



Training for life... in two worlds

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Nungalinga College and the *Bilingual Family and Community Studies* program

- ▶ A project funded by Caritas Australia
- ▶ Students come to Darwin from remote communities to learn work-readiness skills
- ▶ Provides for a Yolngu facilitator who translates concepts and knowledge from the Yolngu worldview to the mainstream and vice versa
- ▶ Most students speak English as another (3rd, 4th or 5th) language



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Turbulent times?

- ▶ The last year may have been turbulent for many in Australia due to the GFC
- ▶ But for many people living in remote communities of northern Australia the last 100 or more years have been turbulent...
- ▶ The last three years could be described as 'tumultuous' with the introduction of NTER, income management, changes to CDEP, and one intervention after another....



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Bilingual and bicultural learning

- ▶ A contended history in remote Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory,
- ▶ 'Both-ways' or 'two way' learning is designed to respect cultures, the idea being to learn from each other,
- ▶ But Training Packages are written from a mainstream cultural perspective (though it is sometimes falsely assumed that they are value free)



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Key points from the evaluation

- ▶ Students want *employment*, funder/RTO wants *community development*
- ▶ Students and funder/RTO saw *confidence and work related outcomes* as the main outcomes from BFACS
- ▶ Students identified *work experience, understandability, and supportive environment* as the factors leading to success while the funder/RTO saw the *bilingual approach, teamwork and both ways learning* as the main factors



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- ▶ Students' identity is and will always be bound inextricably to their cultural context,
- ▶ Yet VET prepares them for a world that is not theirs, which is foreign and difficult to understand
- ▶ BFACS makes an attempt to unpack the mainstream worldviews that are embedded in VET—in a way they can grab hold of
- ▶ Trainees see success in terms of being able to straddle the gap between cultures



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What do these results mean?

- ▶ RTOs sometimes make assumptions about what participants need but if they don't ask, how will they know? A community engagement approach is required.
- ▶ There may be an imperative for both-ways learning but where do the resources to do this, come from?
- ▶ We might have found out what trainees wanted but are they getting what they wanted?



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Some further questions for training provision in remote contexts

- ▶ RTOs see themselves as providing training, but given the connection between training and community outcomes how do they know if their training is effective?
- ▶ Those of us who are whitefellas often make assumptions about what is 'normal' but the reality is that our view of 'normal' (what makes common sense and is right and true) is not the same for many people from remote communities. How can whitefellas hope to understand the culture of remote communities if they don't understand their own?
- ▶ To what extent can Training Packages be recontextualised (assuming they can't be decontextualised) for remote contexts?

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Further information

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