CHAPTER 7  CURRICULUM DESIGN

THE MAJOR DILEMMA OF SCHOOLING in remote Aboriginal societies is profound. Aboriginal parents have a short answer to the dilemma: their children need to learn the three Rs and to grow up Aboriginal. But they do not say how this can be done, and it is perhaps not their job to know how. That is a curriculum design task for trained Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators. So far I have argued that the solution to the dilemma lies in not bringing its ‘horns’ together, but treating them as two separate issues—constructing two separate culture domains in each school, and letting whatever integration that is beneficial or unavoidable take place outside school. As Kleinfield (1984, 183) notes in relation to North American Indian groups there should not be: ‘“either/or” choices between a minority culture and Western culture, rather than a “both/and” approach that encourages children to achieve competency both in a local and a national culture’.

BASIC COMPONENTS OF A TWO-WAY CURRICULUM

Practical curriculum measures in both culture domains are discussed under the same basic curriculum headings for each domain. A curriculum can be defined in many ways. A simple definition for the purposes of this chapter is that a curriculum includes all the learning experiences a student is exposed to by a school. It includes what is to be taught, how it is taught, by whom it is taught, where it is taught, why it is taught and when teachers, parents and students can know that learning has been accomplished.

The ‘what’ of a curriculum includes the content or facts and the control of those processes which may be an integral part of the knowledge (where the medium is the message), or those procedures which must be controlled in order for the knowledge to be applied in real life outside school. The ‘how’ of a curriculum includes all the teaching methodologies and contexts which must be employed to allow students to learn most effectively. The ‘who’, ‘where’ and ‘why’ influence the curriculum in both overt and covert ways and are especially powerful in terms of the hidden curriculum. Finally, evaluation and assessment are necessary, but their purposes should be to provide learners and teachers and parents with a sense of accomplishment, and to help teachers plan effectively. Evaluation should locate the learning difficulties in the school context and teaching methodology rather than in the students.

THE ABORIGINAL CULTURE DOMAIN CURRICULUM

The Aboriginal domain of the school has a credibility and tradition to establish. Because Western schooling is such a highly-developed machine the danger is that
the Aboriginal domain could come to be seen as a soft option by contrast to the Western domain. Christie (1984a) found in his research at Milingimbi that Aboriginal students liked and expected hard work; repetitive and cognitively undemanding work perhaps, but hard work nevertheless. They did not respect those teachers who screened too many videos or organised other entertaining activities. To establish norms for the Aboriginal domain, teachers and others need to theorise strongly (or indoctrinate if you will), about the value and status of the Aboriginal domain of the school. Furthermore, the curriculum needs to have substance to substantiate and ‘read back’ the theorising. The substance of the Aboriginal domain will mostly depend upon on-site curriculum development and tapping existing human resources.

**WHAT SHOULD THE ABORIGINAL CURRICULUM INCLUDE?** The Aboriginal curriculum might include: local traditional and contact history; storytelling (both as content and as a cultural identity process); music or song poetry and song history and geography where appropriate to the age and age-grade status of the students (which Ellis 1985, shows is a major educational form in itself); that portion of artistic knowledge legitimate for children to observe or participate in; participation in ceremonies which the Aboriginal school council sees to be significant (for example, children would always attend funeral ceremonies for appropriate relations); visits to traditional land for exposure to all the environmental knowledge, survival skills and history for which the topography would act as a mnemonic device; and of course, oral language development and literacy where the latter is possible and wanted. Both oral language development and literacy could be accomplished through planned informal methodologies in tune with Aboriginal ways of doing things. It would be possible to have the Aboriginal domain as an entirely oral domain, that is, reject literacy as an un-Aboriginal thing; but to me that is a less adaptive approach and would make the Aboriginal domain harder to sustain. However, for some groups a completely oral approach may be the only option for a number of practical reasons, mainly connected with language group size.

The dangers of trivialisation or ‘thingification’ will be lessened if Aboriginal adults authenticate the activities by choosing the time and place for them, and by their own attitudes towards those activities. The Aboriginal tendency not to draw a distinction between practice and the real thing (see Harris 1980a, 88–95) but rather to make practice sessions satisfying ends in themselves should help the learners. However, adults will still need to guard against activities which are so decontextualised that they amount to something quite unnatural to Aboriginal culture.
Aspects of the Aboriginal domain will be adaptive and part of the social change process, such as planned oral language learning or language enrichment in school, and reading and writing. Developing writing in Aboriginal languages which is faithful to Aboriginal preferred styles and purposes is a current priority. These should involve unique functions which are in complementary distribution with the functions of English written literature. Because of the shortage of time available to Aboriginal groups to develop such writing styles and functions, compared with the more than a hundred years such groups as the Vai and Kutchin took to achieve that end, the assistance of outside expertise might be necessary.

HOW SHOULD THE ABORIGINAL CURRICULUM BE TAUGHT? If informal learning is central to most remote Aboriginal learning, and planning is central to making schools work efficiently, then the logical approach to the Aboriginal domain of a two-way school would be a planned informal approach (see Graham 1984). However, that is from a non-Aboriginal outsider’s point of view, using Western logic, and if Aborigines are to do it their way it may turn out to be something quite unexpected. It could be appropriate in a planned informal approach to allow informal Aboriginal ways and contexts of learning to be maintained but with behind-the-scenes organisation. Learning primarily would be through the informal means of observation, imitation, listening, personal trial and error, participation, repetition of real ‘wholes’ (such as being exposed to entire stories rather than to parts of them), successive approximations to the efficient end product, and responding to significant relationships (see Harris 1980a).

The planned aspect of these learnings would not alter their style, but ensure that the experiences happened and happened often enough to allow effective learning. Unplanned informal learning can be effective but very hit-and-miss in the modern context. In more traditional times the subsistence economy and ceremonial activities governed the frequency of informal learning experiences. To the extent that social life is still governed by kinship and hunting trips and ceremonies still take place, informal learning is still effective, especially in outstations. However, in larger settlements where children can spend up to twenty-five hours per week in Western culture classrooms, and where Western work patterns, television, movies and card playing can reduce time for learning Aboriginal matters, conscious planning for and creation of Aboriginal learning situations by Aboriginal staff and other adults is a necessary adaptation to contemporary life.

All those traditional activities which regularly took place for informal enjoyment, such as string figure games, singing camp songs, storytelling and elaborate ways of cooking can still be continued today without any danger of
trivialisation, provided of course that both adults and children are interested in them and provided they are in the right relationship to each other. Perhaps there lie the biggest dangers to the viability of Aboriginal domain learning activities, and the biggest challenges to the ingenuity and leadership of those interested in using the school as one of the means of culture maintenance.¹

**WHO SHOULD TEACH THE ABORIGINAL CURRICULUM?** A wide range of local Aboriginal adults of two categories should teach in the Aboriginal culture domain. One category will be trained Aboriginal teachers, some of whom hopefully are very highly-trained in terms of contemporary education theory and method, and theory relating to biculturalism, and who are doing their own theorising about these issues. The other category would be local adults who are recognised experts in various aspects of Aboriginal knowledge and skill who will also theorise about their young people's learning. Both of these categories of teachers would need to be teaching groups of children in appropriate relationship to them for such an exercise, but they can quickly work that out. To legitimise their place on the school staff, and help give the Aboriginal domain equal status with the Western domain, an appropriate pay structure would need to be worked out for the key people.

**WHERE SHOULD THE ABORIGINAL CURRICULUM BE TAUGHT?** The Aboriginal curriculum should be taught in appropriate contexts in terms of content and the authority of the teacher, and where that person is comfortable. Reading, writing and oral language development can take place in a classroom in a manner very similar to conventional schools. Then there would be two types of activity outside the classroom.² One would be unplanned participation at various community activities and ceremonies, such as mortuary ceremonies for those children in appropriate relationships. Aboriginal children often attend these ceremonies now, so making them part of the school curriculum would not lose more time to other forms of education. The other type of activity would be planned excursions, such as visiting old people for storytelling in the camp or visiting traditional land to absorb historical, religious and environmental knowledge and attitudes. These excursions would vary from something like two hours to a week or more.

**WHEN SHOULD THE ABORIGINAL CURRICULUM BE TAUGHT?** Learning in the Aboriginal culture domain would take place partly according to set timetabling in a manner very similar to conventional schools, and partly at unforseeable times such as mortuary and initiation ceremonies. However, it must be emphasised that if Aborigines are to run this domain of the school their way, what happens in terms of use of time and attitudes to time might be quite surprising to Western observers.
This is to be expected if non-Aborigines are to pay more than lip service to the notion of Aboriginal control. In any case, shortage of school time is as much a qualitative matter as a quantitative matter.

WHY SHOULD THE ABORIGINAL CURRICULUM BE TAUGHT AT SCHOOL? There are a number of reasons why this part of the curriculum should be taught under the auspices of the school: to reproduce desired aspects of cultural life not being sufficiently reproduced by day-to-day living; to allow the school to perform those culture adaptation roles desired by parents, and to aid in the identity and status building and indoctrination in the first culture that is necessary for culture survival and for the confidence to deal with the dominant culture and its schooling requirements.

WHAT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES SHOULD BE FOLLOWED? Assessment procedures would be of two kinds until Aboriginal adults have developed further ones. The out of school activities would be assessed simply in terms of the degree of parent approval of what was happening, and this would be ascertained by the school council. Activities inside the classroom could be assessed in the same way as they would be in the Western culture domain; that is, mainly by keeping folders containing dated samples of children’s work and teachers’ evaluation comments. However, non-Aboriginal observers must accept that what happens in this culture domain will very often be group work, and/or not subject to Western criteria of what is important in schools.

THE YIRRKALA EXAMPLE OF ABORIGINAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Yirrkala provides a good example of what can happen in terms of curriculum development in the early years in an Aboriginal-controlled school. Local Yolngu people do not talk about this work as being in the Aboriginal domain, but it looks like that to an outsider. Recent Aboriginal domain curriculum development at Yirrkala began with Helen Watson (then from Deakin University) in joint research with Yolngu people on the Gamma maths project (see Watson 1987, 1988).³

The Ganma workshops became Garma workshops, the term garma referring to ceremonies that can be publicly seen as opposed to Madayin or ceremonies which are held in secret. The Yolngu curriculum development workshops then developed from Garma in to Galtha workshops (1989a–e). Galtha is a term referring to the first act of a ceremony, the piercing of the ground to start it off. Part of the galtha process, with the singing already started, is the negotiations which decide who will fill all the roles in the ceremony. The significance of this term to Yolngu curriculum development is the idea that
curriculum cannot be obtained from a book but through negotiation with the older people.

During 1989 there were five or six Galtha workshops, two of which were held in homeland centres. The Biranybirany workshop concentrated on the symbols of cycad palm food. The Yothu Yindi Yolngu rock band of recent international fame performed contemporary Aboriginal rock music at this workshop, including songs which contained cycad symbols. At the Wandawuy homeland workshop, the focus was on clan connections with land and how other clans are interconnected by having what have been likened to small 'embassies' of land within other clan boundaries. At the Wandawuy Galtha workshop a graduation ceremony for remote area teachers was held in Yolngu style. No Balanda (white people) were allowed at either homeland centre workshop, but they were informed later about them. The Primary Galtha Rom (Law) workshop focused on the meanings of the names of children and elders, learning totemic names, the special connections between names, land and water, and the study of family trees (Christie, personal communication 1989; see also Yirrkala Community School Literature Production Centre 1989f).

Some examples of other important Yolngu terms which were the focus of Yolngu curriculum workshops, and which reveal the study priorities of the people, have been djalkirri, yirralka and yalu. Djalkirri literally means 'foot' or 'footprint'; it symbolises the connection between people and land and is translated as 'foundation'. Some of the main djalkirri foundations of Yolngu curriculum are that learning and knowledge come through wangathkurru, or knowing our land; dhawukurru, or knowing our history and stories; dhulanggurru, or understanding our totemic designs; gurrutukurru, or knowing our people, our clans and ancestors; and manikaykurru, or knowing our clan songs. Yirralka refers to the homeland and yalu which literally means 'nest', refers to the kinship system (Christie, personal communication 1989; see Marika, Ngurrwutthin and White 1989, 16–18).

THE WESTERN CULTURE DOMAIN CURRICULUM

Most Aboriginal parents and teachers, and non-Aboriginal teachers, would agree with Kleinfeld's statement (1984, 184) that it is important to teach minority children the national culture, as thoroughly as it is taught to white children, but in practice many non-Aboriginal teachers have been inhibited in the task because of concern that they were undermining Aboriginal culture. It is one of the strengths of the two-way school design that, provided the Aboriginal domain operates properly and provided Western skills are taught as roles which can be adopted and not as ends in themselves, teachers in the Western culture domain should be able to teach
to their full ability without inhibition. The substance of the Western domain of a two-way school will be discussed under the same basic headings as the Aboriginal domain.

**WHAT SHOULD THE WESTERN CURRICULUM INCLUDE?** Primarily the Western curriculum would include the three Rs, which in practice means reading, writing and Western maths. It is possible that Aboriginal parents would prefer that social studies, or social and cultural education as it is variously known, and science not be taught. That is their prerogative, but it should be explained to them that to teach English language and culture sufficiently well for language to be used in socially appropriate ways at socially appropriate times, a good deal of the content of a social studies curriculum will need to be learned as an inseparable part of the language learning process.

The question of science or environmental science might need to be discussed with Aboriginal parents on a number of levels. On one level the scientific method is likely to be seen as especially dangerous to Aboriginal world view. On another level pragmatic strategy might suggest that Aboriginal students, at least in the short-term, are unlikely to seek careers in science, so in view of the fact that the available school time can be well used in learning the three Rs and in building up sophistication in English through them, science is not a priority. However, while it may not be a priority as a school subject, as an example of Western thinking it might well be. Also, the urgent need of greater knowledge about disease and preventative health among Aborigines living in remote settlements, as well as their expressed interest in technical trade skills (for example, Strelley wants to train its own electricians and motor mechanics) makes the avoidance of all Western science almost impossible.

In contrast to the necessarily school-based or local-based curriculum development of the Aboriginal domain, the Western domain could take much more advantage of system-based sources of curriculum guidance. Of course all good teachers develop a lot of their own curriculum guides as they prepare their daily lessons, but there is no special virtue, and in fact much time to be wasted, in rejecting the curriculum guides available from State Departments of Education. If it is felt that local curriculum development is necessary, at least some time can be saved by modifying a centrally available curriculum document rather than rediscovering the entire wheel. Good curriculum development is much more difficult than most people realise (see Skilbeck 1984, for an analysis of principles of school-based curriculum development).

**HOW SHOULD THE WESTERN CURRICULUM BE TAUGHT?** So much can be written about teaching methodology, and in my experience so much that has been written
has not been helpful to teachers in Aboriginal schools, that I have decided to limit
the discussion to what has proven to be useful in bilingual schools in the Northern
Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. There has been much
interchange between teachers in the Northern Territory and those in other States,
and some modification of each other’s curriculum materials. It is natural, of course,
that two-way school curriculum development should build on the experience of
bilingual schools. So, following this admittedly parochial but useful experience
of teaching method, I will list seven key ingredients of an effective teaching
methodology for English language, culture and content in the remote Aboriginal
context:

1. Make use of the teaching triangle. This is shorthand for the view that for new
concepts or ideas to be learned in a way that provides a contextual basis for
understanding, a good standard procedure is for teachers and students to adopt
a three-stage cycle: share an experience, that is, do something together; talk about
it; then record it in some way. This is a practical way of moving from the known
to the unknown (see Graham 1984).

2. Know the strengths and weaknesses of Aboriginal learning styles for the
Western domain classroom. The informal learning strategies of learning by doing,
looking, repetition, participation, trial and error, by successive approximations
of the end product, and learning in appropriate relationship to particular people,
predominate in remote Aboriginal society (see Harris 1980a). These learning
strategies do have important applications to school learning tasks, such as learning
to read and write, but care must be taken both to help Aboriginal children become
more comfortable with learning through verbal means and hypothetical problem
solving, and to avoid the trap of using strategies such as Aboriginal tolerance of
repetition merely as child minding devices (see Harris 1984).

3. Know the importance of establishing a context of situation and context of
culture for learning in a second language. For too long teachers have tried to teach
English to Aboriginal children without realising fully enough that language is
representative of a culture and that language can neither be learned well, nor
used appropriately, without an extensive knowledge of the culture in which it
is imbedded. Thus for Aboriginal children, learning English must be an exercise
in learning English culture (see Halliday and Hasan 1985; Gray 1983, 1986).

4. Adopt a sound theory and practice of second language learning. The model
I recommend is that of concentrated language encounters, designed by Brian Gray
at the Traeger Park Primary School in Alice Springs and recorded in curriculum
guide form by Beth Graham and others. This approach tries to formalise and
concentrate for school use the features of the first language learning situation between mother and child at home. It involves children taking many of the initiatives for their learning and learning the cultural content of situations in which language is used, and teachers modelling language for children. All this is integrated through small group dramas where the parts are learned by rote and where there is scope for creativity, and through activities such as detailed group discussion and negotiation of written stories. The approach draws on and integrates other well-tried teaching activities such as storytelling, theme development, role playing, language experience, process writing, shared book experience and group 'cloze' exercises (see Gray 1983, 1986; Northern Territory Department of Education 1985c).

5. Encourage academically purposeful learning. It has been discussed several times earlier in this book that many Aboriginal children see school learning as a ritual, where mere presence in school over time gains the learner a new status as a schooled person. Christie (1984a) has shown that teachers need to develop a three-stage cycle of academically purposeful learning if Aboriginal children are to be successful school learners in the Western domain. The three aspects of the cycle are that learners must have a consciously clear goal of what is to be learned; they must believe that they have individual control over the learning task in the sense that they are responsible for their own learning and believe they can do it; and they must be able to accept and use teacher feedback positively.

6. Develop curriculum genres or teacher-pupil interaction patterns which promote student cognitive work. It has been observed by a number of researchers such as Malcolm (1980), Young (1983) and F Christie (1985) that much teacher-pupil interaction in classrooms involves either regulatory talk or at least involves teachers doing most of the talking and most of the cognitive work. Teachers need to become more conscious of this and to learn strategies for fostering more productive dialogue strategies (see Graham 1986). Some of these strategies are implied in points 1, 4 and 5 above.

7. Control the hidden curriculum (see Coombs, Brandl and Snowdon 1983). The hidden values curriculum has been discussed in several places earlier in this book. The main point to remember here is that teachers need to make it clear over time that what the children are learning about Western culture they are learning because it is needed for surviving in the Western domain, not because it is intrinsically better or more valuable.

The 'how' of the Western domain involves what could be called a giant role play of that domain, and the points above suggest ways Aboriginal students might become skilled players in it. Apart from the encouragement that two-way schooling offers in terms of the possibility of students learning successfully to high
levels in both culture domains without one body of knowledge undermining the other, two warnings come to mind. As Paulston’s discussion in Chapter 3 suggested, there will be some deeply held Aboriginal values which are in conflict with important values in the Western culture and which Aboriginal people will not be able even to temporarily adopt in a role play sense. That just has to be accepted, and does not negate the general viability of living and learning in two separate culture domains. The second warning, as stated earlier, is an intuition that it is not advisable for even highly bicultural teachers to try to teach in both culture domains of a school at the same time (same day, week or year) because the teaching methodologies of each domain are so very different and might take some time to tune into.

**WHO SHOULD TEACH THE WESTERN CURRICULUM?** Fully-qualified teachers, preferably with proven experience in teaching, should teach the Western curriculum. If they are non-Aboriginal teachers they should have special training in Aboriginal culture awareness and in teaching in Aboriginal classrooms. Fully-trained Aboriginal teachers increasingly will become the main teachers in this domain and could contribute a great deal to it, but for Western culture teaching it is preferable in the short-term that not all staff in the Western domain be Aboriginal people.

**WHERE SHOULD THE WESTERN CURRICULUM BE TAUGHT?** The Western curriculum should be taught mainly in classrooms, and classrooms which are decorated and organised along Western lines and where Western manners and rules of punctuality prevail. Every aid should be used to create a culture context to promote learning of Western roles. Excursions to towns and cities should also form part of this curriculum.

**WHEN SHOULD THE WESTERN CURRICULUM BE TAUGHT?** One view of the ‘when’ is attendance and I believe that a school council should require parents to ‘contract’ that they will send their children to school at least 80 per cent of the time allocated to the Western domain. This is important for three reasons. Firstly, irregular attendance is one of the main causes of teacher discouragement and low expectations. Secondly, even the most able Aboriginal students put themselves at a disadvantage in comparison with urban and majority culture children simply by not attending school regularly—much of the time European Australian children do better simply because they attend more often. Of course useful time in school is a qualitative matter as much as a quantitative one, but the latter is necessary before the former can be a reality. Finally, regular attendance at school is a cultural
matter—part of the Western culture context is to attend school and this is part of role learning. It should be said here that improving attendance should not be just a matter of coercion; if teachers are effective, children are likely to attend more often. However, a school needs to try to establish norms of behaviour. Also, when a school is Aboriginal-controlled, it is logical that attendance will increase.

Obviously two-way schooling is an enormous timetabling challenge. However, many timetabling problems in schools arise when teachers are not sufficiently ruthless about priorities—they agonise about how to add important activities without being bold enough to scrap the less useful ones. Admittedly timetabling will not be at all easy, and great flexibility will be necessary to respond to the need, sometimes unpredictably, for students to go on lengthy Aboriginal excursions or to attend funerals. A units-of-work system might be useful, where teachers can keep track of the amount of time spent in particular topics in each class. Or, when one class or group or clan is away on a week-long Aboriginal domain excursion, another class may spend its entire time for that week in the Western domain.

**WHY SHOULD THE WESTERN CURRICULUM BE TAUGHT?** There are a number of reasons why Aboriginal students living in an Aboriginal settlement should attend a section of a school which is deliberately structured as a microcosm of Western culture. These are: to prepare for high school and further Western education if that is what the parents wish; and to learn how to adopt roles appropriate to Western culture so that Aboriginal people living in remote settlements may enjoy their times in the Western world more—or at least find those times less stressful and confusing and more effective. An additional reason is to reduce dependency on non-Aboriginal brokers and mediators.

**WHAT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES SHOULD BE FOLLOWED?** Assessment procedures in the Western culture domain should be of three types. Firstly, older students who appear to be destined for urban high schools should be taught how to handle the kinds of tests they are likely to face there (see Harris and Harris 1988). Teachers should pragmatically provide training in becoming ‘test-wise’ whether or not they approve of all the kinds of tests involved. This is a Western cultural matter. Not all aspects of Western culture are reasonable or rational and Aboriginal students need to learn the good with the bad if they are to be saved later embarrassment. Secondly, the school needs to make time to explain to parents how their children are performing and to try to explain what further steps are necessary for the children to achieve better results. Thirdly, assessment procedures are needed which are designed to improve the schooling of children and let new teachers know what
they can do. Student shyness or unwillingness to display their skills often means that new teachers may underestimate their abilities. As Cummins (1986) reminds us, assessment should be ‘advocacy-oriented’, demonstrating what students can do rather than what they cannot; and if there is a problem, locating that problem somewhere other than in the child’s capacity for learning.

Two very basic suggestions for a positive approach to assessment that are both respectable and reasonably simple to implement are offered here. One is a filing cabinet organised with folders for each student, marked with their name and age. Then tests (which preferably are also good teaching devices), need to be collected about every half year. After a year or two an evaluator or visiting adviser in conjunction with teachers can order the pages in each folder consecutively and easily assess the progress each student is making. Teacher comments are also very useful. The main kinds of tests and teaching activities that can be stored in this way would include very simple devices such as a page of sums for the number strand of maths, and assessments of other aspects of maths; ‘cloze’ tests to gauge English reading comprehension; and student attempts to rewrite an English story read to them orally. These are merely an indication of the types of measures that need to be taken. The second suggestion is to periodically keep dated samples of each student’s work, such as artwork and writing.

It is important in the context of assessment for teachers not to try to build in variety, or do too much. Some testing programs founder on too much initial enthusiasm. The procedures need to be streamlined so that administering the tests doesn’t become too big a job. Also, none of these tests should be dumped on the students. Most Aboriginal students are not ‘test-wise’, and the procedures beat them as much as the content. For this reason and because most of these procedures can be made into good teaching experiences, students need to be given several experiences of the procedure before a sample of their performance goes into their assessment file.

**CONCLUSION**

The aim of this chapter has been to give a concrete idea of the content and processes which could make up each culture domain in a two-way Aboriginal school. These are largely presented from a non-Aboriginal point of view. As Aboriginal people gain more control of their children's schooling, they will structure these schools in unique ways. Aboriginal teachers in particular will become more involved in curriculum development in both domains.

The purposes of each domain are quite specialised. The main purposes of the Western domain are to teach English language and culture, school-type learning and survival skills, and sufficient orthodox school subjects to allow entry...
to high schools for those who desire it. Hopefully this teaching can be implemented in a way that makes it clear to students that their learning is directed towards survival and even prosperity and enjoyment in the Western domain, and that the Western domain is not better—just inescapable and even useful. To that end the Western domain might be thought of as a giant role-play and not a source of primary identity.

The Aboriginal domain has different priorities—to strengthen Aboriginal identity and to maintain distinctively Aboriginal ways of doing, feeling, learning and believing, and to 'hold' Aboriginal knowledge. This domain does not represent an attempt to freeze Aboriginal culture in the past. All live cultures are changing and adapting, but it is crucial that those undergoing such change have a large part in directing that change.

While Aboriginal education has existed for 40,000 years, the Aboriginal domain of a school is a great challenge because no-one has done well at this yet—it is new and uncharted ground. In that sense we are only now at the beginnings of Aboriginal education through schooling. The Aboriginal domain will need time to develop and latitude to make mistakes and false starts. Many of the activities in this domain might, or will preferably, take place away from school but they will need to be under the auspices of the school as one avenue of Aboriginal control over the formation of their children's lives and as a statement to European Australians that Aborigines want to exercise the right to do things in alternative ways, even through major contemporary institutions such as schools.

The Aboriginal domain harbours dangers as well as challenges: dangers of trivialising Aboriginal culture; of not providing enough substantial and interesting things to do for young people; of government administrators seeing it as a soft option; or as an opportunity to save funds under the guise of leaving all Aboriginal matters entirely to the private expression of Aboriginal people. Ultimately, if the Aboriginal domain truly has an independent Aboriginal stamp on it, it will be unpredictable to non-Aboriginal observers and very different from what anyone might now imagine. Since 1987 the mood expressed by Aboriginal people about schooling at various conferences and meetings around the country is that they want to keep their languages and they want control of their schools. European Australian society needs to cooperate in making these things possible without trying to push the buttons from behind the scenes. Ultimately Aboriginal initiatives, creative energy and sheer determination will be the decisive factors in achieving Aboriginal goals for schooling. In the following chapter some of the guiding principles which I personally see as both helpful and fundamental for Westerners in forming professional working relationships with Aboriginal people involved in both schooling and tertiary training are discussed.
NOTES

1. It is worth remembering here that schools in any culture are adaptive mechanisms for survival. This is very often economic survival—in order to be truly self-determining, minority culture groups need to be economically self-reliant. There is no reason why the Aboriginal domain of the school could not become involved in economic enterprises such as bark and sand painting and batik and silk screen fabric designs, derived from traditional Aboriginal art forms. The apprenticeship of young people in traditional crafts should be considered a legitimate activity for the Aboriginal domain of a two-way school.

2. We should not be surprised if Aboriginal people wish to have some influence over the design of buildings they occupy; for example in planning them with structural features which facilitate the maintenance of avoidance relationships, an example being no narrow hallways in which people in avoidance relationship must pass.

3. Gamma was a metaphor about salt and fresh water mixing together when they meet at a river mouth, which relates to the nature of Yolngu bicultural curriculum development. The metaphor itself does not appear to endorse domain separation.