Cultural interface theory in the Kenya context and beyond

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Yunkaporta's (2009) pedagogical 'eight ways' conceptual framework, inspired by Nakata's (2007) cultural interface theory, provided the platform for interpretation of the data in the current study. Here we considered the transferability of the framework to a current initiative in Kenya and its usefulness in preparation for an expansion of that initiative to other developing world countries. The current study considered to what extent the work of these Australian authors, concerned with enhancing the engagement and educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners in the Australian context, would be applicable in contexts far removed from Australia. This paper describes the context of the current study: groups of teacher education students from the University of Notre Dame Australia undertaking some weeks of teaching in the Aberdare Ranges School in Kenya. As the University seeks to expand service learning opportunities to countries other than Kenya, the research question was: to what extent is Yunkaporta's eight ways conceptual model useful for Australian pre service teacher education students preparing to work for the first time in a cross-cultural context at the cultural interface? A case study methodology was utilised and data were gathered from students' reflective diaries and individual interviews. Thematic coding was utilised for interpretation of the data.

Introduction

Service-learning can, as a concept, be viewed through multiple lenses within multiple models, including but not limited to experiential, critical theory, progressive, social and multicultural education, social justice and action (Butin, 2006). Preparation of the University of Notre Dame Australia students for their three-week immersion in the Kenya context had changed, expanded and developed over time, but the approach had been piecemeal, amended on the strength of student feedback after each trip (Kearney, Perkins & Maakrun, 2014). The development of the preparation had not, however, been developed within a theoretical framework or model. This current research seeks to evaluate the model proposed in this paper situated within cultural interface theory. Thereby, this research makes a contribution to the growing body of knowledge, research and literature in relation to cultural interface theory and provides a model for university staff more broadly to consider academics supporting students who are undertaking service learning in a cross-cultural context.

This paper first provides an overview of cultural interface theory as explicated by Martin Nakata (2007a), a Torres Strait Islander in Australia, and other Australian Aboriginal authors. It then provides an outline of Yunkaporta's (2009) Eight Ways Learning Framework which built on Nakata's work. The authors of this paper have been involved in cross-cultural work and research in Australia with Aboriginal people and have been strongly influenced by the work of Nakata and Yunkaporta. The paper then describes a current initiative, undertaken over four years, where Australian teacher education students

undertake some weeks of teaching in a disadvantaged school in Kenya with which the university has built a partnership - a different cross-cultural context. A summary of the methodology, methods and data analysis for the current study are then provided. The current study considers to what extent, in preparing their students for cross-cultural experience of teaching in Kenya, and in student reflection on the experience, aspects of Yunkaporta's eight ways were evidenced. A mapping of student voice to Yunkaporta's eight ways learning framework is provided and relevant examples of the eight ways in the Kenya context are described. Finally the discussion explains to what degree these findings will have an impact, in the expansion of the service learning opportunities to be offered to teacher education student and on how this framework will be used to guide the preparation of students for their work at the cultural interface.

Cultural interface theory

Martin Nakata (2007a) coined the term "education at the cultural interface" (p.7) where, he maintains, education in a cross-cultural contexts requires more than just the inclusion of Indigenous narratives and perspective. It requires first and foremost the recognition of the Indigenous people's knowledge systems and an understanding of the complexity from their perspective at the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007b). It can also not just be reduced to the inclusion of Indigenous content.

The current study considered whether Martin Nakata's cultural interface theory provided a suitable framework as it captures the nuanced and multi-dimensional nature of the place of non-Indigenous teachers charged with the responsibility of supporting an initiative in a remote Kenyan community.

Nakata (2007b) "captured this complexity and conceptualised it as a broader interface" (p.198). What he has termed as cultural interface, is embodied by points of intersecting trajectories. He explained as follows:

> It is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional space of dynamic relations constituted by the intersections of time, place, distance, different systems of thought, competing and contesting discourses within and between different knowledge traditions, and different systems of social, economic and political organisation. It is a space for many shifting and complex intersections between different people with different histories, experiences, languages, agendas, aspirations and responses … All these elements cohere together at the interface in the everyday (Nakata, 2007b, p.199).

Nakata argues that the elements and relationships in this space is how one's thinking, understandings, knowledges, identities and histories change in a continuing state of process, our "lived realities" (Nakata, 2007b, p.199). According to Nakata there are three guiding principles:

> Firstly, Indigenous people are entangled in a very contested knowledge space at the cultural interface; secondly, to move forward it is necessary to recognise the continuities and discontinuities of Indigenous agency; and, thirdly, the understanding of the continual

> tension that informs and limits what can be said and what is left unsaid in the everyday. (Nakata, 2007b, p.215-216)

Nakata (2001) has also described the successful application of the cultural interface theory in education as requiring the starting point to be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'lifeworlds', and then extending learners in the overlap with non-local realities, maintaining continuity with the past, while learning skills relevant to the present and the future. He further asserts that the cultural interface approach is not simply a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to transition into mainstream education, but "should be considered an innovation, enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are relevant for learners of any culture (Nakata cited in Yunkaporta, 2009). By 2007, Nakata (2007b) had extended this view to describe the cultural interface as a space where there is a dialogical exchange between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal systems. Taking this further in what it means for those working at the cultural interface in education, there is the acknowledgement that it is a "dynamic space between ancestral and western realities" (Yunkaporta & McGinty, 2009, p.58).

Other Australian Aboriginal authors extend this premise, citing the need to take into account the interrelatedness of people, land and spirit. Martin (2003), for example, puts forward the notion of a "relational epistemology supported by a relational ontology" in that this "helps us focus our attention on our interrelatedness, and our interdependence with each other and our greater surroundings" (p.205). In the current Kenya initiative there has been an ongoing, reciprocal relationship building with the same staff participating year after year, albeit with a different group of students each year. In an extension of her original proposition, Martin (2007) explained important aspects when non-Indigenous people work with Indigenous people.

> The goal is to prepare for change so that it expands one's autonomy, agency and relatedness and does not diminish or limit this autonomy, agency and relatedness. This must occur as coming amongst others in relatedness, so as not to silence, displace or make them invisible. (p.18)

In the current Kenya initiative this was achieved by ensuring that in all collaborations, Indigenous partners led decision-making on the type of learning and teaching that would take place each year.

The eight ways framework

Yunkaporta (2009), in extending thinking around the cultural interface, has contended that Aboriginal perspectives do not come from Indigenised content, but from Aboriginal processes of knowledge transmission. A common-ground pedagogical framework was developed using an Indigenous standpoint methodology inspired by the work of Martin Nakata. Figure 1 below shows Yunkaporta's (2009) conceptualisation as a boomerang matrix of cultural interface knowledge with the common ground between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people connected yet separated.

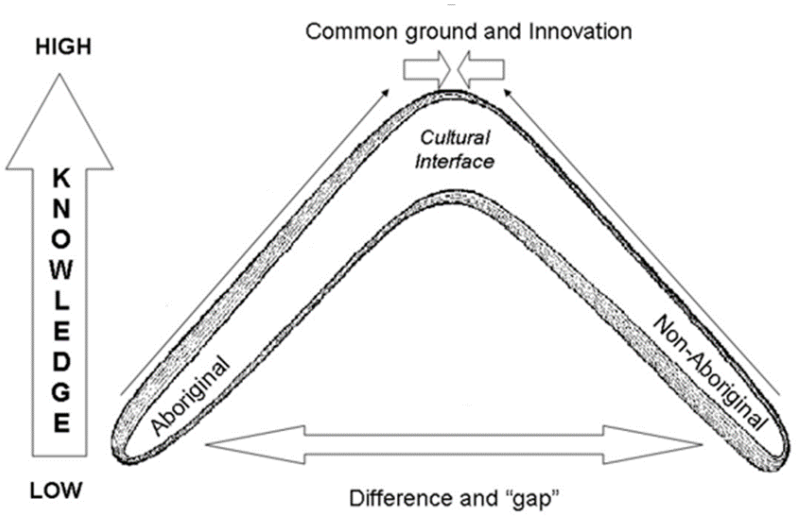

Figure 1: Boomerang matrix of cultural interface knowledge (Yunkaporta, 2009, p.4)

The eight-way framework of Aboriginal pedagogy shows Aboriginal ways of being made up of eight interconnected pedagogies that see teaching and learning as fundamentally holistic and non-linear, comprising kinaesthetic, visual and social aspects. The eight interconnected pedagogies described by Yunkaporta (2009, p.4) are shown in Figure 2.

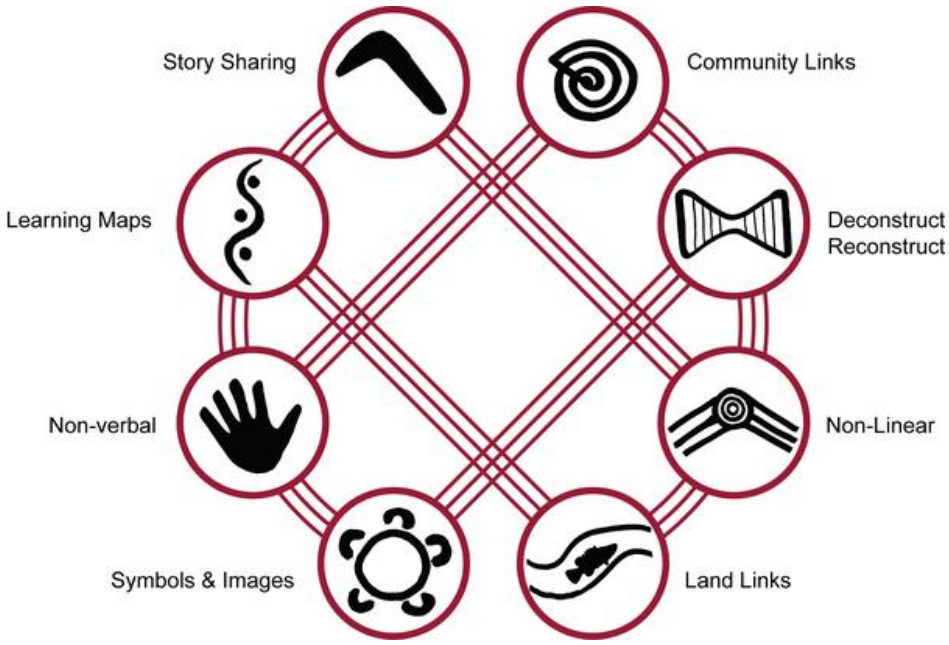

Figure 2: Eight ways framework

Yunkaporta (2009) suggested that in better appreciating an Aboriginal standpoint, it is important to have a clear understanding of one's own ontology, what one believes is real, supported equally by a clear articulation of one's epistemology, the way one thinks about that reality. In the current study, analysing the data in terms of the eight interconnected pedagogies assisted in clarifying these two aspects. Yunkaporta (2009) goes on to encourage that there be a conscious development of methodology, which he perceives as the "tool to make your epistemology" (p.4) and that this be enacted within a framework of explicit axiology, ethics and values. In the current study, for example, one of the potential dangers identified was that the Kenya experience would be a slum tourism experience for students, and every effort was made to avoid that and ensure that it would be a deep and transformative experience.

Methodology

The aim of the current study was to ascertain to what extent Yunkaporta's (2009) eight ways conceptual model is useful for Australian students preparing to work for the first time in a cross-cultural context beyond Australia at the cultural interface. The present research was a qualitative study in the paradigm of interpretivism "which takes the position that social and cultural phenomena emerge from the ways in which the actors in a setting construct meaning" (Schensul, 2012, p.75-76).

The interpretive nature of this present research was motivated by a belief that reality is multi-dimensional (Merriam, 2009) and there is not just one reality. What is experienced may be interpreted differently by individuals, depending on their connection with the issues at hand. The aim was to capture the variety of participants' experiences for analysis (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Walker, 2014). The interpretive theory on which the present research was based "is characterized by a concern for the individual … to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.17). Working for the first time in a cross-cultural situation at the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007b) can be confronting and this research sought to identify a model that would enable the University to provide the best possible preparation for students into the future. Interpretivism considers realities to be multiple, and looks particularly at the context in which the behaviour takes place in order to try and understand it (Ary et al., 2014).

The advantages of working within the theory of interpretivism were as follows:

1. It was possible to give a voice to the participants and to present an interpretation of their reality within that framework. Voice was significant in this study as it sought to present the student participants' reality in their terms and within their frames of reference.
2. The participants' contexts would in all likelihood be idiosyncratic, multifaceted, and complex. It was necessary to work within a methodological approach that produced qualitative evidence to describe this adequately.

3. The researchers were interested in understanding "the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.17) and would be able to interpret how they made sense of their cross-cultural experience.

Such research can uncover the implicit meaning, from one or more perspectives, in a particular circumstance. In the current study the purpose was to understand how students experienced the cross-cultural experience and reflected on their preparation for it (Ary et al. 2014).

The limitations of working within a paradigm of interpretivism is that "[t]here is a risk … that they become hermetically sealed from the world outside the participants' theatre of activity" and they are "criticized for their narrowly micro-sociological perspectives" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.21).

By definition, interpretive research must be subjective, and potentially limited to the experiences only of the participants. The research is situated in both context and time. Individual perceptions determine what are considered facts, and what is truth is deduced by the researcher from a particular viewpoint.

To achieve validity and reliability in interpretive research, Richards and Morse (2013) maintained that rigour at all stages of the research is key, and highlighted the following:

1. Rigour in the design phase by working from the strengths of the researchers, having a comprehensive background to the study, working inductively, and using appropriate methodology and design,
2. Rigour while conducting the research by being responsive to new themes as they emerged, and coding reliably, and
3. Rigour when writing up by providing an adequate project history and audit trail, and in linking findings to the literature.

All of the above were undertaken by the researchers in this current study.

This was an evaluative study and evaluation embeds the notion of judgment, whether one is referring to the subjective assessments people make informally during the course of their everyday lives, or whether one is referring to formal evaluation, such as specific inquiry. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) noted key features of evaluation and which capture exactly the purpose of the current study: "answering specific, given questions; gathering information; making judgements and taking decisions" (p.50). These authors hold that educational evaluation is important in that it provides validation for improvements in educational policies and practices. In the current research, validation of practice and participants' experience provided a platform for decision-making as the University prepares to expand opportunities for students to undertake service learning in further developing world countries.

Participants and data collection

Participants were teacher education students from 2011 to 2014 who undertook teaching in the Aberdare Ranges School in Kenya. Data were gathered from

- pre-service teacher education students' reflective diaries (n=127);
- individual interviews with a purposive sample of these pre-service teacher education students (n=8), identified PST 1 to PST 8 in transcripts; and
- individual interviews with teachers at Aberdare Ranges School (n=12), identified as ART 1 to ART 12 in transcripts.

Design for data analysis

Thematic analysis of the data was completed with the themes being determined by the elements in the eight ways framework (Yunkaporta, 2009), not derived from the data.

The context of the current study

This specific service learning experience was conducted in an international setting in Nakuru, Kenya. It was the result of a visit in 2010 to the University of Notre Dame Australia Sydney campus by the director of a non-government organisation to address pre-service teachers. She shared the experience of establishing links with the government of Kenya to provide education to some of the local community's most disadvantaged citizens. This particular community was predominantly internally displaced peoples and orphaned children in an area situated northwest of the country's capital, Nairobi. The non-government agency was responsible for building the Aberdare Ranges Primary School, for the community, for the funding the education of children through external sponsorship and for the employment of local teachers.

This service learning experience spanned three weeks each year and was structured to deliver a creative arts and sports program to children at the host school. All activities were conducted in English, not Kiswahili, although students quickly learned some key words in Kiswahili. Children were all learning English and communication was therefore possible through medium of English, albeit at a rudimentary level. For the host community in general, this program was delivered outside the parameters of the regular school year as the visiting pre-service teachers (PSTs) arrived one week after the official end of the host school's regular academic year. Children's attendance at the host school during this time is not mandatory, although many choose to continue to come.

From 2011 to 2014 a total of 127 have participated in this particular experience.

Findings

The findings will present a summary of themes where connections between the eight ways framework and the service learning experience can be made; where possible, direct student quotes are used to support the conclusions of the researchers. Findings presented

are reflective of the case, not the individual students. It is interesting to note there is almost complete alignment between students' reflective diary entries and the sentiments and examples noted by students who took part in interviews.

What became evident from the findings was the transferability of many of the processes embedded in the eight ways framework. These processes included learning as attained through narrative; working from wholes to parts; working non-verbally and connecting learning to needs and values. Some processes were more difficult to code and the discussion section of this paper identifies them and attempts to articulate the possible reasons why matching was limited.

Articulation of the findings commences again with the acknowledgment that "teachers cannot enter the Cultural Interface without first engaging in intense personal reflection to centre themselves in their own personal metaphors and cultural world views, so they can bring their highest knowledge to the table and leave their fears, limiting beliefs and issues at the door" (Yunkaporta, 2009, p, 187). All participants in the immersion participated in a series of meetings in the lead up to their travel to Kenya. While all students had already completed a unit where Yunkaporta's eight ways was the focus, in relation to meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in their classes, the preparation did not explicitly make those links, nor encourage students to use this as a framework in their reflective diaries. This is a limitation of the current study. Nevertheless, the responses of the students fall neatly into the eight ways framework.

The preparatory meetings addressed the cultural context and cultural norms of the host community the PSTs would be placed in and also provided opportunity for them to reflect on their own feelings prior to participation. As to the degree that teachers engage with their own personal introspection before entering the cultural interface, this is difficult to ascertain. What becomes evident for many of the PSTs is that their introspection of their own cultural world view is engaged with and challenged whilst in Kenya. A requirement of all PSTs whilst abroad was maintenance of a critical reflection journal which aimed to foster awareness of themselves, of diversity and identity, so as to foster both social and civic responsibility. In light of this, student reflections included:

> During this time, I also gained a lot of perspective and came to the realisation that I was born into an extremely fortunate situation. Upon realising this, I can't help ponder and imagine the privilege I have living in Australia, receiving an education and being able to earn money.
>
> The Kenyans I met have faced and overcome horrific situations that no one should ever have to experience in their lifetime…the strength and will of the women, men and children is something that really forces me to reflect on my own life and values. I have learned and am still learning about the greater meaning of life.
>
> I have spent time examining my own personal beliefs and values on return to Australia.

These comments are representative of those written by other participants as they seek to describe how the experience has shaped and challenged their understanding of themselves

and the world. The experience allowed PSTs to develop empathy with others and thus they were able to analyse their own beliefs and attitudes so as to gain insight into themselves and others.

The following elements of the eight ways framework are presented, as the pedagogical processes embedded within them could be correlated to student responses.

Story sharing

This way of learning through narrative pedagogies encompasses the act of drawing lessons from narratives to engage students in reflection and analysis. As described earlier by Martin (2009), this engagement facilitated a coming together in relatedness where neither the PST nor members of the host community were invisible. This experience placed all students in a variety of local family home-stays, where they lived with, shared with and experienced the lives of the family members. Students' experiences in engaging with the lived narrative of their host families are captured in interview comments below:

> To experience another way of life, to live with the families and experience part of their day-to-day changed my perspective on my own life. (PST 6)

> The relationships that I formed with my home-stay family on this trip have truly surprised me. My home-stay family welcomed me with open arms and let me into every aspect of their life. I truly appreciate this worldly exposure. (PST 2)

> The experience of living with and sharing the daily experiences of our Kenyan home-stay family was more than I expected. I have formed solid relationships with my 'mama' and 'papa' and a sense of connection with them. (PST 7)

> It was in Kenya that I was taught countless life lessons that will remain with me. I learnt forgiveness after hearing an incredible story of a widower who shared a drink with the man who had massacred people whom he loved. I learnt generosity from my home-stay family who insisted that I poured the first bucket of warm water over my head first. (PST 1)

This sense of relatedness through story was also shared with teachers employed at the host school who valued pedagogical narratives which were shared between themselves and the PSTs. The PSTs were assigned in groups of 3-4 to various classes where they were afforded the opportunity to run activities either themselves but also to work in collaboration with the host classroom teacher. This allowed both the PSTs and the host teachers to exchange teaching experience and discuss teaching pedagogy. Sharing of pedagogy by PSTs and host teachers was conducted both respectfully and reciprocally. Host teachers commented:

> I've been challenged; I've learnt a lot from them (pre-service teachers) and so many other teaching methods that I didn't know, I've come to know through them, so even to me, as a teacher, I've also gotten something (ART 10)

> Yesterday, we went outside – I have never done it before; I've taught for seventeen years and I didn't know that it can work very well. Yesterday we went out for a reading lesson. What we do in our schools here, we normally have reading – the whole class- but now they taught me a different tactic of teaching reading lesson(s) (ART 4)

> I have learnt some more activities from the students and I wanted to practice before they go home, I wanted to make sure I got it...I want to incorporate the activities that I have learnt from the students so that my teaching will be very creative and something which is pleasing to children...they learn through play and they learn through doing activities. (ART 9)

Deconstruct/reconstruct

Writing a decade before Yunkaporta developed his eight ways conceptual framework, Hughes and More (1997) had noted that in exploring new concepts young people benefit from concentrating on "understanding the overall concepts or task before getting down to the details" (Hughes & More, 1997, p.28). To see the whole concept at the beginning, although they may not necessarily fully understand it, allows them then to gradually bring in parts where connections can be made to develop understandings.

The concept of service learning is abstractly explored by all participants prior to any involvement in the project. Essentially students build knowledge that service learning promotes: solving complex problems, based in authentic contexts; fostering global, civic and social responsibility; and coming to a deep understanding of the importance of establishing reciprocal, culturally respectful relationships with the host community. It is only once students were in country that the abstract concept of service learning explored at university came to life; it was in Kenya that they began to make connections between the various components and where deep learning and understanding occurred.

Student journals reflect this way of learning; comments reveal how the experience has shaped social, civic and global learning and responsibility:

> After Kenya, I am much more aware and interested in national and international social justice issues. My heightened self-efficacy has encouraged me to take risks that I was not necessarily willing to take before the trip, such as taking initiative to stand up for what I believe is right.

> I have developed a greater global awareness and an awareness of some of the issues and challenges that people face around the world. I have also developed a greater awareness of cultural differences and cultural sensitivity.

> I have now an increased understanding of service learning and how to go about assisting others, beginning with finding out first what they wold like help with and how my set of skills can match up with what is needed.

> I have always wanted to have social justice as a firm, focal foundation in what I do with my life. This trip helped shape a lot of ideas and opinions about how I can be a force of change for a better world.

These reflections connect both to Intercultural Understanding, which is now a general capability across all key learning areas in the Australian Curriculum, that "encourages students to make connections between their own worlds and the worlds of others" and "develops students' abilities to communicate and empathise with others and to analyse intercultural experiences critically" (ACARA, n.d.). Connection is also evident with Yunkaporta's (2009) idea of the common ground that intersects between the cultural knowledge and responsiveness of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Further, this enhanced student learning with regard to intercultural understanding and global-mindedness is in line with the University's graduate attribute of internationalisation. This standard requires that students build a capacity for international and global perspectives based on an understanding and appreciation of social and cultural diversity and individual human rights. According to Sutherland:

> ... international experience is perceived to be beneficial in providing student teachers with global perspectives and increasing confidence and independence in their teaching and learning. It also enhances intercultural understanding and empathy for other cultures. (Sutherland, 2011, p.151).

Community links

This way of learning is community based, and relevant to lived experiences. In Aboriginal pedagogy, the motivation for learning is inclusive of the community (Yunkaporta, 2009), and thus responsive to the community. The connection with community and learning for PSTs in the current study was heightened as they were placed with local families for the duration of the experience, in home-stay arrangements. These arrangements allowed for the PSTs to engage at the cultural interface, becoming for a short time, a member of the host family, engaging and assisting in family life experiences.

> The families we stayed with quickly became a second home for us. They showed us the warmth and compassion of a close knit community, we learned how to dance and they told us about Kenya and about the people (PST 5)

Whilst in Kenya, PSTs were officially welcomed into the broader community. This broader community is home to over 600 internally displaced families. PSTs spent time visiting with and speaking with families. Many of these families live in very rudimentary structures, essentially tents supplied by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) after the 2007 internecine violence in Kenya which resulted in their internal displacement. Engaging with the lived experience of families in this community became the catalyst for a building project, funded in part by PSTs in response to community needs. As of 2014, forty-one homes, consisting of a wooden frame, corrugated iron walls and roof, along with a water tank, have been built.

One student shared this view:

> I was so incredibly moved by my experiences in Kenya that when I came back and after telling my family about the Village and showing them photos we decided to forgo

> Christmas presents and instead send the money for a house to be built in the village. It is only one very small start, but I am motivated to continue to make changes in my life, small changes that may result in a big change to families on the other side of the world. (PST 8)

The use of social media is one way of ensuring PSTs remain connected with the community and vice versa that the community is able to stay connected with PSTs. The following posts have come from the media page:

> House #31 for Francis, a single father with two sons thanks again to Francesca C. It is worth noting this is now seven months since the NDU 2013 visit to Nakuru and the houses keep being funded.

From a community elder:

> All is well and the good news is that the government & Kenya power company has now agreed to connect electricity in houses in the community if the owner will be able to do the wiring in his house, most of them have done the wiring except a few who are pending due to funds.

Clearly demonstrated here is the connection with the community and the PSTs response to addressing real world issues as part of service learning.

Non-verbal

For this element and this experience, Wheaton (2000) gave an idea of the scope of this pedagogy, when she talked about the way Aboriginal learners test knowledge non-verbally through experience, introspection and practice, thereby becoming critical thinkers who can judge the validity of new knowledge independently. Immersed in a cultural setting different to their own, PSTs engaged in critical observation so as to navigate their own experiences and thus be able to act in culturally respectful and responsive ways.

For the PSTs, their initial visit to the school required that they critically observe what local teachers were doing and how routines were enacted. Their time in various classrooms became focused around the ability for them to effectively use nonverbal language to engage the children; for many of the children, English was either limited or for the young children non-existent.

As a result of this learning, students noted:

> Professionally, I don't find the idea of working with ESL [English as a second language] students nearly as daunting and I feel I have a greater understanding of how to teach them, make things easier for them, explain things or show things to them as part of the lesson. I think I am more empathetic, caring and understanding. (PST 4)

> Being in front of a large class of ESL children, I watched and learned various strategies, activities and techniques that I could implement in my own teaching. (PST 6)

Non-linear

Yunkaporta (2009), stated that this way of presenting learning is cyclic and indirect, therefore common ground can be found between different ways of seeing, viewpoints and knowledge systems. The notion that learning can be best effected when it is cyclical, not linear, is not idiosyncratic to Aboriginal ways of learning. Furthermore, it is not a new proposition that a non-linear approach is a complementary way of learning, encompassing the ability to put ideas together to produce new knowledge, so that through thinking laterally innovation is possible. Learning for PSTs in this Kenyan experience was the result of doing, through direct involvement in the lived experience. PSTs were required to respond to issues as they arose, make connections between the things they knew and those they did not, thus actively constructing knowledge as they required. Thus this learning is subjective and individual.

The need to use non-verbal cues to communicate in the classroom in response to the language barrier, required the need for responsive teaching by the PSTs. They had to change pre designed activities and their methods for teaching in response to circumstances. One PST expressed this succinctly when she wrote:

> Professionally, I have gained the knowledge that nothing can ever be truly planned. I think that I learned that I am adaptable and can think quickly on my feet. I think this lesson is invaluable.

In the same vein another noted:

> The work I did with the children over in Kenya meant that I developed skills and increased my ability to think quickly and flexibly and work with children across both cultural and language barriers.

Land links

"This pedagogy is about linking learning to land and place" (Yunkaporta, 2009, p.12). There is a strong connection between people and country, knowledge and learning, rites and responsibilities (Edwards & Buxton, 1998; Martin, 2009; Yunkaporta, 2009).

As students in the current study were immersed in the host community, staying with local families in home-stay arrangements, the significance of the connection to land and place became quite stark as all home-stay families are members of the broader internally displaced people's camp. The importance of tribes and land and tribal responsibilities were communicated to students through a community elder who officially welcomed the students to the community.

Discussion

Although just an ephemeral synopsis of the qualitative data collected has been presented, what has been, in relation to six of the eight elements of Yunkaporta's (2009) eight ways

of learning, is a correlation which illustrates how underlying processes of Aboriginal pedagogy can be transferable to international settings through the provision of service learning opportunities. Evident further is that our PSTs will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australian schools and these types of global experiences hold the potential to build capacity and competency to respond in appropriate ways at the cultural interface.

Story sharing was fostered through lived experiences in community, with the PSTs engaged with the 'cultural other' in home-stay accommodation, community visits and exchanges with classroom host teachers. All of these promoted a depth of knowledge and understanding of global, social and civic issues and the PSTs' responsibility to engage with them. It became clear that this experience was an "institutionalized mechanism fostering students' growth and self-awareness concerning issues of diversity, volunteerism and civic responsibility" (Butin, 2003, p.1675).

Learning at the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007a) was experienced in Kenya as PSTs were immersed in a culture they were largely unfamiliar with; it challenged pre-conceived notions they may have had prior to arriving – notions about the country, the people, the environment that they would be working in, and their own ideas as to how they would feel and respond. One student noted:

> I naively entered Africa as a young nineteen year old education student who thought she'd simply teach young needy children that were less fortunate and who knew a lot less about life than herself. I could not have been more wrong.

In determining the transferability of the eight ways framework (Yunkaporta, 2009) derived from Nakata's cultural interface theory, it became clear that analysis of data collected from PSTs was able to connect in significantly valuable ways with six of the eight elements. Evidence suggests that teachers should immerse themselves in diverse and unfamiliar environments as a means of enhancing their social, cultural and civic capacities, so as to maximise the learning potential of their students (Walters et al., 2009). This service learning experience allowed for interrelatedness between the PSTs and the host community, including teachers at the host school and wider community members. Shared narratives allowed the PSTs to grow in intercultural knowledge and understanding and as articulated in interviews and journals, fostered global, civic and social awareness. As such, PSTs are further building their pedagogical knowledge with regard to the impact of diversity and culture on student learning and to also build their capacity to effectively meet the needs of all students they encounter in the classroom both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Beyond these, part of the foundation of Yunkaporta's (2009) work is for non-Aboriginal teachers to identify their own authentic cultural standpoint and teaching philosophy so as to develop an Indigenous methodology. This notion is supported through the findings in the current study and was developed and enhanced through this particular experience. As Yunkaporta (2009) suggested and as discussed earlier, this experience has allowed PSTs an opportunity to figure out their ontology (what they believe is real); figure out their

epistemology (their way of thinking about that reality) and then develop their methodology (a tool to make their epistemology further inform their ontology) all of these done within a framework of their axiology (ethics and values).

Further to this, what became apparent throughout this experience is that PSTs were able to "leave their fears, limiting beliefs and issues at the door" (Yunkaporta, 2009, p, 187). Through reflection journals PSTs appeared to develop the capacity and the confidence to turn a difficult situation into a positive, affirming one:

> I was provided with many opportunities to develop various teaching skills and an appreciation for the fact that I can make a real difference in the field of education.

In facing their challenges and overcoming them a sense of confidence was developed in the PSTs. One PST's comments reflect the sentiment well:

> The greatest learning I got from this trip was confidence and belief in my own abilities…. I have noticed changes in myself. I have grown personally and professionally. Africa changed me. Kenya changed me!

Of the eight ways of learning, two elements proved difficult to find valuable correlation with in the data collected. These were learning maps and signs and symbols. Yunkaporta and Kirby (2011) highlighted that both are interrelated in Aboriginal pedagogy, as one provides the structure of memory whilst the other provides the language of memory. In his model, learning is coded in symbols, signs, images and metaphors and these become tools for learning complex knowledge. It could be plausible that this way of learning for students took place, not specifically as a result of the researchers' pedagogy, but perhaps as a result of the actual experience itself as students may have used these tools to make personal and deep meaning for themselves. This conjecture however is purely speculation.

In conclusion, Yunkaporta's (2009) eight ways of learning has the potential to provide a valuable framework upon which international service learning experiences can be built. Further research based upon use of the framework in student briefings and as a recommended structure for reflective journal entries would seek to consolidate the findings of this paper.

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