**Tensions between policy and practice:
Reconciliation agendas in the Australian curriculum English**

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ABSTRACT: *In various parts of the world, Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are actively working towards Reconciliation. In Australia, the context in which we each undertake our work as educationalists and researchers, the Reconciliation agenda has been pushed into schools and English teachers have been called on to share responsibility for facilitating the move towards a new national order. The recently introduced Australian Curriculum mandates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures be embedded with "a strong" but "varying presence" into each learning area (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2013). In this paper we consider the tensions between policy and practice, when discourses external to education are recontextualised into the discipline of English. We do so by applying an analytical framework based on Bernstein's (1990, 1996, 2000) sociological theories about the structure of instructional and regulative discourses. Our findings suggest that the space to exert Reconciliatory agendas in the Australian Curriculum English is ambiguous and thus holds the potential to not only marginalise Indigenous knowledges but also to create tensions between policy and practice for non-Indigenous teachers of English.*

KEYWORDS: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Australian Curriculum, cross-curriculum priorities, Indigenous, instructional discourse, reconciliation, reconciliatory agendas, regulative discourse.*

OUR RELATIONS TO THE INTERSECTING TOPICS

We each come to this examination of the *Australian Curriculum English Version 5.0* (*AC:E*) with a strong interest in the Reconciliation agenda. The *AC:E* was made available online to all Australian school teachers by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in 2012 and implemented in most Australian schools for students in Foundation (aged 4.5-5.5 years) to Year 10 (aged 14.5-15.5 years) from 2012. In a break from the traditional presentation of (Western) research papers, we commence by acknowledging our relations to the intersecting points of this topic. Following Indigenous academic Karen Martin, our relations to each of these topics are also "physical, spiritual, political, geographical, intellectual, emotional, social, historical, sensory, instinctive and intuitive" (2008, p. 69). In an attempt to come to know more about the entities of our relatedness, we each reflect on the following questions: From where do I come? What is my relationship to the Reconciliation agenda? and What is my interest in writing a paper about Reconciliation agendas in the *AC:E*?

Beryl was born in the 1960s on *Wiradjuri* land in rural New South Wales, Australia, to monolingual English-speaking working-class parents of Norwegian and Irish

heritage. She was raised as a monolingual English speaker on the red clay of *Yuggera* land, what Europeans call the Redland Shire (South-East Queensland, Australia), along the edges of *Quandamoopah* (Moreton Bay, South-East Queensland, Australia). This is where she played in the large Moreton Bay Fig Trees, and watched the Stradbroke Island ferry travel between *Minjerribah* (Stradbroke Island, South-East Queensland, Australia) and the mainland. Like many shire students, she regularly travelled to *Minjerribah* to compete in interschool sports, undertake geography excursions and learn about contemporary Indigenous literature, in particular, that written by the Elder, poet, writer, artist and educator *Oodgeroo Noonucal*. This is not to suggest that in any way she came to "see" or "be" Indigenous. To the contrary, her geography assignments on the sand-island formation of *Minjerribah*, *Bummeria* (perched Brown Lake) and *Myora* (Freshwater Springs) were founded on the Western knowledge system of landforms.

These ways of understanding the world as a physical entity stood in stark contrast to those expounded by Karen Martin's clear and strong Indigenous understandings of the relatedness between Entities, Country, People and Land (2008, p. 70). Beryl's learning *about* contemporary Indigenous culture never included learning *from* or deep questions about other ways of knowing. After completing secondary schooling in the 1980s, she studied to become a primary school teacher. During the next two decades, her interactions with Indigenous Australian peoples were limited to teaching those who attended city-based schools and/or preservice teacher education courses. Rather than being dialogical and facilitating a sharing of epistemologies and ontologies, curricula content and its pedagogies and assessment were firmly entrenched in mainstream discourses. As a university educator and researcher, she embarked on a five-week sabbatical in a remote Torres Strait Islander community in 2008 (Exley, 2010, 2012) and since 2009 has been a volunteer at a community-based Indigenous Homework Hub (Davis-Warra, Dooley & Exley, 2011).

Mui is a Malaysian citizen, born in Malaysia and of Chinese origin. From the oral stories narrated and passed down by her grandmother, she has some knowledge of her cultural heritage. Through learning cultural studies at school, she has prior knowledge about Malaysian Aborigines and their histories. Cultural Studies is a core unit in the Malaysian educational system. The term *Orang Asli* (in Malay) means "original peoples" or "first people". In the past, the Aborigines lived in the remote parts of the Malay Peninsula, but in present times, many have left their homes in the forests and are coming together into the cosmopolitan centres. At the time of writing this paper, she was finishing her final year of an undergraduate Bachelor of Education degree at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and undertaking this research as part of a QUT Summer Vacation Research Scholarship.

Through these experiences, we recognise and respect that Indigenous Knowledge is not open knowledge; this fact is a basic tenet of Aboriginal cultures (Sheehan & Walker, 2001). We thus come to this analysis through our non-Indigenous lenses. We are nonetheless sensitive to the silences around Indigenous representation. By penning this article, it is not our intention to contribute to the marginalisation of Indigenous viewpoints; rather we wanted to give voice to non-Indigenous teachers of English charged with the responsibility of implementing the *AC:E*. We are, after all, in many ways typical of the raft of non-Indigenous teachers of English seeking to work with this current mandate.

The remainder of this article is presented in a number of sections. The next section offers an abridged summary of white Australia's black history, so readers not familiar with this vexed journey over the last 200 or so years can better understand the complex set of engagements in the Australian context. As Crowley and Matthews remind us, "reconciliation can never assume or presume itself as a universal for it is always replete with its historical specificities" (2006, p. 269). In the section after that, we summarise the research literature on pre-service and practising teachers' understandings of and responses to Indigenous perspectives in educational contexts. Whilst this literature does not specifically focus on teachers of English or those working in the early years of schooling, the summary is useful to describe the professional context into which the *AC:E* was launched. The third section provides a chronology of the formation and introduction of the *AC:E*, paying attention to the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures*. The fourth section introduces the theoretical lens for the analytical work, drawing on Bernstein's (1990, 1996, 2000) sociological theories about the structure of instructional and regulative discourses. The fifth section introduces the four data-sets extracted from the *AC:E* for analysis. So that a detailed analysis can be undertaken, we limit our Content Descriptions to the first formal year of schooling, Year One, where the students are typically 5.5 to 6.5 years of age. The article concludes with some commentary on implications for the re-centring of Indigenous knowledges and implications for non-Indigenous teachers.

WHITE AUSTRALIA'S BLACK HISTORY

Australia is home to the world's oldest living Indigenous groups, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Some still live on country, caring for and living off the land and sea and adhering to strong cultural connections to tribal homelands (Pascoe, 2010). Many others are urban Indigenous peoples with strong cultural connections to their clans and homelands as well as current place of residence. We use the nomenclature of peoples, lands, cultures, languages in the plural to recognise the linguistic and cultural differences between different Indigenous groups; to do otherwise would be to homogenise Indigenous peoples, thereby contributing to the erasure of their disparate identities. Notwithstanding these points of difference, Indigenous Australians have extensive family ties, many rituals, multiple worldviews and perspectives and often speak a couple if not a few Indigenous languages. Each clan's point of view has a deep and complex history going back tens of thousands of years. Briefly, these accounts all start with the dawn of creation and provide the stories about the lands, the peoples, their languages and the lores for ways of living.

In 1770, Captain James Cook, a British navigator and sea-explorer, arrived on the *Endeavour* at a place that also became known as Botany Bay, in a place that also became known as the city of Sydney, in a state that also became known as New South Wales. Cook and his entourage encountered the local Aboriginal inhabitants, erroneously declaring the land as *terra nullius* (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, n.d.), and declared the land a British colony. This historic event launched, to use a phrase replete with ambivalences, white Australia's black history. This nuanced phase acknowledges the painful and oft-silenced history of subjection of Australia's Indigenous peoples to a colonial foreign power (Conway-Herron, 2011). The arrival

of *The First Fleet* in 1778 and the establishment of a British settlement at Port Jackson in Sydney was not a peaceful affair. The dispossession of Aboriginal lands and the senseless massacre of many Aboriginal peoples preceded the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, and the 1946 declaration that the celebrations of *The First Landing* would become known as Australia Day. However, the Indigenous peoples offered a new title, Invasion Day or Mourning Day, in recognition of the loss of sovereign rights to their lands, families and rights to practise Indigenous cultures.

Some sixty years post invasion, the Commonwealth Electoral Act was amended to permit Indigenous peoples a vote at federal elections. The flip side of becoming more visible, however, was that the Australian Government exercised its constitutional powers to make laws for Indigenous peoples without consultation. It did so, whilst taking another decade to form the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and National Aboriginal Consultative Committee. In the lead-up to the Federal elections of 1972, the Labor government campaigned on a platform that included "land rights", "self-determination" and a new department for "Aboriginal Affairs" (Trudgen, 2010, p. 44). However, after another period of inaction, various Indigenous peoples took matters into their own hands, establishing *The Aboriginal Tent Embassy* outside Parliament House in the national capital, Canberra, forming an ongoing visible public protest to seek the recognition of Aboriginal land rights. In 1985, *Uluru*, one of the sacred lands of the Aboriginal peoples, was handed back to its traditional custodians. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody commenced in 1987 with the goal of examining the disproportionately high number of deaths of Aboriginal peoples in custody in each State and Territory between 1st January, 1980 and 31st May, 1989 (National Archives of Australia, Fact Sheet 112). In 1991, the Commonwealth Parliament passed the *Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act* and the *Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation* held its inaugural meeting in Canberra in February, 1992 (Gunstone, 2005). In June of the same year, the High Court handed down *The Mabo Decision* that recognised the special relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the lands. The Court also ruled that Australia was never *terra nullius*. The *Bringing Them Home Report* on Australia's Stolen Generations was launched in 1997 (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997), which publicly recognised the Commonwealth's act of forcing Aboriginal children from their families, the forced removal from their traditional lands which have vital cultural and spiritual significance, and the subsequent forced adoption into white families from the late 1800s to the 1960s. The damaging effects were that many children were denied contact with their Aboriginality, traumatised and abused (Silburn, et al., 2006). The *National Sorry Day* was commemorated for the first time on 26th May, 1998.

In the first year of the new millennium, *Reconciliation Australia* was established as an independent and non-profit organisation. Approximately 300,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge as part of the National Reconciliation Week. Their shared goal was a vision towards unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians (Reconciliation Australia, n.d.). However, the "influence of nationalism that encouraged the sharing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities, cultures and histories…discouraged discussions on issues such as sovereignty, a treaty and power relationships" (Gunstone, 2005, p. 2). On 13th February, 2008, the then recently elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd formally apologised to the Stolen Generation on behalf of the Australian Parliament. By the second decade of the new millennium, the

time in which we write, many Indigenous languages have died out. Aboriginal English is still used as a means of communication between speakers of different Aboriginal communities but it has no status in mainstream government, business and schooling. Standard Australian English (SAE) is the only official Australian language.

Although an abridged account, the previous paragraphs highlight two facts: the length of time taken for proactive Reconciliation agendas to begin to enter public consciousness and the relatively limited impact of the multiple reform agendas. The next section brings the discussion closer to the field of teaching and learning by overviewing the uptake of Indigenous perspectives in teacher education and teaching practice more generally.

THE RECONCILIATION AGENDA IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION AND TEACHING PRACTICE

The literature on the uptake of the Reconciliation agenda in teacher education and teaching practice is not only limited (Kanu, 2012), its focus is not on teachers of English or teachers working in the early years. A small number of significant studies home in on pre-service teachers' and practising teachers' understandings and appreciations of Indigenous perspectives. The pre-service teacher and teacher participants of these Australian-based studies are, in some ways, representative of the current cohort of teachers who are now charged with the responsibility of embedding the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* in the *AC:E*.

A couple of years after the establishment of *Reconciliation Australia,* a major study commissioned by the federal Department of Education, Science and Training and carried out by Mooney, Halse and Craven found that pre-service teachers have "covert but deeply entrenched prejudices against Aboriginal culture and people" (2003, p. 8). Such concerns were echoed in a research report prepared two years later by Craven et al., who also revealed that many pre-service teachers commented on the need "to learn more about how to teach Aboriginal culture/history" (2005, p. 54). Despite Gunstone offering that university courses "are most likely to be effective when they do not just focus on an appreciation and awareness of other cultures, but they also analyse the dominant culture and the racism and power that exists within the structures and institutions of the dominant culture" (2008, p. 105), Phillips (2011) found otherwise. In her doctoral dissertation, Phillips (2011), an Indigenous academic, reflected on eight years of teaching Indigenous studies in pre-service teacher education programs, noting that in the main, Indigenous viewpoints are poorly understood by pre-service teachers and attempts to embed Indigenous perspectives in pre-service teacher education at an Australian university hosting a large Faculty of Education from 2005-2009 were vehemently resisted.

Nakata (2003), an Indigenous academic, reported that non-Indigenous teachers also grappled with how to teach about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in mainstream classrooms, because of cultural differences between the teachers' practice and the cultural practices of the content of instruction. Tensions also surrounded what constituted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Mooney, Halse and Craven (2003) noted that some non-Indigenous teachers

found themselves in a bind, when confronted by Indigenous students who questioned their credibility to teach about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Partington (2003) claimed that even well-intentioned teachers unwittingly relied on stereotypes, Internet, media, books and journals about Indigenous histories and cultures, as they did not have sufficient knowledge of Indigenous content. Partington (2003) surmised that some non-Indigenous teachers had limited knowledge of suitable pedagogies for teaching about understandings of the intricacies of Indigenous cultures and their multifarious identities. Nakata observed some proactive teachers encountering difficulties in getting the lessons right, and in a statement that highlights the political nature of teachers' work, opined that some teachers lacked the "desire to do the right thing" (2003, p. 10). Research studies undertaken in the last few years also confirm that many non-Indigenous teachers are still developing an adequate knowledge base about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures (Harrison & Greenfield, 2011; Santoro, Reid, Crawford, & Simpson, 2011; Zurzolo, 2010).

The most recent and the largest national study on broader issues around the education of Indigenous students, *The Stronger Smarter Learning Communities Project*, indicated that the potential of embedding an Indigenous perspective in Key Learning Areas may not be realised due to inappropriate and racist approaches that had the collateral effect of "defining and positioning the sole Indigenous student in the class as an *object* of study and commentary" (Luke, et al., 2013, p. 224, emphasis in original). Moreover, Key finding Number 16 from the above named project identified "broad community support for the embedding of Indigenous knowledges in the curriculum, but Indigenous students and staff report significant problems with non-Indigenous teacher knowledge and intercultural sensitivity" (p. 120). On the basis of multiple findings of this ilk, the core reporting team cautioned that "the Australian Curriculum mandate for the embedding of Indigenous knowledges raises major issues in terms of the requisite depth of teacher knowledge of Indigenous cultures, histories, issues and languages" (p. 417).

The major issue that Luke et al. (2013) identify in the final comment of the previous paragraph warrants some unpacking. The central dimension of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* is that they encompass established forms of local knowledge and ways of knowing that have been developed through the tens of thousands of years, during which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been custodians of country. Commenting on the world view of Canada's First Nations People, Kanu explains Aboriginal perspectives in abstract terms as a process of looking for "holism or connections among parts in order to make meaning", a way of knowing that is "intra-personal, subjective, holistic, spiritual, and transformative" compared to the Western/mainstream perspective which is seen to be "fragmented, neutral or objective" (2012, p. 105). Similarly, in a comment derived from the Canadian context, Curwen-Doige likens Aboriginal perspectives to an "expression of an individual's spirituality in relationship, not an expression of an objectified system of beliefs or a religion" (2003, p. 147).

However, these definitions mask a more complex reality about mandating that non-Indigenous teachers embed *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* into the *AC:E*. As a case in point, Trudgen's (2010) first-person recount of life as a *Balanda* (non-Aboriginal) in one remote Aboriginal community in Arnhem

Land in Australia offers some insight into the challenges of coming to know and understand another person's world view. After living, working, laughing and crying with a proud and functional Aboriginal clan for more than a decade, he knows there is no definitive list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives or worldviews. Rather, a "people's world view is the product of a host of environmental and historical factors" (Trudgen, 2010, p. 102) that continually change over time and place. Trudgen's (2010) comprehensive accounts also reinforce something else of significance to this research paper, that is, the role of language in encoding knowledge of worldviews; there is often no English language equivalent to describe or translate the complex systems of clan laws and ways of living.

The next section recounts the formation of the *AC:E*, paying attention to the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories and Cultures*.

THE INAUGURAL AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH

The *AC:E* differs from other English curricula around the world, where English is taught as a second or foreign language to non-native speakers of English. In the Australian context, English is a compulsory key learning area for all Australian students. Until recently, English curricula differed across the six states and two territories of Australia. As a result of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2008), and the recommendation made by Purdie, et al. (2000) in the *Positive self-identify for indigenous students and its relationship to school outcomes* project report, it was deemed necessary for all Australian students to "understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians" (Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2008, p. 8).

The process of constructing the inaugural *AC:E* commenced with the release of the *Framing Paper* by the now-defunct National Curriculum Board (2008). The *Framing Paper* recognised that a strong foundation in English was imperative for all young Australians to develop better understandings of the interconnected nature of cultures and identities. Responses from the general public were reviewed and the *Framing Paper Consultation Report: English* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009) was published. More than 1,100 responses were received, out of which 333 responses pertain to the *English Framing Paper*. However, as reported in *The Australian* (Ferrari, 2009) newspaper, neither Indigenous leaders nor communities were consulted during the planning process, thereby marginalising Indigenous voices and viewpoints. *AC:E* Version 1.0 was approved by ACARA on 18th May, 2009 and, subsequently, minor amendments were made and *AC:E* Version 2.0 was released on 5th November, 2009. Teachers were asked to orientate themselves to the new version and commence implementation from 2012.

Rather than being core content, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* were to be embedded as a cross-curriculum priority in the discipline of English, albeit with a "strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to each of the learning areas" (ACARA, 2013, Cross-curriculum priorities, para. 2). The

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures were embedded, not just for the benefit of Indigenous Australians, but for all students to "develop an awareness and appreciation of, and respect for the literature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples" (ACARA, 2013, Ethical understanding, para. 1).

For the purposes of this research paper, three sets of data have been extracted from the *AC:E,* because of their potential alignment with the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories and Cultures*:

- **Data Excerpt A:** Two identified overarching aims of the *AC:E* which include statements about *a growing range of contexts* and *English language in all of its variations*;

- **Data Excerpt B**: Two identified general capabilities of *ethical understanding* and *intercultural understanding*;

- **Data Excerpt C:** Four identified Year 1 content descriptions of *discussing authors' techniques, performing, creating texts* and *responding to texts.*

A fourth set of data has been included for analysis, because it documents the Year 1 Achievement Standards, that is, the definitive position on what counts in terms of curriculum learning outcomes.

- **Data Excerpt D:** The Year 1 Achievement Standards, comprising the receptive modes of listening, reading and viewing, and the productive modes of speaking, writing and creating.

As a prelude to detailing the data, the next section overviews the sociological theory of Basil Bernstein and the development of an analytical framework for analysing these four data excerpts.

THEORIES OF DISCOURSE, RECONTEXTUALISATION AND KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURES

To examine the tensions between policy and practice with respect to Reconciliatory agendas embedded in the *AC:E*, we begin with Bernstein's notion of pedagogic discourse. These understandings provide the analytic tools to analyse the documents as they intersect with enactment of policy and practice in relation to reconciliation issues. Bernstein's (1990, 2000) work focuses more exclusively on the forms of discourse that are particular to pedagogic transmission and acquisition, their generating contexts and processes of change. Bernstein (1990) clarifies that pedagogic discourse is not so much a discourse, but a principle—or more specifically—a recontextualising principle for instructional and regulative discourse. Three terms require explanation: instructional discourse, regulative discourse and recontextualisation. Each will be introduced in turn.

Bernstein (1990) suggests that in the act of teaching, teachers transmit content knowledge, that is an instructional discourse (ID), as well as social and moral values, or what Bernstein (1990) calls a regulative discourse (RD). Put another way,

instructional discourse is concerned with the content knowledge of the subject discipline being taught. It relates to skills and knowledges of various kinds. In short, instructional discourse refers to the principles or rules of selection and organisation of curricula content knowledge. Bernstein (1990, p. 183) explains that the **regulative discourse** provides a "specialised order, relation, and identity" to both the instructional discourse and the social order of the classroom interactions. Put another way, the regulative discourse "creates the criteria which give rise to character, manner, conduct, posture, etc." (Bernstein, 1996, p. 48).

The relationship between these two discourses is elaborated by Bernstein as:

> the rule which embeds a discourse of competence (skills of various kinds) into a discourse of social order in such a way that the latter always dominates the former. We shall call the discourse transmitting specialised competences and their relation to each other 'instructional' discourse, and the discourse creating specialised order, relation, and identity 'regulative' discourse. (1990, p. 183)

What is constituted as the instructional and regulative discourse is always a site of struggle as multiple social groups vie for access to the power that control of the curriculum bestows. Instructional and regulative discourses that are moved from external sites to curriculum are said to be recontextualised (Bernstein, 1990) because they have to be changed and adapted for the purposes of schooling (Invison, 2010). Thus, during the process of recontextualisation, instructional and regulative discourses may not always maintain their original discursive form. Fundamental to the principle of recontextualisation is the notion of a potential discursive gap, that is, a space that provides the potential for the original instructional and regulative discourse to change, or as Dowling (1998) points out, for the original discourse to be misrepresented.

In more theoretical terms, our research focus is on the tensions between policy and practice when Reconciliatory agendas are recontextualised from a setting external to education and embedded as instructional and/or regulative discourses in English. We are not arguing that Reconciliatory agendas should not be relocated to a site of education; on the contrary, we are strong supporters of proactive and progressive Reconciliatory agendas needed to move a multicultural Australia forwards. Our research is concerned with the work of teachers and the tensions inherent in this new era of reform.

According to Bernstein (2000), instructional discourses can be structured as either horizontal or vertical discourses. Each category is defined by its structuring principles in specific contexts of use by particular groups of knowers. Content that is considered to be a horizontal discourse by one set of knowers, may be considered to be a vertical discourse by another set of knowers (see Bourne, 2003). Thus, all discourses shift and change across time and place, thereby marking them as "inherently unstable" and at times "contradictory" (Invison, 2010, p. 98).

Horizontal discourses are the forms of knowledge that are considered to be ritualistic and highly predictable in particular contexts, although they are capable of accepting "artful variations" within their well-known limits (Bernstein, 2000). Muller (2001) further clarifies that horizontal discourses are segmental, context dependent, tacit and multilayered. They are called segmental because their knowledges are classified by

"loosely organised rules of distribution" (Muller, 2001, p. 139) of "a particular view of cultural realities, or rather of a way of realising these realities" (Gamble, 2010, p. 125). Put another way, horizontal discourses are akin to everyday or mundane knowledges (Muller & Taylor, 1995) or what Bourne (2003, p. 500) calls everyday and common-sense.

In contrast, **vertical discourses** are context independent discourses that take the form of specialised languages or ways of knowing. Acquiring vertical discourses of the instructional kind involves learning principles (Invison, 2010, p. 90). Acquiring vertical discourses of the regulative kind requires students to "suppress embodied knowledge, evacuate subjectivity and deny emotions" (Invison, 2010, p. 98). Irrespective of the form of discourse being attended to, students who are inducted into a vertical discourse are inducted into a system of knowledge that they could not access alone (see Bourne, 2003). Bernstein (2000) distinguishes between two forms of vertical discourse. The first gives rise to a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the production of knowledge. The second form is coherent and explicit and has a systematically principled structure that is hierarchically organised. Bernstein (2000) labels these two forms of vertical discourse by their different knowledge structures, the former as horizontal knowledge structures and the latter as hierarchical knowledge structures. It is helpful to explain each in more detail.

Horizontal knowledge structures are more common in the humanities and social sciences, or what Vitale (2001) terms the soft sciences. Bernstein (2000) provides a detailed description of the way that horizontal knowledge structures give rise to a collection of theories that draw on their own specific language. This collection of theories is characterised by strong demarcations of discourses, users and practices. Interactions between pedagogic agents who can access the knowledge are highly restricted and controlled (Haavelsrud, 2001). This is how the power of the knowledge base can be realised. The specialised languages of horizontal knowledge structures are not translatable into other forms of knowledge because they have their own criteria for what constitutes legitimate ways of knowing and legitimate ways of representing knowing. The specialised languages of horizontal knowledge structures discipline the knowers of each knowledge structure while simultaneously excluding all others. Bernstein is quite clear on this point: "It is only access to the new languages of horizontal knowledge structures that offers new possibilities for a fresh perspective, access to new questions, a new set of connections, a new problematic and a new set of speakers" (2000, p. 162). Horizontal knowledge structures can be further identified as having either stronger or weaker rules or structuring principles. By way of example, a discourse with stronger structuring principles is explicit and endowed with a precise articulation of its concepts and procedures. Economics (Vitale, 2001) and studies in logic (Moore & Maton, 2001) are examples of horizontal knowledge structures with stronger structuring principles. Discourses with weaker structuring principles are characterised by rules with low levels of formalisation and explicit procedures, such as sociology, social anthropology (Vitale, 2001), cultural studies (Moore & Maton, 2001) and English (Invison, 2010).

In contrast, **hierarchical knowledge structures** are often found in the natural sciences and in mathematics, or what Vitale (2001) terms the hard sciences. Hierarchical knowledge structures attempt to create very general propositions and

theories to highlight underlying uniformities across a burgeoning range of apparently different phenomena (Bernstein, 2000).

The visual representation in Figure 1 is useful to the research in practical and theoretical ways. Practically, it shows that both instructional and regulative discourses have the potential to draw on horizontal discourse, horizontal knowledge structures with weak regulating principles, horizontal knowledge structures with strong regulating principles and/or hierarchical knowledge structures. Theoretically, it shows that these discourses form a continuum from the most esoteric (hierarchical knowledge structures) to the most everyday (horizontal discourse). In other words, sub-categories of vertical discourse that lie closest to horizontal discourse (i.e., horizontal knowledge structures with weak regulating principles) are most like horizontal discourses (see Gamble, 2010).
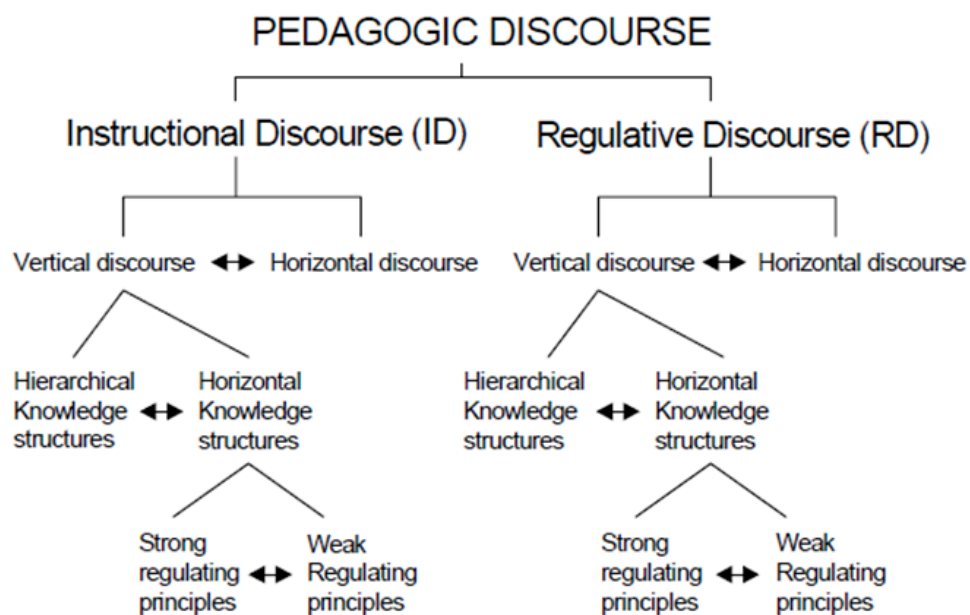

Figure 1. The structures of pedagogic discourse (Exley, 2005, p. 113)

DATA ANALYSIS

For the purposes of this paper, three data excerpts have been extracted from the *AC:E,* because of the potential to embed the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories and Cultures*. A fourth data excerpt, Year 1 Achievement Standards, has been added because it marks what counts in terms of student learning outcomes. Each data excerpt will be introduced and analysed in turn.

Data Excerpt A

The *AC:E* lists four overarching aims, two of which potentially link to the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures:*

> Ensure that students learn to listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of contexts with accuracy, fluency and purpose. (ACARA, 2013, Aims, para. 1)

> Ensure that students appreciate, enjoy and use the English language in all its variations and develop a sense of its richness and power to evoke feelings, convey information, form ideas, facilitate interaction with others, entertain, persuade and argue. (ACARA, 2013, Aims, para. 1)

The first overarching aim focuses on skills and knowledge of various kinds, in particular students learning to *listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect….with accuracy, fluency and purpose.* These instructional skills are clearly marked as belonging to the discipline of English. The potential to activate the cross-curriculum link of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories and Cultures* is in the reference to *a growing range of contexts.*

The second overarching aim focuses on students' *appreciation, enjoyment and sense* about the English language. This regulative conduct sits apart from the instructional discourse identified above as it is less about skills and knowledge of various kinds and more about a specialised order and identity for participating in the discipline of English. The potential to activate the cross-curriculum link of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* is referenced by *appreciating, enjoying and using the English language in all its variations.*

Data Excerpt B

The *AC:E* also lists seven general capabilities that "assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century": Literacy; Numeracy; Information and Communication Technology Capability; Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability; Ethical Understanding; and Intercultural Understanding. Each of these general capabilities is specified for the key learning area of English and although icons are added to some content descriptions, teachers "may find further opportunities to incorporate explicit teaching capabilities depending on their choice of activities" (ACARA, 2013). Two of the general capabilities, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding, warrant a fuller description because of their potential to support the goals of the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures. According to the *AC:E* (ACARA, 2013), the Ethical Understanding general capability is as follows:

> Students develop ethical understanding as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values, character traits and principles, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical understanding involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others. (ACARA, 2013, Ethical understanding, para. 1)

> Students develop ethical understanding as they study the issues and dilemmas present in a range of texts and explore how ethical principles affect the behaviour and judgment of characters and those involved in issues and events. Students apply the skills of reasoning, empathy and imagination, consider and make judgments about

actions and motives, and speculate on how life experiences affect and influence people's decision making and whether various positions held are reasonable. (ACARA, 2013, Ethical understanding, para. 2)

The study of English helps students to understand how language can be used to influence judgments about behaviour, speculate about consequences and influence opinions and that language can carry embedded negative and positive connotations that can be used in ways that help or hurt others. (ACARA, 2013, Ethical understanding, para. 3)

The first paragraph of the General Capability of *Ethical Understanding* is orientated to the students' character, whereas the second and third paragraphs are orientated to students' understandings of texts. Thus, the General Capability of *Ethical Understanding* is constituted by a regulative discourse (paragraph one) and an instructional discourse (paragraphs two and three). Whilst not overtly stated, the notion of a student's *strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook* and the *issues and dilemmas present in a range of texts* offer the potential to activate the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures*.

According to the *AC:E* (ACARA, 2013) the General Capability of *Intercultural Understanding* is as follows:

Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect. (ACARA, 2013, Intercultural understanding, para. 1)

Students develop intercultural understanding through the study of the English language and the ways it has been influenced by different cultural groups, languages, speakers and writers. In interpreting and analysing authors' ideas and positions in a range of texts in English and in translation to English, they learn to question stated and unstated cultural beliefs and assumptions, and issues of intercultural meaning. (ACARA, 2013, Intercultural understanding, para. 2)

Students use intercultural understanding to comprehend and create a range of texts, that present diverse cultural perspectives and to empathise with a variety of people and characters in various cultural settings. (ACARA, 2013, Intercultural understanding, para. 3)

The first paragraph of the General Capability of *Intercultural Understanding* is orientated to students' character and actions whereas the second and third paragraphs are orientated to students' understandings and creation of *a range of texts*. Thus, the General Capability of *Intercultural Understanding* is constituted by a regulative discourse (paragraph 1) and an instructional discourse (paragraphs 2 and 3). Whilst not overtly stated, the notion of students valuing others' *cultures, languages and beliefs*, coming to understand *how personal, group and national identities are shaped* and the requirement for students to engage *with diverse cultures* in ways that *cultivate mutual respect* and *empathise with a variety of people and characters in various*

cultural settings offers the potential to activate the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures*.

Data Excerpt C

The *AC:E* is structured via three interrelated strands of Language (knowing about the English language), Literature (understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature) and Literacy (expanding the repertoire of English usage) (ACARA, 2013). The *Content Descriptions*, that is, "the knowledge, understanding, skills and processes that teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn" (ACARA, 2013, Content Descriptions, para. 1), and *Content Elaborations* that illustrate the *Content Descriptions*, are organised according to these three interrelated strands. The *AC:E* is a medium-specification document, listing approximately six to seven A4 pages of *Content Descriptions* and *Content Elaborations* per year level. Some *Content Descriptions* are identified by ACARA as providing the opportunity for embedding *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* as indicated by an icon. Due to space limitations, we focus on the four Year 1 *Content Descriptions* identified by ACARA (2013) as providing opportunities to embed *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* (see Table 1). The Language strand contains no recommendations, the Literature strand contains three recommendations and the Literacy strand contains a single recommendation. Sub-strands are noted for each as they appear in the ACARA documentation.

ACE V5.0 Strand	Literature: Understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature			Literacy: Expanding the repertoire of English usage
Sub-strand	Literature and context	Examining literature	Creating literature	Texts in context
	Discuss how authors create characters using language and images	Listen to, recite and perform poems, chants, rhymes and songs, imitating and inventing sound patterns including alliteration and rhyme	Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication	Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences

Table 1. Content descriptions identified by ACARA (2013) as having the opportunity to embed *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures* in the first year of schooling.

Some *Content Descriptions* are orientated towards an instructional discourse (knowledges and skills of various kinds), evidenced through examination of *authors' techniques, performances focused on sound patterns,* and *the creation of and responding to texts*. Other *Content Descriptions* include a regulative discourse that demarcates the social order of the classroom where students are *discussing, listening, reciting, performing, recreating* and *responding to activities*. This form of regulation

stands in contrast to the internalised character traits of Data Excerpt A (for example *appreciating, enjoying and sensing)* and Data Excerpt B (for example, *building a strong personal and socially orientated ethical outlook*). Although these four content descriptions are identified by ACARA as having the potential to embed the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories and Cultures*, this potential is neither overtly nor implicitly referenced.

Data Excerpt D

The *AC:E* includes *Achievement Standards* to "indicate the quality of learning students should typically demonstrate by a particular point in their schooling" (ACARA, 2013). These year-level specific *Achievement Standards* describe the "quality of learning" that indicates a student is "well placed to commence the learning required at the next level of achievement" (ACARA, 2013, Achievement standards, para. 2). The Year 1 *Achievement Standards* are presented as two paragraphs and focus on the receptive and productive modes as outlined below:

> *Receptive modes (listening, reading and viewing)*
> By the end of Year 1, students understand the different purposes of texts. They make connections to personal experience when explaining characters and main events in short texts. They identify the language features, images and vocabulary used to describe characters and events. Students read aloud, with developing fluency and intonation, short texts with some unfamiliar vocabulary, simple and compound sentences and supportive images. When reading, they use knowledge of sounds and letters, high frequency words, sentence boundary punctuation and directionality to make meaning. They recall key ideas and recognise literal and implied meaning in texts. They listen to others when taking part in conversations, using appropriate language features. They listen for and reproduce letter patterns and letter clusters. (ACARA, 2013, Year 1 Achievement Standard, Receptive modes, para. 1 & 2)

> *Productive modes (speaking, writing and creating)*
> Students understand how characters in texts are developed and give reasons for personal preferences. They create texts that show understanding of the connection between writing, speech and images. They create short texts for a small range of purposes. They interact in pair, group and class discussions, taking turns when responding. They make short presentations of a few connected sentences on familiar and learned topics. When writing, students provide details about ideas or events. They accurately spell words with regular spelling patterns and use capital letters and full stops. They correctly form all upper and lowercase letters. (ACARA, 2013, Year 1 Achievement Standard, Productive modes, para. 1 & 2)

These Year 1 Achievement Standards constitute an overt instructional discourse of the *AC:E*. The focus on, for example, main events in short texts, language features, developing reading fluency, punctuation and spelling patterns, mark the *AC:E* as belonging in the discipline of English. The Year 1 Achievement Standards include a regulative discourse that demarcates the social order of the classroom where students explain, read aloud, listen, create, interact and take turns. This form of regulation stands in contrast to the internalised character of appreciating, enjoying and sensing (Data Excerpt A) and building a strong personal and socially orientated ethical outlook (Data Excerpt B). The Year 1 Achievement Standards do not explicitly or implicitly embed the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

In theoretical terms, the skills and knowledges of various kinds detailed in the two identified overarching aims (Data Excerpt A), the two identified General Capabilities (Data Excerpt B), the four *Content Descriptions* (Data Excerpt C) and the Year 1 *Achievement Standards* (Data Excerpt D) are all forms of instructional discourses. These instructional elements are not of a horizontal discourse as none conform to Bourne's (2003) definition of everyday and common-sense. Rather, they each display a specialised language, for example, *fluency* (Data Excerpt A), *characters* (Data Excerpt B), *alliteration* (Data Excerpt C) and *intonation* (Data Excerpt D). Terms such as these do not appear as instructional discourse for any other curriculum; the language of the *AC:E* is a discrete language focused on the discipline of English. These instructional elements are vertical discourses because students are involved in learning principles about the discipline of English. The focus on specialised criteria for the production of English knowledge with relatively low levels of formulation identifies these instructional elements as a horizontal knowledge structure with weak regulating principles, something not atypical of the discipline of English (see Invison, 2010). The specialised language of the instructional discourse serves to induct students into disciplinary content they otherwise could not access alone.

In theoretical terms, the discourses which give rise to character, manner and conduct detailed in the two identified overarching aims (Data Excerpt A), the two identified General Capabilities (Data Excerpt B), the four *Content Descriptions* (Data Excerpt C) and the Year 1 *Achievement Standards* (Data Excerpt D) are regulative discourses. The regulative discourses are not of a horizontal discourse as none conform to Bourne's (2003) definition of everyday and common-sense. They each display a specialised language, for example, *appreciate* (Data Excerpt A), *empathise* (Data Excerpt B), *recite* (Data Excerpt C) and *read aloud* (Data Excerpt D). Terms such as these do not appear as regulative discourse for any other curriculum; the language of the *AC:E* is a discrete language focused on the character, manner and conduct of being a student within the discipline of English. They are vertical discourses because students need to "suppress embodied knowledge, evacuate subjectivity and deny emotions" (Invison, 2010, p. 98). The focus on specialised modes of interrogation with relatively low levels of formulation identifies the regulative discourses as a vertical discourse with a horizontal knowledge structure with weak regulating principles. As such, the actions of the students are highly restricted. However, the payoff is that the specialised order, relation and identity of the regulative discourses serve to induct students into the character, manner and conduct of the discipline of English, an induction they could not access alone.

According to our analysis, embedding the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* in the discipline of English is more implicit than explicit in Data Excerpts A and B. Embedding the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* in the discipline of English is not visible to us in Data Excerpts C and D. This is an important point given that: (i) Data Excerpt C is constituted by the four *Content Descriptions* identified by ACARA as providing opportunity to embed the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* and (ii) Data Excerpt D details the Year 1 *Achievement Standards*, the definitive marker of what counts as discipline of English outcomes.

In the four Data Excerpts, there is nothing to suggest that the structure of knowledge about *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* has a specialised language or a specialised way of knowing. The "loosely organised rules of distribution" (Muller, 2001, p. 139) co-exist with an absence of a specialised language and specialised ways of knowing, thus rendering *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* as a horizontal discourse. Bautier's (2011) empirical research concludes that the pronounced localisation and segmentation of knowledge corresponding to horizontal discourses are often short-lived interactions and knowledge-building exercises. Positioning *Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Histories and Cultures* as mundane knowledges (Muller & Taylor, 1995) means that teachers may unwittingly transmit horizontal discourses, unaware of the chasm between horizontal and vertical discourses.

In short, such views support what Hattam and Atkinson (2006) refer to as a "liberal version of multiculturalism" (p. 695), where the focus is on learning about other cultures in an attempt to break down stereotypes and increasing tolerance towards diversity. Such views "essentialise and reify cultures…rather than analyse them as historical and political constructs open to ongoing transformations" (Hattam & Atkinson, 2006, p. 695). The outcome is that *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* are denied an overt verticality in the sanctioned curriculum, which in turn denies students access to a specialised system of Reconciliatory knowledge. Bautier asserts (2011) that students cannot recontextualise instructional and regulative discourses of a horizontal nature and "proceed to inscribe it within a vertical discourse if the linguistic characteristics and resource required to do so are not familiar to them" (p. 122). Bernstein is quite clear on this point: "It is only access to the new languages of horizontal knowledge structures that offers new possibilities for a fresh perspective, access to new questions, a new set of connections, a new problematic and a new set of speakers" (2000, p. 162).

The verticality of the instructional and regulative discourses of the discipline of English *vis-à-vis* the horizontality of the cross curriculum priority conceals an inherent ambiguity. On the one hand, the verticality of the instructional and regulative discourses of the discipline of English *vis-à-vis* the horizontality of the cross curriculum priority signals that the ideological nature of the *AC:E* is founded on a normative model of the discipline of English which privileges standard English over everything else. Thus the cultural bias of the *AC:E* is masked by its structuring principles. From this viewpoint, Western knowledge systems of the discipline of English still hold the balance of power. However, on the other hand, the power of cultural bias is not guaranteed and incontestable. Disciplines positioned as vertical discourses with horizontal knowledge structures and weak regulating principles are closest to the everyday and common-sense horizontal discourses (see Figure 1), and are more likely to be colonised by other influences. Teachers, as the recontextualising agents of the *AC:E*, are thus accorded a relative degree of power over the transmission of instructional and regulative discourses for the discipline of English and the mandate to embed the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures*. Teachers have to reconcile these policy tensions, contradictions and discordances in the fray of practice.

CONCLUSION

The finding of the preceding analysis on the recontextualisation of the Reconciliatory agenda into the *AC:E* highlights a statement made by Crowley and Matthews almost a decade ago: "Working in and with reconciliation is to work between something that is as robust as it is fragile" (2006, p. 275). In talking about pedagogy and moral order, Muller and Hoadley assert that teachers can only respond proactively to tensions between policy and practice "if they themselves embody the rule, if they enact it with moral authority" (2010, p. 166). In the *The Stronger Smarter Learning Communities Project,* Luke et al. referred to reconciliation agendas as the "new pressures and responsibilities on teachers to work in extremely sensitive, knowledgeable and critical ways" (2013, p. 108). These assertions bring to the fore the function of the teacher in marking the boundaries of the instructional and regulative discourses of the discipline of English and the constitution of the instructional and regulative discourses of the recontextualised Reconciliatory agenda; by definition the students have not yet internalised the legitimate text. Thus to achieve these goals, it is vital that teachers are committed to and passionate about embedding the cross-curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures,* and to improve upon and rectify areas where the cross-curriculum priority might be skewed or structured as somewhat optional. In commenting on teachers' professional standards and embedding *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* in the Australian Curriculum, Davis and Grose (2008) implore teachers caught up in the tensions between policy and practice to not only seek support through professional development but also to develop a substantive knowledge base through being involved in their local Aboriginal and Islander communities.

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