



Australian  
Indigenous  
Psychology  
Education  
Project  
(AIPEP)

# **Increasing cultural competence and Indigenous representation in psychology**

*Reflections on what has/has not  
worked for Psychology Educators*

**APS National Conference**

30 September 2015

Gold Coast, Qld

## Introduction and Purpose

This document was developed for the Australian Indigenous Psychology Education Project (AIPEP) 'How To' forum held at the APS Golden Jubilee Conference, September 2015. It provides brief points on what has and has not worked for psychology educators involved in the project when attempting to implement change in the psychology curriculum to increase cultural competence, and/or in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychology students.

The contact details for each educator have been included to encourage ongoing discussion and exchange between educators and institutions.

Further information on AIPEP can be found at [www.Indigenoupsyched.org.au](http://www.Indigenoupsyched.org.au) or by contacting Katrina Newnham, Project Manager, on 03 8662 3332 or [aipep@psychology.org.au](mailto:aipep@psychology.org.au).

We welcome all feedback and input to this resource and the Project.



## Ms Yvonne Clark

*Yvonne Clark is lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of Adelaide and a member of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA).*

*As well as teaching, research, supervision and clinical work, Yvonne is involved in improving systematic approaches that enable Indigenous students to study and become qualified in the field of psychology. Yvonne is currently completing a PhD looking at lateral violence within Indigenous communities.*

*Yvonne has worked in child protection and has particular interests in Indigenous child and adolescent social and emotional wellbeing.*

*Yvonne is a member of the AIPEP National Reference Committee.*

### WHAT HAS WORKED FOR ME

Having connections with and support from Aboriginal colleagues and Aboriginal and Islander support units 'Wilrtu Yarlur' and 'Yaitja Purruna'

Engaging and having support from some colleagues within the School of Psychology to embed Indigenous knowledge and curriculum.

Having a humble, helpful and non-Judgemental approach to teaching cultural competence in courses.

Ensuring changes in some school policies around recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students in various year levels and courses.

Engaging with Indigenous student cohort

### WHAT HASN'T WORKED FOR ME

Wider interest and understanding of colleagues to embed Indigenous knowledge and curriculum into psychology courses and topics

Not having a PhD (even though I have a MA and much experience)

My humble approach (doesn't work in all contexts)

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## Dr Jillene Harris

*Jillene Harris is a Lecturer in the School of Psychology at Charles Sturt University (CSU), NSW where she teaches a first year foundational subject - Indigenous Australians and Psychology.*

*Jillene is the Indigenous Liaison Person for the School of Psychology and has experience in integrating support frameworks between community, education and health sectors. She was the Arts Faculty representative of the Indigenous Education Strategy Coordinating group which oversaw the implementation of this strategy across CSU.*

*Jillene is a member of the AIPEP Project Team.*

### **WHAT HAS WORKED FOR ME:**

Having the University and Schools values aligned

Partnership with Aboriginal colleagues and Elders

Good teaching

A humble and honest approach

Giving colleagues' time

Giving the students space

### **WHAT HASN'T WORKED FOR ME:**

Assessment of reflection

Expecting that all psychology students will understand

Expecting that all colleagues will understand

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## Associate Professor Jacky Cranney

*Jacky Cranney is a UNSW and OLT Learning and Teaching Fellow, and an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Jacky has experience as an Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) assessor, and is particularly interested in undergraduate psychology education as well as public education in the form of psychological literacy.*

*In 2008 Jacky received the APS Distinguished Contribution to Psychological Education Award and, in 2013, was made a Fellow of the APS. Jacky is a member of the APS Division of Research, Education and Training Forum, and is also involved in a number of international psychology education organisations.*

*Jacky is a member of the AIPEP Project Team.*

### WHAT HAS WORKED FOR ME:

Connecting with the Indigenous education unit (information, support--but not enough time spent)

Connecting with others who are passionate about these issues (moral support, information)

Dogged persistence--to a certain extent Recognition of colleagues' academic cultural biases - a starting point

Making the most of any opportunity (e.g. positive leadership change)

My developing cultural responsiveness--makes me more patient with everyone

Enthusiastic student responses to relevant curriculum activities Indigenous and non-Indigenous role models (inspiration)

### WHAT HAS NOT WORKED FOR ME

Convincing enough of my colleagues to consider integration of Indigenous issues into the curriculum

Not making the time to connect more to the Indigenous student cohort

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## Associate Professor Dawn Darlaston-Jones

*Dawn Darlaston-Jones is Co-ordinator of the Bachelor of Behavioural Science at the University of Notre Dame.*

*Dawn has published and presented work that critiques the research endeavour and challenges the dominant paradigms within psychology and on calls for changes in curriculum to promote social inclusion and anti-racism strategies.*

*Dawn is a member of the AIPEP Project Team.*

### WHAT HAS WORKED FOR ME:

Identify one's own positionality first

Identify and work with local Indigenous community(ies) Elders, Peers, advisors

Be guided in EVERYTHING by Indigenous peoples

Emphasise critical reflexivity (as opposed to reflectivity) and embed this in every unit

Identify and understand one's own position relative to the shared history of a settler context

Allow time to talk and share responses and resistance

Storytelling to help students/peers understand that they don't know what they don't know

Applied work relevant assessments to develop knowledge and skills concurrently

### WHAT HASN'T WORK FOR ME:

Rushing the journey: Self-discovery and shifting ones perspective takes time

Making assumptions: Everyone's experience is different and one cannot assume knowledge or understanding from any person regardless of their context

Standard style assessments

Standard teaching practices

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## Dr Paul Harnett

*Paul Harnett is a clinical psychologist and Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland.*

*Paul led the development of the School's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), the first introduced in an Australian university department, and is committed to incorporating Indigenous content into psychology curriculum. Paul runs a fourth year honours course on Indigenous mental health and wellbeing and has worked in research partnerships with Indigenous organisations*

*Paul's major research area is child protection and includes the development of a parenting program for multi-problem families, Parents Under Pressure (PUP) program.*

*Paul is a member of the AIPEP National Reference Committee.*

### WHAT HAS WORKED FOR ME:

Support/partnership with Indigenous community

- Indigenous Advisory Group
- Partnerships with Indigenous organisations (research/placements/pro bono work)
- Pool of guest speakers
- Relationship with UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit
- School of Psychology RAP (to some extent)

Teaching

- Respect of Indigenous Knowledge/world view
- Student reflection on own values/privilege (gentle)
- Engaging in latest issues affecting Indigenous community (e.g. discussion forums)
- Recognised need for cultural competency training

Research

- Support Indigenous research agenda

### WHAT HASN'T WORKED FOR ME:

Engaging with our Indigenous student cohort

Wider interest of colleagues in embedding Indigenous Knowledge into their courses (but this is changing)

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*For further information on the Australian Indigenous  
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