

*For the development of transformative pedagogies through 'courageous conversations' within the cultural interface to motivate student engagement and promote reconciliation.*

**OVERVIEW: SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTION AND CONTEXT**

James Cook University (JCU) is committed to achieving "genuine and sustainable reconciliation between the Aboriginal and



Like Nakata, we attempt to 'story' our experience to provide a springboard for the difficult dialogues we are having in contemporary Australia, at the interface of Indigenous and western knowledge systems. We make the appeal for more productive engagement in the difficult debates that are essential to reconciliation, for example, we explore the stories and discuss the effects of dispossession and dislocation of Indigenous peoples from many communities to become the one Bwgcolman community on Palm Island. These stories, often silenced and misunderstood, take courage to speak about. We encourage students by indicating that 'no topic is taboo'. The underlying philosophy of these conversations is 'courage is the force that creates history'. This idea of courage promotes supportive risk-taking, creating the possibility for cultural connectivity and the potential for reconciliation, as the following student evaluations indicate:

*I feel this subject should be compulsory for all students regardless of what they are studying. I am more aware of what happened in the past and why reconciliation is so important today and for the future and I feel that this new knowledge will help me to become a better teacher. Thank you (Student evaluation, 2010).*

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### (3) Narrative inquiry including multilayered and multimedia learning experiences

We energise the curriculum through the use of multi-layered stories of those involved in the events that have shaped the historical, social and cultural terrain. We draw on the idea that 'our metaphors define us and our stories sustain us' (Foeman and Nance, 2002). In other words, we examine the socially constructed terrain of past events and mindsets surrounding Indigenous histories to contest and re-present current perspectives of Indigenous Australians. Our focus points are those that prioritise Indigenous voices and give a multi-directional gaze into the diversity and depth of Indigenous Australia. This is why we draw upon a number of Indigenous media such as the film, *One Night the Moon* by Rachel Perkins and the text *Maybe Tomorrow* by Monty 'Boori' Pryor to deconstruct layers of meaning within these learning experiences. We include guest speakers that invoke their stories for further student reflection. Student engagement excels with this approach as the student evaluations' indicate.

