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Modelling interdisciplinary collaboration to build cultural competence and academic literacy

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Universities across Australia are increasingly focussing on the ability of their students to engage with people from other cultures and to develop an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives. This paper describes the collaborative aspect of a project aimed at supporting students' development of cultural competence, which is part of a broader strategy at the University of Sydney to embed cultural competence in the curriculum across all faculties. The rationale for the focus on academic literacy practices is that students will be required to demonstrate cultural competence in assessment tasks, expressed in academic genres. One of our aims has been to identify the demands this places on students as they construct new disciplinary and cultural knowledge. Although our collaboration involves three areas – discipline knowledge, cultural competence and academic literacy – we focus here on the interrelationships between academic language and learning (ALL) practitioners' and cultural competence specialists' work. Based on insights drawn from our experience, we propose a new 'Thirdspaces' paradigm for supporting students' cultural competence which highlights complementarities between our fields around epistemology and theory, and ways of working with discipline based teachers. While the main goal has been to transform the learning of students, our collaboration has given us the opportunity to learn and transform our own practices, providing a more solid foundation for future faculty embedding work around cultural competence. Our experience suggests that ALL units can play an important role in developing the cultural competence of students in our universities.

Key Words: academic language and learning, academic genres, academic literacy, embedding, cultural competence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, Indigenous knowledges.

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1. Introduction

Australian universities are increasingly recognising the importance of their graduates taking their place as "employable" (Gamble, Patrick, & Peach, 2010) "global citizens" (Israel, Miller, & Reed, 2011; Trede, Bowles, & Bridges, 2013). The *Wingara Mura–Bunga Barrabugu* (Thinking Path to Make Tomorrow) strategy at the University of Sydney represents an important step in a longer-term agenda to "develop and integrate cultural competence through innovative learning, teaching, research and engagement" (University of Sydney, 2012, p. 5) and to create a culturally safe learning environment for all students and staff. Cultural competence at the University starts with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and perspectives, encouraging "connections with cultural, historical and symbolic representations and challenging realities. It also creates the opportunity and capabilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians to share, to think and learn, and to contribute to the other" (University of Sydney, 2012, p. 5). That is, the University recognises the special place that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have as First Nations peoples of this country. The recently instituted National Centre for Cultural Competence (NCCC, http://sydney.edu.au/nccc) views transformation as core to cultural competence work (Sefa-Dei, 2008; Sherwood, Keech, Keenan, & Kelly, 2010) and emphasises the importance of "decolonization", which involves:

> [Developing] an understanding of colonization as a process that continues to frame race relations in Australia; [developing] the capacity to critically analyse and articulate changes in personal conceptions and behaviour; and [being] aware of and [appreciating] the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge systems and solutions. (Sherwood et al., 2010, p. 197)

As Sherwood (2009) argues, the importance of decolonization cannot be underestimated, as:

> …most non-Indigenous Australians' educational experiences have promoted amnesic discourses of settlement fuelled by colonial assumptions of white superiority. This dominant way of knowing, being and doing has infiltrated all spectrums of mainstream society and it is this positioning that continues to promote problematic constructs of Indigenous Australians. Decolonization requires acknowledging that these ways of knowing have been historically and institutionally contrived. They are ways of knowing that are no longer useful or healthy for any Australian. (p. S24)

One of the ways in which cultural competence and decolonization can be achieved is through the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives in the curriculum and building staff and students' capacity for critical self-reflection (Sherwood et al., 2010). This embedding process started in late 2013 and is continuing. To progress this work, in 2014 the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) at the University funded seven strategic projects aimed at building capacity to support staff in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge across the curriculum.

The "Academic Literacy for Cultural Competence" project is one of these projects. Our project team consisted of two staff members from our University's Academic Language and Learning (ALL) Unit (the Learning Centre) and one staff member from the NCCC. The initial impetus for the project was that students, in keeping with the University-wide graduate quality currently being developed (University of Sydney, 2015), will need to be able to demonstrate cultural competence, most likely through assessment tasks. These assessment tasks, for the most part, will be expressed in academic genres (written and spoken). That is, we noted the need not only for professional development for staff around cultural competence (covered in two of the other strategic projects) but also for resources and support around academic literacy development. Cultural competence and academic literacy are interrelated due to the central role that language plays in the construction of cultural and disciplinary knowledge. Moreover, we envisaged that the type of support that ALL practitioners already provide to discipline based teachers might extend to supporting cultural competence, with guidance and input from cultural competence experts. The aims of this project, then, were to explore the academic literacy demands placed on students in producing cultural competence related assessment tasks; to work with cultural competence specialists to review and/or develop materials and resources for use by or with students;

to identify ways in which support for students might be provided; to work closely with discipline based teachers from several faculties to adapt or develop materials; and to share resources across the University.

The paper is organised as follows. In Section 2, we present how we modelled our collaborative work, using the metaphors of 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994) and 'Thirdspace' (Kostogriz, 2002), and explain how the way we conceptualised our work changed as we began to recognise the complementarities not only in the epistemological foundations of our work but also in how we do this work, especially with colleagues in the disciplines. In section 3, we illustrate some of the resources we have developed and how our resource development has been influenced by academic literacies, "thinking writing" and functional linguistic approaches to academic communication in connection with critical pedagogy, Indigenous pedagogies and critical race theory (see e.g. Ladson-Billings, 2000; Smith, 2003).

2. Modelling interdisciplinary collaboration

2.1. Discipline, cultural competence and academic language and learning

In the context of university-wide curriculum renewal around cultural competence, there are two main ways in which discipline based teachers can ensure their students are supported in this endeavour: (a) they can develop a degree of expertise around cultural competence and/or ALL; and/or (b) they can work collaboratively with cultural competence and ALL specialists. Option (b) can in fact facilitate (a) as reciprocal professional development can take place through such collaboration, especially if participants enter the collaborative process with a view to learning. Increasing the numbers of staff who have knowledge around cultural competence (and how this can be assessed) is critical to ensure that cultural competence does not remain the sole responsibility of a small group of experts and "champions" at the University and that cultural competence really does become "everybody's business" (University of Sydney, 2012).

Table 1 provides an overview of the types of academic staff working with students in the three main areas of disciplinary knowledge, cultural competence and academic literacy (as well as in the intermediate spaces), and their potential preparedness to support students' development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competence.

Table 1. Supporting cultural competence and academic literacy.

Area[1]	**Support**
Discipline	Discipline based teachers who are responsible for embedding cultural competence in the curriculum and assessing/evaluating students' level of cultural competence. Some teachers will be aiming to incorporate cultural competence in their Units of Study/ assessment tasks for the first time and will have little or no prior experience or expertise in this area.
Discipline/ Cultural competence	Discipline based teachers for whom cultural competence (or Indigenous cultural competence) is part of their core business (e.g. Indigenous studies, cultural studies, intercultural communication, anthropology, ethnomusicology, etc.). Cultural competence specialists whose expertise and experience is founded in a variety of disciplines (e.g. education, Indigenous studies, anthropology, health, etc.).

[1] In reality, it is often difficult to disentangle work in these spaces as the boundaries are not clearcut – hence the focus on shared spaces in this paper.

Table 1 continued.

Area	Support
Academic language and learning (ALL)	ALL practitioners whose main role is to support students' development of academic and professional communication, but who have no specific expertise in cultural competence.
Academic language and learning/ Discipline	ALL practitioners with expertise and experience from within particular disciplines (e.g. linguistics, applied linguistics, education, etc.) (but who are not typically or necessarily based in those disciplines). Subject teachers with expertise in language and communication (e.g. applied linguistics, rhetoric, educational linguistics, etc.).
Cultural competence	Cultural competence specialists whose primary focus is in providing support for staff (and students) to develop skills and knowledge in cultural competence, with a particular focus on Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies.
Academic language and learning / Cultural competence	ALL practitioners whose theoretical stance is that language cannot be divorced from social and cultural contexts. Some may be experts in fields such as cross-cultural linguistics. Cultural competence specialists with expertise in language and/or learning (e.g. education, linguistics, Aboriginal languages, etc.).
Discipline/ Academic language and learning / Cultural competence	Discipline based teachers with expertise encompassing all three areas (e.g. adult literacy within education, with expertise in Indigenous education; or applied linguistics, with a specialisation in intercultural communication, etc.).

2.2. Exploring the Thirdspaces

Briguglio (2014) notes that collaboration between experts in different parts of a university is itself a "cultural endeavour". She describes how collaborators can benefit from each others' expertise and together develop "creative solutions" to support students' academic language development (2014, p. 27). Cultural competence adds a further level of complexity to discipline embedded language and learning work but also brings the potential for a rich collaboration between three sets of specialists to support students' development of cultural competence. Figure 1 illustrates how we initially envisaged the interrelationships between those working in the discipline knowledge, cultural competence and ALL areas.

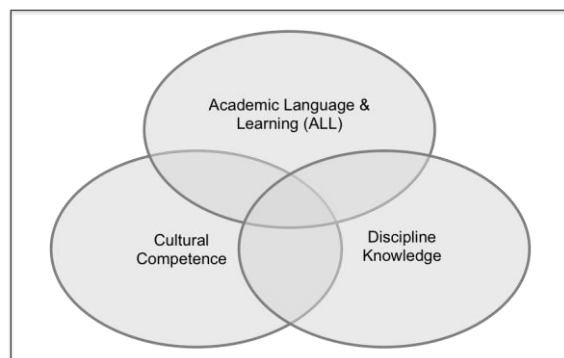

Figure 1. Exploring the Thirdspaces.

Part of the complexity of working in this area is keeping all three perspectives in focus. As Kramsch (2009) argues, "understanding someone from another culture requires an effort of translation from one perspective to the other that manages to keep both in the same field of vision" (p. 237). While keeping an eye on all these intersecting spaces, we decided to work more

systematically at the ALL/cultural competence interface to enhance our understanding of each other's work practices, to learn more of the other's language and concerns, and to attempt to identify common ground from which to work more confidently with faculties (separately or together). The aim was to build a more solid foundation from which to work with faculties with no experience and/or special desire to incorporate cultural competence into their curriculum or to interrogate how this is currently done.

Like Briguglio (2014), we found the metaphor of "third space" (Bhabha, 1994) to be useful for conceptualising our interdisciplinary work. Kostogriz's notion of a "Thirdspace" as "*living* dialogical events in literacy learning practices" (Kostogriz, 2002) also resonated with our exploration of "connections between differences" through dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981; Holquist, 2002, p. 40) and the "relationality of Self and Other" (Bakhtin, 1981; Kramsch, 2009, p. 235). Kostogriz's Thirdspace pedagogy of literacy invites students to become more aware of difference, contradictions and ambivalences, and encourages them to learn to live with these rather than seek to resolve them (Kramsch 2009, p. 240). This idea is easily transferrable to academics entering new learning spaces.

Although we initially focussed on the *differences* between our ALL and cultural competence areas, we soon realised that our thinking about the other was heavily influenced by the silos in which we typically operate; that is, we expected the knowledge, work practices, assumptions, theories, experiences and professional sub-cultures of our respective fields to be as different from each other as from those of the disciplines. The model we devised (Figure 1), therefore, gave more weight to these anticipated differences. As our work progressed, however, these differences started to disintegrate and we uncovered a multitude of similarities and complementarities in our work.

2.2.1. Epistemological assumptions and theory

One such disintegration occurred when we realised how relevant much of the ALL literature is to cultural competence. Although we utilise different academic languages to talk about our theories, there is significant commonality in the concepts around culture and language. The work in both our areas tends to be founded on a social constructivist epistemology that emphasises the relationship between knowledge, communication and social structures; views language as operating within contexts of culture; adopts critical stances toward knowledge; and is concerned with power, identity and ideology. Nonetheless, while ALL practitioners may understand the foundational concepts of cultural competence, they do not necessarily understand the specific context in which these operate, especially regarding Indigenous pedagogies and knowledges. Cultural competence specialists, on the other hand, may appreciate that language constructs socio-cultural meaning but may not necessarily be familiar with the specifics of (functional) linguistic theory.[2]

An invaluable meeting place for our work in this space has been around academic literacies as an approach to language and learning and socio-cultural context (e.g. Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Scott, 2007). An academic literacies approach:

> views the institutions in which academic practices take place as constituted in, and as sites of, discourse and power. It sees the literacy demands of the curriculum as involving a variety of communicative practices, including genres, fields and disciplines. From the student point of view a dominant feature of academic literacy practices is the requirement to switch practices between one setting and another, to deploy a repertoire of linguistic practices appropriate to each setting, and to handle the social meanings and identities that each evokes. This emphasis on identities and social meanings draws attention to deep affective and ideological conflicts in such switching and use of the linguistic repertoire. (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159)

[2] The theoretical foundations of our work from the cultural competence perspective are elaborated in Russell-Mundine & Harvey (2015).

This approach is highly relevant to the embedding of cultural competence in the curriculum because cultural competence development will be an interdisciplinary endeavour for many faculties, i.e., bringing Indigenous studies, perspectives, and pedagogies into disciplines with quite different (and sometimes radically different) epistemological foundations and assumptions (see e.g. Metallic & Seiler (2009) for discussion of "animating Indigenous knowledges" in Science). This process will be challenging for students (and many teachers) as it will involve "learning a new repertoire" and in some cases acknowledging seemingly irreconcilable world-views. It will also undoubtedly involve the type of "affective and ideological" conflicts that cultural competence specialists argue are necessary in order to engage in "courageous conversations" around issues such as race and colonization (Singleton & Linton, 2006). Cultural competence also demands the recognition of power differentials (e.g. between western and Indigenous knowledges) and requires the awakening (or further development) of students' identities as culturally competent thinkers and writers.

In addition to academic literacy, we have also applied a "thinking writing" approach to our resource development, wherein writing is seen as a vehicle "for learning and reflection" (McConlogue, Mitchell, & Peake, 2012). In this approach, learners (and staff such as ourselves) are seen as "actively constructing their understanding of disciplinary contexts and articulating these through writing" (McConlogue et al., 2012, p. 205). This approach seems well suited to the type of critical self-reflection deemed crucial for cultural competence development (Sherwood et al., 2010).

Finally, breathing life into academic communication and allowing us to theorise its complexity are functional linguistic theories such as Systemic-Functional Grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and Genre Theory (e.g. Martin & Rose, 2008), which draw attention to the meaning-making potential of language choices and emphasise the influence of social and cultural context on the production of texts. In addition to the more "traditional" academic genres (essays, reports, etc.), cultural competence may bring to the fore genres that are either new (or hybrid) in the university context or new to particular disciplines, for example, critical self-reflection. Functional theories of language are highly compatible with cultural competence work as they allow us to investigate how identity, power and ideology are realised in language choices. Appraisal Theory (e.g. Martin & White, 2005) may also be useful in identifying the "affective conflicts" that occur in the pursuit of cultural competence (Fook, White, & Gardner, 2006; Walker, Schultz, & Son, 2014). Systemic-Functional Grammar, Genre Theory and academic literacies have recently been brought closer together in the "Language as Social Semiotic" (LASS) approach to teaching and learning (see e.g. Coffin & Donohue, 2014); we have followed a similar approach to LASS but have augmented this with "thinking writing" as noted above, all in the service of developing resources to support cultural competence development (illustrated in Section 3 below). In the next section, we describe similarities between how ALL practitioners and cultural competence specialists approach embedding work.

2.2.2. Embedding cultural competence in the curriculum

A further complementarity between the ALL and cultural competence areas is how we provide support for students. In the ALL field, four main approaches to providing support have been described: adjunct (weak or strong), integrated and embedded (Jones, Bonanno, & Scouller, 2001; Harris & Ashton, 2011). Most ALL practitioners will be familiar with these approaches as well as the arguments for the effectiveness of embedded over adjunct approaches (Briguglio, 2014; Harris & Ashton, 2011).[3]

Cultural competence specialists identify a similar range of approaches. Like ALL practitioners, they are concerned that "adjunct" approaches (e.g. "stand-alone" Units or "ad hoc short term workshops on cultural awareness", Universities Australia, 2011, p.77) may not be an effective and sustainable approach in the longer term. An adjunct approach can encourage the perception

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[3] There is, however, an acknowledgement that "the whole continuum of development support" may be required in some university contexts (Briguglio & Watson, 2014, p. 14).

that cultural competence involves "soft skills" or "common-sense information" (Ranzijn, McConnochie, Day, Nolan, & Wharton, 2008) and a devaluing of cultural competence if it is not integrated with discipline content (Furman & Dent, 2004). Moreover, while an adjunct approach might increase students' cultural awareness, it does not necessarily help them move to the cultural competence level.[4] Cultural competence is an ongoing process that requires students to develop an ability to identify one's own cultural assumptions, values and beliefs. This ability is expressed in a full range of academic capabilities, with critical thinking and self-reflection of central importance (Ranzijn, McConnochie, & Nolan, 2009; Walker et al., 2014). Recently, these capabilities have been drawing increasing attention in the ALL field as well (Szenes, Tilakaratna, & Maton, 2015; Stevenson, James, Harvey, Kim, & Szenes, in press). There are concerns within both the cultural competence and ALL areas that subject teachers assume students understand what is meant by critical (self-) reflection and fail to either teach these capabilities explicitly (Moon, 1999) or provide sufficient resources to assist students (Fook et al., 2006).

For cultural competence related assignments, the question of appropriate assessment practices is even more challenging than for academic language and learning development. Indeed, it has been questioned whether cultural competence should be assessed at all (Furman & Dent, 2004) or whether critical self-reflection, as one of the most important academic capabilities required for cultural competence, should be assessed, and if so, how (Boud & Walker, 1998, p. 194).

Other factors that will have implications for the way we move further into the discipline space include: not having an adequate and shared "vocabulary" to discuss our work (Thies, 2012); discipline based teachers being confused by the complexity of areas outside their main field of knowledge and lacking confidence to teach in these areas (Jones, 2008); discipline based teachers lacking the time to engage in the "deep" collaborative work that is often required for more effective and ultimately sustainable student learning (Harvey, James, Szenes, Kim, & Stevenson, 2015). The issue of teacher confidence is especially important in the cultural competence space. Unless subject teachers have some expertise in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competence specifically they might be concerned that they are not going to get it "right" and will say the "wrong" thing (Ranzijn et al., 2009). This fear may lead teachers to avoid cultural competence if possible (Haynes, Taylor, Durey, Bessarab, & Thompson, 2014). Moreover, non-Indigenous teachers can be hampered by their inability to acknowledge their own privileged positions and the impact of the dominant western world-view that characterises the institutions within which they work (Di Angelo, 2011). This can be addressed in a number of ways, e.g. through professional development (currently underway at the University) and through the promotion of a "decolonizing" philosophy informed by critical race theory (McLaughlin & Whatman, 2011; Russell-Mundine & Harvey, 2015). We have attempted to reflect this in the resources we develop and in our embedding work. Finally, subject teachers may quite simply believe cultural competence (like academic literacy) to be outside of their sphere of responsibility (Jones, 2008; Thies, 2012).

2.3. Relational work in the Thirdspaces

The discovery of these complementarities led us to reconceptualise our model (Figure 2) to reflect what we had initially imagined to be a third space characterised by differences as a shared space characterised by commonalities.

We also recognised that a "third space" has the potential to become a "static place" situated between two cultures, or a space in which Bhabha's notion of hybridity is problematic in the Indigenous context. The idea that "the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistorized and read anew" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 247) has negative connotations, raising the spectre of ongoing colonisation, assimilation and cultural appropriation of Indigenous peoples' cultures and histories. Our conceptualisation has therefore come to be more in line with Kostogriz's (2002) idea of "thirdness"

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[4] Following the continuum model of: cultural incompetence—cultural knowledge—cultural awareness—cultural sensitivity—cultural competence—cultural proficiency (Universities Australia, 2011, p. 59).

or a ‘Thirdspace” that focuses more on “dynamic, relational, variable and emergent phenomena rather than on stable entities” (Kramsch, 2009, p. 248).

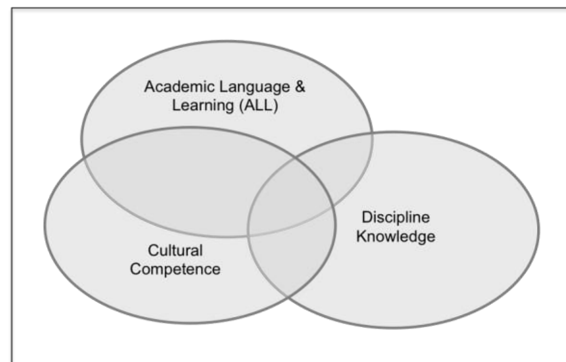

Figure 2. Reimagining the Thirdspaces.

What we see as having the most importance during this stage in our collaboration is the dynamic and relational aspect of our work in the Thirdspaces that encourages us to not only consider how to transform students’ learning but to interrogate and change our own practices. It is this kind of transformation, and a willingness to become “less than expert” in an emergent Thirdspace, that we believe will allow for curriculum renewal around cultural competence and successful decolonization of the curriculum.

The relationship strategies we have been utilising have the potential to subvert traditional power relationships in the University system, where formal power and authority tend to lie within faculty and administrative structures. Our Centres have similar opportunities and challenges as we negotiate working with faculties, students (and the University administration) to attempt to build new, flexible and relational ways of working together. Both the Learning Centre and the NCCC have the opportunity to model sustainable interdisciplinary relationships with colleagues across the University and become less encumbered by silo thinking.

While we have intentionally been more focussed on cultural competence/ALL interactions during this stage of the project, we have also been working with academics in two faculties. Our initial collaborators are champions in the cultural competence space and there has been an obvious synergy in our intentions for this work. The next stage in our journey will involve moving further into faculties where there will be fewer complementarities, and potentially more conflicts and tensions. For instance, we may need to develop strategies to work with “resisters” or those for whom cultural competence is not on their radar. Strengthening partnerships with existing champions of cultural competence (e.g. those occupying the intermediate spaces in Table 1) will also be essential to ensure knowledge sharing across the University. Again, there are parallels between ALL and cultural competence ways of working as both our groups are by nature and of necessity mindful of the relationship-building aspect of our collaborations with colleagues across the University.

Another area that will be interesting to explore as we broaden our work is how important personal synergies have been over and above cultural competence/ALL synergies generally. Despite our focus here on inter-team learning within the project, we have not been working in isolation, and colleagues from the Learning Centre and the NCCC (as well as our collaborators in faculties) have been an important part of the development of this project. Nonetheless, the synergy within our team may be the result of our disciplinary knowledge, an intersection of interests, experiences and a shared prioritising of the relational aspect of our work (itself an essential component of Indigenous pedagogies). This highlights the importance of finding allies with whom to face the ideologically, politically and emotionally charged task of decolonizing the curriculum.

Cross-cultural encounters can bring a range of responses. In our case, the complementarities we have described have led to positive experiences. The fact that we were not aware of our com-

mon ground may reflect the arbitrary boundaries set up within university structures more than anything else. As Crozet, Liddicoat, & Lo Bianco (1999) suggest, "the difference between being a servant of one's cultural boundaries and to be free from them does not lie in the annihilation of one's own boundaries … but in the awareness of what those boundaries are" (p. 13). We have come to realise that, despite our similarities, we should also keep in focus our different specialisations and that we are working towards different outcomes, which has implications for how we approach embedding cultural competence in the curriculum (and co-curriculum). For instance, it is likely that ALL practitioners could work more effectively (and easily) in the cultural competence space than cultural competence specialists could work in the ALL space; the latter tend not to have the deep knowledge of linguistic theory and the methods to apply this knowledge to students' language and learning. However, it was never our aim for the cultural competence team member to develop ALL knowledge (even though her knowledge has in fact been enhanced as a side-benefit of the collaboration); rather, the collaboration was aimed at enhancing the cultural competence of the ALL team member in recognition of the Learning Centre's work and capacity to influence students and teachers across all faculties and schools in the University. ALL practitioners, therefore, with our understandings of language and culture and the relationships between these, are well placed to promote cultural competence in the curriculum.

3. Thinking writing: Thirdspaces in practice

One aim of our project has been to provide resources for discipline based teachers to help them embed cultural competence in their curricula, especially around assessment tasks. We have produced Exemplars and accompanying Teaching Notes for two academic genres: Critical Review of a Journal Article and Analytical Essay.[5] Importantly, our resource development process has been not only for the benefit of teachers and students but aimed at enhancing our own understandings of the cultural competence aspects of various academic genres, following the principle of "thinking writing" (more often associated with students' writing development). In producing these Exemplars and Teaching Notes (and the assignment questions upon which the Exemplars are based[6]) we have had the benefit of at least three different perspectives: Author 1 is an ALL practitioner; Author 2 is a cultural competence specialist; and Author 3 is a graduate of the University with knowledge of his discipline (Political Economy) but with limited "expert" knowledge of ALL practices or cultural competence. As none of our team is Indigenous, we sought feedback on our process and resources from the Director of the NCCC, who is Aboriginal and we have used one of her journal articles as the target for our Critical Review of a Journal Article Exemplar (see below).

The Exemplars and Teaching Notes were written mainly by the first and third authors and reviewed by the second author for cultural competence. The Teaching Notes are based on the Learning Centre's existing resources relevant to these two genres and adapted to address cultural competence issues. The Exemplars and Teaching Notes were written with several end users and purposes in mind: (i) relevant aspects of the Exemplars and Teaching Notes will be incorporated into the Learning Centre's central workshops (e.g. Writing a Critical Review; Essay Writing; Analytical Writing; Writing a Literature Review); (ii) they will be placed on our website for downloading by discipline based teachers, where they can be used or adapted for particular assessment tasks; (iii) with minor changes, the resources will be placed on the "resources for students" pages of the Learning Centre website for direct access by students; and (iv) they can be used to inform future faculty embedding work, where relevant.

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[5] We are in the process of producing a companion Persuasive Essay Exemplar and Teaching Notes and developing resources around critical self-reflection for two Units of Study in two faculties.

[6] To write these assignment questions, we drew upon our team's own knowledge within the fields of Education and Political Economy.

3.1. Critical review of a journal article

The Critical Review of a Journal Article genre was chosen as an exemplar because it is a very common assignment type across disciplines and one that students often need help with. In selecting this academic genre, we encountered one of our first major lessons in working in the Thirdspaces, that is, this genre would not necessarily be chosen by a discipline based teacher with expertise in cultural competence. This is because an Indigenous knowledges pedagogy encourages a more collaborative engagement with students, one that explores western knowledge as a construct and allows students to explore different ways of creating knowledge. This exploration is typically evaluated through less traditional assessment practices, for example, through critical self-reflection and dialogue. We decided, nonetheless, that until more appropriate (and Indigenous) pedagogies become more commonplace at the University, this type of assignment would most likely continue to be used in order to develop (either directly or indirectly) aspects of cultural competence. Moreover, the academic communication strategies required to write a highly valued critical review (e.g. analysis, adopting a critical position, providing evidence, sourcing literature, and so forth) are also relevant to other academic genres and the insights gained from producing this Exemplar may be transferred to these.

The simple assignment question we constructed for our Exemplar (in the field of Education) was:

> Select a reading from the Unit's recommended readings to critically review. You should support your evaluation with evidence from sources [e.g. from the required or recommended readings list and from your own literature search]. In your review you should explain the relevance of the ideas to the current higher education context in Australia. Your review should be 1000 words in length and follow Harvard referencing conventions.

As noted above, the article we chose to critically review for our exemplar (Sherwood, 2009) is entitled "Who is not coping with colonization? Laying out the map for decolonization". The accompanying Teaching Notes included:

- Academic strategies for writing a Critical Review of a Journal Article (e.g. description, analysis, evaluation, logic, and persuasion)
- Structural elements of the genre (see Table 2)
- Linguistic strategies (e.g. paragraph structure, topic sentences, appraisal, modality and logical connections) (see Table 2)[7]
- Cultural competence related issues
- The full text Exemplar itself, as an Appendix (an excerpt is shown in Table 2)
- Links to further resources related to either ALL or cultural competence.

The main cultural competence issues we identified for this academic genre were around choosing a text to evaluate and considering the cultural competence implications of both the target text and the critique of this text (see Table 3). For instance, students (and teachers) need to consider whether to choose a text by an Indigenous author if the topic is related to Indigenous knowledges and perspectives. Doing so would help ensure a diversity of voices is heard in the academy and that Indigenous culture is treated respectfully and protocols followed. As an Indigenous author is more likely to avoid perpetuating stereotypes and problematising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, such an article can reinforce a positive model of cultural competence (this has been our approach in choosing Sherwood's article, which addresses the theme of decolonization). A challenge here is that Indigenous authors are seriously underrepresented in the "quality" journals students are encouraged to source their ideas from, and it can be easier to choose a culturally "incompetent" article by a non-Indigenous author so as to provide a mostly negative critique (as well-supported negative critique tends to be highly valued). Students may also shy away from choosing texts by Indigenous authors for fear of being disrespectful and falling into cultural incompetence themselves (see e.g. Haynes et al., 2014, p. 5).

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[7] These strategies are explained more fully in the Teaching Notes.

Table 2. Critical Review of a Journal Article – Structural stages.

	Structural Stages	**Exemplar (excerpt – one paragraph showing evaluation)**
1.	Introduce the aspect and provide an overall evaluation[1] *Aspect: "encouraging reflection"* *Evaluation: mixed*	Although the focus of this short article is Indigenous health and trauma, and the aim is most likely to guide the reader towards certain conclusions, it would have been useful to learn more about what might influence non-Indigenous Australians to be more "open" to reflection, which Sherwood argues is necessary for an honest appraisal of the causes of poor Indigenous health outcomes. *Language focus: topic sentences; analysis; logic (e.g. contrast); noun group structure; modality* *[LINKS TO RESOURCES AND WORKSHOPS]*
2.	Provide further details (or summary) of this aspect	As Sherwood suggests in the article, the continued promotion of negative constructs (regardless of how they are formed) ultimately impacts both the colonized and the colonizer. From her opening question: "who is not coping with colonization?" it is clear that Indigenous peoples are not, as they carry the burden of intergenerational trauma, internalization of racism, and being "blamed" for having been colonized (see e.g. Virdun et al., 2013). Yet, at the same time, the implication in the article is that the colonizers are not coping with colonization either. *Language focus: summarising ideas* *[LINKS TO RESOURCES AND WORKSHOPS]*
3.	Elaborate on the evaluation: positive, negative, or mixed *Mixed*	Herein lies the challenge for decolonization as a methodology, i.e. the extent to which "mainstream systems are open to reflecting upon their own agendas" (S26). Non-Indigenous peoples, for example, may need to become more conversant with the ongoing impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples, as well as on non-Indigenous peoples, to understand our shared histories and context and to develop a better understanding of our world view and how to respect others. As Ranzijn et al. (2009) observe, the assumption that one's worldview is right and that those of others are wrong or inferior has been, and still is, responsible for cultural misunderstanding and cultural incompetence at best and oppression, persecution and even genocide at worst." (2009, p.17). At the same time, there is a need to investigate further "the emotional response of [non-Indigenous] individuals to guilt" (Haynes et al., 2014, p. 5), which can accompany an awakening to one's own cultural incompetence and can lead to inaction due to a fear of being "politically incorrect" (p.6). *Language focus: incorporating evidence; logic (e.g. contrast, exemplification; addition); modality; noun group structure; paraphrasing* *[LINKS TO RESOURCES AND WORKSHOPS]*
4.	For negative evaluations, provide an alternative approach *In this case, the alternative involves an extension rather than replacement of the authors' ideas*	
5.	Back up critique with authoritative evidence	*Language focus: references to other authors: Virdun et al. (2013), Ranzijn et al. (2009), Haynes et al. (2014) (incorporated into Structural Stages (2), (3) and (4) above); referencing conventions; quoting, summarising and paraphrasing* *Cultural competence focus: protocols and guidelines* *[LINKS TO RESOURCES AND WORKSHOPS]*
6.	Repeat or reinforce overall evaluation	*Not present in this paragraph*

On the other hand, questions need to be asked about non-Indigenous authors writing about Indigenous issues: What authority do these authors have in writing about these issues? Do they

follow research protocols? Do they perpetuate stereotypes or problematise Indigenous peoples?[8] Nor can it be assumed that because an article appears in a "quality" journal, that the article is culturally competent. In our Teaching Notes, we have included examples of both culturally competent and cultural incompetent journal articles for illustrative purposes but have focussed our attention on providing a positive model due to our desire to enhance the cultural competence of students (and staff) through academic literacy practices.

Table 3. Aspects of a journal article to review and implications for cultural competence.

Aspects	**Implications for cultural competence**
Justification (e.g. of the research, topic, etc.)	Who is making the justification and identifying the research topic, etc.?
Methodology	What kinds of knowledges are privileged in the selection of samples, data for analysis, methods of analysis, and so forth?
Results	To what ends will the results be used? Are some results foregrounded, while others are backgrounded or excluded?
Conclusions and interpretation	Who is interpreting the results and what process of feedback is being employed?
Generalisability of results	Does the writer make overgeneralisations, especially with respect to the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, past and present?
Implications of results	What are the implications of the results from the perspective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
Argument and logic	Is the argument balanced? Is rational logic used in an attempt to perpetuate stereotypes? Does the logic respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their history, diversity and contemporary life?
	See protocols and procedures, NSW Department of Education and Training (2003, pp.15-17) http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/schoollibraries/assets/pdf/aboriginalresourceguide.pdf

3.2. Analytical essay

The Analytical Essay genre was chosen because analysis is a foundational academic capability but, like critical thinking and reflective practice, is one that students (especially in their first year at university) find challenging. The assignment question for this Exemplar (in the field of Political Economy) was:

> Compare and contrast the government's economic development approach to Indigenous policy making [as expressed in Closing the Gap, Stronger Futures or a specific policy of your choice] with one alternative approach. [This can be drawn from scholarly literature, and/or non-government organisation, Indigenous community, or think tank submissions and policy papers].

The Teaching Notes accompanying this Exemplar drew upon ideas from the Learning Centre's existing resources and include: academic strategies, structural elements of the genre, linguistic strategies, cultural competence issues, the full text of the Exemplar, and links to further resources (see Figure 3 for excerpt). The main cultural competence issues we identified for this genre were: choosing appropriate source materials; following protocols and guidelines appropriate to Indigenous culture and knowledges; and being aware of and reflecting on one's own biases and assumptions.

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[8] See for example, Cleary (2005).

THE PROCESS OF ANALYSIS – CULTURAL COMPETENCE IMPLICATIONS

In assignments that involve analytical writing, students need to engage in a number of processes simultaneously. These commence with the initial reading and interpretation of the assignment instructions, continue during the reading and researching stages, and influence the writing of various drafts. These processes, seen through the lens of cultural competence, include:

Analysing information and ideas: Writers need to be aware and critical of their own cultural and ideological biases, and those of their sources. This includes recognising the potential for inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes or perpetuating racist views and constructs.

(See, for instance, protocols and procedures, NSW Department of Education and Training (2003, pp. 15-17)
http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/schoollibraries/assets/pdf/aboriginalresourceguide.pdf)

Respectfully engaging with and acknowledging Indigenous voices: A fundamental strategy for evaluating one's own work and that of others is to look for the presence, absence or representation of Indigenous voices. At the same time, it is important to recognise that diverse opinions exist within Indigenous societies, as they do within non-Indigenous societies.

Seeking to understand the relationships between individual pieces of information and ideas presented in the source material.

Organising individual pieces of information and ideas into groups according to these relationships and giving the different groups abstract headings. While in some cases these headings are provided in the literature, often writers have to develop these headings, which can be challenging.

Establishing an overall picture of how these various groups of information relate to each other, that is, how they contribute to a larger picture. A writer's view of this larger picture will be affected by any number of issues: their experience, social position, upbringing and education. It will also be influenced by how much reading has been done at any given point in the research process, how much reflection on the topic has taken place, the researcher's level of expertise in the field, and so on.

Being as flexible as possible to the idea of changing this picture and its component parts with more reading, more reflection and understanding.

Finally, for an analysis that contributes to the development of an argument or a critique of ideas, it is important to *balance the need for simplicity in presenting these ideas with the need to respect the complexity* of the topic/question under consideration. For instance, assuming the analysis rests on identifying problems and solutions in a particular socio-cultural situation, it is important to remember that there may be no "perfect" solution to these problems. Indeed, there may be any number of acceptable solutions, especially in areas that generate controversy. Moreover, the idea of a "problem" itself needs to be treated with some caution in the area of cultural competence because there has been a history of problematising Indigenous peoples (cf. also causes/ effects, advantages/ disadvantages, etc.) At the same time, it is crucial to not close the discussion down—e.g. due to fear of the unknown or of not knowing—but to open the discussion up. In the cultural competence context, this is often referred to as being respectfully engaged in conducting "courageous conversations".[9]

Figure 3. Developing cultural competence – Analytical Writing (excerpt from Teaching Notes).

In addition to enhancing our understanding of these academic genres through our resource development, our approach has also allowed us to reflect on our own practices. Based on observations and in-depth conversations with the two other team members, the first author has gained insights into the tacit knowledge about writing (Elton, 2010) that students may develop throughout a degree; how a writer (in this case, a graduate student – the third author) might in-

[9] Singleton and Linton (2006).

terpret and use the Learning Centre's resources; how these resources can be improved based on these observations; and the advantages and limitations of 'models'. Further, as academics do not typically produce the same types of academic genres as students, writing a response to an assignment question has offered more insight into the writing process of this particular genre, following the principle of "it is one thing to teach, it is another to do". The second author, whose background is in cultural competence, reported that in the process of evaluating the resources, her understanding of the two genres had improved and that she had been afforded more understanding of how to explicitly teach these genres to her students in future. The third author, whose writing skills have been honed during the course of a degree reported that the process of following the Learning Centre's resources as a model to write the Analytical Essay Exemplar made explicit his tacit understandings about writing practice as well as enhanced his understanding of the complexities of analysis as they play out in the organisation of a text.

4. Conclusion

This paper describes collaborative work across three academic areas: academic language and learning (ALL), cultural competence, and disciplinary knowledge. It has been prompted by a University wide strategy to embed cultural competence in the curriculum, across all faculties, such that our graduates develop the ability to engage respectfully with other people and other ways of knowing the world, and to examine themselves and their assumptions in the spirit of critical thinking and genuinely reflective learning and practice. One aim of our project has been to uncover the cultural competence demands of selected academic genres so as to support teachers faced with incorporating cultural competence related assessment tasks into their curriculum.

Through our collaboration, we have become aware of complementarities between the ALL and cultural competence areas (e.g. in the social constructivist epistemologies that underpin our work and the ways in which we work with discipline based teachers). Our collaborative work can be conceptualised as occupying a dynamic Thirdspace that foregrounds a relational approach to cultural competence and academic literacy development. An enhanced understanding and strengthening of the ways in which our areas can work together helps us break down silo thinking and will position us to work more effectively with discipline based teachers in the future. We have provided an illustration of our practice in this area: Exemplars and Teaching Notes for two academic genres.

ALL specialists have much to contribute to the embedding of cultural competence across the curriculum, given our close contact with students, often in disciplines from all faculties across our universities, our familiarity with the types of assessment tasks they are assigned, the texts they produce in response to these assignment questions, and the challenges they face. Working with cultural competence experts, as in this project, can ensure that ALL practitioners are able to provide adequate support to students and teachers. As with cultural competence development itself, we view our work as the beginning of a journey. The next steps are to extend this work further into the discipline space; to address other types of cultural competence; and to explore more systematically some of the key linguistic features of cultural competence as expressed in academic genres.

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