we need to be able to establish a system in much the same way as we have Teaching Innovation grants within the University to be able to develop those resources for teaching. I think we need something similar for Indigenising curriculum. We've got a system in place, maybe we could replicate that system. I don't know. But that's also something for the sub-committee as well.

What we will definitely be addressing next year is a clear framework, a clear guideline for staff throughout the University if they're thinking of Indigenising curriculum. On the whole I've been really pleased with the way in which this work has been taken up within the University in places that you didn't expect.

I: Thank you Tracey for having this conversation. It's good to hear your perspectives on where the journey has come from at the University, and where it's going into the future. And I think the success of what's happened is very much due to you, your leadership in this area, and your generosity to many people has been really important.

P: I have been cognisant that this space is new and strange, and weird and challenging, and so I've not wanted to frighten anybody unnecessarily further, and so it is one of those spaces where we can work together to be able to produce something really quite unique.

I: And thanks for joining us for another episode of Indigenising Curriculum in Practice.

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