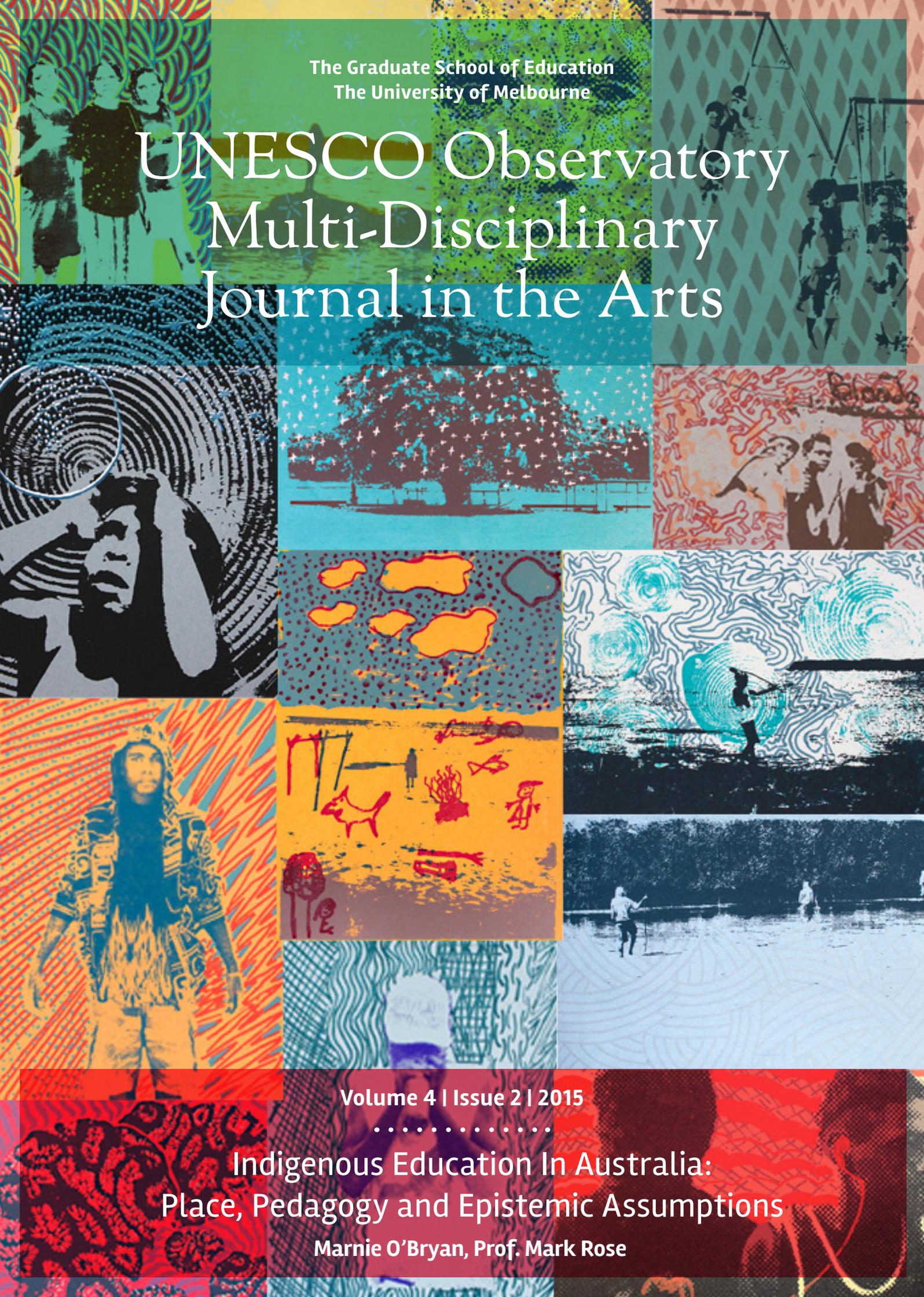


The Graduate School of Education
The University of Melbourne

UNESCO Observatory Multi-Disciplinary Journal in the Arts



Volume 4 | Issue 2 | 2015

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Indigenous Education In Australia: Place, Pedagogy and Epistemic Assumptions

Marnie O'Bryan, Prof. Mark Rose

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ABOUT THE E-JOURNAL

The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal is based within the Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne, Australia. The journal promotes multi-disciplinary research in the Arts and Education and arose out of a recognised need for knowledge sharing in the field. The publication of diverse arts and cultural experiences within a multi-disciplinary context informs the development of future initiatives in this expanding field. There are many instances where the arts work successfully in collaboration with formerly non-traditional partners such as the sciences and health care, and this peer-reviewed journal aims to publish examples of excellence.

Valuable contributions from international researchers are providing evidence of the impact of the arts on individuals, groups and organisations across all sectors of society. The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal is a clearing house of research which can be used to support advocacy processes; to improve practice; influence policy making, and benefit the integration of the arts in formal and non-formal educational systems across communities, regions and countries.

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THEME

This special edition of the UNESCO Observatory E-Journal focuses on education for and about the First Peoples of Australia and bears witness to the many faces of Indigenous education in Australia. It testifies to a complex landscape; places on a map, places in minds and places in spirit that taken together present a snapshot of the tone and dimension of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in early 2015.

Indigenous education policy is framed by a bi-partisan commitment to 'closing the gap'. In some instances, Indigenous leaders are framing the debate over how this is best achieved. At the same time, non-Indigenous educators are increasingly becoming aware that equality and mutual respect can only be established once the Australian community opens its mind to the ancient wisdom and the true stories of this place. Many of the articles in this publication identify the 'gap' as an epistemological divide and argue that, like any bridge, education measures aimed at 'closing the gap' need to be constructed simultaneously from both sides. To that end, a number of papers focus on initiatives being developed and explored by mainstream schools to give authentic voice to the perspectives of First Australians for the benefit of non-Indigenous students.

COVER ART

Yirrkala Collage

Various Artists,

Yirrkala Art Centre

*Courtesy of the artists
and Yirrkala Art Centre*

The papers in Volume One, '**Indigenous Education in Australia: Policy, Participation and Praxis**', are all concerned with how Western educational structures and institutions work for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Volume Two of the Journal is entitled '**Indigenous Education In Australia: Place, Pedagogy and Epistemic Assumptions**'. Each of the articles in this volume pertains to the education experiences of people living in remote Australia.

The articles in this publication take the reader through a rich multidisciplinary tapestry that points to the breadth and complexity of the Indigenous education landscape in Australia today. The papers are honest and true to the heterogeneous communities that are the First Peoples of Australia. Similarly, the poetry and artworks that appear here bear witness to the breadth, depth and diversity of artistic talent and tradition in this country. Taken together, they challenge the reader to move beyond a simplistic quest for 'the silver bullet' to redress disparity in education outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. They encourage reflection, innovation, reciprocity, respect and empowerment through education.

We recommend each and every article.

Prof. Mark Rose & Marnie O'Bryan

Guest Editors

Poems

Melanie Natilma Gamilmil Mununggurr

I am Melanie Natilma Gamilmil Mununggurr, Djapu woman from North East Arnhem Land, NT. I am a descendent of leaders, educators, warriors and peace-makers alike. I have been lucky enough to be blessed with a beautiful son, who has helped me to see the world in a different light, and a wonderful, supportive family who encourage me to follow my dreams and search high and low for ways to fulfil my passions. I aim to make a difference. I work towards a future where my son will still have his culture, land and language. I believe that knowledge is power. Education is the key - two-ways learning, reciprocation, appreciation and commitment are paramount to ensuring a brighter future where equality is no longer an abstract concept. I am currently studying to be a teacher and hope to continue to work in my community once I have completed my degree.

***Like the Early Mornings You Love
I Love You!***

*You are thin blades of grass, kissed by the dew of the night
Glimmering crystals, in the first drops of sunlight
You are a crisp clear chirrup, breaking still silent morn
Life awakening, when a new day is born*

*You are the last shining star, blinking into grey sky
Salty air drifting, on a breeze from tides high
You are beautiful flowers vibrant and new
Life's simple wonders, are the metaphors of you*

May '2014'

NB: I wrote this one for mum for Mother's Day this year.

Djapu Pride

Ngarrany dhuwal Djapu
This is me
White sand, blue sea

Ngarrany dhuwal Djapu
Can you see,
The mana deep within me?

I stalk these waters, silently
Nurturing, and protectively
Deep eyes
Deep thoughts
Deep sea
Surging within me

Ngarrany dhuwal Djapu
This is me
Warrior blood beneath my skin
Pounding through my body
An ancient bond, to ancient kin

Ngarrany dhuwal Djapu
Do you see,
Banumbirr in my eyes?
Break of morn, til dusk of night
Where Dhanbul dances across the fire

larrany dhuwal Djapu
I feel me
In glowing moonlight sand,
From home of Lonely Tree
To the island of sturdy man

Ngarrany dhuwal Djapu
I am me
Land, culture, language and sea
Eternal pride engulfs me
Forever strong, forever free

Ngarrany dhuwal Djapu

This is me

Translation:

Ngarrany dhuwal Djapu - I am Djapu

Mana – Shark, my totem

Banumbirr – The morning star, My dreaming

Dhanbul – The spirit caretaker of Dhuwa people and land

Confusion

Secrets, lies, torment, suspicion

Roll up, roll out, stir up and pour

Spill and spatter over this broken heart

Burn it, curse it, make it pain

Feel the stab but never flicker

Take the pain but never shudder

Hear the hurt but never quiver

See the truth but never dare

Turn an eye and make it blind

Turn a frown and make it smile

Turn a tear and make it dry

Never tell and never cry

March '2009'