

*An Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
find Relational space:
Yarns from a Joint Leadership
Team at a Rural Community Based
Preschool*

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Abstract

Members of the dominant culture have generally not been prepared to relinquish power or status as professional leaders in education (Colbung, Glover, Rau, & Ritchie 2007; Huggins 1998). My research tells our story, one of a relationship of belonging, of community, of creating a place for early childhood education. It is a story of three women, two of whom came together as joint directors of a community based preschool in a rural district. Two of the main characters are women from the local Bundjalung people who are the traditional custodians of the land where the preschool is situated. The other woman, myself, is non-Aboriginal.

An objective of my thesis is to share reflections about myself as a non-Aboriginal person collaborating with the Bundjalung community for over twenty five years, rather than another white expert or observer of Aboriginal people. As an active participant of my community, I can discuss my own discoveries, such as the knowledge gained through learning to turn down the 'white noise' (McCoy 2000).

My methodology is an auto-ethnographic narrative that has been influenced by phenomenology, yarning, feminist poststructural method, and postmodern emergence. This methodology permits me to write in an accepted academic method, which also honours the spiritual essence of my story. This thesis tells a story; it is my story, their story, our story. It is the story of our day. It is a story of moving from contact zone to relational space.

Certification

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis and all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Karren Anne Amadio

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