

UC Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning (Teams and Individuals)

Category: Approaches to teaching and the support of learning that influence, motivate and inspires students to learn.

Creating relationships of trust and hope for reconciliation and a new social contract of health equity for Australians. 'Restorative Healthcare Team'

Our team present a research informed decolonised approach that has revolutionised how Unit 7434 Indigenous Health: Contemporary Issues is delivered. The mandatory undergraduate nursing and midwifery unit development involved an authentic and iterative learning, teaching and assessment feedback loop commencing in 2017. The unit content and delivery has been revised and co-created with guidance from First Nations Elders, the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM), expert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, community leaders and researchers to deliver a more authentic teaching and learning experience- to include the students as partners in learning. Building a relationship of respect, empathy, collaboration, and hope between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples in the classroom- for life!! This citation relates to the work of this team in convening and supporting the unit for semester 2 for the years 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021. Frequent feedback includes this sentiment expressed in recent ISEQ data, *"I'm really excited that this is a compulsory course for my study as I think it is so important for everyone in the healthcare field (or really just everyone in aus!) to have an understanding of Indigenous culture and how history has impacted on current conditions for Indigenous Australians"* (2021 S1 7434 ISEQ 370735 comment). The unit has filled a curriculum gap for other health disciplines, and is a popular cross faculty elective including Law, Business, Arts, Design, Communication and Media, with enrolments of around 250 students in 2017 up to 400 -500 recently. In 2021 the demand for this kind of education, continuing positive feedback and opportunities to deliver external short courses led us to modularise the unit for external short course delivery in 2022.

The unit pedagogy is philosophically framed and implemented using critical theory and restorative justice approaches for powerful transformative learning. Decolonising approaches such as 'Dadirri' (West, Stewart, Foster, Usher, 2012)- authentic deep listening- utilised in Yarning Circles are aligned to Freire (1993) for transformative education enabling the possibility of just reconciled relationships. Informed by 'Restorative Healthcare' participatory action research (Northam, Brown, Applebee et al, 2017), students partner with teachers and each other in Yarning Circles using approaches of 'unconditional positive regard' (Wilkins, 2000). Non-Indigenous teachers model and practice cultural humility, defined as "a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing power imbalances in the patient-physician dynamic and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations (Tervalon and Murray-Garcia, 1998, p.123)" or "to say that they do not know when they truly do not know" (p.119) in all unit activities. We seek to challenge, unsettle, and disrupt assumptions- unconscious and conscious bias's- and enable new, sometimes painful growth towards truth, learning and relationship building with transformational - 'epochal' moments (Dirkx & Mezerow, 2006, p.125).

Teaching approaches for transformative learning- evidenced when a person's previous assumptions are disrupted, new information conveyed- and a new understanding of the world and their situation in it becomes obvious, where choices required in this new paradigm are understood by the 'learner' (Dirkx & Mezarow, 2006) were carefully planned. These anticipate and lesson the harm of the impact of new information in situations of intergenerational trauma and the emotions of disbelief and shame that may be revealed when ideas attendant to 'white fragility' (McWhorter, 2020), emerge. Restorative justice philosophies and practices frame all the approaches. Content delivery challenges existing paradigms to help Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' understanding grow to form positive, meaningful, health affirming reconciled relationships- to become change champions -for a new social contract between themselves and First Australians.

Statement addressing the citation: Distinctiveness, coherence, and clarity of purpose

'Indigenous Health Contemporary Issues' responds to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) accreditation standard (2019) and Australian Health Professional Regulatory Authority (AHPRA) stipulation that the program includes, "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history, culture and health taught as a discrete subject and based on the Nursing and Midwifery Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Curriculum Framework" (Item 3.10, p. 16). A critically important element is to support students to practice in culturally safe ways, as described in a joint statement in the Code of Conduct for Nurses and Midwives, by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia,

"Nurses and midwives have always had a responsibility to provide care that contributes to the best possible outcome for the person/woman they are caring for. They need to work in partnership with that person/woman to do so. The principle of cultural safety in the new Code of Conduct for nurses and Code of Conduct for Midwives (the codes) provides simple, common sense guidance on how to work in a partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The codes do not require nurses or midwives to declare or apologise for white privilege" (CATSINaM, NMBA, ACM, ACN, ANMF, 2018; p. 1).

This unit is described as "responding to increasing awareness for governments and the community at large of the particular healthcare challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This unit will explore contemporary issues affecting relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non-Indigenous Australians in the context of healthcare outcomes across the lifespan." The learning outcomes are to: critically reflect on historical and contemporary issues affecting the relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non-Indigenous Australians; develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes for positive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as they receive healthcare; and interpret and analyse rudimentary healthcare data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

The significant disparity in life expectancy and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples compared to non-Indigenous Australians (Australian Government, 2020), and evidence of the impact of unconscious bias, 'white privilege' and racism in healthcare settings (Watego, Singh & Macoun, 2021) has generated a range of strategies in health institutions, universities and professional regulatory authorities to structure education that enables learners to work and interact in culturally 'safe' ways. The terms cultural awareness, cultural safety and cultural competence are contested in that the knowledge and application of learning from these programs and courses are rarely evaluated in terms of attitudes towards an increased understanding/ empathy towards the relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians in a reconciled context of contemporary Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is a critical element of this unit and the work of the team. The learning and assessment activities are structured to take students on a journey of self-reflection, cultural awareness, sensitisation and for some- the achievement of cultural safety. In the first week of their studies students complete an on-line Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health (CUCRH) Cultural Orientation package. This ensures they have the 'basic' cultural awareness knowledge to bring them into the classroom/ virtual room to form positive relationships with the teaching team and students who have Indigenous heritage. Many non-Indigenous students express the belief they have never previously met a First Australian - the information learnt in the package and in class is constructively aligned to help them see it is possible they have, as they start to put away earlier assumptions about who is a First Australian.

Engagement is aligned and consistent with national and international priorities, informed by contemporary research. The robust learning experience uses assessment that connects students to culture and requires them to engage relationally with the content, demonstrate empathy, and a desire to 'do something'- significant transformation. This is a difficult unit to cheat in, it is about the individual (as an Indigenous or

non-Indigenous student) and their personal relationship with First Australians, therefore difficult to counterfeit.

Influence on student learning and the student experience

The importance of principled relationships drives the transformative outcomes that we have seen and continue to see from the students. This is most evident in Yarning Circles when students who are First Australians start to feel comfortable to disclose that information within the group. An example was an Indigenous student enrolled in the unit in 2017, Fred Leftwich who led the opening of the CIRI funded Restorative Practice Research Colloquium in 2017. Fred spoke glowingly about his experience of Yarning Circles in the unit 7434 as a new way of learning and engaging for students. He was subsequently awarded the prestigious Roberta Sykes Scholarship to the London School of Economics. Evidence of transformational learning is evident in ISEQ comments, student assessments, unit discussion posts, feedback, nominations for teaching awards and notes of thanks describing how the unit has changed the students' lives. Some comments as described below:

"This was a fantastic (student) presentation! Captivating and demonstrates a critical understanding of some of the historical, social, political and material conditions that has bound the well-being of First Nations peoples. Safe to say, this is evidence of transformative learning. Well done to you and the rest of the teaching team" (Ali Drummond, email correspondence, 7.10.2021).

"This unit has been very impactful and I am loving the way it is delivered through a combination of passionate lecturers, yarning circles and online resources. I have been really impressed with how the teaching staff are checking in with students that the confronting nature of the content isn't causing students too much distress. Favourite unit so far!" (2021 S1 7434 ISEQ 370441 comment).

"I have just completed Mod 4 and particularly enjoyed the lecture from Mr Ali Drummond. I am really enjoying learning how I can provide culturally safe care as an HCW. I am also enjoying the reflection of self and gaining further awareness. I also agree with Amalie's post that this course would be beneficial and included in wider degrees outside of Health". (Student Discussion board, Joanna, 28.08.2021).

"Wow this module has been an eye opener. I have worked with First Nations Australians for years and thought I had a good understanding of the trauma from their past and the social determinants of health and the impact this has on their health and wellbeing. However I found the Utopia video in particular distressing, heartbreaking and it made me angry and hurt that people could be treated this way particular the fact that they are still treated in a completely unhuman and horrendous way."

"I really hope everyone who has accessed these knowledge speaks up for others under some circumstances, "we are not responsible for the past, but to the future". (7434 Student Discussion board post, Fan, 30.08.2021).

Students have contributed to action research projects and volunteered for public events. Formally researching evidence of student cultural safety and empathy to examine if the evidence of transformative learning we have witnessed can be measured, compared and replicated is a critical objective for our ongoing unit evaluation. External expert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurse academic (Ali Drummond) is assisting us in this ethically approved research to enhance the critical rigor of the work.

Breadth of impact

The guidance and collaboration of Aunty Roslyn Brown, and respected Indigenous knowledge holder's Dr Wayne Applebee and Mr Allan Sambono in supporting culturally safe reconciled relationships with non-Indigenous teachers enables cultural safety to be modelled. Amplifying Indigenous voices, knowledges and practice that 'see' students as potential ally's and collaborators- creates pathways of healing. The past is acknowledged, institutional racism is 'seen', and modelling enables students to be inspired, understand,

and look within enabling their practice of cultural sensitivity and cultural safety (Ramsden, 2002). Changing the power paradigm by amplifying First Nations voices, strengths and knowledges defines how this unit is conceived, taught and its impact. It has been recognised as an exemplar in its approaches for Indigenising Curriculum and the goals of reconciliation. The social justice impact of this work has been recognised by professional organisations nationally and internationally.

The impact of this unit has been evidenced in the work of the University, organisations such as CATSINaM, NMBA; Canberra Health Services, the ACT Government, United Ngunnawal Elders Council, Australian Health Professionals Regulatory Agency, Council of Deans of Nurses and Midwives and the national Muliyan Consortium and the Canberra Restorative Community. Learnings have been presented in the United States, Canada, and Taiwan. Importantly, feedback from First Nations students who have been connected to and elevated in their identity whilst involved in the unit has provided the team with important impetus to continue this work. Of note, Wiradjuri student Chrystale Langford who has taken on leadership roles in the UC Nurses Society and elsewhere. The relationships now extend to several funded research grants including a Community of Practice for Indigenous Psychology and Nursing students. Learnings have been instrumental in commencing relationship building with the Darug custodians, the traditional owners of UC Sydney Hills Campus for Nursing. The unit teaching team serve on university, faculty, school and discipline committees to Indigenise the curriculum and create cultural safety. Most significantly, the unit has been showcased as an exemplar of transformative learning by the Faculty of Health Galambany Group.

Addressing equity and diversity

A UC CIRI grant ‘Identifying Restorative Health Practices’ that informed the development and delivery of unit was inter-sectorial and inter-disciplinary and explored ways of reviving and promoting Indigenous language, knowledge, cultural and spiritual practices to rebuild Indigenous communities’ adaptive capabilities and spiritual healing practices. It was guided by Ngunnawal, Kamilaroi, Maori and other Indigenous Elders to ‘Close the Gap’ of social injustice for First Australians. It imagined a future of university graduates who have the knowledge and strength to own and overcome healthcare injustice. Our approaches address the aims of the University of Canberra Reconciliation Action Plan, UC Indigenous Strategic Plan, UC Cultural protocols and UC Indigenising Curriculum Framework and align with CATSINaM frameworks. When Yarning, all students are provided with the opportunity to share about their ‘story’- who they are, their parents and heritage. The circumstances that enabled them to be who they are today as partners in learning. Students are brought into the circle as equals, each has an opportunity to speak whilst all listen with respect; an iterative process that builds confidence to ask questions, support, critique or dissent respectfully. Indigenous students describe feeling safe to share their heritage with the other students- a metric that we view as the most important measure of student success in this unit. We believe this test should be applied to all courses. Policies of genocide and assimilation mean many Indigenous students are ‘pale’ skinned, have had their culture stripped from them- or are not recognised for their proud heritage. A particular understanding of the impact of diaspora- the scattering of Indigenous people and loss of cultural identity is held by Dr Applebee. The 65,000-year legacy of First Australian culture and more than 500 nations prior to colonisation is shared with students and includes the realisation for some that they may be able to reclaim their cultural identity.

International students and students who have English as a second language, or for reasons known to them are generally quiet in class have reported that they feel empowered using the Yarning Circles approaches and feel listened to and heard and ‘seen’ in the teaching experiences. Many International students voice surprise to discover for the first time that Australia has Indigenous peoples and become engaged in reflecting on their own stories and experiences and connecting to the other students and teachers. Students report a greater sense of inclusion in the unit and seek to be included in more than the set attendance required- finding they enjoy participation and the relationships that are created. Students frequently email and seek out opportunities to volunteer and remain connected to the teaching team following the conclusion of the unit teaching.

References:

- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (2019). Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2019. ISBN: 978-0-6487395-0-0 Available at <https://www.anmac.org.au/search/publication>
- CATSINaM, NMBA, ACM, ACN, ANMF, (2018). Joint Statement March 23rd. Cultural safety: Nurses and midwives leading the way for safer healthcare. Available: <file:///C:/Users/s425062/Downloads/Nursing-and-Midwifery-Board---Statement---Nurses-and-midwives-leading-the-way-for-safer-healthcare.PDF>
- Dirkx, J.M. & Mezarow, J. (2006). Musings and reflections on the meaning, context, and process of transformative learning. *Journal of Transformative Education*. Vol 4 (2). P.123-139. DOI:10.1177/1541344606287503
- Friere, P. (1993) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Penguin Classics, Great Britain.
- McWhorter, J. (2020). The dehumanising condescension of 'White fragility'. *Article* July 15, 2020. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/07/dehumanizing-condescension-white-fragility/614146/>
- Ramsden, I. M. (2002). *Cultural Safety and Nursing Education in Aotearoa and Te Waipounamu*. Thesis. Victoria University.
- Tervalon, M., & Murray-Garcia, J. (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 9, 117-125.
- Watego, C., Singh, D. & Macoun, A. (2021). *Partnership for Justice in Health: Scoping Paper on Race, Racism and the Australian Health System*. Lowitja Institute. ISBN 978-1-921889-76-9. https://www.lowitja.org.au/content/Image/Lowitja_PJH_170521_D10.pdf
- West, R., Stewart, L., Foster, K. & Usher, K., (2012). *Through a Critical Lens: Indigenist Research and the Dadirri Method*. *Qualitative Health research* 22(1) 1582- 1590. Sage. DOI: 10.1177/1049732312457596
- Wilkins, P. (2000). Unconditional positive regard reconsidered. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 28(1), 23–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/030698800109592>

'Restorative Healthcare Team' References

Dr Holly Northam OAM

Senior Lecturer, Discipline of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health, Faculty of Health, University of Canberra. Currently on Outside Study Program, Currently International Visiting Fellow at Dalhousie University Restorative Research Innovation and Education Lab. Previously Discipline Lead Nursing, Convenor of Unit 7434: 2017, 2018, 2020 and mentoring and researching in the unit 2021.

Relevant Qualifications AHPRA Registered Nurse, NMW0001374563; AHPRA Registered Midwife, NMW 1374563

2016: Doctor of Philosophy in Health (University of Canberra, Australia); 2006: Master in Critical Care Nursing (University of Canberra, Australia); 2002: Graduate Diploma in Critical Care Nursing (University of Canberra, Australia)

Relevant Awards

2019: Order of Australia Medal	2008: Australian of the Year: Finalist, Local Hero Award
2018: ACT Women's Honour Roll	2006: Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship
2010: ACT Chief Nurse: Certificate of Appreciation	2004: ACT Government Commissioner of Public Administration Award
2010: ACT Chief Minister's Awards for Organ Donation Awareness	

PhD students ACT Chief Nurse and Midwife PhD Indigenous scholarship to be supervised by **Northam**. Restorative approaches scholarship: \$120,000. I also currently supervise 3 PhD students and will have 2 new ones in 2021 conducting research related to my area of expertise.

Recent Related Grants

Co-designing, co-implementing and co-evaluating an empowering discipline specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Community of Practice Network Initiative. Faculty of Health, Teaching Innovation Generating Education Research (TIGER) grant:2021 \$5,000

A Month of Yarning. Health care journeys for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Capital Territory. University of Canberra CIRI Grant 2021. (\$35,915)

What are the factors associated with mental health outcomes and experiences among nurses and midwives in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic? A mixed method study ACT Health: 2020 \$65,000.00

Community-led restorative child and family protection initiative (pilot). NED (Nurturing Evolutionary Development) Foundation 2019 \$10,000.

Strengthening staff capability and self-efficacy to embed Australia's First Nations' perspectives and pedagogies into the University of Canberra (UC) health curricula. Faculty of Health, Teaching Innovation Generating Education Research (TIGER) grant: 2019 (\$5000)

Indigenous Health Seminar: 'Our children, our youth our future- restorative healthcare to close the gap' University of Canberra CIRI Grant. 2018 (\$17,500)

'Heart Time': Feasibility of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cardiac Rehabilitation program delivered in a non-Indigenous health service. (2017) \$38,321.

Restorative practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families/ communities in the new University of Canberra Hospital: Adding healing value through intersecting yarning circles. University of Canberra CIRI Grant. 2017 \$102,864.00

Recent journal articles:

Hall, C., **Northam, H.L.**, Webster, A., Strickland, K. (2021). Determinants of seasonal influenza vaccination hesitancy among healthcare personnel: An integrative review. Journal of Clinical Nursing. Accepted.

Freene, N., Brown, R., Collis, P., Bourke, C., Silk, K., Jackson, A., Davey, R., **Northam, H.** (2021) Feasibility of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cardiac Rehabilitation program delivered in a non-Indigenous health service (Yeddung Gauar): a mixed methods feasibility study BMC BCAR-D-20-01202R1 BMC Cardiovascular Disorders

L. Geia, K. Baird, K. Bail, ..., L. **H. Northam** OAM, ... R. Wynne (2020) A unified call to action from Australian nursing and midwifery leaders: ensuring that Black lives matter, Contemporary Nurse, 56:4, 297-308,

