

Benefits with Anna Lagos and Caitlin Murphy

(T: Tracey K: Katelyn A: Anna C: Caitlin)

- T: Hi everyone, I'm Tracy Bunda and welcome to our podcast series, Indigenising curriculum in practice. I'm a Ngugu 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 our listeners are located and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge the ongoing contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to society at local, national and international levels. I'm joined by my colleague and cohost, Dr Katelyn Barney.
- K: Hi everyone, 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 we're recording has always been a place of teaching and learning. I'm a non-Indigenous woman living and working in Meanjin. In this series, Tracy and I interview Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics about how they're Indigenising curriculum within the faculties at the University of Queensland.
- T: Together we are going to ask questions to unravel the why, the how and then when of Indigenising curriculum.
- K: Our theme for this podcast is based on the principle of benefits and our guests today are Anna Lagos and Caitlin Murphy from the library at the University of Queensland, welcome.
- A: Thank you.
- T: Anna would you like to start off and introduce yourself in any way you want to and then Caitlin we'll get you to do the same?
- A: My name's Anna, I was born and raised in Brisbane on Turrbal and Jagera country, I'm from a big family, I've got lots of aunts and uncles and cousins and we all live between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast so I feel really connected to those places. I'm a mum and I'm a librarian and I've worked at UQ Library since 2019 and I was also very fortunate to study here as an undergraduate student a long time ago. At UQ Library I am the Associate Director of the Office of the University Librarian and I've been project managing a library project to support Indigenising curriculum.
- C: I'm Caitlin Murphy, I'm a Jinibara woman from Dungidau clan which is Kilcoy area, I actually also grew up on Turrbal Jagera country. And actually spent a lot of time on this campus here at St Lucia as a child, as my dad was studying here. I joined the library in June last year. I'm part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services and Collection team there. We've been doing a lot of work around how we can improve practices in how we catalogue and describe Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous material in our collections. It's been a busy time, there's no shortage of work but I'm really excited to be working on projects across the library and also in university wide projects like our Indigenising curriculum resources.

K: Thanks Caitlin and Anna, can you talk a bit about the resources that you've been developing for Indigenising curriculum?

A: Our work on Indigenising curriculum in the library as Caitlin mentioned, builds on a lot of the work that we've been doing over the last couple of years. And that work has been led by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services and Collection team. So that work has been about trying to have a better understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander items that we have in our collection and the make them available to people. And we're doing that by addressing library descriptive practices in order to respectfully acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. And those descriptive practices that respectfully acknowledge those contributions and connections, then help make those resources easier to find and therefore more available to people.

So we're building on that work and in our current project, what we've been trying to do is make all those resources we have in the library more easy to find for UQ teaching staff. So we've built a webpage that brings all of those resources together, these resources are things like a library guard that showcases a lot of the diverse voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that we have in our collection. We've got guides on Indigenous resources and databases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. And then things like a referencing guide on how to respectfully acknowledge Indigenous authors. We've got a course reading list that includes notes on authors cultural heritage as they've described it and that reading list was designed as a starting point for teaching staff to highlight the work of Indigenous authors and Indigenous perspectives to help them include those in their course reading lists.

Our websites also got information that will help people assess resources that they might find independently and it can also, has some resources to help people develop their own cultural competencies as well as sharing examples of Indigenising curriculum in practice. So that's kind of the resources we've got available so far and then looking into the future we're looking to add a module to help teaching staff get started with Indigenising curriculum as well as keeping those examples and resources refreshed and bringing new ones in over time.

T: That's fantastic work and really critical work to be able to help the academics across the university. Because when I started this work I realised that non-Indigenous academics wouldn't even know who was an Indigenous author, who are the Indigenous writers within our community. And then the fact that you've also got that resource to help people choose what's a good resource, what's not a good resource. Mind you though I do see a place for bad resources as well to teach everybody why it's such a bad resource.

A: Guidance around assessing the resources is also then going into thinking about why you might use different resources. And so the role, some of those historical objects might have in your teaching as well.

T: You've also developed, the UQ has a Blak History module and for listeners, the library is using Blak Destiny Deacons formation of Blak for Blak. Can you tell us about that module, if whether or not it's available for people outside of UQ?

- C: UQ as a Black History was actually developed by my colleagues, Lesley Acres and Raelee Lancaster as a first year med student orientation in Fryer Library. And so it was designed to build the students connection to campus and also their knowledge of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history here at UQ. And thanks to Bruce Ibson, University Archivist and also Jeff Rickertt from the Fryer Library, Raelee and Lesley were able to pull some really special materials from our archives. Those materials highlight the stories of the people and place here at St Lucia including some important sites on campus you can learn about. For example, [0:07:22.9] in the great courts, all the background there and also some of the mural history and sculptures that you can see around the campus. There's also information on past students and staff and also the activism that has been ongoing here at UQ for many decades. So it's since grown to become an online module that can be embedded into Blackboard. We're working on making that module available to UQ staff and students next year, it's currently ongoing a bit of a refresh so that we can add some new interviews with past students and staff and also we're broadening the scope. So it's not faculty specific, it will be accessible to all students and staff, yep.
- T: And there's some interesting history here at UQ isn't there? Distinguished Professor Marcia Langton started here at UQ, didn't finish her first degree but did start here. Aboriginal Community Radio started here.
- C: That's right, Murri Hour.
- T: Murri Hour started here so Kev Carmody was an undergraduate student here and now of course we've got the Kev Carmody House which is a residential accommodation for students. So there's lots of interesting things, perhaps it's a model for other universities to take up.
- K: You mentioned that you're working with some non-Indigenous academics around Indigenising curriculum. Can you talk a bit about any examples of the ways that you're working with staff?
- C: I mentioned earlier that the library's work at the moment around Indigenising curriculum is built on a lot of the work that had already been done by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services and Collection team. But with the work we're doing at the moment, one of our goals was to make this work not a project but just that the way we work now in the library. And in doing that it's about making it everybody's work and everybody's responsibility in the library. For this particular project we've been working with lots of different library staff, most of those are non-Indigenous so that we can build everybody's knowledge and comfort and skills around supporting this work and participating in this work. And one of the ways that we've been able to do that is created a resource for library staff that we've called 23 things to know about Indigenising curriculum, 23 things is a very library thing that exists so we've adopted that. In those 23 things to know about Indigenising curriculum we've been sharing content with library staff each week. That content sometimes addresses gaps in our technical or knowledge gaps but also it's about addressing our discomfort as non-Indigenous people in working in this space. Being vulnerable and kind of accepting that position but then being able to continue with that work. A lot of the work we've been doing in the project is about building the confidence I guess for all library staff to kind of participate in that.

- A: I think I would just like to add how refreshing it's been as an Aboriginal staff member to work in a space where that cultural load recognised and that not all Indigenous enquiries necessarily have to be answered by our team. It's just been really supporting knowing that this is a whole of library, this is whole of library work, it involves everyone.
- T: It's an important change isn't it, business as usual - Indigenising my work.
- C: For myself as a non-Indigenous person, you know I did feel a little bit nervous about getting things wrong or offending some people but it's been, it's actually been really fun to get involved and it's been a really supportive project. And knowing that everybody is on that journey and kind of has recognised that it's work we all need to do, has been really fulfilling actually.
- T: What I want to turn to now is some of the principles that we've established to frame Indigenising curriculum and one of them is around benefits. Can you talk about the benefits of these resources for Indigenising curriculum and what you think the role is and the benefits of libraries more broadly in Indigenising curriculum?
- C: Again as a non-Indigenous person we all benefit from richer and more diverse perspectives and ways of thinking both in terms of how we understand the world and our relationships in the world. One of the benefits in the Indigenising curriculum program is in how the library can partner with and support our academic teaching colleagues. And the work that we can do to make these resources easier for teaching staff to connect with and that will help them with the work that they're doing in Indigenising curriculum. Another benefit I see in this work is the benefit of connectedness so just in doing this work in the library we've been able to make connections through the communities of practice in sharing with colleagues across Australia in the library world. But also in sharing with UQ colleagues about the work that we've doing and how we can all learn from each other. So that connection has been a really nice benefit from the Indigenising curriculum work we've done.
- A: I think there's been some wonderful benefits that have come from the work we've been doing in terms of making collections more accessible to communities also, by adding that richer metadata, sorry it's sounding library speak now. But the way we're describing collections, the fact that we're able to add the people, languages and place, headings really supports Indigenous ways of searching the collection. So that; s another benefit that comes from this work.
- T: That's really critical I mean blackfellas aren't necessarily going to go into a library and understand what, you know the classification system is there but they are going to be able to understand our classification system. So where's all the Gamilaroi information, who are the Wiradjuri authors, who are the Goenpul authors.
- K: The podcast is called Indigenising Curriculum in Practice, what does that really mean to you guys in the library in relation to teaching and learning and Indigenising curriculum, is there anything else you wanted to add?
- A: I think that practice to me implies learning, something we're always doing and especially in the library, you learn something new every day. However, when it comes to something as big as Indigenising curriculum, I think it's quite easy to also feel

overwhelmed or uncertain as to where to begin. So Indigenising in practice to me means moving beyond that fear of making a mistake and instead focus that energy into making a start. And I think this really links well to the other design principle of respect and approaching it with respect and that openness to learn.

C: For me as well and really in a library sense Indigenising curriculum in practice, also means making sure that libraries are a safe and respectful place. And this means our library collections and our descriptive practices but it also means our digital spaces and our physical buildings. So Indigenising curriculum in practice, for me means that we're making sure all of these spaces are safe and comfortable and that they are spaces that make way for those respectful relationships and learning to continue.

T: For me it's very obvious that the library is making the change so our guests today have been Anna Lagos and Caitlin Murphy from the University of Queensland Library, thank you women for being here with us today talking about Indigenising curriculum in practice.

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