Making a Difference

Challenges for Teachers, Teaching and Teacher Education

Jude Butcher and Lorraine McDonald (Eds.)

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Making A Difference

THE RESURRECTION

Richard Campbell of the Gumbaingirr people has grown as an artist from his childhood days, through his period of separation from his family as one of the "Stolen Generation," to being an artist and teacher of art. He wants Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to find a spiritual connection through his art.

Asked what he wants Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to get from his art, he reiterates.

> *"We all have a spiritual connection, we're all brothers and sisters, with the animals, the tree, rivers and rocks, we all belong to one big god – call it Christ, we call it Birrigun, we are all one in God."*

In the future Richard hopes to do more paintings about being part of the Stolen Generation, and how it has made him feel, but not just for himself but for all the people he has known throughout his years, his brothers and sisters, his aunts and grandparents and the other Aboriginal children and men he shared his youth with in the homes and institutions, most of whom have passed away now or are near enough, because of the abuse they suffered through the years. "In Kinchela, we boys came from all around NSW; we were like one big family, we stuck together and looked after each other. Most of us have returned to the dreaming now." It's time to tell our story.

(Richard Campbell's art can be viewed at **www.nativespirit.com.au**)

NOTES ON "THE RESURRECTION"

The use of the colour blue denotes the sky where the birds are and the water. The dots and the hands in the painting represent the elders and the Holy Spirit. The journey symbol in the tree trunk denotes how the elders are buried in the roots of the tree and rise up through the branches. It also signifies Richard's journey as well as the Holy Spirit.

The tree is the Murribi, tree, for the Gumbaingirr people all things happened around that tree. The dead were buried in the tree and the people believed that the spirits of the elders rise through the tree through the branches and go out into the dream time.

When Birrigun died he went into spirit, into the dreaming and after his resurrection through the Murribi tree he appeared to his people as the Southern Cross that is the journey of Birrigun. In Gumbaingirr his name means Southern Cross, he was the champion of the Gumbaingirr people like Jesus is to Christians.

When Birrigun's mother, Gawnggan, buried him in a Murribi tree it was sealed with a rock so that no animals could get into the burial site. Every year at the same time she would visit the site, marrgaan, to mourn him (this is at Arakoon at South West Rocks) but one year the elders noticed she did not come. Instead they saw a brolga dancing around the tomb and they believed it was her spirit. Her tears for her son fall into the coolamon which is the feminine symbol because it is the vessel of life, carrying water, food, babies. It is painted with markings just the way that Richard's father taught him when he was a boy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Making a difference" is the result of the professional work and generosity of many people. In the first instance there are the conference organisers, the presenters of papers and the participants at the ISATT Conference in 2005 in Sydney. Subsequent to the conference, authors wrote chapters to be reviewed for possible inclusion in this book. The international team of reviewers generously blind reviewed the proposed chapters. Their substantive feedback provided the editors with a basis for final chapter selection and revisions.

Richard Campbell, Michael Darmadi and Brad Thompson have enticed us to read the book and engage with the challenges through Richard's art, Michael's graphics and Brad's advice on design. Therese Yassa and Adrian Pulley were very attentive to detail in compiling the chapters and other sections of the book. A special thanks to Jenny Asha, who in her invaluable role as editorial assistant, was most sensitive and tireless as she worked with authors to ensure that the language and expression in each chapter was suitable for an international audience. Throughout the preparation of the book we were guided by Michel Lokhorst of Sense Publishers. The expert work of his publishing team has resulted in the production of the book.

Within our own institution we are grateful to Dr Marea Nicholson, Head, School of Education (NSW) for her support. We also are indebted to Professor Peter Sheehan OA, Vice-Chancellor Australian Catholic University, for his foreword to this book and for the continuing priority he gives to having a sound research base for professional education.

Jude Butcher and Lorraine McDonald.
Editors

FOREWORD

In many ways this is an issues book which both challenges and educates us at one and the same time. In its four sections, the authors push us to confront change not only in the underlying assumptions that change poses for teachers, teaching, and teacher education, but in the practices associated with the many challenges that have to accompany it. There is no way of making a difference without heeding the challenges and looking to transform the reality of education as it impacts on those who both teach and practice. In all these ways, it is a highly stimulating book that takes the reader over an extraordinarily wide domain. As the book's preface says, this reflects the breadth of contexts and issues that the authors of this book both articulate and evaluate remarkably well.

Education is a basis for people's hopes for new opportunities and new beginnings. These beginnings and new opportunities, however, are transitions from where we are or have been. When children commence schooling for example, their learning builds upon their learning at home and in their communities. For educators making a difference and addressing the challenges, education is necessarily contextualised in place and time for different people, communities and nations. The International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching (ISATT) took place in Sydney in 2005 and this book contains the work of many distinguished scholars who presented at that Conference, which was truly international in character. The Conference gave the opportunity for scholars and professionals to talk about their work across a diverse number of contexts and it was a sign of great hope to see participants from 30 countries do just that.

One recalls the United Nation' Millennium goals which include access to primary education for all. These goals are a challenge for us as educators and researchers. They are also a challenge for nations and the wider global community, including its international corporate members. The challenge is clear when we face the facts that, while 85% of primary school students make the transition to secondary school in Europe, Asia, North and South America, only a quarter of African countries achieve similar results. World wide, as of 2006, 100 million children are not accessing schooling. Furthermore, at the start of 2003, there were approximately 20.6 million refugees, internally displaced persons, and stateless persons in this world. These international situations challenge all of us to consider to what extent and with what success do children in our own communities access schooling and sustain their participation in education. Great change in educational policies and practices is required if education is to be accessible and engaging for all children.

After reading the book we find answers to the important questions of how best to make a difference locally, nationally and internationally. For the purpose of reflection let me give you three examples from experiences at my own university and how these challenges, particularly with people from disadvantaged circumstances, can and have been addressed with respect to accessing university education. The people are Indigenous Australians, the people of East Timor who voted to become an independent nation in 1999, and the homeless and disadvantaged people from the university-of-the-streets. High course retention

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rates have been achieved for the Indigenous Australians who are studying teacher education and there are exceptionally high retention rates for the primary teacher education students at the Catholic Teachers College in Baucau. Through the Clemente and Catalyst courses offered by Australian Catholic University in the sites offered by Mission Australian and St Vincent de Paul Society, the first graduates from the university-of-the-streets have progressed through a Certificate of Liberal Studies to further study and to other opportunities and new beginnings. One graduate from the Certificate course, who had previously completed postgraduate study, is now doing his doctorate examining public housing options for a disadvantaged area of Sydney at another university.

All of these groups of students give expression to their hope to make a difference for themselves and for their wider societies. Their hopes emerged from education which respected them as learners, with their own insights and expert knowledge. A genuine mutual respect exists between students and lecturers and learning partners. In many ways they all are partners in learning as they come to realise new opportunities and new beginnings for themselves, their institutions and for sections of our society. New insights matter most when they reflect a common concern for mutual respect, the diversity of language, the importance of context, and the scope of what we can effectively do together.

Australian Catholic University was honoured to host the 2005 International Conference of ISATT. In this book, as well as the conference itself, the participants showed how people from across the globe can learn together, develop new insights and provide well-informed and value-based directions for needed opportunities and new beginnings.

In conclusion, I offer a reflection upon the cover of this book. The cover invites us all to engage with the richness of Indigenous Australian art by Richard Campbell of the Gumbaingirr people. His art represents the opportunity for new life born from much suffering. The engagement with this art occurs within the context of Sydney's Opera House and Harbour Bridge. More than 500,000 Australians crossed the Bridge in 2000 in their walk for reconciliation – a crossing symbolising the transitions needed in Australian society today. The Opera House is placed on a site with Indigenous origins and shows how the designer Joern Utzon's challenging dream became a reality. The creators of the cover draw us deeply into the meanings of the many dimensions of art and photography. They invite us into the richness of this book.

This book will be valued by many. I know you will enjoy reflecting upon its many insights, which the authors offer us and I recommend it highly to you. I ask you to accept the challenge of applying these insights into your own fields and to address your concerns about how best to make a difference.

Professor Peter W Sheehan AO
Vice-Chancellor
Australian Catholic University

PREFACE

This book has been written to provide an international forum of scholarly discussion around the theme of how teachers and teacher educators can make a difference. It examines some of the challenges that need to be addressed across the teaching profession. The chapters have been developed by the contributors from a set of keynote presentations and refereed papers given at the 2005 International Study Association for Teachers and Teaching (ISATT) Conference, in Sydney, Australia. The conference was attended by 190 delegates, from a diverse range of countries: Australia, Belgium, Bosnia, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Jamaica, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, and the West Indies. A distinctive feature of the conference was the range of education systems, policies, teacher education programs, school districts, classrooms, teachers and students whose views were argued for and critiqued. This book has been prepared so that it reflects that breadth of contexts and issues.

Making a Difference: Challenges for Teachers, Teaching and Teacher Education begins with *An Australian Perspective*. This perspective was presented by *Professor Judith Parker* as the after dinner speech at the ISATT Conference dinner. The speech integrated a number of facets very evident at the harbourside venue, very apparent in the theme of the conference and very relevant to Sydney, and Australia, at the midpoint of the first decade of the new millennium. Parker reflected upon the 'public messages' seen in the qualities of the Sydney Opera House's structure and context and on how Utzon, the architect, transformed the design into a "building that is awake all the time". She also reflected upon the contribution Indigenous Australians have made by opening their cultural and spiritual knowledge to people through their art. Parker challenged all present to make explicit the true meaning of public messages and affirmed teachers and teacher educators in their roles as 'enlargers' not 'straiteners' of life.

The book is presented in four sections, each emphasising a unique dimension of what is involved in making a difference. The authors offer a range of viewpoints from their different cultural, historical and professional contexts. While each section has a special emphasis, the major themes of heeding challenges and making a difference are woven into all the sections.

The first section, *Heed Challenges,* affirms the work of teachers and teacher educators and shows the need to move beyond current assumptions, policies and practices. The four chapters provide different contexts and scaffolds for identifying appropriate directions in which to take up the challenges and make a difference. In Chapter 1, *Jude Butcher and Lorraine McDonald* offer a series of examples through which they argue that, to heed the challenges of contemporary education, educators need to address the assumptions and values which underlie policy-making and its implementation. In Chapter 2, *Jennifer Gore* outlines a framework for improving pedagogy which takes the challenge of quality teaching directly to teachers - she encourages them to move beyond their current practice. In Chapter 3, *Geert Kelchtermans*, critiques the teacher contract, heeding the challenge of

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recognising teachers' worth through their personal commitment. In Chapter 4, *Pam Grossman* seeks a common language of practice for teacher educators, challenging the profession to examine its practice and its assumptions.

The second section, *Challenge Assumptions*, makes explicit some of the assumptions that can be made by systems, policies and teachers about teachers' work. This section highlights the problematic with some suggestions of ways forward. In Chapter 5, *Joanna Michalak* critiques assumptions around what counts as a teacher's 'success', offering proof that it can mean different things depending on national, historical and educational contexts. In Chapter 6, *Per Laursen* examines the features of the 'flexible' school, claiming that educators cannot assume 'flexibility' around communication between teachers and students, based only changes to the physical structures of schools and classrooms. In Chapter 7, *Julie Clark* contends that teachers assume understanding of science facts when evidence suggests otherwise. She points to the need for teachers to reconsider their own assumptions about the depth and breadth of their subject knowledge. In Chapter 8, *Karen Maras* has a focus on teachers' assumptions about what young students' know. Maras critiques current assumptions and offers teachers a research based framework to inform how they can facilitate the development of children's cognition in art .

The third section, *Challenge Practices*, shows the importance of reflecting on practice across schools, classrooms and teacher education settings. The professional autonomy of teachers and teacher educators is seen as essential if dominant practices and policies are to be critiqued and challenged. In Chapter 9, *Jukka Husu, M.A. Sanna Patrikainen and M. A. Auli Toom* offer a challenge to teachers to develop their reflection competencies. They present a coherent model of teacher reflection which allows practice to be viewed as 'hot' action and 'cool' reflection. In Chapter 10, *Maria Assunção Flores, Raimo Rajala, Ana Margarida Veiga Simão, Aki Tornberg, Vesna Petrovic and Ivan Jerkovic* present a critique of professional development across three countries: they challenge aspects of these practices and develop a model which draws on the 'best' from all. In Chapter 11, *Jana Kalin and Barbara Steh* examine the challenges for teachers as they cope with school reform and maintain that teacher autonomy is essential for real reform of teaching practice. In Chapter 12, *Garry Hoban* challenges the way practice and theory are presented in many teacher education programs, reasoning that a stronger link between school and tertiary classrooms would provide a more coherent program, with practice guiding theoretical understandings.

The fourth section, *Transform Realities*, provides a set of narratives which express personal stories of professional transformation. These stories offer insights into ways of thinking about how individuals and learning communities engage in a process of mutual transformation. In Chapter 13, *Peter Howard, Sharon Cooke and Jude Butcher* reflect on Cooke's personal journey, as an Indigenous Australian, to become a teacher. The importance of collegiality in terms of support from relatives, friends and the institution itself is recognised as crucial in Cooke's personal transformation to Indigenous teacher and educational leader. In Chapter 14, *Mike Marlowe and Gayle Disney* tell a story of how Tory Hayden's 'Teacher

Lore' influenced teachers' attitudes and practices with children with disabilities. They offer a picture of how teachers' realities can be transformed through thoughtful inservicing. In Chapter 15, *John Loughran* indicates ways of transforming teacher education through repositioning the student as researcher. He presents students' voices as they describe some of their changed realities as student teachers. In Chapter 16, *Pam Denicolo* recounts a broader reality of doctoral education in the UK and Europe. She articulates the potential for policy, doctoral programs and students to be transformed, creating real change in this arena. In Chapter 17, *Ora Kwo* relates the story of mentoring and inducting teachers into their profession in a new school district. As the mentors and teachers created 'communities of truth' across sites, the teachers' professional realities were transformed through their 'honest' discussions.

The chapters in this book provide readers with frameworks, evidence and examples addressing challenges and making a difference. Evidence is presented as to how realities have been transformed for students, teachers and teacher educators as well as for the profession itself. We hope that your engagement with the authors and material in this ISATT forum will motivate you to transform realities in your own professional worlds.

Jude Butcher, Lorraine McDonald and Jenny Asha
Australian Catholic University

JUDITH PARKER

AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

Colleagues, friends and especially overseas participants in the first 'down-under' conference of the International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching. I want to pay my respects to the Gadigal People, the traditional custodians of this land.

Conference dinners are opportunities for participants to enjoy one another's company: papers have been polished; some have been presented; praise be, the technology worked, and the demands of the diurnal tasks back home, either professional or domestic, are cast aside. Conversations flow, humour delights, good food and drink take us to a mellow ambience. So, a mellow ambience is not one that should be disturbed for long by earnest exhortations from the dinner speaker. A friend of mine told me to be mindful of this when I was talking to her about what I might say. I have taken her advice and tried to choose a gentle focus in order not to disturb your mellowness for too long. So here are some reflections from retirement on the Opera House, on Aboriginal art of the Kimberleys, on language and on what they might say in affirmation of the study of teachers and teaching, and their profound significance for the well being of society.

Retirement has many pleasures, few more than time free from guilty thoughts about unpleasant surprises in my in-trays; unmarked student assignments; the death of the latest photocopier, or indeed, the wretched budget which I used to spend time pouring over in the vain hope that I could conjure up a miracle. I never did.

REFLECTIONS FROM RETIREMENT ON THE OPERA HOUSE

The Harbour Bridge which we can see from here and the Opera House on Bennelong Point are much loved and admired Sydney icons. My favourite is the Opera House. Earlier this year there was an exhibition at the Sydney Museum called 'The Studio of John Utzon: Creating the Sydney Opera House'. So, in my guilt-free state, I went off to learn more about my favourite building.

The exhibition displayed Utzon's intricate drawings that eventually, after considerable and sometimes bitter controversy, gave rise to the majestic Opera House we see today. Whenever I behold the building or go to events there, I am struck by its absolute appropriateness for the site. Its solid base accentuates the character of the peninsular and the unfolding of the shells of the roof, like sails, take you upwards and onwards to dazzling possibilities, and emphasise again the infinite genius of human creativity.

In designing the Opera House, Utzon apparently studied naval charts of the harbour; examined the precise topography of the site; found inspiration in sources as diverse as the mathematics of complex geometrical shapes; architectural forms of

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ancient civilisations and modern ephemera, such as an advertisement for a Swedish bathing suit worn by a svelte female model.

Having introduced that piece of ephemera, I feel I need to explain how it eventually came to be used. Utzon and the engineers faced immense problems in designing and building the roof- those extraordinary shells we see today. They finally worked out that the shells could be seen as segments of a sphere. These spheres could then be divided into reproducible sections which could be built on the site and then raised and connected to form the frame for each shell. But what to put over the frame? This is where the swimming costume came in: it was made up of vertical, interlocking shapes in contrasting light and dark colours that covered and defined the curved form of the model.

Utzon transformed this design into tiled lids which fit over the spherical frames; the tiles are in contrasting colours to allow the light, even on the dullest of days, to play over them and create, as he wanted, a building that is awake all the time.

REFLECTION ON ABORIGINAL ART OF THE KIMBERLEY

A few days after I saw the Utzon exhibition, I travelled again to the Kimberleys in the far north of Western Australia, an isolated and sparsely populated region where Aboriginal people have observed their customs and traditions for thousands of years.

The art of the Kimberleys is now world renown: the ancient paintings and carvings on rock faces, on headlands and in the spectacular, towering gorges. Some carvings are so old that the rocks themselves have cracked and eroded.

On this visit, I saw numbers of rock paintings on the Mitchell Plateau of the Wangina. These are roughly human shaped figures representing ancestral beings who came out of the sea and the sky to shape the landscape. We now know that artists belonging to tribes descended from the Wanjina regularly cared for the images by repainting them to restore their brightness and preserve the spiritual essence of the ancestors. One famous modern painter, Rusty Peters, says that: *Rock art is the blackfella schoolbook.*

In Kununurra, east of the Mitchell Plateau, I went to an art gallery called *Our Land* which fosters the distinctive art of the East Kimberleys. Maybe you'll have time to go the NSW Art Gallery here in Sydney where there are some fine examples of East Kimberley art. You could then meander through the Botanical Gardens, directly across from the Gallery, to the Opera House. A glorious walk.

Talking about any East Kimberley Art is meaningless without understanding that the paintings refer to events, people and places relating directly to the artist who paints them. Invariably, they are about the artist's country and the transformative power of the landscape - a witness to everything and a presence to be reckoned with. As Peggy Patrick, a Gija woman, said in 2002:

Painting means to us country. That's why people paint.
We are born with it, we got it on our body, on
our bones- we are born with it –it is on our skin

The distinctive features of the art include the use of concentric circles to denote specific sites, lines of dots to describe shape, rows of arches as hills in profile. The overall effect is an aerial perspective. The preferred medium is ochre, mined locally, reflecting the colours of the landscape. The land is truly awe-inspiring, with magical canyons of Purnululu, the striated surfaces of cliff faces; the yellow flowers of the native kapok tree; the strange red of the Rozella plant; the bluish purples of the small Mulla Mulla flower and the Boab trees, with their branches like an inverted root system.

Above all, though, the art is inextricably tied to teaching, to passing on cultural and spiritual knowledge. There was what could be described as a renaissance in East Kimberley Art in the late 70s. It began as a response by artists like Rover Thomas, Paddy Jaminji, Jack Britten and Queenie McKenzie, to the cyclone which hit Darwin on Christmas Day in 1974. The cyclone was understood to be Jurntakal, the Rainbow Serpent, warning that people should return to the law and not slip completely into gadija ways. Hence paintings, as one of the younger generations of painters said:

> *....tell the stories of the people, pass on cultural knowledge and help younger generations to "walk this land".*

REFLECTIONS FROM RETIREMENT ON LANGUAGE.

I began my professional life as an English teacher and have an abiding interest in language; about how we use it to make sense of the world, about its manifestations in the public arena. I'm also interested in, some might say obsessed, by what is going on in the world. In retirement, I have time to read the daily newspapers and listen to the radio. There's time too, to read books like Julian Burnside's *Word Watching* and Don Watson's *Death Sentence* on the decay of language in public life.

The daily dose of news and current affairs can be less than edifying: not only because of the litany of crises, meanness and constraints or the banality of celebrities' diets or sportsmen's dalliances but also because of the language in which the litanies are expressed. Words are too often used like slogans (originally from the Gaelic "war cry"), to obfuscate, denigrate and frighten.

Policies and opinions are unfurled in chaotic prose or delivered in deathless monotones to disguise the pain and harm they will inflict. Radio talkback hosts become experts on anything from the weather, crime, city planning, medicine, the law and always, teachers and teaching.

We are told that refugees are *illegals*, even when they have committed no offence under Australian or international law; that fences used to secure them are not electrified but *energised* and that a total disaster is *an incomplete success.*
Disturbingly, Burnside writes:

We sit, most of us like captivated school children in a side show alley, spell-bound as the hucksters of language deceive and dissemble. And while we know from Orwell how the tricks are done, we are nonetheless beguiled.

AFFIRMING TEACHING AND TEACHERS

Now what do my reflections on the Opera House, Aboriginal Art of the Kimberleys and on language, say about the study of teaching, teachers and teacher education?

Manning Clark, the eminent Australian historian, often talked about the *straiteners* and the *enlargers* of life. It would seem to me that teachers and teacher educators, no matter where they work, strive to see that their endeavours are enlarging. Sadly those endeavours are often in a socio-political context which is straitening. Whether that is because of scarce resources in so many countries; inadequate numbers of teachers; or constraints on what can be taught or by bureaucracies and politicians who do insufficient to affirm the value of teachers.

If I consider the themes of this conference and read your abstracts, then I am struck by the continuing contested positions between that which enlarges and that which constrains, and your struggles, informed by the best of scholarship and research, to ensure enlarging wins.

The Opera House is a monument to *enlarging* despite the attempts of the NSW government of the time to straiten. Utzon was able to transform his knowledge of history, culture, mathematics and of course, his architectural skills to create a building that millions of people from all over the world appreciate, admire and are inspired by. In striving to develop competence, teachers understand that real learning is about stretching children's capacities so that they too can transform their knowledge to create and enlarge, not necessarily opera houses, but the possibilities for their lives.

Being in the Kimberleys again and seeing the Aboriginal art was a stark reminder that the possibilities for so many Aboriginal people are severely limited. Straitened indeed. However many of the papers at this conference emphasis the imperative to understand Indigenous cultures to teach in full recognition of the diversity of ways of knowing, expressing and creating.

To quote Rusty Peters again: "Rock paintings are black fella school houses". Through appreciating their complexity we might be helped to create connections that enliven our own cultures. Unless, through forums like this we do, then I doubt whether we can ever truly have communities solidly founded on principles of social justice.

Governments, parents, the wider community do need assurances that our educational endeavours are credible. It is proper that schools, universities and other sites of learning are held accountable and that the reporting of the accountability be accessible to all those responsible for and interested in education. After all, the provision of education is probably the greatest investment any society can make in the well being of its citizens.

But debates about quality, measuring, reporting, accountability are too often corralled by those Julian Burnside would call "the hucksters of language". Education is a complex, intellectual activity and there are not, and never will be quick fixes or slick one-size-fits-all solutions. The contrast between the thoughtful, evidenced-based scholarship suggested by the abstracts for this conference write large that education is not reducible to league tables, ticks and squares and the ubiquitous bottom line.

Education is not a commodity; it's not a breakfast cereal where the components can be neatly, if not truthfully, labelled. When Andy Hargreaves was here in Sydney in 1997, he called for educational discussions to be "discourses of dignity." Such discourses would seem to me to recognise complexity and ambiguity; affirm what is being achieved, critique new ideas and policies. And perhaps above all, celebrate the possibilities for enlarging and not straitening.

Judith Parker