International Journal of Education & the Arts

Yarning on Solid Ground: Connecting Aboriginal High School Students to Culture Through Yarning and Arts-based Learning

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Abstract

This article explores the role yarning has in supporting Aboriginal high school students to connect to culture through creative projects in partnership with First Nations artists, knowledge holders and Elders in the local community. Following an exploration of literature on yarning as method and Aboriginal pedagogies in Australian schools, Neville Williams-Boney and Debbie Higgison reflect on what yarning means to them and the role yarning played in their own education. The article then shifts to discussing how yarning was integrated as a pedagogical tool within weekly sessions of the Solid Ground program. Here Aboriginal students engaged in a process of negotiation and collaboration with industry mentors as they developed and shared several creative outputs with the local community. We conclude by evaluating the benefits of devoting space for Aboriginal pedagogies in school contexts and the broader possibilities of yarning to collect, analyse and disseminate data in music education research.

Neville: To be honest, I keep saying this, yarning is not a new science. Of course, all people love listening and love to have their story told. That's what it is, and Elders want to belong too. They always get cast aside. Elders just love to be heard and love to have their story told. They also love children living up to what their potential could be. They feel so proud watching them singing and dancing. It's really emotional because when they were kids, they wouldn't be able to fathom doing it because of the history that's been going through. My Nan, for example, doesn't talk about anything. Then there's my mum's generation who are just angry about everything. And then you've got my generation…

Debbie: Some of them think they know everything [laughing]!

Neville: Not that we know everything [laughing]. It's just we're trying to figure out how do we kind of fight this. My nan's generation shut it up and kept quiet like they were told to, and nothing happened. That didn't work. We got my Mum's generation who yelled and yelled and yelled in the 1980s and the 1990s. Still nothing happened. And now we see that they're hurt and they're sad. We know that our grandparents are hurt and sad too. What do we do? We tried yelling. We tried shouting. I think it's up to the young people to ask, how can we kind of fight this problem?

Introduction

Storytelling is a central element of First Nations cultures globally where oral tradition is dominant (Geia et al., 2013; Kovach, 2009). For First Nations communities in Australia, storytelling, better known as yarning, has been practiced for thousands of years (Atkinson et al., 2021). Yarning "is integral to Aboriginal peoples' understanding and learning throughout life" (p. 191). It brings people together to "relax and reflect on stories in recent or past history" (Ober, 2017, p. 8). Hughes and Barlo (2021) observe that yarning can occur at different levels, from "conversations among family and friends, to very formal communication through which Elders pass on knowledge to the next generation" (p. 355). Yarning is inherently a lived experience of story, grounded in the "key elements of respect and reciprocity, whereby the listener is tasked with the responsibility of transferring knowledge" (Anderson et al. 2018, p. 173).

This article explores the role yarning has in supporting Aboriginal high school students to connect to culture through creative projects in partnership with First Nations artists, knowledge holders and Elders in the local community. Drawing upon yarning as method (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010), we specifically share a collaborative yarn between Wiradjuri/Weilwan choreographer Neville Williams-Boney, education project officer and

proud Wangal woman Debbie Higgison, and non-Indigenous music educator Thomas Fienberg. Following an exploration of existing literature on yarning as method and pedagogy, Neville and Debbie reflect on what yarning means to them and the role yarning played in their own education. We then share different perspectives on how yarning was integrated as a pedagogical tool within weekly sessions of the Solid Ground Artist in Residence program (Fienberg, 2023b; Fienberg & Higgison, 2022). Within this program Aboriginal students from Western Sydney engaged in a process of negotiation and collaboration with industry mentors as they developed and shared several creative outputs with Elders and the local Aboriginal community. We conclude by evaluating the benefits of devoting space and time for yarning in school contexts and the broader possibilities of yarning to collect, analyse and disseminate data in arts education research.

Yarning as Method

While parallels can be made with other Indigenous research methods (Kovach, 2009), yarning provides a distinctly localised enaction of Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing (Atkinson et al., 2021; Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003). Drawing upon the authority of Aboriginal knowledge systems, the approach is intrinsically grounded in relationality and reliant upon "expected outcomes, responsibility and accountability between participants" (Dean, 2010, p. 6). A key strength of yarning as an Indigenous research tool is its familiarity as an everyday process for communication (Walker et al., 2014). This creates a relaxed, culturally safe environment where participants enter as partners in the research process (Dean, 2010), enabling an honesty and openness to emerge that may not otherwise be fostered through Western research methods (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010; Fredericks et al., 2011). The characteristics of yarning can be clearly aligned with the integrity embedded within the goals of research ethical guidelines published by the National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC] (2018) and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [AIATSIS] (2020).

Yarning takes on many different forms, mirroring the diversity of Aboriginal nations within Australia (Dean, 2010; Shay, 2021). Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010) distinguish four different types of yarning within research contexts. *Social yarning* regularly acts as the starting point of research interactions. These informal conversations function primarily to build relationships between researchers and their participants. *Research topic yarning* is defined as a "conversation with a purpose", while *collaborative yarning* "takes place between two or more people where they are actively engaged in sharing information about the research project" (p. 40). Critically, collaborative yarning can occur during both the research process and in the dissemination of findings (Shay, 2021). Yarns can transition at any time to the fourth variation, *therapeutic yarning*, when recalling traumatic or emotional events. Describing the

implementation of yarning, Bessarab and Ng'andu note the different types can be used independently, interchangeably or within a sequence.

Problematising the simplification and varied research quality of yarning studies, Atkinson et al. (2021) caution against superficial reporting by scholars. Such misuse reinforces settler colonial attempts to undermine and eliminate Indigenous knowledges (Smith, 1999) and can equate to cultural appropriation, where dominant cultures use practices "from another culture without thorough research, and remain ignorant of the cultural context" (Han, 2019, p. 9). Atkinson et al. argue that researchers need to "report on their experience with Yarning, the types of Yarning they are using and the relationality generated" (p. 191). Beyond explaining the types of yarning being used, Shay (2021) reflects on how data should be collected during the yarning process. While acknowledging the prevalence of yarning studies reliant on audio or video recording (e.g., Atkinson et al., 2021; Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010), Shay questions its potential to compromise "the authority of participants to choose what they want to be recorded as part of the research" (p. 65). This reinforces the need for Indigenous participants to lead and engage in all stages of the research process.

Embedding yarning in research contexts is "highly dependent on existing connections and relationships" (Shay, 2021, p. 66). Critically, social yarns and shared teaching experiences over the past seven years have been integral to fostering trust between our research team. More formalised research topic yarning commenced in 2021, during the design of our broader research agenda, application and subsequent approval by The University of Sydney's Human Research and Ethics Council. After collectively deciding on talking points for the collaborative yarn at the centre of this article, a two-hour yarning conversation was held over zoom and transcribed to generate thick descriptions for the findings of this article. While it would have been ideal to hold the yarn in person, this format enabled the three of us to meet in mutually beneficial locations amidst busy schedules. As discussed within the yarn itself, this re-emphasises how yarning is recontextualised under institutionalised, restrictive, Western-imposed conditions (Shay, 2021).

Working Towards the Inclusion of Aboriginal Pedagogies and Voices in New South Wales Schools

School-based education in the state of New South Wales (NSW) and Australia more broadly has historically acted as a key tool in the cultural destruction and suppression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices. Successive Federal and State Government policies denied access to education, with Aboriginal children eventually requiring an exemption certificate to attend whitewashed NSW public schools during the Assimilation Era (1951-1962). Even after the Assimilation policy was disbanded, up until 1972 NSW public school principals reserved

the right to refuse to enroll Aboriginal children on the grounds of "home conditions" or "substantial community opposition" (NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, n.d.).

The *Aboriginal Education Policy* (NSW Department of Education, 1982) was a significant step towards reconciling centuries of settler-colonial oppression. The document recognised the dual purpose of Aboriginal education: "to enhance the development and learning of Aboriginal students… and enable all students to have some knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Aborigines and their cultural heritage" (p. iii). Importantly, the policy was written in consultation with Aboriginal communities and the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG). At its core was the need to involve Aboriginal communities "through consultation and participation, in making the learning environment and the school curriculum relevant to the needs of their children" (p. 1).

Pre-empting documents in other states and at a Federal level, the policy was revolutionary for acknowledging the diversity of Aboriginal communities and specific needs for the individual child. Recognising *both ways* of learning (Harris, 1980), the policy outlined the need to acknowledge "Aboriginal learning methods" and the "introduction of Aboriginal Studies programs [and] incorporation of the study of Aboriginal Arts" (pp. 7-8). The key aspects within subsequent updates to the Aboriginal education policy have remained close to the initial document. The current Partnership Agreement between the NSW AECG and NSW Department of Education (2020) outlines three outcomes expected to be delivered for Aboriginal students: "Aboriginal students find schools to be engaging, culturally safe places to learn; Aboriginal students believe that they can succeed at school and they do succeed; and Aboriginal students are confident in their heritage, cultures and languages" (p. 4).

While 40 years have passed since the release of the first Aboriginal Education Policy, schools have been slow to adopt pedagogical practices to counter the dominant settler colonial system. In Western NSW, the ongoing research of Tyson Yunkaporta (2010), a proud member of the Apelach Clan in Far North Queensland, has been critically important to the development and implementation of Aboriginal pedagogies in school contexts. Drawing on studies completed nationally (Harrison, 2005; Hughes et al., 2004) and internationally (Battiste, 2002), Yunkaporta collaborated with community Elders to design the *Eight Ways Aboriginal Pedagogy Framework* to assist teachers in understanding and using Aboriginal knowledge in the classroom. *Eight Ways* features eight interrelated pedagogical processes based on an Aboriginal kinship system illustrated in Figure 1. The pedagogies encourage "narrative-driven learning, visualised learning processes, hands-on/reflective techniques, use of symbols and metaphors to communicate ideas, land-based and on-Country learning, indirect and synergistic logic, modelled/scaffolded genre mastery, and connectedness to community" (St

John & Edwards-Vandenhoek, 2022, p. 91). Importantly, these pedagogies are not intended to be studied arbitrarily or as sequential learning styles (Yunkaporta & Kirby, 2011). They also have the capacity to overlap and complement existing Western pedagogical approaches.
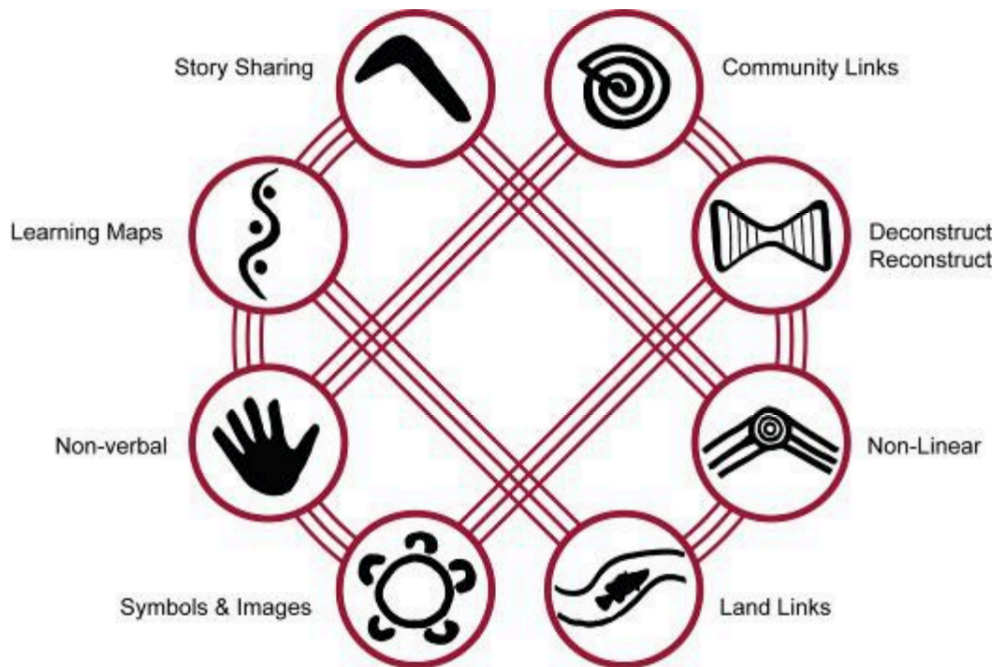

Figure 1. 8ways Framework (Yunkaporta, 2010, p. 46).

In *Eight Ways*, yarning as pedagogy is embedded within the act of story sharing. Reflecting on the framework, Yunkaporta and Kirby (2011) observe that yarning acts as "distinct pedagogy all on its own" (p. 207). Yarning in the classroom honours the way "Elders teach using stories, drawing lessons from narratives to actively involve learners in introspection and analysis" (Yunkaporta, 2010, p. 49). Critically, Yunkaporta discusses the benefits of yarning in all subject areas through the exchange of personal and wider narratives to support learners of all cultural backgrounds.

In Australian music education, the use of culture bearers has provided a key means of bringing Aboriginal perspectives and yarning into secondary classrooms (Marsh, 2000; Power and Bradley, 2011; Murphy-Haste, 2009). The impact of these culture bearers extends beyond providing "authentic, accessible and relatable" learning experiences, by "incorporating Indigenous epistemological understandings of the relationship between the arts and the spirit of place" (Locke and Prentice, 2016, p. 148). While the inclusion and usage of the term culture bearers in global music education has been problematised as discriminatory and

othering (Hess, 2013; 2019), leading Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property expert Terri Janke (2021) encourages teachers and schools to:

> … create employment opportunities for Indigenous knowledge holders to come into schools and deliver services and workshops, sharing their wisdom and expertise. Let's hire local Indigenous community experts to expand the minds of our next generation of educators, innovators and creators. (p. 288)

The Solid Ground Artist in Residence Program

While collaboration with Aboriginal knowledge holders in schools can often be fleeting and hampered by curricular pressures, the proceeding yarn reveals the benefits of ongoing engagement with Aboriginal mentors as a means of building meaningful relationships (Mackinlay, 2008). Established in 2016 as a joint initiative between Carriageworks and Blacktown Arts, the Solid Ground Artist in Residence program is currently housed in four schools across Greater Sydney. Critically, the program is led by a team of Aboriginal arts administrators who select the professional artists and "negotiate with non-Indigenous teachers individualised programs for schools," carrying "first-hand knowledge of the challenges faced by Aboriginal Youth in urban settings" (Fienberg & Higgison 2022, p. 111). Thomas became involved in Solid Ground as one of the non-Indigenous teachers supporting the program from 2017–2021. As an experienced and highly respected social worker and behavioural change therapist[1], Debbie joined Solid Ground as an Education Project Officer in 2018 with the primary goal of supporting the artists' vision and connecting the students and schools with the local community. Neville initially supported the Solid Ground program as a casual choreographer on several creative projects, before taking on the permanent role as an artist in residence at two different schools. The yarning conversation was driven primarily through the voices of Debbie and Neville, who brought with them decades of lived experience of yarning in community and family contexts. For Thomas, years of collaborating with Aboriginal musicians and community members provided insight into the yarning process and the responsibilities, and limitations, of contributing to the yarn as a non-Indigenous researcher (Fienberg, 2023a).

Yarning and Connection

Neville: Yarning for me is a knowledge sharing collaboration. It's not just about what you say and what you receive back from people. It's also about what's happening around you at that same time. While it can be just talking, it goes further when

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[1] Debbie Higgison was the recipient of the NSW Female Community Hero award in 2017 and 2021 Chifley Woman of the Year.

you're on Country and you're talking about a certain site, or writing a song about a certain place. Sometimes you just need to be there for it to have that kind of effect. You can feel it. It's yarning with Country. If you're dancing about a star and you get told the story in an office, it's not until you sit under the stars, point at that star and realise that's the star we're talking about. You have this visceral learning experience. You move differently, you speak differently, the yarn becomes more articulate.

Debbie: When you're yarning it just feels so informal and you're much more relaxed and open to discussion. For me, it's about the experience of sitting in a circle. It's about equality. Everybody is sitting in the same space. There are no broken parts, or people sitting in a corner. Everybody is equal. You can see everyone, and everybody feels that they're included. It's that safe space. When we get the kids together, we start by telling them to "come and sit in a circle." There's an energy there that gets people talking. It's not like sitting across having a coffee, or even this situation on a Zoom screen where you've got to think on your feet. Someone will be talking, and it'll trigger or remind you of something and then you want to contribute. It feels good even if it is upsetting information. When you're sharing that information it's healing.

Neville: When I was growing up, school was all very academic. It was all very stressful. Yarning would have calmed all that stress. When you talk about your feelings, talk about your problems and everything that's happening, it kind of makes things better. In schools there's not enough time given for yarning, especially for our mob.[2] The next best thing to do is act out to get attention by vandalising or fighting, because no one else is listening.

Debbie: That's why Solid Ground's important. Turning up every week and being consistent. Finding out what the students are good at and talking about it. Then reminding them by asking about it the following week. They start opening up that little bit more. Getting them involved in hands-on activities, sitting around in a circle showing them that safe space. There's also the vulnerability of giving a little bit of you to invite them to tell a little bit about themselves. I think both Neville and I, and even you, Thomas, come across kids who don't know enough about their culture. With Solid Ground, we're showing these strong, positive role models. They don't always see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and

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[2] Mob is an Aboriginal English word for Aboriginal community.

we are showing them that. They are building that confidence. It might be a slow process, but it's happening. You have to see it to be it!

(Re)connecting Through Yarning

Neville: I think we're caught up in this whole thing where you've got to know everything about Aboriginal culture because your Aboriginal. Like no! That's ridiculous. That's just impossible! I don't know a lot about traditional music. I know the dancing context, but not the playing or being a songman. I don't know language as much as someone else does. That doesn't make you any less Aboriginal, or any less of a person if you don't know.

Debbie: When I first started working with Neville, he let everybody know that his connection to culture, even though it was always there with his family, didn't really adapt till he found dancing. That could be exactly how our students feel. They've got no understanding, no connection to how they feel about getting this information from their families. Most of them can't even identify many generations in their family. It makes them think "Well, if that happened to Neville, that could be me too." Every time we work with Neville, students would say they spoke to this person, or they found out this information. They were more open because Neville had let them know he had trouble at school. He didn't connect to culture the way he is now until he was a little bit older. I think they resonated with that.

It's just unfortunate within this Western Sydney community that under the Dharug Nation, there is so much missing information and some families have this much, others have that much, and everybody is trying to sort of make their way to the top. But no one's coming together. It makes me think, "I wanna talk, I wanna ask." I go to certain people, and I ask them questions. I need to know before I can do something within the Solid Ground program. Sometimes it's hard because you don't know who to go to. I often go to several people to try and get the information. Then I've got to decipher it myself because my family has that disconnection so there's not a lot that I do know. My mum tries to listen, but she's got so much disconnection that she can't. I'm a little envious of some of the families that have that information handed down to them and they are passing on their traditions.

Yarning and Creativity

Neville: In terms of creativity, yarning sparks these things in your brain. It sparks this idea and you're like, "oh, that's a great idea!" And you wouldn't have got that idea if you weren't talking to a certain person. When you're sharing, it sparks others and then they tell you, which is the beauty of collaboration. With creativity you've got to have this humbleness and not be precious about your idea: "This is my idea. No one else can have it! No one else can take it. No one else can shape it!" If you allow it to grow with the conversation in a yarn, it will be much more organic, truthful, honest, and more emotive.

Sometimes I come into the kids and they're dancing and I realise they really don't like this. Then I sit down and talk to them and start yarning to hear their story. I realise, "oh that's what the story should be about." One day we were just playing games and to be honest, I had no idea what I was doing. I was like, "let's see how this goes." We played some games about songs, just messing around. Then we put our favourite songs all in a hat and had to guess who wrote that song down. I feel like you can judge people by their music taste. We got to know the kids on a different level. I was also trying to figure out which song they would resonate to and how to move to it. We pulled all the names out of the hat, and we ended up with "True Colours."

Debbie: Everyone was included. Everybody was contributing. There was laughter. There was discussion. It was a good energy.

Neville: Even the kids who wouldn't talk were talking. They're actually starting to show up and wanting to join in because they played a part in it. It's about that full circle. Yes, the older kids are leaving now, but then the younger students will become the older people. So that song is perfect for them to say goodbye. It's not going to be a new thing. You've got to trust them. "We created this space for you. Use this space. Don't just let it fall because it will help you and then you can help other kids too."

Thomas: What's interesting for me is that it doesn't matter that you were singing and dancing to a version of "True Colours" from *Trolls*. It doesn't have to be a song by an Aboriginal person. You're still enacting dialogue and conversation through yarning. You're sharing culture through music and dance.

Debbie: I think that's a really big part about it because they're looking for somewhere to belong. They know a little bit about a little bit. It's baby steps. As long as we're

going forward being inclusive, they're going to want to contribute, and it just grows from there.

Neville: I'd say they know less than a little of a little bit. I know a little bit and they think I know a lot.

Debbie: There's lots of ups and downs of learning about your family and other people's mobs. That's why I try to help them understand that we're not doing traditional dances. We're doing cultural dances. Part of culture is being able to take the words or information from a story and interpret it into a dance. To have something handed down to you traditionally, it has to come from your mob. It's a hard conversation to have with these young ones, because they think they're going to be learning all these things they see on television or see at gatherings. That comes out of having conversations, you know, yarning.

Inviting Knowledge Holders and Elders into the Creative Space Through Yarning

Debbie: Elders are the glue that brings everybody together. At the opening of the school's yarning circle, the Solid Ground students were so engaged with Uncle Wes.[3] Everything we had worked on came together when Uncle Wes was there. He told his stories. He told his life. He told his poetry. Our Elders are the people that we learn from, and this is information that we need to pass on. When Uncle Wes came into that space, there was just something that demanded the students' best behaviour, their inquisitiveness, their listening skills, sitting around in that new yarning circle. It was very empowering to see and then to watch him watch the kids dance. He was mesmerised by it. It gave him such a good feeling and that made me feel good. That's why we all need to work together. It's important for us not just to acknowledge that they've given us the information. Now we're giving them the information too.

With one of the other schools, we initially had Uncle Wes Zooming in from my house because of COVID. Even though our artists had spoken about Uncle Wes and how his knowledge helped them with their songwriting, it wasn't until we got him in for six weeks to talk about his stories that the kids got to interpret how he said things. I guess it was a bit of a wakeup call to me too. It was as if they were

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[3] Uncle Wes Marne AM was a Bigambul and Western Sydney Community Elder, who passed away aged 102 in 2024 after the research topic yarn and article was written. In Aboriginal culture, Elders are addressed as "Aunty" and "Uncle" out of respect.

in two different rooms. I had to explain to Uncle Wes when he heard their rap songs that this is how the kids heard what you said. We had to talk to him about it and explain how the students see things differently. They only had six weeks of hearing this. It wasn't daily. It was only once a week for an hour to take notes to build lyrics. When he heard the song he said, "I know that's my stories. But it's not what I said." To have that yarn about this generation, this is how they're hearing because they don't get that consistency. That's how the world is working. Our traditions are lost because they aren't handed down on a daily basis like they would be would have been. Everybody's only getting little titbits. There's something about having the Elders come into that space that everybody wants to be a part of. They want to know. They're our walking encyclopedias.

Neville: I just wanted to touch on something that you said. Yes, we're hearing things differently and we're interpreting differently, but like the stolen generation we're clinging onto something, so it's not lost. I think because of the history that's happened, Elders and our kids now, we need to shape culture in a certain way. Modernise it in a way that is going to continue for the next generation. Yes, it's different, but it's not scary different. It doesn't have to be scary. We have to trust children or give them the skills to be able to take a story and use their cultural knowledge to tell that story and add a bit of depth to it.

Debbie: We've got to adapt to how our young mob receive information because we need them to carry it on. If they don't have the capacity to sit day after day after day to hear these stories how they were traditionally handed down, how do we get the version where it's something that they understand and can pass on to their children? We're all so busy. We've got lots of things to retain. We don't always get to take that time out to walk on Country and be one with Mother Earth to be able to do what was. I agree we do have to try and adapt to the way kids are today but not through Zoom like we are doing now, but the face-to-face yarning and coming together. I think while we can include our knowledge holders in this space, especially face-to-face, the kids really appreciate it and I think it helps us working through their stories creatively.

Thomas: What do you think knowledge holders get out of yarning with young mob?

Neville: There's a sense of happiness that their story's being told. They love yarning. They love being heard, just like kids do, but also knowing that their story and their culture is going to be continued. I don't think it's that hard of a question to

be honest. I think it's very simple. They just love seeing culture prevail and their story told.

Reflections on the Possibility of Yarning in School and Research Contexts

As this yarn draws to a close, it is timely to reflect on the implications of the knowledge shared. Through the voices of Debbie and Neville we are richer for gaining insights into their lived experience of yarning and the role it has played in connecting with community and piecing together cultural knowledge fractured from ongoing colonial oppression. As they enter schools, they bring with them an empathy and understanding that non-Indigenous teachers alone cannot bring. For Aboriginal students in Western Sydney, weekly yarning with community knowledge holders and artists provides a reliable, ongoing mentorship assisting them in understanding their emerging identity and navigating assumed cultural expectations. This trust is not immediately gained and easily lost, emphasising the need for schools to develop long term partnerships with knowledge holders and community groups to best support Aboriginal students.

In discussing the implementation of the Eight Ways framework, Yunkaporta (2010) speaks about the need for Aboriginal pedagogies to be presented alongside each other rather than in isolation. In the generation of creative projects through the Solid Ground program, this was seen as the students yarned through ideas, before deconstructing/reconstructing them through hands-on artmaking, songwriting and dance works. Critically, these projects were grounded in the context of their local community, supported through the work of administrators and artists such as Debbie and Neville. Drawing on relationships with knowledge holders, opportunities were also provided for students to engage in the ongoing continuation of cultural practice. This reinforces the need for increased space and time for yarning with knowledge holders in school contexts and ongoing negotiation as creative projects take place.

As non-Indigenous music educators continue to write on engaging with decolonial research methods (Bradley, 2012; Hess, 2018; Kallio, 2020; Prest, 2023; Prest & Goble 2022), collaborative research alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has an important role in documenting "the struggles of Indigenous people for genuine self-determination" (Rigney, 1999, p. 440). For our research team, yarning as method provides an Indigenous model to guide all stages of our research project from design, to data collection and dissemination in forums such as this journal. We conclude with one final reflection from Debbie on the research potential of yarning:

> Debbie: Having a yarn just prompts your memory to think about things you've associated that experience with. The conversation in yarning just seems very natural and easier to do without feeling like you're pressured to get it right. We have our good

outcomes, and our not so good outcomes. Yarning helps us talk through our experiences and describe how we continue to adapt.

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Neville Williams-Boney is a proud Wiradjuri, Weilwan Man, and an Independent Artist. He is a dancer, botanist, zookeeper, storyteller and all those things make him the teacher he is. Neville has pursued his love of performing since the age of 15, starting as a ballroom dancer then finding his passion in contemporary dance. He is a teacher at NAISDA Dance College and casual lecturer at The University of Sydney. Neville has also presented at numerous conferences across Australia.