



Australian International
Education Conference

18 – 21 October 2016
Melbourne Convention
and Exhibition Centre

Connectivity – at the heart of international education

Indigenous Connectivity:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students' Journeys to Canada
for Study Abroad

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WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



ENHANCING PROGRAMS TO INTEGRATE TERTIARY OUTBOUND MOBILITY EXPERIENCES

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ABOUT THIS PROJECT

PROJECT INFORMATION

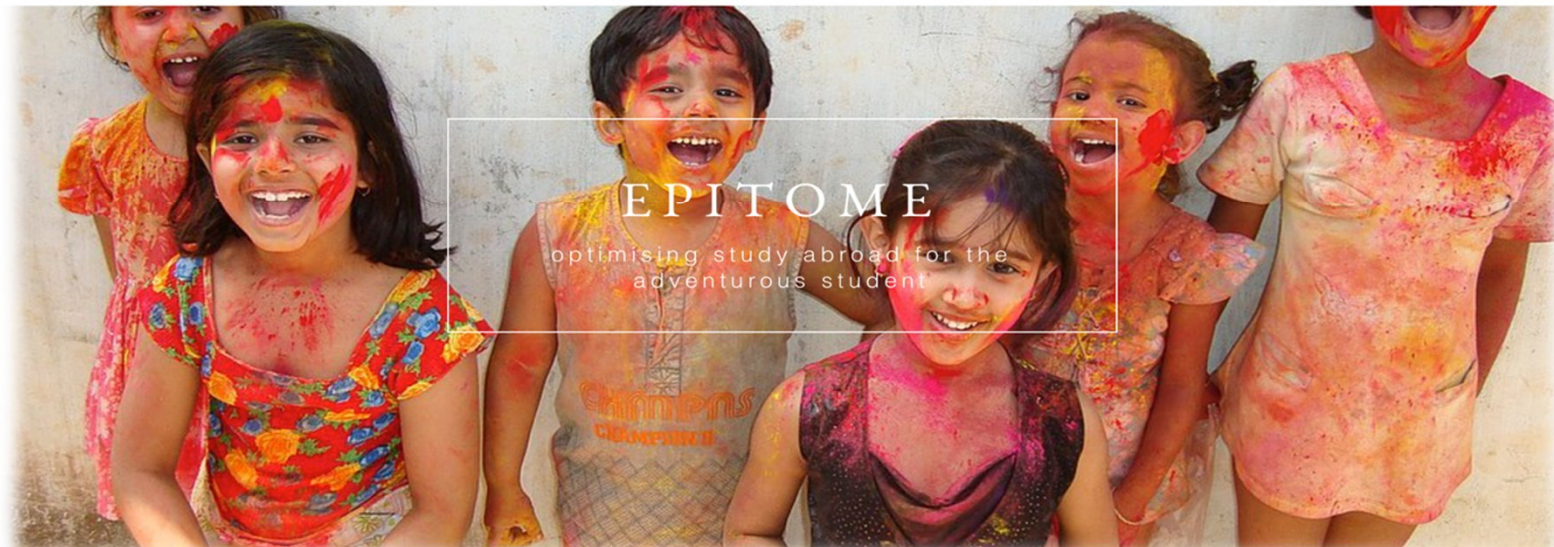
LEARNING & TEACHING RESOURCES

SURVEY

BLOG ENTRIES

FACEBOOK

MEDIA



The Research Team



Quick Scan of the Room

What are some of your overseas / cross-cultural experiences as a staff or student?

Examples:

- Study Abroad
- Short-Term Placement
- Professional Experience
- Study Tours
- Volunteering
- Service-Learning





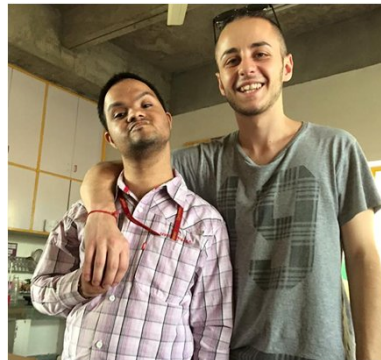
EPITOME Project

Case Study: Indigenous Students' Journeys



Background

Across the Australian university landscape, educators are striving to **internationalise** the curriculum and develop students as culturally competent **‘global citizens.’**



The desire to design, implement and embed **Outbound Mobility Programs (OMPs)** into the curriculum to create a more globally aware Australian workforce for the future has inspired our research.





The materials co-created by students and staff will assist in leveraging students' positive experiences to enhance recruitment, preparation and re-entry phases of OMPs and amplify their learning outcomes.



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Abroad

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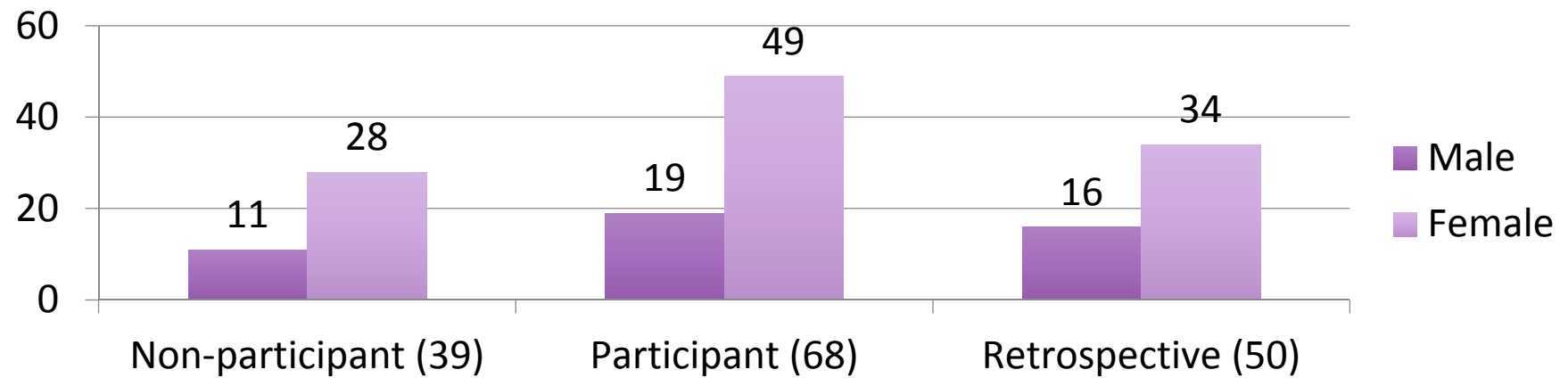
More

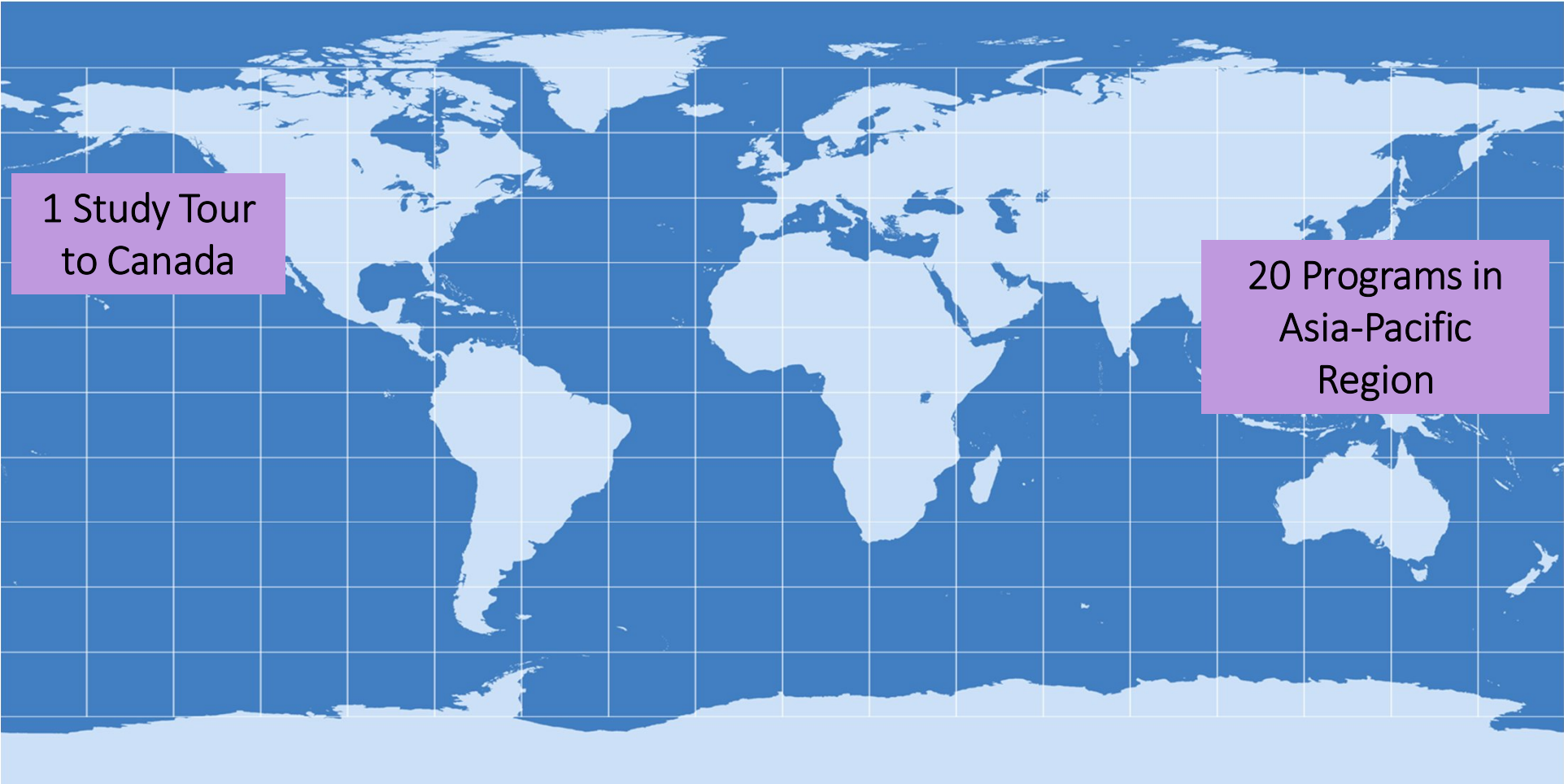
mixed methods research design:
online surveys, case studies, interviews, photo-
elicitation, and social media.



Overview of Findings

Participants (n = 157)

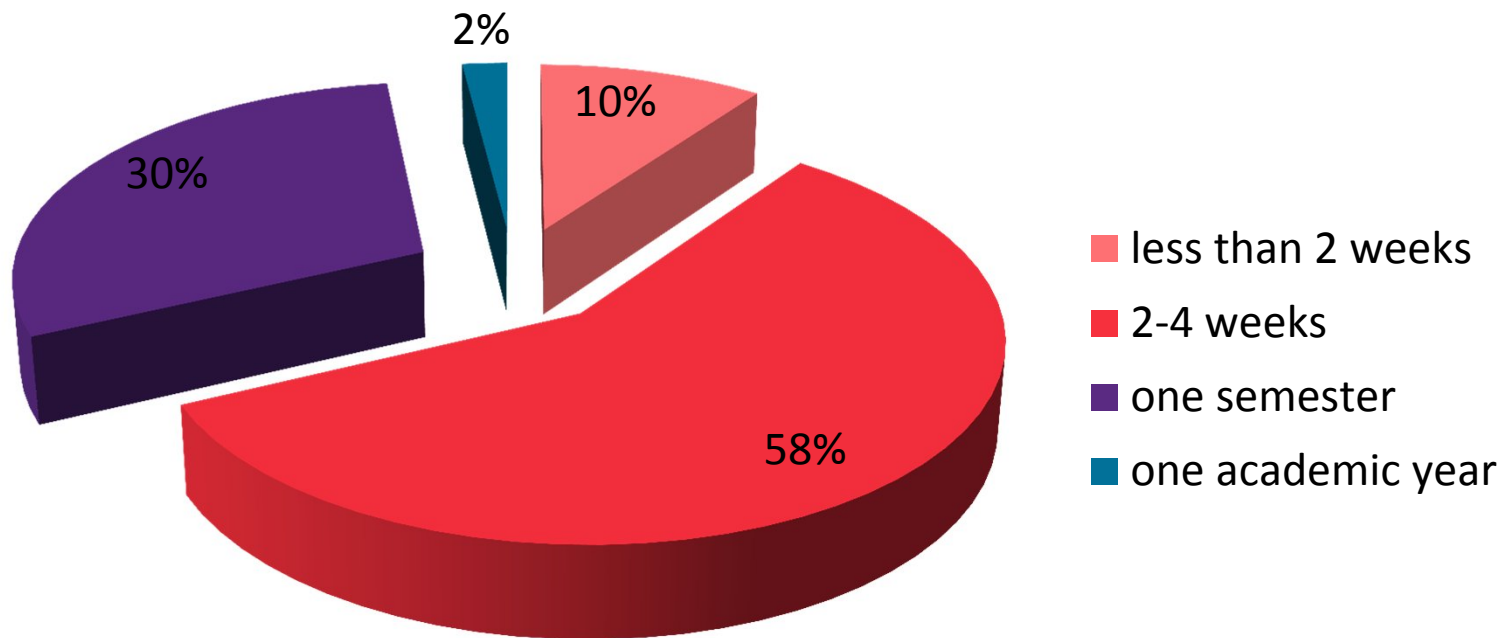


A world map with a light blue background and a white grid overlay. The map shows the continents of North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. Two purple rectangular boxes are overlaid on the map: one on the left side over North America and one on the right side over the Asia-Pacific region.

1 Study Tour
to Canada

20 Programs in
Asia-Pacific
Region

Majority of mobility experiences are 2 – 4 weeks



KEY FINDINGS

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ALMOST
1/4 STUDENTS
WHO PARTICIPATED
HAD ALREADY LIVED
OVERSEAS
FOR 6 MONTHS
OR MORE...



5 THINGS NON-PARTICIPANTS THINK OF OMEs

The problem is not that they think study abroad is unappealing or unimportant. It's the conflicting considerations in their lives that stop them from going.



OVER 80% OF PARTICIPANTS-TO-BE
REPORTED NO TRAINING FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION.



FUN



**LIFE CHANGING
EXPERIENCE**



**MORE
ATTRACTIVE
TO EMPLOYERS**



**INCREASE
MY CONFIDENCE**



**UNIVERSITIES
OFFER LIMITED
SUPPORT**

5 **CONSIDERATIONS** STUDENTS HAVE WHEN THINKING ABOUT WHETHER TO GO:



FINANCE



TIME



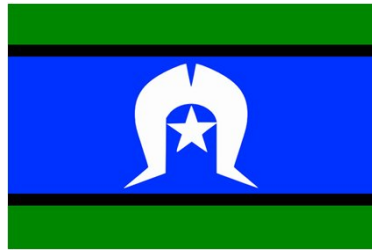
**OTHER
OVERSEAS
TRAVEL**



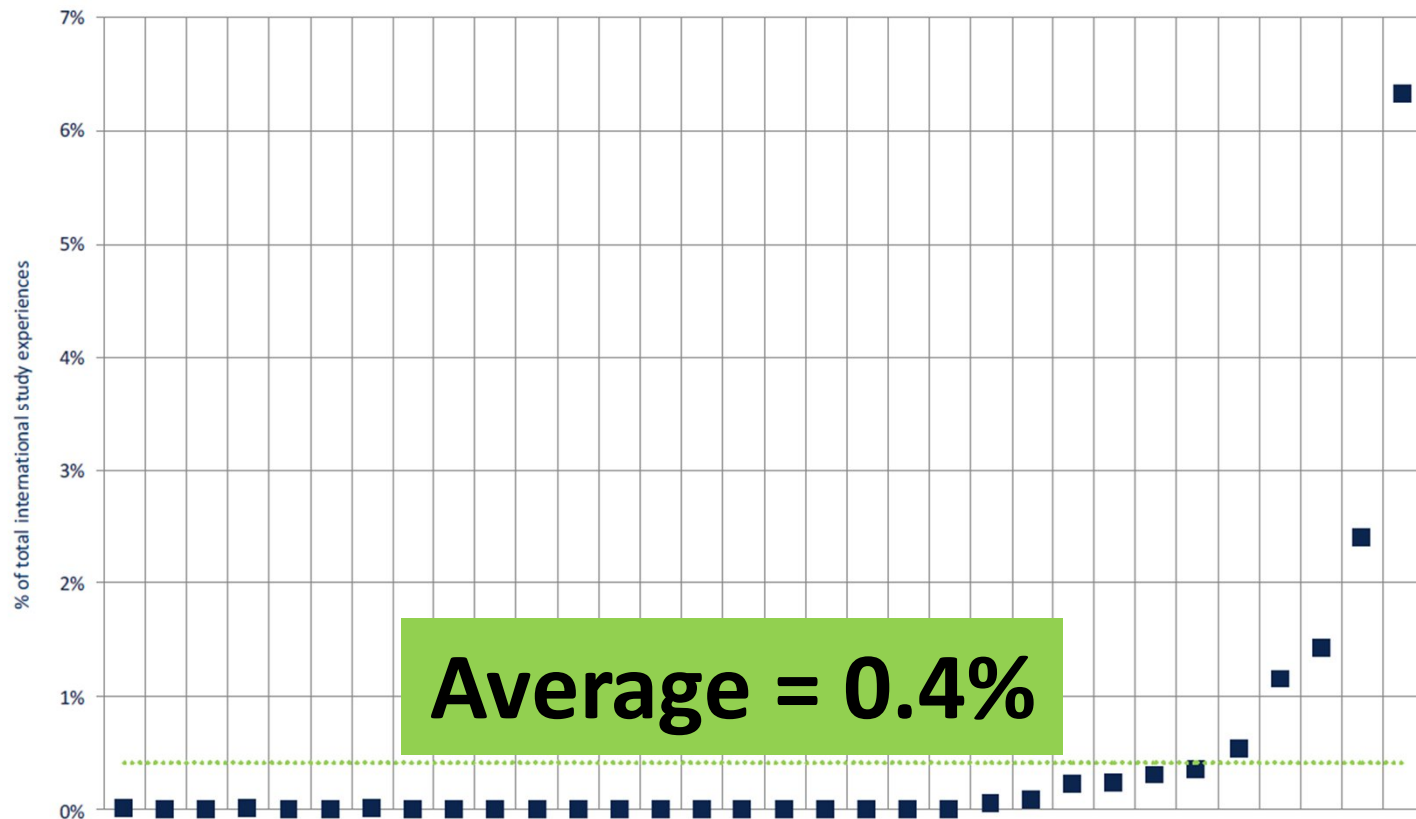
**DESTINATION
UNAPPEALING**



**WORK
COMMITMENTS**



Indigenous Student International Study Experiences



Learning
Abroad 2015
(AUIDF, 2016)

Where are we now?

While universities acknowledge that **access** and **equity** are key concerns for studying abroad, “...only five institutions Australia-wide advertise specific access/equity grants/scholarships to support learning abroad programs, and **only two of these are aimed at Indigenous students**” (Harrison & Potts, 2016).

The Research Gap

There is a significant focus on **internationalisation** and **global citizenship**; however,

“the virtues of education by travelling are well known to popular culture yet there is a **seemingly obvious gap** in its university scholarship – especially in the fields and disciplines of **Indigenous education** and **Indigenous studies**” (Revell, Milroy, & Thomas, forthcoming).

Indigenous Connectivity:

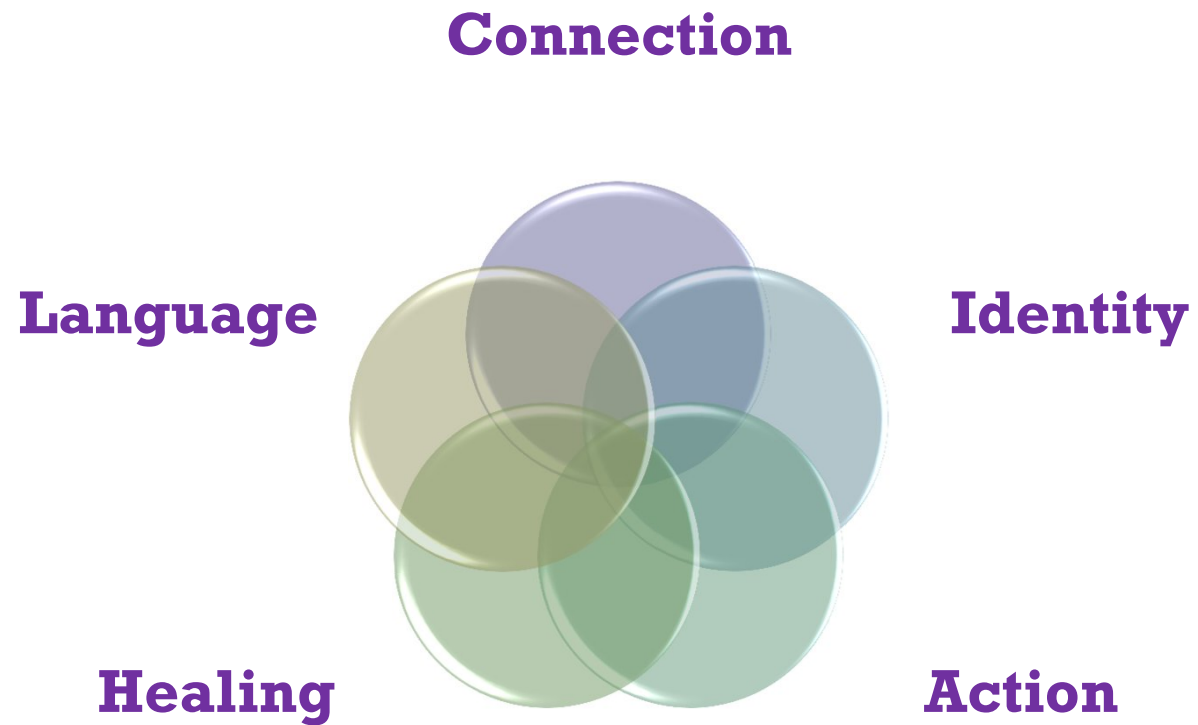
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students' Journeys to Canada for Study Abroad



First Peoples House, University of Victoria, Canada

- **Exploring the experiences of eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-service teachers on a short-term study tour to the University of Victoria.**
- **Retrospective narratives through focus group, interviews, and photo-elicitation.**

Interconnected Themes:





“To get over there and **feel** the ground and **touch** and **smell**, and **see** all the things that are happening in a country so far away from us, in Canada, and having that perspective of that **connection to culture** is very important.”

Connection: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander & First Nations Cultures

- Becoming part of the landscape and place.
- A sense of commonality (e.g. dreamtime stories, cultural practices, and community).
- Shared experiences of colonisation.



Language: Renewal and Revitalisation



Everyday use.

Indigenous curriculum, language, and methodologies.

Indigenous Service Centre, Tribal School, and First Peoples House.

Identity: Self-reflection beyond the classroom...

“I’ve never thought about my Indigenous culture. I never really grew up with my Indigenous culture...

So going over there and learning from their traditions and learning all the issues which really are similar to our Indigenous issues in Australia, you come back and it made me realise I really **need to learn a lot more about my past generations** and more about my family and our family tree.

It’s something that I don’t think you could learn from a classroom.”

Healing: Cultural connectedness

That's what I'm perceiving what healing is, that it's happiness. You feel connected, it's spiritual, it's meaning, it's all connected.



From One Song Line To Another

Lynne Thomas



Elder in Residence at University of Victoria, Aunt May Sam
Rochelle Koster



***“I found a
passion for who I
am, and for my
culture.”***

Donna Collier





Discussion

In a world of globalisation, Indigenous people are speaking with greater confidence and **collective solidarity** about justice, sovereignty and **cultural renewal** (Revell et al., forthcoming; Sissons, 2005).

“Indigenous Australians are creating space within tertiary institutions as part of the broader project of **cultural renaissance**” (Dudgeon & Fielder, 2006).



Practical Implications

Student Voice: The importance of listening to and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enhance their experiences of tertiary study (Barney, 2016).

Cultural Understanding: Creating positive learning environments and culturally safe spaces.

Support: Pursuing funding (NCP; Endeavour Mobility Grants); and building university support and peer networks.

References

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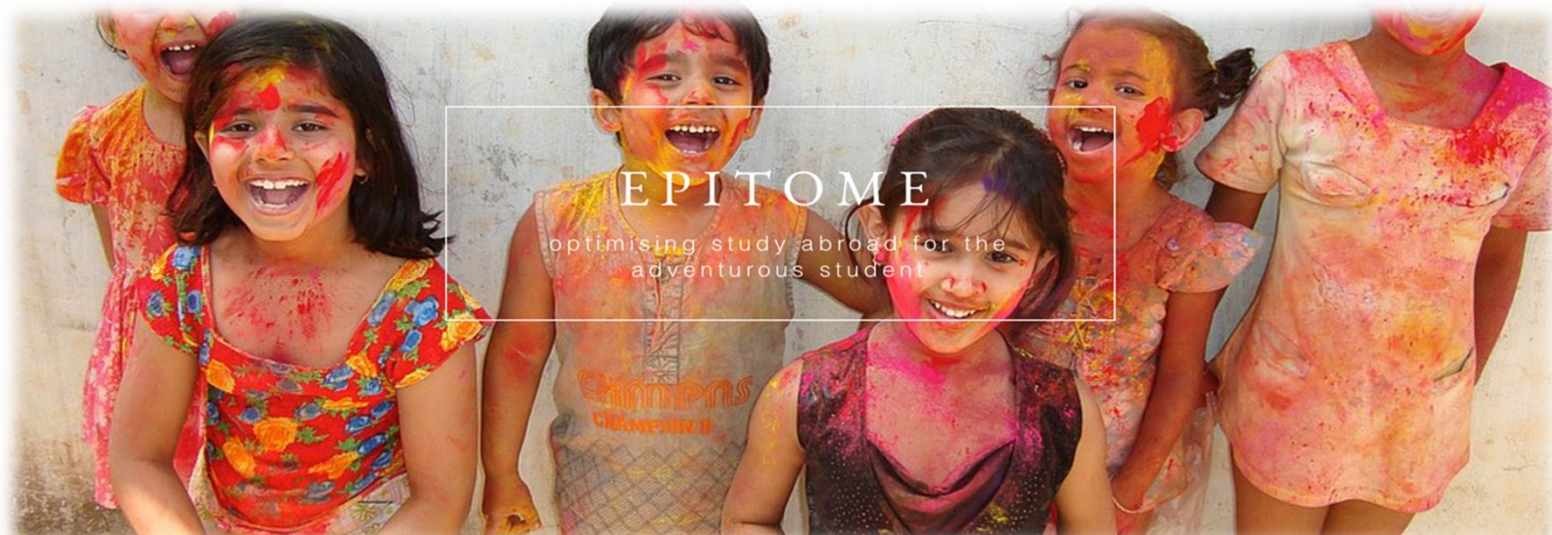
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