Linking Worlds: Strengthening the leadership capacity of Indigenous educational leaders in remote education settings

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STRENGTHENING THE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY OF
INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN REMOTE
EDUCATION SETTINGS

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Brandon says: This picture describes the knowledge of the Bininj people before they go on to the western world. The old man is not just pointing but giving his words ‘kunmayali’, which we call knowledge. The grandson will use all the skills given to him by his granddad. No matter what happens he just has to focus on his studying and never look back. We must always support our children for their further education because it is very important. They are the ones who are our future.

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Research Report
August 2009
An Australian Research Council Linkage Project
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Executive Summary

Within the current national focus on improved Indigenous student outcomes, the role and significance of Indigenous leadership in education is integral. In response to the lack of information about Indigenous educational leadership in the Australian context, discussions between the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE), the Flagship for Creative and Authentic Leadership at Australian Catholic University (ACU National), along with the Collaborating Organisations (COs) – Catholic Education Office, Darwin (CEO NT), Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (NT DET) and Principals Australia – led to the development of a proposed project that explores the nature of Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings. The four year project entitled, Linking Worlds: Strengthening the leadership capacity of Indigenous educational leaders in remote education settings - was funded by the Australian Research Council and included provision for a Post Doctoral Fellow (APDI) and a Doctoral student (APAI).

While there is a vast body of knowledge and research on educational leadership per se, there has been limited research into Indigenous educational leadership, particularly in remote Indigenous communities. The Linking Worlds project contributes to expanding knowledge in this important area, and is of significant interest to academics and educators and all those involved with, and who have a stake in Indigenous leadership, and Indigenous education, especially in remote communities.

This research project investigated Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings and aimed to frame the unique ‘worlds’ within which Indigenous educational leaders operate, and to determine the skills, knowledges and attributes required to be an effective leader. This understanding is needed to strengthen the leadership capacity of educational leaders as they negotiate their roles in modern societies and cultures. It is anticipated that the outcomes of Linking Worlds will lead to an improved understanding of the relationships between systems, schools and remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Research Questions (See p. 7)
The overarching research question was:

a. What are the unique ‘worlds’ within which Indigenous educational leaders operate, and what skills, knowledges and attributes are required to be an effective leader?

Sub-questions arising from the main question were:

i. What factors influence and impact on educational leadership in remote Aboriginal communities, and how might this understanding assist in strengthening the leadership capacity of educational leaders?
ii. How does the system define effective Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings?
iii. What expectations do educational systems and remote Indigenous communities have of Aboriginal educational leaders in terms of their role and responsibilities?

Literature Review (See p. 7)
The literature review identified abundant material with respect to educational leadership in general. However, literature that deals specifically with educational leadership in remote Indigenous community contexts remains scarce. Prior to Linking Worlds project, only two studies (Kamara, 2009; Nolen, 1998), have dealt specifically with educational leadership in remote Australian Aboriginal communities.

1 Formerly the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training.
2 Formerly Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council.
The conceptual framework of this qualitative study included the exploration of a range of interrelated issues – educational, cultural, managerial, and administrative - in the sphere of Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings. The study explored how a range of stakeholders, including the major employers of Indigenous teachers – NT DET, and CEO NT – as well as the main Indigenous teacher education institution – BIITE - defined effective Indigenous educational leadership in these settings. The study also investigated the expectations that education systems and remote Indigenous communities have of Aboriginal educational leaders in terms of their role and responsibilities.

Research Processes and Data Analysis (See p. 22)
The data collected through this project included a number of rich sources for determining the nature of educational leadership in remote Indigenous contexts. A total of four categories of data were collected involving over 100 individual participants from a wide variety of locations and functions within both Catholic Education and Department of Education and Training. Data included:

- interviews with experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous school leaders (15);
- Indigenous lead stories (9);
- visual metaphors (27) representing educational leadership from Indigenous (16), non-Indigenous (9) and mixed group (2) perspectives, annotated with their verbal explanations; and,
- focus group discussions with Collaborating Organisations (3).

Data analysis identified recurring themes and issues across all data sources from which conclusions about participants’ views of educational leadership in remote community school contexts have been drawn. Given the number and range of data sources, two inductive analytical approaches were adopted. The first (‘text rendering approach’) ensured that the research team became deeply familiar with each transcript by reading them thoroughly to identify the main themes discussed. The second (‘Leximancer’ software) enabled a more ‘objective’ search of the data to identify and quantify the strength of concepts and themes and to identify any that may have been overlooked in the first approach.

Findings (See p. 31)
- Participants in this project offer views of leadership unfamiliar to most educators. Historically these schools were set up to be similar to schools across Australia, but they are not like these schools. Inevitably a school in a remote Indigenous community is influenced and shaped by local cultures, location and the personnel who work there. Everyone working or participating in the school must engage with a mainstream education system whilst also engaging with a local Indigenous cultural reality. Each school context is different, and skills, knowledge and operational models need to respond to these differing social and cultural dynamics. Therefore, the leadership discussed by participants focused on a form of intercultural leadership suited to these conditions. Significantly, participants stressed that this kind of leadership was required by both the Western, non-Indigenous educators as well as the Indigenous educators.

- Linking Worlds participants defined effective leadership as being strong in identity, resilient and confident and, most importantly, as being able to make the intercultural connections necessary for educating children and advocating for others. Effective leadership requires interaction and interdependence through team work to share the work load and is not an individual effort. The mainstream educational system - the bureaucracy - was spoken of by participants most often in terms of its over emphasis on management and administration in defining effective
leadership. This emphasis was misplaced according to the dominant perceptions of those who work within the intercultural worlds of remote Indigenous schools.

- **Linking Worlds** has determined the skills, knowledges and attributes required for effective leadership by describing them as *intercultural educational capabilities*. These capabilities help leaders to shape and engage in an intercultural ‘space’. Working effectively in this space involves working with the educational system, which determines the general directions for ‘the space’, and with those who are members of it, including administrators, teachers, students, staff and community members.

- **Linking Worlds** has found that the current categories describing leadership capabilities - personal, relational, professional, and organisational - are not sufficient in that they fail to fully embrace interculturalism. They ignore, to a certain degree, the significance of culture on leadership development and continue to privilege a Western perspective.

- **Linking Worlds** suggests that Indigenous education should be viewed as an intercultural system that functions well when there is respect and appreciation for different cultures and when they are allowed to flourish with creativity and dignity. What these intercultural capabilities are is a matter of debate, discussion and further research although *Linking Worlds* has begun to define them.

- Factors that influence and impact on educational leadership in remote Indigenous communities, are embodied in the *relational themes* identified through data analysis and include many arenas of work where difference features. Remote schools are contexts in which clashes of understanding are common. Language and cultural differences often impede mutual understanding and the ability of people to take action. Cultural views around the meanings and purposes of the country, land and education are frequently at odds with each other. The learning that has to occur on both sides is significant. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff need ongoing support from within and beyond the community in order to develop as leaders.

- Finally, this research has confirmed that the role of an Indigenous education leader is multi-faceted requiring multi-dimensional responsibilities. On the one hand, Indigenous education leaders are expected to be cognisant of educational, management and administration policies required in the day-to-day running of a school, while on the other, to be the source of all things Indigenous. Indigenous communities see their educational leaders as being strong advocates for the children and the community in terms of education, but also as a key source of support to community members with other issues and challenges. Indigenous educational leaders are expected to be a balanced and upstanding member of the community and to take on numerous cultural roles and responsibilities. They are required to listen, and learn from others, to be humble, to remember who they are and be strong in their identity.

*Implications of findings (See p. 37)*

Taking all these responses into account, the *Linking Worlds* report considers the implications for future leadership and practice for educational leadership in remote Indigenous communities.

*An Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework* has been constructed for future leadership scholars and practitioners to use to guide their work and on which policy formation, professional development activities and tertiary leadership courses for practising and aspiring leaders can be based. The *Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework* is informed by two principles...
developed as a result of the research. When considering ways forward, these principles can inform leadership practice and leadership development. These are for education systems to:

a. engage in a changed perspective on Indigenous education that encompasses an intercultural understanding of Indigenous education; and,

b. expand and enrich educational leaders’ intercultural capabilities.

The *Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework* emphasises the need for non-Indigenous staff to learn to be intercultural teachers and leaders as well as the needs of the system to work interculturally for both Indigenous and Western outcomes. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people must be willing to step into this intercultural world (the intercultural space) where new leadership practices can be learned and are required.

The *Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework* consists of re-defined intercultural spheres of influence and intercultural capabilities required for understanding and working within an intercultural world. Both the spheres of influence and the capabilities are not considered as fixed but should be viewed as organic and flexible and to be added to through further research and discussion.

The *Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework (IELF)*

The *Linking Worlds* report concludes with examples of ways that individuals and systems of education might engage with and use the IELF (see Appendix A, p.52). The primary way requires a changed perspective that encompasses an intercultural understanding of Indigenous education. An understanding of the intercultural leadership capabilities and framework will assist in policy development, professional development activities and designs for courses at tertiary level to be offered at the partner institutes engaged in the Linking Worlds project.
Overview of the Project

Within the current national focus on improved Indigenous student outcomes, the role and significance of Indigenous leadership in education is integral. For example, research undertaken by Frigo et al. (2004, p. 59) into literacy and numeracy for Indigenous students found “how well the school supported the learning of Indigenous students was in the strength of its leadership.” In response to the lack of information about educational leadership in the remote Indigenous community context, discussions between the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE), the Flagship for Creative and Authentic Leadership at Australian Catholic University (ACU), along with the Collaborating Organisations (COs) – Catholic Education Office, Darwin (CEO NT), Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (NT DET)³ and Principals Australia⁴ – led to the development of a proposed project that explored the nature of Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings.

The CEO NT is committed to the development of Indigenous educational leadership, through both policy and operational practices. There are approximately one thousand students enrolled in five Indigenous Catholic schools in the NT. All five schools are developing Indigenous leadership structures. Four of the five schools have Indigenous Principals/Principals-in-training/co-Principals and each school has an Indigenous leadership team, made up of locally identified Indigenous staff.

NT DET believes that promoting good governance and educational leadership in remote settings is crucial to improved education outcomes for Indigenous students. There are over nine thousand students enrolled in a range of education institutions which include Indigenous community schools and Homeland Centre Schools. NT DET is committed to high quality teaching and effective school leadership and recognises the important role of educational leaders as partnership builders and Indigenous people and communities. NT DET recognises that Indigenous educational leaders are key links in building successful partnerships with parents and communities in remote settings, where student outcomes most need to be improved. NT DET’s Corporate Plan supports school based management that enables school communities to closely examine their identified needs and programs to meet local needs.

Principals Australia, as the peak body of four Australia-wide Principals’ Associations, is regarded as a significant national voice on the professional development of Principals. Principals Australia’s role is to ensure that Australian Principals have knowledge of and access to high quality, appropriate professional development activities, regardless of the type, size, location or affiliation of their school. Principals Australia strives to be viewed as a dynamic, proactive organization, having a profound and positive impact upon the professionalism and continuous improvement of Australian principals. Principals Australia endorses the view that Indigenous education is of the highest priority and is dedicated to achieving reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through education and action. Principals Australia is committed to creating a challenging and supportive national framework for schools to undertake locally designed initiatives.

Both BIITE and ACU have significant Indigenous enrolment in higher education courses and are relatively new higher education institutions within Australia. Batchelor Institute is a specialist, dual sector tertiary education provider targeting the education and training needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with an Indigenous student body comprising approximately 3,020 students (BIITE, 2008). ACU offers five courses specifically for Indigenous students: a Diploma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, a Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies), a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) (Indigenous Studies) an Associate Degree in Business Administration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies), and more recently a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education

³ Formerly the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training.
⁴ Formerly Australian Principal Associations Professional Development Council.
(Indigenous Studies) all of which are delivered in external and part-time mode. Both BIITE and ACU are well placed in terms of teaching and learning in Indigenous Higher Education, and more recently in collaborating on research around teaching and learning issues. This collaboration has led to the Linking Worlds project. Linking Worlds was managed through ACU’s Flagship for Creative & Authentic Leadership which is one of ACU’s three major areas of research strength and provides research, scholarship policy advice and leadership for the wider community.

Each of the contributors to Linking Worlds, with their varied backgrounds and wide experience in many of the aspects of Indigenous education, entered into the project as an exercise in research partnership. Together with the Research Team, the COs set out as tertiary educators and education industry providers, to explore the nature of educational leadership in remote Indigenous settings. The process was designed to identify and explore ways of linking and sharing the knowledge and experience for the benefit of the members of these settings. Fitzgerald (2003, p.10) makes the point that ‘Indigenous leaders face the dilemma of double consciousness as they struggle to interpret, negotiate and survive in two distinct-cultural worlds’ and expresses a need to formulate ‘Indigenous and non-western theories of educational leadership that are grounded in research’. Similarly, this applies to Indigenous education leadership frameworks which also need to be grounded in research. Each organisation engaged in the project was conscious of this need and had a high level of expectation, of willingness and of sensitivity to contribute, according to their needs and interests, for the benefit of the project.

Each participant organisation entered the research process with a number of expectations. For the research partners this was identified as being an opportunity to explore the nature of Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings. For CEO NT, expectations were around planning and developing professional development programs more closely targeted to the needs of Indigenous bodies; assisting to codify and refine CEO NT leadership training programs, processes of negotiation with communities and support programs for Indigenous school leaders; and, defining pathways into longer term future, for example, succession planning. CEO NT also expected to strengthen the link with ACU and BIITE for recognised leadership training which acknowledges the unique characteristics of leadership in remote settings for Indigenous staff.

NT DET expectations centred on promoting good governance and educational leadership to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students; and, further developing a culture of reflective practice, community engagement and succession management. For Principals Australia, the focus was on ensuring that Australian Principals have knowledge of and access to high quality appropriate professional development activities; providing valuable information to support extension of leadership capacities of Indigenous educators; and, achieving reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through education and action. Principals Australia also anticipated that Linking Worlds would complement and strengthen their initiatives, such as the Dare To Lead program, through strengthening the capacity of educational leaders to lead in Indigenous education, providing practical and useful support and by establishing, nurturing and working in partnerships of all kinds, at all levels.

When the Linking Worlds project commenced in late 2005, it was anticipated that it would provide significant insights into the unique relationship between schools, the bureaucracies that administer them, and remote Indigenous communities. In addition, it was envisaged that the research product would be a practice-based educational leadership framework informed by principles and practices that shape effective Indigenous educational leaders.
Research Problem and Question
While there is a vast body of knowledge and research on educational leadership per se, there has been limited research into Indigenous educational leadership, particularly in remote Indigenous communities. The Linking Worlds project contributes to expanding knowledge in this important area, and is of significant interest to academics and educators and all those involved – and have a stake - in Indigenous leadership, and Indigenous education, especially in remote communities.

This research project investigated educational leadership in remote Indigenous settings and aimed to frame the unique 'worlds' within which Indigenous educational leaders operate, and to determine the skills, knowledges and attributes required to be an effective leader. Therefore, the overarching research question was:

a. What are the unique 'worlds' within which Indigenous educational leaders operate, and what skills, knowledges and attributes are required to be an effective leader?

Sub-questions arising from the main question were:

i. What factors influence and impact on educational leadership in remote Aboriginal communities, and how might this understanding assist in strengthening the leadership capacity of educational leaders?

ii. How does the system define effective Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings?

iii. What expectations do educational systems and remote Indigenous communities have of Aboriginal educational leaders in terms of their role and responsibilities?

Leadership Literature
Leadership literature could fill a small library but within this library one would be hard pressed to locate a book, let alone articles on Indigenous educational leadership, especially one that focuses on leadership in the context of remote Indigenous communities. So, this literature review will move from broad topics such as definitions of leadership, and leadership theories and styles to a narrower field, namely educational leadership in remote Indigenous contexts and intercultural leadership.

Leadership theories
For the purpose of this literature review, leadership theories refer to how leadership works, while comment on leadership styles focuses on general approaches to leadership. Firstly, leadership theories are described using a number of categories. These are trait theories, behavioural theories, process theories and values theories. For each leadership theory, there are associated leadership styles.

- The trait category holds the view that leaders are born with or have charisma or specific traits, abilities, and skills (Stogdill, 1974).
- The behavioural view of leadership is that leadership capability can be learned, rather than being inherent (Merton, 1957).
- The situational category sees leadership as a matter of situational demands and the emergence of a leader as a result of time, place, and circumstance (Yukl, 1989).
- The process view of leadership is that it is a process of dynamic interaction among people, and is essentially dissipative (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990).
- The values category believes that leadership has a moral dimension with a focus on, and a commitment to ethics, purpose, values and beliefs (Starrat, 2004; Duignan, 2006).
Within this latter category authentic leadership is “knowledge based, values informed, and skilfully executed” and requires “professionally effective, ethically sound, and consciously reflective practices in educational administration” (Begley 2001, p 353). Authentic leadership “acknowledges and accommodates in an integrative way the legitimate needs of individuals, groups, organisations, communities and cultures” (Begley 2001, p.354). Although there appears to be ‘no unitary concept of transformational leadership’, there are a number of accepted generalisations and key concepts including the role of leadership in fostering “capacity development and higher levels of commitment“ to the project’s goals” (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

Leadership and schools

Sergiovanni (1992) believes that when schools become true communities, teachers become more committed and self-managing which frees principals from the burden of trying to control people. He asks the question: should schools be understood as formal organisations or as communities, and argues for the latter. Sergiovanni (1992, p. 41) believes that communities are defined by their centres, which “provide norms that guide behaviour and give meaning to school community life” and, in doing so, “answer questions like: what is this school about? What is our image of our learners? How do we work together as colleagues?”

In a later work, Sergiovanni (2002, p. 33) states that the common feature with all leadership theories is the emphasis on “connecting people to each other and to their work”. In order for the educational leader to do this effectively, they must master seven basic competences:

The management of attention is the ability to focus others on values, ideas, goals, and purposes that bring people together and that provides a rationale, a source of authority for what goes on in the school... the management of meaning is the ability to connect teachers, parents, and students to the school in such a way that they find their lives useful, sensible, and valued ... the management of trust is the ability to be viewed as credible, legitimate, and honest ... the management of self is the ability of 'heads' to know who they are, what they believe, and why they do the things they do ... the management of the paradox is the ability to bring together ideas that seem to be at odds with each other ... the management of effectiveness is the ability to focus on the development of capacity in a school that allows it to improve performance over time ... the management of commitment involves moving leadership away from bureaucratic and personal factors towards cognitive factors – towards ideas (Sergiovanni, 2002, pp. 51-54).

Watkins (1989) believes that the leadership literature focuses heavily on the functional view of leadership which he believes to be “fairly descriptive, simplistic and naïve” (p.11). He calls for a critical approach, which would focus “on the power dimensions that underlie the process of reality construction and which give force to the human agency of people in organisations” (p.26). Watkins (1989) argues that leadership is best understood in terms of power and that “too often what is in reality a power relationship is obscured by the label of leadership”. In his argument, he uses Etzioni's (1961) typology of power:

Normative power relates to the ability to allot and manipulate symbolic rewards, especially in areas which carry esteem and prestige ... remunerative power is based on the ability of the organisation to hand out rewards or prized resources to particular people ... coercive power depends on fear of the application or threat of application to sanctions (p. 21).

A critical approach would view leadership as a processual dialectical relationship, which “implies that there is not one preordained or designated leader within the organisation, but at any time any one member of the organisation can come to the forefront” (Watkins, 1989, p. p.28). The role of the leader becomes that of “a facilitator who is responsible for a process rather than outcomes” and is “relocated from the apex of the period to the centre of the
school community “(p. 28). This ‘centring’ is consistent with Sergiovanni’s view of the school as a community.

School-based management

The history of remote Aboriginal community schools highlights the enormous changes that have occurred in a relatively short space of time, in some cases, only over 50 years. One major change has been the way in which schools are expected to be led, managed and operated, and where decisions that were once made in central and regional offices are now “the province of their communities” Cranston (2002, p.2). School-based management models of operation have meant changing roles and responsibilities for educational leaders. Cranston (2002, p. 5) believes that “while schools exhibit their own unique characteristics as organizations, the skills and capacities required of their leaders, the principals, are increasingly becoming similar to those more generically conceptualised”. Table 1 (Cranston, 2002, p. 5) lists these enhanced skills and capacities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enhanced Skills And Capacities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Generally, various aspects of strategic leadership - people, school, educational</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Generally, various aspects of strategic management - facilities, budgeting, staffing, accountability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Leading, visioning, cultural change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge of state, national and international educational developments.</td>
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<td>• Knowledge of wider organisational change and development issues beyond education sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Capacity to make meaning for others of these developments (educational and otherwise).</td>
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<td>• Capacity to manage and lead through uncertainty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interpersonal, people skills - communication, collaboration, consultation, negotiation, persuasion, conflict management.</td>
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<td>• Capacity to empower and delegate effectively, leading to multiple leadership roles.</td>
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<td>• Capacity to manage time effectively, identify and act on priorities.</td>
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<td>• Capacity to operate in a culture of higher pressure and greater job demands.</td>
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<td>• Capacity to identify skill deficiencies.</td>
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Table 1: Enhanced Skills and Capacities

While reforms in the ways in which schools are managed calls for developing and enhancing existing skills and capabilities of educational leaders, it also gives rise to a number of tensions that leaders experience as a result of these reforms. These include from Cranston’s (2002) research:

• managing the balance between needing to be a good manager of the school site in terms of its budget, resources and accountability requirements while maintaining, or attempting to maintain, a role as the educational leader of the school for the professional staff;
• managing and responding to the system demands for accountability and planning processes and documentation in a context, the rhetoric of which suggested schools would operate with enhanced autonomy and responsiveness to local needs;
• maintaining a focus on learning outcomes for students amidst considerable change and uncertainty, generated in part by the halting of the original ‘Leading Schools’ school-based management model together with a raft of other developments which often took the principal away from a focus on teaching and learning;
• endeavours to delegate decisions to, and empower teachers in a culture where some teachers were reluctant to accept change and take on greater and/or changed
responsible. Coupled with this was an increasing sense of isolation felt by some participants in their role as principal (Cranston, 2002, p. 7).

*What is effective educational leadership?*

Research literature has identified key characteristics of effective schools. These characteristics include “strong leadership, a positive learning environment, high expectations, order, structured teaching, and positive relationships with parents and communities” (Blair, 2002, p. 180). Other research has focused on what makes an effective leader. Blair (2002) examines the notion of effectiveness and of effective leadership, and lists some of leadership qualities necessary for success in multi-ethnic contexts.

Blair believes that transformational change involves all leaders in implementing the school’s vision, which in turn requires strong leadership “to hold onto the vision and the courage to examine and implement this vision in practice, sometimes in the face of strong resistance or hostility” (Blair, 2002, p. 186). Drawing on the work of Beare et al. (1997), Blair (2002) lists several generalisations of effective leadership. These include:

1. transformational rather than transactional leadership: a leader takes action to change community attitudes towards school, and action to change the culture of the school;
2. outstanding leaders have a vision, and an absolute commitment to the vision, that shapes their organisation;
3. vision must be communicated in a way that secures commitment among members of the organization;
4. communication of vision requires communication of meaning;
5. issues of value (what ought to be) are central to the leadership and students are placed at the centre of all school policies, decisions and practices;
6. the leader has an important role in developing the culture of the organisation;
7. collaborative and participative decision-making within a framework of state and local policies.

In a study of school principals in England, Day (2000) supports the premise that the work of school principals has become more complex due to government intervention in school management and school curriculum. To cope with these changes, Day (2000) believes that reflection is necessary. In the discussion on reflective practice, Day (2000, p. 114) suggests that the professionalism of principals is “a key factor in organizational quality and growth”. Professionalism means “having a strong technical culture (knowledge base); service ethic (commitment to serving clients needs); professional commitment (strong collective identity); and professional autonomy (control over classroom practice)”. Sachs (in Day, 2000, p.115) suggests that there are five core values that “constitute the fundamentals of a proactive and responsible approach to professionalism.” These are:

1. Learning in which teachers are seen to practise learning, individually and with their colleagues and students.
2. Participation in which teachers see themselves as active agents in their own professional worlds.
3. Collaboration in which collegiality is exercised within and between internal and external communities.
4. Co-operation through which teachers develop a common language and technology for documenting and discussing practice and the outcome.
5. Activism in which teachers engage publicly with issues that relate directly or indirectly to education and schooling, as part of their moral purposes.
Day (2000, p. 117) found that effectiveness of principals was related to the capacity to be reflective:

in different ways about (i) their values, beliefs and practices; (ii) those of their staff; (iii) the position and progress of their schools in relation to others in local and national contexts; (iv) current and emerging policy matters which affected management and the curriculum; and (v) conditions of service for teachers in their schools.

Successful leaders “engage in a range of reflective practices through their careers” of which there at least five kinds:

- the holistic, where the emphasis is upon vision and culture building, and maintaining an overview of the key purposes of the school;
- the pedagogical (on and in action), in which they place emphasis upon staff acquiring, applying and monitoring teaching which achieves results allied to their vision (which includes but is greater than the demands made by policy implementation imperatives);
- the interpersonal, where the focus is upon knowing and nurturing staff, children, parents and governors;
- the strategic, where the focus is upon entrepreneurship, intelligence gathering and networking to secure some control of the future;
- the intrapersonal, where the focus is upon self-knowledge and self-development and fulfillment, as a lifelong learner (Day, 2000, p.118).

Day’s (2002, p. 123) conclusion was that effective leadership “is as much about developing the self as it is about capacity building in others and such effective leadership requires an intelligent head and an intelligent heart”, of which reflective practice is essential.

**System leadership**

The term System Leadership is gaining increasing prominence (Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves, 2008; Hopkins, 2007). System leadership has to do with school based educational leaders taking a ‘systemic view’ in terms of ways of linking with others to create better schools – from the ground up.

System leadership is deemed to be inclusive of all systems’ personnel, irrespective of formal positions of authority and it recognises the importance of connections between these key members and the whole system. System leadership is understood as being exercised in five major domains or significant areas: identity, education, stewardship, community and future focus (Flagship for Creative & Authentic Leadership, 2007). In each of these domains, system leaders demonstrate a range of capabilities: personal, relational, professional, and organisational (Duignan, 2006). These capabilities are founded on a value-based and ethical framework designed to integrate values and culture into future education policy and decision-making. System leaders recognise the importance of the connections between different issues, different individuals and different institutions. They understand that it is these connections that create systems, which are more than the sum of their parts.

Stephenson (2000, p.2) described capabilities as an all round human quality, an integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively not just in familiar and highly focused specialist contexts but also in response to new and changing circumstances. Duignan (2006) identified capabilities as more than simply possessing particular knowledge and skills or having the potential to do something. It means demonstrating that one can actually do it. Duignan (2006) made a distinction between competency and capability based programs as competency being about delivering the present based on past performance while capability is about imagining the future and
bringing it about. Competency is about control; capability is about learning and development. Competency is about fitness for other people’s purpose, while capability is about judging fitness of the purpose itself.

**Culture and cultural diversity**

In discussing cross-cultural leadership Shields (2002), introduces the concept of communities of difference “to encourage dialogue about a new kind of community that does not try to homogenize or assimilate its members into an established set of shared values, common beliefs, and preferred practices” (p. 213). Values, beliefs and practices underpin a definition of culture which is defined as “the enduring sets of beliefs, values and ideologies underpinning structures, processes and practices which distinguish one group of people from another. The group of people may be at school level (organizational culture) or at national/regional level (societal culture)” (Walker & Dimmock, 2002, p. 169). Therefore, Shields (2002) believes that schools represent diversity and not sameness, which in the *Linking Worlds* contexts suggests that diversity exists between schools and within schools. Shields (2002) also believes that to lead a community characterised by diversity, calls for leadership that will transform the school. A transformational leader:

- creates a school vision;
- sets high performance expectations;
- creates consensus around group goals;
- develops an intellectually stimulating climate;
- creates a productive school culture and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions; and,

Walker and Dimmock (2002, p. 21) believe that “culture is a significant influence on school leadership in and within societies because it helps to shape school leaders’ thoughts and subsequent actions about concepts such as leadership, followership, communication, and learning and teaching”. Walker and Dimmock’s (2002) framework for cross-cultural comparison in educational leadership and administration enables the cross- cultural comparisons across different societies, regions, localities and school systems. The rationale for such a framework “is to improve understanding of the influence of societal culture or regional/local sub cultures on educational leadership and administration” (Walker & Dimmock, 2002, p. 181). They believe that leadership will remain too narrowly conceived unless there is an attempt to understand it as being “partially derived from, and influenced by societal culture” (Walker & Dimmock, 2002, p. 168). Their framework for cross-cultural comparison in educational leadership and administration is an attempt to research and better define educational leadership from a cultural and cross-cultural perspective. The framework consists of four elements that constitute schooling:

- organisational structure – refers to the ways in which human, physical and financial resources are established and deployed in schools;
- leadership management and decision processes – are at the core of school leadership and management and include things like the position, role and power of the principal, leadership style, motivation, planning and communication;
- curriculum – is at the heart of the schools technology of curriculum, teaching and learning and focuses on goals and purposes, breadth, depth, integration, differentiation and relevance.
- teaching and learning – refers to things like the nature of knowledge, teacher/student relations, teacher/home relations, generalist versus subject specialists, learning outcomes, guidance and counselling (Walker & Dimmock, 2002, 174-176).
The framework also consists of two sets of cultural dimensions: societal/ regional/ local, and organisational. Within this construct there are six dimensions of societal/ regional/ local cultures, and six dimensions of organizational culture. The framework draws on the work of Hofstede (1991, 1994) whose work explores the influence of culture on management and leadership practice. Using the framework in leadership and management processes, educational leadership can be expressed through the elements that make up the leadership management and decision element of schooling, and analysed by and through the six cultural dimensions. In the Walker & Dimmock (2002) framework, educational leadership comprises the following processes:

1. collaboration – to what degree do educational leaders encourage collaboration?
2. motivation – to what extent do educational leaders motivate teachers as individuals and as a group?
3. planning – how flexible are educational leaders in planning?
4. decision making – how do educational leaders make decisions?
5. communication – how is written and verbal communication used by educational leaders?
6. conflict resolution – how is conflict within the school approached and resolved?
7. appraisal – how do educational leaders structure, conduct and view appraisal systems?
8. staff development – how is teacher leadership development fostered and promoted?

Dimmock and Walker (2005) believe that their model can be used as a framework for cross-cultural research into educational leadership, and such an approach would provide a deeper understanding of the cultural contexts of educational leadership.

*Gender and leadership*

The argument for and against gender differences in leadership has been a constant topic in research literature (Blackmore, Holiday, 2006; Johnson, 1997; Sinclair, 1998). Empirical studies contributing to this debate have mainly focused on leadership experiences in a variety of fields such as business (Kanter, 1993; Rosener, 1990) and education (Astin & Leland, 1991; Holiday, 2006; Johnson, 1997). Much of this debate has been locked within essentialist stereotypes of masculine and feminine gender which are no longer credible (Collard & Reynolds, 2005).

Early writings about leadership popularise women's leadership in essentialised ways and suggest that women might exercise traits described as flexible, supportive, nurturing, collaborative, collegial, and socially just (Fitzgerald, 2003) while men are modelled on particular hegemonic male images of being strong, able to make the hard decisions, being independent, taking unilateral action (Blackmore, 2005, p187). To date, empirical studies are inconclusive on such prescriptive oppositional debates which are often couched in early leadership theories that have been generally gender blind.

While pursuing the tangential debate on gender and leadership Nieva and Gutek (1981) report that “traditionally women are seen as lacking the necessary attributes for leadership. They are believed to be compliant, submissive, emotional, and having great difficulty in decision making” (p.83). These attributes unfortunately are not promoted positively for leadership in the traditional masculine hegemonic leadership discourse. Nieva and Gutek (1981) further reviewed studies on gender and leadership and thus concluded that it is dependent on who is doing the observing and reporting thus pointing to reflections of social perceptions.

A study carried out by Astin and Leland (1991) of seventy-seven women leaders in leadership positions in 1950s, 60s, and 70s from educational institutions, government agencies, and

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5 This section by Kamara (2009).
other organisations utilised a four step model – leader, context, leadership processes, and outcomes. In their findings, the leaders viewed leadership ‘as integral to social change’ (p.156); attributes such as consistent performance, passionate commitment, and collective action characterised leadership experiences of their respondents.

Kanter’s (1993) examination of the experiences of women within business in America revealed that structural impediments such as power, opportunity, and access were hindrances to the mobility of women in the organisational hierarchy and, as a result, deterred women from aspiring to leadership positions. In another study examining the leadership behaviour of women and men leaders within the fields of government, business, and other professions, Rosener (1990) found three attributes that were characteristic of women leaders which she defined as components of interactive leadership (p.120); these were sharing power and information, encouraging participation, and enhancing self worth. Her findings challenged the traditional command-and-control hierarchical model of leadership which had gained credibility in earlier leadership studies as the only successful way of practice.

In Helgesen’s (1990) study of leadership narratives of women, he discovered that the women were unable to compartmentalise their lives in a manner similar to their male respondents. Additionally, Helgesen (1990) found that the women routinely acknowledged the importance of issues such as relationships, mentoring, childcare, and participatory leadership to shape their leadership approaches and practices. Mintzberg’s (1973) research of male managers found that men viewed their work lives and personal lives as separate realities.

Thus research with essentialised views of gender has predominated in the literature on leadership. Such views have not considered components such as ethnicity, culture and the context in which leadership is practised. Contemporary studies have emerged that no longer give credibility to such ideology. Factors such as gender, race, ethnicity and context must be considered in any debate on the practice of leadership.

**Indigenous educational leadership**

Research into Indigenous educational leadership remains limited, although in the past few years there have been a number of developments. Likewise, there has been very little cross-cultural comparative research which, according to Walker and Dimmock (2002), needs to be addressed because as long as “the bulk of theory and practice in the field is drawn almost exclusively from narrowly conceived Anglo-American beliefs, philosophies and understandings, our understandings in the field of educational administration and leadership will remain partial and incomplete” (p. 199). This section will review research into Indigenous educational leadership across cultures, specifically Native American, Canadian Indian, Maori and Australian Aboriginal. It will also look at some comparative research, and research specifically into educational leadership in remote Australian Aboriginal communities.

Napier (1995) conducted research into Native American women who undertook doctoral degrees from the Pennsylvanian State University’s American Indian Leadership Program. Napier (1995, p. 45) concluded that “leadership of Indian tribes and organisations cannot be studied as an entity into itself” and that the impact of culture on women as potential leaders must also be explored. Bryant (1998) research concluded that there were six themes that characterised Native American leadership: decentralisation, recognition of the imminent value of all things, non-interference, self-deflection, a reduced sense of the importance of time, and a collectivist decision-making approach. Bryant (1996, p. 10) believes that one issue that needs a greater understanding is the “match between western conceptions of leadership and local culture” and poses several questions:

1. How is leadership understood by other cultures?
2. Are there places where cultural values naturally conflict with the requirements of local culture? How can local cultural expectations of leadership be accommodated by imported theories?

3. What aspects of leadership transcend cultural boundaries?

Bryant (1998) concludes that comparing and contrasting Western and Indigenous views on educational leadership would help better define and depict cultural factors that influence it. Ahnee-Benham and Napier (2002) believe that leadership must be understood within a cultural and community context, and that a “native understanding and practice of leadership cannot be separated from native/indigenous people's historical struggle against colonialism and cultural assimilation” (pp. 139-140). It is within this history that many Indigenous populations “have had to redefine leadership, power, and authority to fit the preferred mainstream way of thinking and organising as mandated by the assimilation policies of their colonisers” (p. 142). Drawing on the work of Robbins and Tippeconnic (1985), they list a set of skills and responsibilities of effective American Indian educational leaders that affirm the principles of:

1. A commitment to serving the community.
2. The emergence and claiming of one's native voice.
3. Traveling across boundaries.
4. Seeing through the eyes of others and accepting the gift of others.

Effective American Indian educational leaders:

1. are able to recognise that differences exist between cultures, and are able to share information in ways that promote respect, rather than contempt for cultural differences;
2. are skilled in cross-cultural communication;
3. are able to translate theory into practice;
4. maintain a positive attitude towards and a deep commitment to the education of, by and for American Indigenous people;
5. are creative and visionary;
6. demonstrate patience and tolerance with regard to various opinions and positions;

In the Canadian context, recent research (Foster & Goddard, 2003, 2001; Goddard & Foster, 2002) investigated educators’, parents’, students’, and community perceptions and expectations of educational leadership in northern Canadian schools that largely served Aboriginal students. Their research set out to answer two questions: What are stakeholder perceptions and expectations of educational leadership? How are leadership and culture in these schools intertwined? They restated the belief that there is recognition in the field of educational administration “of the role played by culture in the formulation and exercise of educational leadership” (Foster & Goddard, 2001, p. 2).

Foster and Goddard (2003, pp. 5-6) found that “the relationship between schools and their communities is to varying degrees shaped by, and responsive to both local and community conditions and the broader societal culture”. They conclude that educational leadership needs to be redefined from one that has been informed by 'positivist assumptions' to one which is more “holistic, inclusive and sensitive to issues of culture, ethnicity and gender” (Foster & Goddard, 2003, pp. 5-6).

Fitzgerald (2003) writing on both the marginalisation of women and Indigenous women in educational leadership literature identifies the “need to formulate indigenous and
non-western theories of educational leadership that are grounded in research that accounts for and explains indigenous women’s ways of knowing and leading” (p. 13). Fitzgerald (2003) locates her discussion with the context of Maori women and argues that Indigenous women need to be located at the centre of narratives on an Indigenous theory of educational leadership. Fitzgerald identifies a number of issues in the search for an understanding of Indigenous educational leadership. She states that “it may not be possible to construct a unitary definition of indigenous leadership particularly as leadership may be exercised in multiple ways in a variety of settings” (p. 15) and suggests that there may be two layers of leadership in Indigenous communities:

(Traditional) community leadership that is derived from an indigenous worldview that recognises skills and knowledge according to mana (authority, respect) of an individual; and leadership as advocacy between indigenous and non-indigenous communities (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 17).

Fitzgerald suggests that what is called is for is a ‘multi-voiced’ approach to educational leadership and management, and that one of the ways in which this could be achieved is to adopt a framework “that positions indigenous ways of knowing and leading at the centre of practice and theory” (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 20). Fitzgerald’s framework for Indigenous leadership and advocacy is based on the principles of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) and a set of leadership values developed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (Cranney & Edwards, 1998).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values and processes/principles</th>
<th>Article 1: partnership</th>
<th>Article 2: protection</th>
<th>Article 3: participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initiation</strong></td>
<td>Who initiates the appointment of an educational leader?</td>
<td>What are the goals of the educational leader, community and organisation?</td>
<td>Whose interests are established and promoted?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>What does each party bring to the leadership?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Who allocates the work activities of the Indigenous educational leader and how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td>Who will directly benefit from the appointment of the educational leader?</td>
<td>What difference will Indigenous leadership make for Indigenous students and community?</td>
<td>How might the cultural aspirations and preferences of the Indigenous educational leader be evident in the organisation?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What will the leader, community and organisation bring to the relationship and how is this recognised?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representation</strong></td>
<td>In what ways can the voice of the educational leader be heard?</td>
<td>What agency does each individual have and how might this be exercised?</td>
<td>Whose voice is heard?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Who will do the work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legitimation</strong></td>
<td>What authority does the leader have?</td>
<td>Who determines what is accurate and how the findings might be theorised?</td>
<td>Who will nurture Indigenous educational leaders? Who makes the decisions about the work and activities of these leaders?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Are the realities and experiences of the educational leader legitimised within the system?</td>
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Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie (2003) conducted research in Queensland, which included one Aboriginal school amongst the twenty-four that were visited in 1998 through to 2000 as part of the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study. This provided an opportunity to “study school leadership in its different forms” which led them to the importance of “finding ways of talking about leadership that could describe a diversity of practices”. At the same time they were careful “not to equate the notion of leadership with the characteristics of individual leaders ... and instead to understand leadership in terms of the social relations of schools” (Lingard et al., 2003, pp. 82-83). They suggest that there are a number of common themes that school leadership must attend to:

- Focus on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as the central activities of the school – the extent to which leadership is focused on improving student outcomes, both academic and social;
- Vision, purposes and goals of the school – the extent to which leadership builds a sense of common purpose and direction, including directions for change;
- Dispersal of leadership – the spread of leadership practices through the school as well as decision- making processes, and the extent of participation in change;
- Social relations within the school – relationships between staff and students, and the ways in which the emotional economy of the school is attended, as well as a consideration of leaders as individuals in relation to others;
- Management structures and strategies – the extent to which leadership focuses on developing organisational processes that facilitate the smooth running of the school;
- Relationship outside the field - key relationships with education departments, parents, communities and other interest groups (Lingard et al., 2003, pp. 87-88).

In terms of the Aboriginal school within their study, they found that the leadership agenda was “directed at shifting the value of Aboriginality in the school”. This was addressed by establishing a:

vision of being ‘strong and smart’ which is clear and easy to communicate; restructuring of staffing to shed an ‘old brigade’ with low expectations of students; building better links with the community by setting up collaborative structures and symbolically giving Elders a dedicated place in the school; changing curriculum and pedagogy by introducing Aboriginal studies as a school subject and by requiring staff to be more accountable for their time and their results; and changing school culture to encourage achievement and self-esteem for staff and students (Lingard et al., 2003, pp. 89-90).

Although this appears as a set of guidelines, Lingard et al. (2003, p. 99) warn that this should not be viewed as the only approach but “at different historical moments in different schools, different leadership approaches are appropriate”.

Wicks (1999) researched the nature of valued educational leadership services in selected Indigenous schools in British Columbia, Canada; Auckland, New Zealand; and Northern Territory Australia with the purpose of identifying common themes and articulating theories of educational leadership. Wicks (1999) found a number of themes common to all international sites, of which several dealt specifically with educational leadership.
Theme | Evidence
--- | ---
Roles of the educational leader | Educational leadership roles extend throughout the community and include educating parents, Education Council, and community members. A liaison between two cultures.
Expectations/attributes of an educational leader | Sensitivity to, knowledge of and respect for the local culture as prerequisites for the effectiveness and the success of the principal.
Educational leadership scope and context | Extensive opportunities for educational leadership across the entire school community. Few restraints on leadership.

From his research, Wicks developed a “meta-theory of educational leadership in indigenous schools”. According to Wicks, educational leadership in Indigenous schools:

- recognises and respects the paramount importance of the local culture as it permeates the school community;
- acknowledges the school as a site of local cultural maintenance, negotiation, and reproduction;
- is aware of and incorporates Indigenous ways of teaching, learning, organising, and decision making into the school;
- serves as a bridge between cultures and extends beyond the school walls throughout the community;
- offers extensive opportunities for leadership within the school and across the school community;
- recognises permeable boundaries between school and community and facilitates a high level of community involvement;
- acknowledges the importance of relationships and the high value placed on relationships by the local culture;
- is aware of the role of celebrations, ceremonies and rituals in validating and perpetuating local cultural norms and values; and,
- is cautiously respectful of exercising role power and participates in a forum of shared power and leadership (Wicks, 1999, pp. 22-23).

Prior to Linking Worlds project and Kamara’s (2009) research, Nolen’s (1998) research Masters was the only research that dealt specifically with educational leadership in remote Australian Aboriginal communities. Nolen’s field research was conducted in five remote Northern Territory Aboriginal schools, but also included interviews with staff from BIITE, NT DEET, CEO, people in church leadership positions, and Nungalinya staff. Her thesis outlines a number of leadership models, which have emerged in remote Aboriginal schools across the Northern Territory. She argues that “there is no one ‘best’ way of exercising educational leadership in remote communities because of the unique nature and set of historical circumstances existing within each community” (Nolen, 1998, p. 5). Nolen (1998, p. 150) believes that “leadership and management can be exercised in different ways” and that – at the time of her research - “flexibility exists within present school structures under devolution processes for schools to plan, organise and implement structures and programs which suit the circumstances of their particular communities”. Her research shows that:

a number of schools are establishing patterns of group leadership to accommodate the demands which are placed on Aboriginal people in educational leadership as they strive to fulfil their cultural and family obligations as well as meet the demands arising from their positions within the school (p. 150).

She found that the mentoring program complemented by BIITE’s courses in educational administration were “critical in developing both professional and personal competence for
Indigenous education: a both ways and intercultural perspective

Indigenous people in the Northern Territory have been suggesting an alternative educational ideology for many years, one that they refer to as ‘both ways’. In 1976, Pincher Nyurrmiyarri from Dagaragu articulated the concept of ‘both ways’ (Harris 1989; McConvell 1982). The Gurindji were worried about the schooling their children would receive. Pincher described the current school as a ‘one-way school’—that is, ‘only kartiya (European way)’ and gave the alternative as a ‘two-way’ school—‘both kartiya way and ngumpit (Aboriginal) way’ (McConvell 1982, p.62). Pincher Nyurrmiyarri developed and discussed this concept of ‘two-way’ schooling, which involved reciprocity and obligation, involving curriculum, knowledge, policies and power. A further aspect of the two-way schooling as explained by Pincher was “re-establishing a healthy relationship between the younger and older generations of Gurindji, healing rifts that had developed in the transmission of traditional knowledge, largely through the interference of schools in the process” (McConvell 1982, p.63). The younger people would bring home the new knowledge they had learnt at school and the old people would be educating the young people both within the school and at home.

The implementation of bilingual education in a number of schools in the Northern Territory during the early 1970s gave a new focus to education. At this time, the ‘domain separation’ theory as proposed by Harris and others gained some popularity. “Aboriginal survival, history and current insight generally support the view that at least partial separation is crucial to survival” (Harris 1988, p.78). At this point, the term ‘two-way’ schooling was introduced as a way to shift discussion from centring solely on bilingual education. Harris explains this model as learning to play a role-play game and suggests ways of living two-ways, for the small culture to continue side by side the majority culture (Harris 1989, p.174). He proposed that separating the two cultures would give the small culture a “safe place to be itself and to grow” (Harris 1989, p.174) and then listed eight steps for this to happen - physical separation (e.g. outstations); maintenance of language in the home and school; Aboriginal influence in the media; economic independence; local control of Aboriginal schools; group action; social change (borrowing across cultures); and becoming highly expert in majority culture skills (at least some members).

This theorising of both-ways, while useful to promote and further discussion and debate, received much criticism for its othering of Indigenous people and its oversimplification of Indigenous culture (Keefe 1989; McTaggart 1988, 1989; Stewart 1989; Willis 1996). In the domain separation model, the cultural universals are situated within the dominant culture. Thus, whilst the minority culture maintains control over its own cultural specifics such as language, culture, perception etc, there is the inherent risk that, through separation, the dominant culture retains control of the cultural universals and the members of the minority culture remain as outsiders (Stairs, 1988, p.309). There was also concern expressed about the theorising being done by non-Indigenous academics. “The point is here not so much whether Harris is ‘right’ or I am, but that both of our viewpoints are couched in terms imposed by a Western discourse about non-Western cultures. Europeans in education continually ‘read back’ versions of white discourse about Aboriginal people themselves” (McConvell 1991, p.21). The domain separation theory, then, was under serious contestation and the philosophy shifted to a more interactive positioning.

What emerged was a more socially critical model of both-ways practice that was represented as two overlapping circles, where the two worlds, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, intersect.

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Aboriginal knowledge culture and experience  

‘Two-ways’ knowledge culture and experience  

European knowledge culture and experience

Figure 1: Two Ways model (Wunungmurra, 1989, p. 12)

In this model, the cultural universals are positioned in the intersecting section. “This intrinsic development process moves towards indigenous education based not just on cultural content, but on the world-view, social roles and interactive style of the indigenous culture” (Stairs, 1988, p.311). A graduate of BIITE, Wali Wulanybuma Wunungmurra, stated it clearly:

We cannot hold back change which will happen whether we like it or not. But as a minority society we can adapt by finding common ground with the majority society. It is through an exchange of meanings that we can produce a ‘two way’ school curriculum. In an exchange of knowledge both sides learn from each other instead of knowledge coming only from the Balanda side. But Yolngu and Balanda knowledge will only come together if there is respect for our knowledge and where Aboriginal people are taking the initiative, where we shape and develop the educational programs and implement them’ (Wunungmurra, 1989, p.12).

In the mid 1990s the Yolngu people shared the metaphor of Ganma. as a way of explaining the both-ways philosophy (Batchelor College 1994; Christie 2007; Marika, Njurruwutthun & White, 1992; McConvell 1993; Ober 2004; Willis 1996) and is a way of exploring education and curriculum from an intercultural perspective.

Figure 2: Ganma metaphor (Marika, 1999, p.112)
Ganna is the name of a lagoon where salt and fresh water meets. Water is a symbol of knowledge in Yolngu philosophy, and the metaphor of the meeting of two bodies of water is a way of talking about the knowledge systems of two cultures working together (Marika, Ngurruwutthun, & White, 1992, p.28).

This was in contrast to the domain separation theory and gave a potentially richer image than the socially critical model. The Ganna metaphor was acknowledged as more appropriately representing the original ‘two-way’ education as proposed by Pincher (McConvell 1994; Willis 1996). A common thread, which emerged in the mid to late 90s, was that of identity and culture: “to live in both worlds we need to achieve a high standard in education but keep our own identity” (Ford 1993, p.76).

**Relevancy of the literature**

As noted above, while there is an excess of literature on educational leadership, literature that deals specifically with educational leadership in remote Indigenous community contexts remains scarce. Nevertheless, a number of generalisations can be drawn from the literature that – in a very general way – provides some responses to the main research question.

Though leadership theories may reflect some relevant leadership styles and behaviours, arguably, they are problematic in the sense that they have not widened the debate to include issues of diversity such as ethnicity, colour, race and gender, and have been constructed from a western paradigm that ignores these factors. To ensure a more inclusive leadership discourse, there needs to be a shift towards a cultural diversity perspective (Banjund, 1996; Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Foster & Goddard, 2003; Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998; Heck, 1998) that will provide a genuine opportunity to include minority voices that were hardly considered in the development of leadership theories. In the context of Northern Territory Indigenous remote community schools, any investigation into educational leadership and school community partnerships must take into consideration historical, socio-economic and cultural values that may influence leadership practice and partnership negotiations.

Some of the leadership literature emphasised that schools should be seen as communities (Sergiovanni, 1992) which, in part, assists in gaining a better understanding of the unique ‘worlds’ within which Indigenous educational leaders operate because there is a focus on the ways in which the community connects “people to each other and their work” (Sergiovanni, 2002). Shields (2002, p. 213) believes that these communities represent “diversity and not sameness” and should not “try to homogenise or assimilate its members into an established set of shared values, common beliefs, and preferred practices”. The “both ways” literature also suggest an alternative perspective where education takes place is a space where “both kartiya way and ngumpit (Aboriginal) way” overlap and the “knowledge systems of two cultures” work together. All of these opinions parallel the view that remote Indigenous schools are unique worlds and are essentially diverse.

A range of leadership literature focuses on the skills, knowledges and attributes required to be an effective educational leader. Watkins (1989) views the educational leader as a ‘facilitator’, while Sergiovanni (2002) lists a number of management competencies he believes educational leaders need to master: the management of attention, the management of meaning, the management of trust, the management of self, the management of the paradox, the management of effectiveness, and the management of commitment. For Day (2000), it is the capacity for reflection, while Cranston (2002) identified a range of “enhanced skills and capacities”. Shields (2002) identifies the responsibilities of a “transformational leader”, while Blair (2002) lists several generalisations about effective leadership. In terms of Indigenous educational leadership, Ahnee-Benham and Napier (2002) list a number of

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7 From Kamara (2009).
skills and knowledge required by Native American educational leaders, while Wicks (1999) “meta-theory of educational issues in Indigenous schools” identifies a number of principles. Again, this literature has some relevancy to the Linking Worlds research, especially when it is viewed through a “capabilities” (Duignan, 2006) lens.

**Research Design**

The purpose of Linking Worlds project was to define the unique ‘worlds’ within which Indigenous educational leaders operate and determine the skills, knowledges and attributes required to be an effective leader. It is proposed that this understanding might assist in strengthening the leadership capacity of educational leaders. It is anticipated that Linking Worlds will lead to an improved understanding of the relationships between systems, schools and remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

The conceptual framework of this qualitative study included the exploration of a range of interrelated issues - educational, cultural, managerial, and administrative - in the sphere of Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings. The study endeavoured to explore how a range of stakeholders, including the major employers of Indigenous teachers NT DET and CEO NT, as well as the main Indigenous teacher training institution BIITE, defined effective Indigenous educational leadership in these settings. The study also investigated the expectations that education systems and remote Indigenous communities have of Aboriginal educational leaders in terms of their role and responsibilities.

Linking Worlds informants were drawn from remote Aboriginal community schools and consisted of qualified Aboriginal teachers or Aboriginal teachers who are currently undertaking training, and non-Aboriginal teachers who have, or had, significant experience in leadership roles in remote community schools. Linking Worlds, at its beginning, was viewed as occurring over four cycles, with each cycle based on Participatory Action Research cycles of planning, acting, analysing and reflecting activities. Action Research has been described as a family of research methodologies (Dick, 1999) characterised by the simultaneous pursuit of action and research that occurs through a planning, acting, analysing and reflecting cycle.

Each research cycle involved Indigenous participation. In Cycle One Linking Worlds project team planned the research project, defined and described the research question, developed the research instruments and to define roles and responsibilities of all involved in Linking Worlds. This meant that the Chief Investigators (CIs), the Australian Postdoctoral Industry Fellows (APDI), the Indigenous Research Officer (IRO) and the Australian Postgraduate Award Industry (APAI) PhD student understood what was expected of them during the life of the project. It also meant that the Collaborating Organisations had tangible input into the planning functions included setting up the Linking Worlds structure, confirming the project personnel, determining the allocation of resources, making project location decisions, and confirming the stages of the project. During Cycle One the researchers – CIs, APDI and IRO - commenced work in the field to explain the research process at individual school sites, discussed and planned the research methodology making adjustments where necessary, and facilitated focus group discussions or individual interviews. The Linking Worlds project team aimed for the first phase of data collection, Data Collection Package 1 (DCP1) to be implemented during this cycle. In Cycle Two the activities were to be repeated, the initial sites revisited with Data Collection Package 2 (DCP2) and the fieldwork expanded to more sites. In Cycle Three, sites were to be revisited and the fieldwork again expanded, with the researchers collecting and analysing data. In Cycle Four, research findings would be disseminated through a process of ongoing communication during the research process, and through the dissemination of Plain English and other non-academically oriented research products.
During Term 1 (January to March) of the 2007 school year, Linking Worlds researchers visited a number of remote Aboriginal schools to provide information about the project and to implement the first phase of data collection. Researchers prepared a DCP1 folder, which contained a power-point presentation, overhead transparencies of the power-point slides, disposable cameras, information letters, and consent forms. The main DCP1 data collection methods consisted of a number of school-based hypothetical leadership scenarios, which were to be discussed in focus groups and a photo-voice activity based on the photos taken by the participants. For example, the ‘Working Together’ topic presented the following scenario:

Sandi and Maggie, the new Indigenous assistant teacher, have planned a cultural activity for just after lunch. With Sandi away sick, Maggie has to rely on some of the parents who have come to the school to help. The kids are divided into groups of boys and girls. Two Indigenous men take the boys for dancing, while the women take the girls. The boys have walked away with the men to the shade of some trees quite a distance from the school. The girls have stayed with the women in the school playground. Some of the non-Indigenous teachers go with the groups, others do not and spend the time planning. The activity lasts all afternoon.

The scenario discussions were to take place one afternoon a week over ten weeks during the first half of the school year. For the ‘Working Together’ example, the following questions informed the discussion:

What is your ‘working together’ story? You might want to discuss and write about:
1. who works together and why?
2. how do you work together?
3. when do you work together?
4. how is kinship used in the school?
5. describe times when kinship obligations make working at school difficult
6. describe times when kinship obligations make working at school positive
7. describe how you manage kinship obligations and the demands of working in a school operating with western cultural rules, give some examples?

The photo-voice activity centred on participants taking photographs of educational leadership events, and then using selected photographs as prompts to talk about related issues. Researchers visited 8 remote Aboriginal schools during Term 1 and conducted the DCP1 in-services.

During the second half of 2007, Linking Worlds researchers were to return to the schools to implement DCP2, which included checks of DCP1 data, photo-voice discussion and interviews. However, it soon became apparent that the research was receiving a subdued response with only one of the eight schools returning DCP1 data.

A number of the researchers felt that the limited response was due, in part, to the action by the Australian Federal government in its intervention into remote Aboriginal communities. Under the pretext of responding to a report into child abuse in some Aboriginal communities – the Little Children are Sacred report (Wild & Anderson, 2007) – the then Liberal Federal Government introduced into Australian Parliament, in August 2007, a package of five Bills that resulted in “a comprehensive, compulsory intervention in 73 Northern Territory Aboriginal communities” (Brennan, 2007). The Bills included measures to abolish the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP); quarantine 50% of community members’ welfare payments, and 100% of those whose children are truants; deploy Australian Federal Police as ‘special constables’ to the Northern Territory Police Force; remove the permit system which governs access to Aboriginal land; acquire five-year leases over prescribed townships that are part of the emergency response; and negotiate with interested communities on
99-year township leases. What it meant on the ground was that a significant proportion of people on CDEP in every community were uncertain about how they would gain income with the removal of the scheme. They also had to cope with hundreds of uninvited non-Aboriginal people entering their communities (government appointed business managers, army, police, welfare agents, nurses, doctors) resulting in, in most cases, high levels of uncertainty and anxiety. An email from one of the school principals to the researchers soon confirmed this: “Sorry for not responding sooner but it’s been busy, busy, busy. And now we have the intervention mob!”

At the next research team meeting the researchers discussed the fact that activities associated with the DCPs were apparently not happening in many communities. A gloom descended on the group as they considered this reality. It would have been easy at this point to simply to blame the communities. However, the researchers began to talk about the ‘Intervention’, which was dominating every news broadcast and which had become the prime topic of conversation at BIITE as students told stories of its impact on their lives. The researchers began to wonder if they were asking too much of the schools they were working with. What had seemed like a useful school activity (DCPs) was seen in a new light. Was the research project becoming yet another problematic ‘obligation’ for these community schools to handle? If the project was to proceed and succeed, a new data collection method was needed.

The researchers began to talk about an alternative, one that would fit more conveniently (and less stressfully) into the lives of those with whom we were working and, in keeping with principles of Participatory Action Research that empower participants to guide the research, reviewed their data collection methods. They talked about how to access participants in a context where they would be free to reflect on, rather than perform, leadership. It occurred to the researchers that, as an ARC Linkage project, Linking Worlds was built on collaboration amongst the research team, the employers of the research participants (NT DET and CEO NT) and a remote Indigenous schools advocacy group (Principals Australia). These partners regularly brought remote Indigenous school participants from all over the NT into centralised workshops to undertake various professional development activities. The researchers were of the view that these workshops would offer a better space for thinking, reflecting and reporting on leadership. In addition, one of the researchers had used a metaphor activity as a data collection method in a previous project, and suggested that this might be a better approach in that it allowed participants to think about leadership in ways that could provide direct insights into their views on leadership.

In addition to the research conducted by Linking Worlds, the APAI PhD candidate, Martha Kamara, focused her research on investigating how Indigenous female principals in Northern Territory Top End remote Indigenous communities negotiated school and community partnerships with their respective communities. Although Kamara’s research will be reported elsewhere, some of her data and findings are relevant to Linking Worlds. Relevant sections of Kamara’s research are woven in to this report.

Research Ethics
The research design for this project is informed by a number of principles articulated by the Indigenous Research Reform Agenda (IRRA) (Henry et al, 2004). IRRA’s review highlighted several points, which have been in the past, and continue to be, endorsed by key bodies such as the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and are also evident in ACU National’s and BIITE’s research ethics guidelines. Linking Worlds is based on three broad principles of ethical research: (a) consultation, negotiation and mutual understanding; (b) respect, recognition and involvement; and, (c) benefits, outcomes and agreement. The way in which Aboriginal people are centrally positioned in the research process underpinned Linking Worlds
and this called for direct involvement by Indigenous educational leaders as key players in the research activity, and actively seeking and listening to their advice on issues of concern.

Fasoli and James (2007), when describing research in Aboriginal communities, identified a number of ‘rules’ for conducting research. These they classified as ‘official rules’, ‘institutional rules’, and ‘unspoken and unwritten rules’. Official rules are the standard research rules set out by the peak Australian organisations of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). NHMRC (2007) have identified six core values as being important when conducting research in and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These are the values of reciprocity, respect, equality, responsibility, survival and protection, and spirit and integrity. The NHMRC (2007) provides guidelines how these values should apply specifically in research to ensure research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect. The AIATSIS (2007, p. 2) guidelines “include a statement of the principles of ethical research in Indigenous studies, followed by an explanation of each principle, accompanied by some practical applications ... [which] ... are not intended to be directive but are recommendations and suggestions to achieve the best standards of ethical research”. As stated earlier these three groups of ethical principles are: (i) consultation, negotiation and mutual understanding; (ii) respect, recognition and involvement; and, (iii) benefits, outcomes and agreement. For each of these principles the guidelines give advice, for example under the principle of ‘respect’ the guidelines advise: “Obtain (do not assume) invitations to visit the community for the time necessary to conduct the research and to report upon results” (AIATSIS, 2007, p. 7). Obtaining the right permission is essential because “any person who trespasses on indigenous land risks endangering not only themselves, but also the traditional land owners who have the obligation to protect the sacredness and integrity of their country” (ATSIC 1997, p.2).

Official rules are also those prescribed by Australian legislation. In the Northern Territory the applicable legislation is the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. The functions and responsibilities of the Land Councils are set out in this Act, one of which refers to entry onto Aboriginal land. Under Section 70 of the Act a person shall not enter or remain on Aboriginal land unless authorised, and so one of the statutory responsibilities and duties of Aboriginal land councils is to process applications for entry permits. The respectful and ethical procedure to follow if you want to enter Aboriginal land, for whatever reason, is to apply for a permit. The Linking Worlds project team acknowledged this in a brochure which was prepared for all communities and participants in which it was stated that “the researchers will seek permission from Land Councils each time they wish to visit communities ... [and] at all times, the visiting researchers will obtain the correct permits and observe community protocols”. Some land councils have specific research permits, while others issue general permits. In addition to seeking entry permits, Linking Worlds researchers also sought research specific permission from the Northern Land Council (NLC) and the Central Land Council (CLC). The NLC requires researchers to complete a permit application which seeks information on a number of details, including benefits to traditional owners and intellectual property. Similarly, CLC also has a permit process in place for intending researchers based on a number of principles which:

- seek to respect Aboriginal rights, culture and intellectual property by requesting that sufficient information is provided to Aboriginal people about projects;
- Aboriginal people are consulted about projects on their land; Aboriginal people can be involved in projects as far as is practical; agreements to protect cultural and intellectual property rights are made where appropriate, and project applicants obtain a permit for projects on Aboriginal land (CLC, 2008, no page).

Institutional rules are those set out by research institutions, in this case both ACU and BIITE who were joint partners in Linking Worlds and who both require ethical clearance within their own institutions. For ACU researchers, a comprehensive ethics approval process is part
of any research that involves human participants. Prior to undertaking research an Ethics Application is submitted to the ACU's Human Research Ethics Committee for consideration. If the research involves Indigenous participants, the application must first be discussed with, and supported by, ACU's nominated Indigenous staff member. Researchers will protect the confidentiality of individual participants involved in the research, and the ethics approval process is a clear indication of this.

BIITE receives many requests from researchers to undertake research due to its all-Indigenous student body and its strong relationships with remote NT communities developed over its 35-year history. Gaining access to Indigenous research sites and participants is not as easy as it once was as Indigenous people have become tired of being exploited by less ethical researchers and have become more aware of their rights. This puts a special responsibility on BIITE to ensure that the research that takes place under its auspice is ethically sound and in the best interests of Indigenous participants.

BIITE's research ethics forms guide researchers to consider key issues in relation to their research intentions and assumptions and the consequences of these for Indigenous people. Researchers must justify their research in terms of overall benefit and risk to Indigenous people specifically and with particular attention to those expected to participate in the project. One question on the form asks the researcher to explain the degree of involvement in the research by Indigenous people, designed to signal this issue as an ethical priority. For many years, Indigenous people have been researched rather than afforded the opportunity to collaborate in researching their own issues and concerns. BIITE's Research Ethics Committee gives priority to Internal Research Grant scheme applications that involve Indigenous people as co-researchers. A request for information about payment of Indigenous participants highlights another longstanding problem encountered by Indigenous people who have, over many years, been used by researchers for their expertise in languages, local contexts, local knowledge, community contacts and as traditional owners of the land, often without recognition or acknowledgement. One section of the form asks researchers to outline how and where the research findings will be disseminated providing examples of recommended plain language and low-literacy-dependent forms of communication (for example community meetings, flyers and posters) as well as seminars, journal articles, exhibitions, conference posters and presentations) to ensure that remote Indigenous participants with low literacy or English as a second, third or fourth language are not disadvantaged. All of these procedures are provided to foster in researchers the need to consider issues highlighted by the NHMRC (2007) and AIATSIS (2007) guidelines described above.

Similarly, NT DET assesses all applications received to conduct research to ensure that projects address issues of strategic relevance to the goals of the organisation, maintain high ethical standards and are realistic and applicable. NT DET acknowledges the importance of research that contributes to the delivery of services that promote continuing improvement in Indigenous education, training and employment outcomes.

CEO NT recognises that the nature and volume of requests received for research, particularly in schools, has significant implications for the efficient operation of work units and schools and the well-being of students and staff. Both NT DET and CEO NT require research projects to be coordinated to minimise disruption and that all research must have prior approval.

Spoken and unspoken rules are the least obvious and most difficult for researchers to follow because they are never explicit and could go unheeded depending on the nature of the research culture developed by a research team. These kinds of rules require researchers to reflect non-judgmentally on setbacks, to hear what is said as well as what is not said, and to find the courage of their convictions as a way to decide how best to proceed. For example, a member of the research team rang one of the communities after a long period of silence, hoping to hear that the DCP1 was going well if not nearly completed. The Indigenous leader
with whom she had had most contact was currently working as the cleaner at the school. The cleaner explained how they were implementing a new literacy program, making time for visits from education department staff providing maths in-services, preparing for the up coming Rural Show in which the school would be entering three projects, clearing up from a recent small flood that had seriously disrupted community activities, investigating the break-in by some youths who had stolen all of the cameras we’d given the school for photo-voice activities and figuring out how to cover for the cook who was ill! She was adamant that everyone really wanted to do the research but it was just a bit busy right at the moment. What she was saying was one of the unspoken rules. Research will not be prioritised over other more pressing issues impacting on research participants’ lives.

The Linking Worlds project provided an opportunity for the researchers to focus on the ethical principles of research. Humphrey (2000, p. 24) states that “researchers are faced with the imperative of examining their own suppositions, actions and motivations, and of abiding by (at least on paper) a set of detailed ethical guidelines”. The challenge to research institutions is to apply these principles in a meaningful and tangible way, and for these principles to inform self-examination. In order for this to happen, research institutions must be active in a number of ways and for the Linking World researchers, this meant upholding the principles of ethical research in action.

Human Research Ethics Principles guide researchers’ work and remind researchers to think about the participants’ situation and their perspectives on the research. As a result of the government intervention, hundreds of uninvited non-Aboriginal people entered Aboriginal communities resulting in high levels of uncertainty and anxiety. The Linking Worlds researchers considered their own presence in these communities and acted according to the espoused ethical principles.

Research Data

The data collected through this project included a number of rich sources for determining the nature of educational leadership in remote Indigenous contexts. A total of four categories of data were collected. These included;

- interviews with experienced Indigenous and non-Indigenous school leaders (15);
- NT DET Indigenous lead stories (9);
- visual metaphors (27) representing educational leadership from Indigenous (16), non-Indigenous (9) and mixed group (2) perspectives, annotated with their verbal explanations; and,
- focus group discussions with Collaborating Organisations (4).

In addition to this, relevant data were also drawn from Kamara (2009) who interviewed five Indigenous female educational leaders – two current principals and three retired. Overall, more than 100 Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals provided data, in one form or another.

Interviews were conducted individually with 15 invited educational leaders who had significant experience and expertise in remote NT schools. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Interviewees were both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, male and female.

Indigenous leaders’ stories were narratives written by Indigenous educational leaders participating in NT DET sponsored leadership program called the Indigenous Leaders Network (ILN) and contained remote Indigenous school leaders’ reflections on their educational leadership journeys.
The Linking Worlds research team facilitated a focus group discussion with the COs as an activity at one of the Project management meetings. The discussion focused on the research questions and the discussion was recorded and transcribed. The focus group discussion also included a critical friend who assisted in keeping the discussion ‘on track’.

Visual metaphors were collected through a series of workshops supported and facilitated by the Partner Organisations. The resulting metaphors represented a range of perspectives including principals from remote CEO schools, participants from NT DET’s Indigenous Leadership Forum, BIITE’s community-based education students, CEO and NT DET’s Indigenous teachers and Principals Australia Tri-State Conference.

The metaphor workshops were seen as an innovative way to engage participants in defining and describing educational leadership issues in remote Indigenous communities. Groups or individuals were asked to discuss the characteristics of leadership they wished to describe using the following questions to prompt discussion.

- How is educational leadership viewed and defined?
- Who is an educational leader?
- What kind of leadership is needed?
- What do educational leaders do?
- How are leaders supported and encouraged?
- What is the role of the community and the system in educational leadership?

Following discussion, participants were asked to represent their views on educational leadership through constructing a visual metaphor in response to the sentence, ‘Educational leadership is...’. Finally, they shared and explained their metaphor verbally with the rest of the group. The sharing discussions were tape recorded and transcribed. Following is an example of one metaphor:

My metaphor about education leadership is whole community engagement and leadership. I do teaching. I grew up in a small community and I think not enough is being done by the community to come together and truly make school and education as a central business for the future of our children. My metaphor here, what I have drawn, there’s three circles and around the circles there’s one white figure and another one’s a dark one that’s representing both ways and as it goes along the pathway it grows with time. More and more people get involved. In this circle what I drew, I put people around the circle. We all should be nurturing. The circle represents the knowledge, the education and working together so that we’re supporting our kids.

I put down here the only way – one of the ways we could do that is by truly and honestly work together and stay focused. In the community, having that dialogue, communication, happening. In the school physically working together, the upper yapa/kardiya⁸ whatever percentage kardiya they want to have in the school. Teaching programs should be yapa/ kardiya because I know that most of the schools are more kardiya, not enough or nothing of yapa and I feel that is not helping us be strong in who we are. For me it’s brainwashing our kids to value more the kardiya side but not our side.

The principal and assistant principal, school counsel and teachers they have a role in building that network in the community. Like working in with the health centres, the council to get guest speakers or to set up a teaching program for six weeks to focus on health in an area maybe kidney or whatever the health issues that’s identified by this community. This community with these people together should develop their teaching program and develop their resources because

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⁸ Yapa is a Warlpiri word used to describe themselves, while kardiya means whitefella.
they’re the ones that live in the community, they know what’s best for the kids with help from outside agencies, other education departments and other people that want to come in and help. But they should be the one.

Local community members should come together from the various departments, health, council, school, police and develop the relevant teaching materials and they should be the ones identifying who should be able to come through as new teachers or into teaching roles within that community and I feel we haven’t really done anything in that way. I don’t think anybody ever did. But I think this is what education leadership is about, whole community engagement and leadership. Using the resources as much as possible and the services that are in those little small communities and getting outside help. It’s those people in there that should come together to develop that program for teaching and for teaching staff and it should be kardiya and yapa and that group should decide how much kardiya teaching material should be there in consultation with the education department mob and how much teaching programs should be there. So that’s what I think education leadership is.

Data Analysis
The focus of data analysis was to identify recurring themes and issues across all data sources from which conclusions about participants’ views of education leadership in remote community school contexts could be drawn. Inductive approaches were used as recommended by David (2003, p.2) because they enable the research;

- to condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format;
- to establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and
- to develop of model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the raw data.

Given the number and range of data sources, two inductive analytical approaches were adopted. The first (‘text rendering approach’) ensured that the research team became deeply familiar with each transcript by reading them thoroughly to identify the main themes discussed. The second (Leximancer software) enabled a more ‘objective’ search of the data to identify and quantify the strength of concepts and themes and to identify any that may have been overlooked in the first approach.

Text rendering protocols involved identification of one sentence within a transcript that, in the researcher’s view, epitomised or represented the essence of the argument or topic being discussed. After a sentence was identified further rendering occurred to isolate a phrase (without a verb) and finally a single word that provides a key theme for consideration. The project team (4 researchers), including a critical friend, reviewed each set of transcripts (27 metaphors, 15 interviews, 9 lead stories and one focus group discussion) and through text rendering identified themes.

Leximancer is a content analysis software tool that enabled researchers to ‘mine’ text based data sources for the identification of key concepts and themes, in this case, those that would inform the research questions being posed about educational leadership in remote Indigenous community school contexts.

Finally, the results of the two data analysis strategies were summarised through identification of ‘relational themes’ (Table 3).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of leadership: perspectives and perceptions</td>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relational themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts, language, culture, country &amp; land, education, leaders, support, communities, relationships, employment, management</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing: appointing, retaining, turnover, identifying, succession, attrition, recruitment</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relational themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships, dialogue, systems, leadership, values.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership: forms-group, shared distributed.</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relational themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capabilities, system leadership, community, interculturalism</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tensions, pressures and barriers - things that make leadership difficult.</td>
<td>Educational leadership</td>
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</table>

**Relational themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership capabilities</td>
<td>Leader</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership capabilities: Indigenous and non-Indigenous.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Relational themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership characteristics, features and roles.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development: professional development, critical friends, mentoring, catalyst for development, school's role in professional development.</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relational themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Features and qualities, relationships, mentoring, shared responsibilities, tensions and challenges, support and training.</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational initiatives including community and parental involvement.</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
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</table>

**Relational themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership, professional development, physical/social/emotional development, indigenous principals, communities/families and children, language, education, both ways, policy, tensions, succession planning.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both ways: working with Indigenous-Western ideas, interculturalism, dualism, culturally inclusive, language, culture, relationships.</td>
<td>Community: role in education, unity, centrality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relational themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big picture</td>
<td>Kids</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Relational themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts of childhood, needs, transitions, responsibilities and future orientations.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
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Relational themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Rendering</th>
<th>Leximancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time as commodity, as a vehicle/measure of education, long view of time, sufficient time for development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Data analysis: concepts and themes

Findings: the research questions

To answer the research questions, data were collected from four sources and complemented by Kamara’s (2009) research. Data analysis informed the development of the Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework underpinned by two principles which emerged from the analysis. The Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework can be used to inform such things as policy development, professional development, and formal training. This research process is represented on the next page (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: the research process

- What are the unique ‘worlds’ within which Indigenous educational leaders operate, and what skills, knowledges and attributes are required to be an effective leader?

The Linking Worlds project sought to define the unique ‘worlds’ within which Indigenous educational leaders operate, and to determine the skills, knowledges and attributes required for effective leadership. Put simply, the worlds in which Indigenous educational leaders
operate are intercultural/both ways ones, and to work in these intercultural educational worlds, one needs to strengthen certain capabilities. Significantly, the onus does not rest on Indigenous educators alone, but is applicable across the educational system and requires ‘working together’ as intercultural educators. This is represented graphically below where educators “talking about the knowledge systems of two cultures working together” (Marika, Ngurruwutthun, & White, 1992, p.28), represented by the crescents, are engaged with the worlds of education – (a) western, (b) Indigenous and (c) intercultural.

![Diagram of linked worlds]

Figure 4: the linked worlds

Participants in this project were well placed to offer views of leadership unfamiliar to most educators. They were chosen to participate because they work or have worked within the unique intercultural world of the remote Indigenous school for many years. Historically these schools were set up to be schools similar to those across Australia. Because of their unique cultural locations, students and staff, they are not like those schools found in suburbs of Darwin or Alice Spring. Inevitably they are influenced and shaped by the local cultures, locations and personnel. Everyone working or participating in the school is expected to engage with a mainstream education system as well as being engaged with a local Indigenous cultural reality. Therefore, the leadership discussed by participants focuses on a form of intercultural leadership suited to these conditions. This kind of leadership was required of both non-Indigenous teachers as well as the Indigenous teachers who work within a diverse social and cultural context. Each context is different, and skills, knowledge and operational models need to respond to these differing social and cultural dynamics. It is not a one size fits all model. Relational and communication skills are essential, as is maintaining the role of an adult learner. It shouldn’t be assumed the Indigenous educators are responsible for or know everything Indigenous, and vice-versa. To be an effective leader, one has to be strong in identity, be resilient, confident and be willing and able to stand in the overlap – the space between cultures – to bring benefit to and advocate for the children and families they serve. Being an effective leader means working, interacting and interdependence through team work share the load and make decisions. It is always a team effort rather than an individual one.

In the literature, within policy documents and demonstrated through the data collected in Linking Worlds, much attention has been given to developing the capacities of Indigenous parents, students and teachers. What is less often discussed or developed is the need for non-Indigenous staff to learn to be intercultural teachers and leaders as well as the needs of the system to work interculturally for both Indigenous and Western outcomes. Linking Worlds
has demonstrated a need to recognise that Indigenous educational leadership practice impacts on western practice as well as vice versa. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people must be willing to step into this intercultural world (the in-between space) where new leadership practices can be learned and are required.

*Linking Worlds* has determined the skills, knowledges and attributes required for effective leadership by describing them as intercultural capabilities. The intercultural space exists as a void or gap when it is ignored or unrecognised by the education system. Shaping it requires educational system leaders to take responsibility for the intercultural space, together with those who become members of it by occupying it, including administrators, teachers, students, staff and community members. Focusing on system leadership, rather than school leadership, recognises the importance of connections between these key members and the whole system. It is understood as being exercised in five major domains: identity, education, stewardship, community and future focus. In each of these domains, system leaders demonstrate a range of capabilities: personal, relational, professional, and organisational (Duignan, 2006). These capabilities are founded on a value-based and ethical framework designed to integrate values and culture into future education policy and decision-making. System leaders recognise the importance of the connections between different issues, different individuals and different institutions. They understand that it is these connections that create systems, which are more than the sum of their parts.

Stephenson (2000, p.2) described capabilities as an all round human quality, an integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively – not just in familiar and highly focused specialist contexts but also in response to new and changing circumstances. Duignan (2006) identified capabilities as more than simply possessing particular knowledge and skills or having the potential to do something. Having a capability demonstrates that one can actually do it. As noted in the literature review, Duignan (2006) made a distinction between competency and capability based programs as competency being about delivering the present based on past performance while capability is about imaging the future and bringing it about. Competency is about control; capability is about learning and development. Competency is about fitness for usually other people’s purpose, while capability is about judging fitness of the purpose itself.

*Linking Worlds* has found that the current categories of leadership capabilities - personal, relational, professional, and organisational - are not sufficient in that they fail to fully embrace interculturalism; they ignore, to a certain degree, the significance of culture on leadership development; and, continue to privilege a Western perspective. Couby (2006, p. 246) argues that interculturalism “needs to inform the teaching and learning of all subjects”, while Abdallah-Pretceille (2006, p. 476) asks a number of questions about members of an intercultural system:

> What does one need to know about the culture of the ‘Other’ or, more precisely, about the ‘Other’, in order to be able to teach him/her or, in other words, to help him/her learn? What cultural information do educators need to become competent? Do they need to understand the cultures themselves or instead the learners through their cultures, that is, through the cultural elements expressed through their attitudes and behaviour?

In a review of literature, DeJaeghere & Zhang (2008, p. 260), identify several dimensions that are necessary for intercultural competence. These dimensions include:

- cultural self-awareness or consciousness-raising (Cross et al. 1989; Bennett 1993; Gay 2000, 73); awareness and acceptance of difference, and others’ cultural worldviews (Cross et al. 1989; Bennett 1993; Hammer and Bennett 2001);
- awareness of the social-construction of race, and prejudice and discrimination in historical and contemporary societal and school contexts (Sleeter 1992);
knowledge of cultural patterns and culture specific knowledge (Bennett 1993; Gay 2000); knowledge of and skill in using different communication and learning styles (J.M. Bennett 1986; Gay 2000); knowledge and skill in using diverse classroom management strategies; ability to adapt the curriculum content to reflect cultural diversity of students; and skills to implement various pedagogies, including discourse, participation and assessment, that are culturally relevant to one’s students (Gay 2000).

*Linking Worlds* suggests that the system of Indigenous education should be viewed as an intercultural one. Such systems function by respecting and appreciating the different cultures and allowing them to flourish with creativity and dignity. What these intercultural capabilities are is a matter of debate, discussion and further research although *Linking Worlds* has attempted to define them. Duignan (2006) would argue that it is not enough to demonstrate intercultural competence, but and intercultural leader must be able to imagine it and make it happen. It is suggested that all educators working in an intercultural system – whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous – be viewed as working together, and not apart, and that the leadership capabilities apply to both and will be required by the ‘collective leadership’ (Duignan, 2006) of intercultural schools.

- What factors influence and impact on educational leadership in remote Aboriginal communities, and how might this understanding assist in strengthening the leadership capacity of educational leaders?

*Linking Worlds* sought to identify the factors that influence and impact on educational leadership in remote Indigenous communities, and determine how this knowledge can assist in strengthening the leadership capacity of educational leaders. These factors are embodied in the relational themes identified through data analysis and include the many arenas of work where difference dominates. Remote schools are contexts in which clashes of understanding are common and language and cultural differences impede mutual understanding and the ability of people to take action. Cultural views around the meanings and purposes of the country, land and education are often at odds with each other. The learning that has to occur on both sides is significant and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff need ongoing support from beyond and within the community in order to develop as leaders.

Fundamental to leadership is the development of relationships through which mutual understanding can occur. As one experienced non-Indigenous principal puts it, “it’s all about - the bottom line about any successes or about relationships, you know - if you didn’t have good relationships then nothing else followed on”. Lack of relationships causes misunderstandings and confusion. An Indigenous educator speaks about a leadership strategy often used by Indigenous staff members but often misunderstood by non-Indigenous leaders: “passive resistance is winning the day... is a good leadership strategy. It’s a strategy for lots of things... (but) silence is not necessarily agreement.” Understanding factors such as these cultural differences in leadership is critical to addressing them. For example, a non-Indigenous principal emphasises the importance of adopting a joint form of leadership approach as the most appropriate for her community. She says, “the terminology’s been mulled over for many years and different models tried, but it’s a dual leadership by any other name.” Leadership models that emphasise individuals are seen as inappropriate for the remote school context in which she worked. This view of leadership was repeated consistently across participants.

The notion of having a big picture view of education refers to educational leaders’ ability to take note of history as well as the current conditions within which the school operates. The situation of the community is a result of a long history of interventions and incidents. When a community is healthy and strong it supports a school to be the same. Big picture issues also relate to the capacity of leaders to communicate and come to shared understandings of the purposes of education. A non-Indigenous educator says, “so it comes back then, to
that notion of the base, of having a shared understanding of where we’re all going in terms of education.” Without this shared understanding, people are working at cross-purposes. A non-Indigenous principal emphasises the importance of the quality of communication that occurs between the school and the community it serves. Communication per se is not enough. He says, “the examples of quality communication between the school and community is rare. I’m talking about quality communication. There might be one or two people that work at the school that the principal has a relationship with and they rely on very heavily. But otherwise interaction can be minimal.” Communication must be broadly based and inclusive of the whole community.

Added to this complexity is that Indigenous leaders have wide-ranging family and community responsibilities and commitments. In many instances Indigenous educators are part of the community, so they cannot separate themselves from community life in the same way that non-Indigenous educators can. Community history, past and current government policies, and social and emotional issues all have major impact and influence on educational leadership. Indigenous educators carry valuable community wisdom and knowledge and have the ability to bring this into the management and operation of the school. They are the sources of deeper perspectives on why things happen as they do, and how they could happen in the big picture of school, the community and Indigenous education more generally.

- How does the system define effective Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings?

The mainstream educational system - the bureaucracy - was spoken of by participants most frequently in terms of its over emphasis on management and administration in defining effective leadership. This emphasis was misplaced according to the dominant perceptions of those who work within the intercultural worlds of remote Indigenous schools. For example, an Indigenous participant rejected the emphasis on leadership as essentially about management of the school, as if school leadership could occur separate from everything else going on in the community:

> We can separate work from life much easier in an environment such as Mitchell Centre, than what you can when you're working at say, Gunbalanya, where there is, in fact, no separation. ... You are who you are all of the time. Your role within the community and your role within family is always really, really at the forefront and the expectations on you are always there. How you walk the line between making those distinctions is really important.

Another participant (non-Indigenous principal) reinforces this view referring to the two essential elements of the principal's leadership role. One is meeting the statutory requirements of the education act and the information requirements and the day-to-day management regime that the department puts in place. His message is that neither should dominate.

> Largely there's a Western construct on that and that predominates the system's thinking in what schools should be like. Because it dominates, it excludes the notion that a principal should be able to communicate with the children and should be able to communicate with the parents of the children and should have a deep understanding of the cultural circumstances of the community in which the school is located.

Indigenous participants felt removed from the system's decision making “the rules I have to follow, and it was not made for me ... I did not make this policy, CEO made this policy” and found the language of the system at times impenetrable — “the language that the non-Indigenous people use is very hard for us to understand” (Kamara, 2009). There was also
a view that the relationship between the system and the Indigenous educational leader was unequal and unbending:

I had to work under the mainstream system ... I am under a strict law or rules with the Department ... I have to go with what they expected me to do ... I had to work under the mainstream system and it was hard [to achieve] what ever changes [were] needed in the school ... I was like in a cage ... I was put to work under a system with people they put above me.

The message here is that this Indigenous leader has no meaningful relationship with the system which is viewed as being hierarchical, authoritarian and removed from the remote context. In other views expressed through the Linking Worlds project, the education system examines effective leadership through a Western lens and with Western expectations. Indigenous education leaders are expected to manage and implement educational policy to ensure Indigenous children achieve the same outcomes as children in urban settings. If this is achieved to the same level/standards in urban settings, then Indigenous educators are recognised and applauded as being effective leaders by the education system. The reality is much more complex.

Kamara’s (2009) research highlights this complexity9. One of Kamara’s informants, here referred by the pseudonym Margaret, endeavoured to bring a balance between the two knowledge systems, with pedagogical and management approaches that are equal in emphasis on the two world views. In her work, Margaret is confronted by two polarised cultures that are laden with values that are entrenched in the beliefs and traditions that they are founded on. She recounted her expectations of being able to synthesise these differences and bring them to a centring point where shared responsibility, interdependence, and respect for each other symbolise the essence of a community spirit. Margaret pointed out that developing an ideological shift was a hard battle in a community where people have been disenfranchised since the arrival of balanda10. Margaret is constantly challenged with the arduous task of walking between two contested worlds as she strives to bring the entire school community together: “It’s been a hard battle it’s been very long and no easy task in a community like this”. As Principal of a remote Indigenous school Margaret wants to have a shared understanding that values both cultures to work in a collaborative relationship:

I think that’s also what’s missing, and valuing others, what they bring and not only looking at it from balanda side but also try and bring this balanda side how that can complement bining11 culture and how those two cultures can work together.

It could mean working together side by side, parallel to each other...

- What expectations do educational systems and remote Indigenous communities have of Indigenous educational leaders in terms of their role and responsibilities?

The research showed that the role of an Indigenous education leader is multi-faceted requiring multi-dimensional responsibilities and capabilities. On the one hand, Indigenous education leaders are expected to be cognisant of the various educational management and administration policies required in the day-to-day running of a school, while on the other, to be the source of all things Indigenous as well as a resource for their community as a whole. From the perspectives of participants in this project, these expectations are unrealistic and yet, they define the lives of many remote Indigenous school leaders.

One Indigenous principal likens the role of Indigenous school leader to wearing two hats where each requires a different form of communication.

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9 The following section is based on Kamara (2009).
10 Used widely in Arnhem Land to refer to white people. Based on the Makasar ‘balanda’, from the Dutch ‘Hollander’.
11 Bining is the term used by Indigenous people in Western Arnhem Land to describe themselves.
so I had to wear two hats in the community. After hours I had to be just a normal person, but in school I had to be the boss. So I had to change my - my communication.

While negotiating these new roles, she tried;

not to distance myself, but to see that way, a way I could be a relative or aunt to some of the students in the school that I was the boss for, as well as my work. So I could look at both ways, yes.

The project found that the roles required of an Indigenous leader involve wrestling with myriad, competing expectations daily. Demands from within the community compete with those from outside and vice versa. An Indigenous principal spoke about how she balanced her responsibilities to the system with those to her community

(I had to) look after the school, that’s why I was there, and also people that come in... they didn’t know how to do the forms. And I used to help out...I did all the paperwork. They came in and asked me, so I did it and they came in lunchtime. I could do it all morning, to help out the community people.

Each world, the community world and departmental world, too often operates independently of the other, leaving the Indigenous educational leader under enormous pressure to satisfy everyone. A non-Indigenous principal felt that much of the pressure on Indigenous leaders could be relieved by improving understanding and empathy at management levels within the education systems.

You’ve got the core of your management people, who do not work with Aboriginal people, don’t know how to work with Aboriginal people or don’t believe that Aboriginal people can work on an equal basis.

Indigenous educational leaders told the researchers that they are well aware of the need to know and to work effectively within both worlds. As another Indigenous principal puts it,

An indigenous educational leader is someone who has knowledge about Aboriginal culture. Is someone who has, yeah, the knowledge with the Aboriginal culture and someone who is a qualified person,... in education....how the school works. You know, looking at both ways, Aboriginal ways and Australian ...Australian ways of learning and adapting. Making sure that kids have the knowledge about their ways and adapting it to Western ways.

An Indigenous school principal was concerned that schools are set up in remote communities without enough consultation and engagement with the community, “because those schools are set there in the community, set up in the community, as education, without community involvement ....but western influence coming in.”

As a result, *Linking Worlds* found that Indigenous community leaders need to be strong advocates for their children and communities, not only for achieving educational outcomes, but also for supporting community members with a range of other issues and challenges. They are expected to walk the talk, to be a balanced and upstanding member of the community, to listen, and learn from others, to be humble, to remember who they are and be strong in their identity. They are expected and work hard to honour their cultural roles and responsibilities as well as their educational roles and responsibilities.

**Ways forward: Implications for leadership and practice**

*Linking Worlds* recommends that the application of an *Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework* be considered to strengthen the capacity of Indigenous and non-Indigenous education leaders working in remote Indigenous schools. An educational leadership
‘framework’, rather than a ‘model’, is proposed in recognition of the cultural diversity and complexity of the remote Indigenous educational settings involved.

A leadership model can provide a comprehensive structure, in a form that guides and directs, and is particularly useful when it is known what is needed and how to achieve it. However, providing a model implies an assumption that schools are the same and their leaders should be able and willing to proceed in the same ways. This research clearly illustrates that, at this time, the processes and endpoints for school leadership within remote Indigenous intercultural worlds are contested and still being negotiated, making the application of a leadership model unsuitable. A framework, however, provides a different kind of structure around which to organise educational leadership policy and practice. A framework can provide an internal frame that supports leaders and a strong base on which they can build, but it is unfinished and must be added to and finished by those who work within it.

The *Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework* is informed by two principles. These are for systems to:

a. engage in a changed perspective on Indigenous education that encompasses an intercultural understanding of Indigenous education; and,

b. expand and enrich educational leaders’ intercultural capabilities.

These principles have been developed as a result of the research. When considering ways forward, these principles should inform leadership practice and leadership development.

**a. Engage in a changed perspective on Indigenous education that encompasses an intercultural understanding of Indigenous education.**

System leadership is understood as being exercised in five domains: identity, education, stewardship, community and future focus (Flagship for Creative & Authentic Leadership, 2007). The *Linking Worlds* project has expanded and redefined the domains as spheres of influence, and has added a sixth - interculturalism/both ways. Although interculturalism/both ways is a separate sphere, it is also recognised that interculturalism/both ways infuses all the others. This is graphically represented as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders who are involved in education “working together” interculturally to support the children with a strong focus on the “knowledge, the education”. This requires commitment by systems to show leadership in these six spheres of influence.
In Figure 5, the six stacked ovals represent the enriched system leadership spheres of influence within an intercultural world of education.

A. Interculturalism/Both Ways

Leadership in the intercultural/both ways sphere of influence focuses on building an ‘even understanding’ with the system. The concept of ‘both ways’ is interchangeable with interculturalism in that both are concerned with the intersection and linking of cultural ‘worlds’; the ‘space’ in which the overlap occurs; and, the teaching and learning that takes place within this space. Like the ‘both ways’ focus of the interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds, interculturalism ‘is an idea that proposes an encounter between cultures that take place from fundamental characteristics, matrices, and unique aspects of each individual culture’ (Coll, 2004, p. 27). To be engaged in an intercultural process “is a releasing experience for each of the cultures involved leading to an awareness of the limits that are inherent to our own cultures and worlds” (Coll, 2004, p. 28). From this basis meaningful dialogue can occur in order to shape and negotiate the development of the intercultural space. This requires intercultural reasoning that “emphasises the processes and interactions which unite and define the individuals and the groups in relation to each other” (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, p. 476). It is “a way of talking about the knowledge systems of two cultures working together’ (Marika, Ngurruwuthun, & White, 1992, p.28) where the “work of analysis and of acquiring knowledge applies to others as much as to oneself” (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, p. 477). Coulby’s (2006, p. 246) statement “that the need to recognize, tolerate and, at best, understand cultures other than that of the state into which people are born has never been more vital” emphasises the need for a both ways/intercultural perspective within educational systems to be supported and promoted. To paraphrase Bash & Zezlina-Phillips (2006, p. 249), if the educational experiences of Indigenous children are to be understood, contextual aspects cannot be ignored. Intercultural education needs to develop a discourse that can
move from the national forces that have intervened in remote Indigenous communities, to the intricacies of an Indigenous child attending a school in a remote Indigenous community.

B. Intercultural Identity

Intercultural identity is having the confidence and determination to move from the known to the unknown, using current knowledge as a springboard to gain new conceptual academic understandings within the intercultural space. Intercultural identity is being open-minded enough to see that there are alternative methods of reaching a goal, using new and innovative approaches drawing from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge systems (Ober 2004). There is an openness and freedom to learn from others, yet still stay true to yourself. It is about drawing on and acknowledging skills, language, knowledge, concepts and understandings from both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems (Ober 2004). Intercultural identity is about respect, understanding, ethics, equality and, justice. It is about balance and negotiation, complimenting and encouraging, not pulling down, but bringing out the best in each other. Within the intercultural space there is a need to acknowledge and celebrate cultural differences, whilst moving forward together and working together as a team. Intercultural identity is about collaboration not competition. This is fundamental to successful educational outcomes for Indigenous children. Indigenous people hold core beliefs and values that are fundamental to their identity. These values help Indigenous people to stand strong in who they are yet at the same time develop flexibility to try new approaches within the intercultural space. Land, language and culture are integral to Indigenous people’s identity. An intercultural identity is built on this understanding, as stated in one of the metaphors:

> When we start off in our community groups, our elders tell us a story, our education and that’s where we get it from our elders and that is our community group here.
> So we walk out with our parents telling us our indigenous knowledge and then we learn the white education way and we bring that back into our community again.

C. Intercultural Education

Indigenous people in the Northern Territory have been suggesting an alternative perspective on education for many years, one commonly referred to as ‘both ways’. The concept of both ways focuses on reciprocity and obligation in the areas of curriculum, knowledge, policies and power. It is also about balance:

> We don’t want to lose our culture with too many Balanda ways of living. In other words we don’t want to learn more Balanda education and less Yolngu education, or more Yolngu education and less Balanda education. We want to learn both with even understanding (Tamisari & Milmilany, 2003, pp. 5-6).

This call for an ‘even understanding’ is at the core of intercultural education. While there has to be a focus on teaching and learning of ‘both ways’ education in these intercultural spaces, it must also be balanced with an aim for all systems staff to work interculturally.

D. Intercultural Service

Intercultural leaders recognise that policy and organisational structures serve the system i.e. those engaged in intercultural education at community, classroom, school and central office levels. Intercultural service is informed by the values of respect, understanding, ethical behaviour, equality and social justice. Intercultural service involves developing relevant and applicable educational policy; providing the right level of physical and financial resources;

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12 Yolngu is the term used by Indigenous people in North East Arnhem Land to describe themselves.
and appropriate procedures to monitor, review, report and provide accountability to all stakeholders.

**E. Intercultural Community**

A fundamental principle underpinning this sphere of influence is that intercultural leaders acknowledge that each community is different in terms of culture, language and history; and, that there are certain cultural protocols, rules and boundaries related to different communities which need to be learned through interactions and relationship building. Relationships - including partnerships, networking, and community connections - are the fundamental aspects of intercultural leadership. As one informant stated: “You cannot lead if you don’t have others coming alongside you.” Solid relationships require key people to be honest and transparent with each other. Community organisations need to work and collaborate together, share information, and discuss community issues for better educational outcomes. There is a need for more community involvement in education with an emphasis on the purpose and important role of education for the future of their children.

**F. Future Intercultural Focus**

Beyond working to achieve better educational outcomes in the present, there is a need for concerted effort towards developing an intercultural future vision. Intercultural leaders demonstrate a commitment to a vision for education that imagines a better future as well as better present. This is described in one of the group’s metaphor as “travelling the unknown waters of daily experiences in order to explore together what lies beyond”.

**b. Expand and enrich education leaders’ intercultural capabilities.**

System leaders should demonstrate a range of capabilities: personal, relational, professional, organisational, and intercultural. These capabilities are founded on a value-based and ethical framework designed to integrate values and culture into future education policy and decision-making. System leaders recognise the importance of the connections between different issues, different individuals and different institutions. They understand that it is these connections that create systems, which are more than the sum of their parts. Duignan (2006, p. 125) states that “effective educational leaders have to be capable both as individuals and as professionals. They must be able to use their knowledge, skills and competencies confidently, with good judgement and wisdom, to solve complex problems in changing circumstances and context”.

The *Linking Worlds* project recognises the original five sets of capabilities identified by FCAL (2007) and described by Duignan (2006), and adds a sixth – intercultural capabilities (Fig. 5). Work drawn from the *Linking Worlds*’ conceptual analysis were used to describe/enrich each of these capabilities, by first describing the capability using actual quotes from the data, and then summarising the features of those capabilities for intercultural leadership contexts.
In Figure 6 the crescents represent Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators engaged with an intercultural world of education, and who possess the five leadership capabilities.

**Personal**

At the core of personal capabilities is a sense of self within an intercultural world. *Linking Worlds* suggests that strengthening personal leadership capabilities requires educators who:

- are committed to a vision for education and looks to the future as well as the present.
- take pride and satisfaction in other’s achievements, children’s particularly but also other adults.
- draw on personal sense of social justice and what is fair and right.
- see themselves as learners.
- have an openness to others, to build strong and appropriate relationships.
- value difference, rather than fearing or ignoring it.
- are self reflective, particularly in relation to their roles within schools and communities the values that guide their work.
- gauge their own strengths and weaknesses.
- recognise personal and professional strengths and the need to find a balance.
- have a sense of humour and ability to put things into proportion.
- have the ability to reflect analytically on issues, problems and community realities.
- are respectful and without arrogance.
- have the ability to act with the courage of their convictions and are not satisfied with the status quo.
- keep the big picture and the mundane in perspective - the micro and macro perspectives - while dealing with everyday complexities.
- have the ability to play a cross cultural diplomatic, facilitator role.

**Relational**

At the core of relational capabilities is the nurturing of intercultural relationships. ‘Right’ relationships were viewed in the metaphors as underpinning educational leadership in that they “are the key to education” and because they are built on “who is interested in us, who respects us and who we trust”. *Linking Worlds* suggest that strengthening relational capabilities requires educators who:

- acknowledge the importance of a community’s language and culture as being central to the school and embrace cultural practices as part of the school’s functions.
- recognise cultural protocols, rules, and boundaries related to their communities and learn these though interactions and relationships with the people.
• recognise that the school is affected by and reflects everything that is happening in the community too.
• seek and form partnerships across and within the system.
• understand that relationships are complex and diverse – internal and external to the school – but establishing the ‘right’ relationships is critical.
• know that schools are not separate entities, and that they must engage in partnerships with - and work and support - other community agencies.
• recognise that healthy family relationships are integral to strong schools and encourage families to work together for the sake of the kids
• recognise that forming and maintaining sound relationships must take priority which means that, sometimes, administration must wait.
• understand mentoring relationships benefit the school and the community and that mentoring occurs both ways.
• realise that good relationships are honest and transparent.
• acknowledge that relationships are based on equality and are inclusive where all opinions are valid and one view doesn’t dominate.
• endeavour to make new people feel welcomed.
• appreciate that relationships travel from the community to the school, and the school back to the community.
• build and strengthen relationships between staff and understand that that they are pivotal in creating better educational outcomes.
• value opinions equally.

Professional

At the core of professional capabilities is the development and application of personal skills to be responsive to enable the individual to take effective and appropriate action within unfamiliar and changing circumstances (Duignan, 2007, p. 120). Such circumstances might involve the leader being seen as having the ability to exercise good judgment when addressing contested values and the application of ethical principles in complex situations. *Linking Worlds* suggest that strengthening relational capabilities requires educators who:

• are contextually aware and responsive: it’s not a one size fits all - all contexts are different and responses to situations need to match the context.
• shape and implement change processes: are movers and a shakers, not complacent, take risks, and are motivated to see change.
• develop moral purpose: to right the wrong, to balance the unbalanced, to bring about change that will benefit the disadvantaged, and realise it is not just a job, but a human rights issue.
• develop a sense of coherence: to see and understand the big picture, and see how all the small parts fits together and function or operate effectively.
• inspire a collegial purpose and vision: encourage and inspire others to see, understand and engage in the purpose and vision; and walks and talks the purpose and vision.
• operate with a sound educational focus: draw on educational knowledge and personal philosophy to guide and inform decisions and processes.
• focus on core outcomes and accountabilities: know where they are heading, and how to get there; the strategies to use to achieve core outcomes; and, who they are accountable to.
• engage in work place learning and relevant professional development: supports and promotes on the job training, are continuous learners who identify their own learning needs and areas to be addressed by relevant professional development.
• develop efficient and robust structures and systems that can operate and function efficiently.
• are committed to service and professionalism, serving others professionally to the best of their ability.
• employ appropriate styles of decision making - individual/group/collaborative - suited to the context and depending on the situation.
• demonstrate a capacity to provide professional support and are aware of the professional development needs of others and responds appropriately.

Organisational
• At the core of organisational capabilities is the person of the leader who is able to respond to complex situations with confidence and an ability to react to unfamiliar situations in order to construct an environment where persons are able to perform and actualise their skills and abilities. Linking Worlds suggest that strengthening organisational capabilities requires intercultural educators who:
• engage in strategic and futures thinking and are aware of the big picture, having their fingers on the pulse, being one step ahead and on top of latest trends including current research, theories and policies.
• avoid imposing old paradigms on new realities in that they learn from the past, but don’t live in the past; moves with the times; and, create new paradigms for new realities.
• develop organisation capacity to respond to contemporary and future needs building on from last response with new and modified structures for new needs which are flexible but stable.
• build a sharing organisational culture that focuses energies and talents through identifying and drawing from the strengths, talents, skills of people in the organisation to bring about a culture of change.
• foster a growth promoting workplace.
• exercise principled and ethical stewardship.
• contribute to organisational sustainability.

Intercultural
Intercultural capabilities permeate through the personal, relational, professional, and organizational leadership capabilities. They are about possessing the skills and abilities to work and learn within the cultural overlaps of an intercultural educational context. Educational leaders who continually move into and interact within the intercultural educational space have ample opportunity to create the openings for real engagement and dialogue between educators, community members, parents, children, and educational administrators.

Linking Worlds suggest that strengthening intercultural leadership capabilities requires educators who:
• establish, strengthen and value respectful relationships.
• acknowledge and accept local traditional leadership as well as school leadership systems
• recognise and respect the diversity of perspectives on land, language and culture.
• reinforce, promote and acknowledge identity.
• stimulate balanced dialogue around an intercultural/both-ways philosophy of education.
• promote intercultural perspectives across the curriculum.
• create time and space to learn from each other.
• create a non-threatening environment where people feel free to express themselves.
• value intercultural systems.
• see oneself as on a continual learning journey.
• work towards balancing imbalances.
Ways forward: an Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework

The Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework (Fig. 7) consists of re-defined intercultural spheres of influence and intercultural capabilities required for understanding and for working within an intercultural world. Both the spheres of influence and capabilities are not considered as fixed but should be viewed as organic and flexible and to be added to through further research and discussion.

Enriched system leadership spheres within an intercultural world:
A. Interculturalism/both ways
B. Intercultural identity
C. Intercultural education
D. Intercultural service
E. Intercultural community
F. Future intercultural focus

Figure 7: Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework

Linking Worlds recommends that the system – encompassing educational bureaucracies such as NT DET and CEO NT; professional organisations that engage with the systems, like Principals Australia; and, educational institutions that prepare system workers like BiITE and ACU – could be active in a number of ways. They can engage in a changed perspective on Indigenous education as intercultural - which encompasses an intercultural understanding of Indigenous education – and can expand and enrich education leaders’ intercultural capabilities through several activities. For bureaucracies and professional organisations this could be policy development, and leadership training and professional support for new and continuing staff; while for education institutions this could be new units for existing or planned courses. Examples of these appear in Appendix A.

Conclusion

The Linking Worlds project has investigated and broadly examined the issue of strengthening Indigenous educational leadership capacity in remote Indigenous schools in the Northern Territory, including an investigation of the unique ‘worlds’ within which leadership is exercised. Outcomes of this investigation indicate the necessity for specialist sets of skills, knowledges and attributes, framed as leadership capabilities, for effective educational leadership in these complex and challenging contexts. This research contributes new perspectives on educational leadership that address a gap in research literature pertaining to remote Indigenous schools as well as building on and enhancing our understanding of capabilities necessary to work
effectively in these contexts. The analysis highlights the limitations of western leadership theories and practices when they ignore the historical, socio-economic and cultural values of remote Indigenous communities.

The research demonstrates that remote Indigenous children do indeed live in unique worlds where Western and Indigenous ways of knowing, being and making meaning are often worlds apart. To work with these children, their families and communities, educational leaders need to recognise as fundamental to their work a sincere acknowledgement and respect for people, elders, country, language and intercultural systems. The identification of the uniqueness of remote Indigenous educational settings as intercultural worlds, different to most educational settings located in Australian urban or regional contexts, emphasizes the need for different forms of educational leadership to be practised. This awareness forms a basis for understanding and accepting the need for new intercultural leadership capabilities.

School cultures in the NT, as is the case elsewhere in Australia, are guided and shaped primarily by Western educational policies, practices, guidelines, accountabilities and orientations. These approaches have proved to be inadequate if we measure success by outcomes achieved by the children who attend these schools. Many of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational leaders involved in this study agreed that the status quo was not sufficient to the needs of remote Indigenous communities. In too many cases Western educational leadership practices and orientations have dominated school life to the exclusion or marginalisation of Indigenous perspectives. In order to strengthen educational leaders and their capacity to work within these schools, new approaches are needed.

In remote Indigenous communities, local people have strong cultural connections - to each other, their lands, languages and cultural practices. They have developed leadership approaches and ways of working that are as important as those that exist within the mainstream of society. However, these approaches are also insufficient in the remote Indigenous context where local people express a strong interest and determination to secure a ‘Western’ education for their children in order to prepare them for their futures within and beyond their communities. To lead effectively within these contexts thus requires a set of intercultural capabilities that acknowledge and address the educational and leadership discontinuities and disconnections that have occurred between communities and mainstream education systems. Educational leaders, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, need to be strong in identity, resilient and determined, and, most importantly, able to stand in the gap between cultures where new leadership practices are created, learned and required. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators who participated in this project articulated these ideas.

The set of intercultural capabilities for educational leadership in remote Indigenous contexts generated through this project have taken as their starting point educational leadership capabilities already identified in mainstream contexts: personal, relational, organizational and professional capabilities (FCAL 2007). By adding an intercultural dimension, new capabilities are signalled that enable educational leaders to bridge the gap, from both sides of the divide. Intercultural capabilities are about possessing the competence and confidence to work from a social, cultural and professional position and rely on the establishment and strengthening of relationships amongst key stakeholders, both within and beyond the communities. They enable work around difference and discontinuity to be made explicit rather than ignored or disregarded. They open up an intercultural space between mainstream and local culture where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators are required and equipped to negotiate educational practice in the best interest of the children and families they serve. All educators in remote school settings require these intercultural capabilities.

The focus in this report on intercultural capabilities rather than competencies is important (Duignan, 2006). Understanding the fundamental differences between leadership capabilities
and leadership competencies leads to new understandings of the nature of educational leadership, an understanding particularly pertinent to the complex, dynamic and unique intercultural contexts found in remote indigenous community schools. As Duignan (2006) has argued, a focus on leadership competency concerns present performance whereas leadership capability draws in the future and ability to imagine and then bring something new into being. Competent leadership assumes a shared understanding of what is needed - which as this study has shown is not the case - and emphasises the capacity to control and manage. In contrast, capable leadership recognises the dynamic nature of the leadership context where there is an assumption that we do not know exactly what is needed thus requiring the capability to learn and develop. Finally, leadership competency emphasises fitness for - usually other people’s purpose, while - leadership capability is about judging fitness of the purpose itself. This final distinction clearly addresses the complexity of remote indigenous leadership contexts where the cultural and mainstream purposes of education are clearly still being negotiated. These distinctions inform the development of Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework.

Based on this project, a number of future actions and applications of project outcomes are indicated. There are policy, professional development and formal training options that include the study and practice of intercultural capabilities. The proposed Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework is a tool to guide these and other activities and should prove to be useful to educators working in other intercultural worlds beyond remote Indigenous Australia.
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APPENDIX A

Examples of the Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework in practice
Background

The Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework can be the basis for policy development for Intercultural educational leadership in remote communities. The vision for the future of education in the Northern Territory is expressed in Closing the Gap of Indigenous Disadvantage: A Generational Plan of Action (2008) with its 20 year, 10 year and 5 year targets and actions in education. Closing the Gap does not mention issues related to educational leadership, the focus of the research in the Linking Worlds project, and there exists the opportunity to develop policy in this area. Using the Closing the Gap model the following is proposed for policy development: An Intercultural Educational Leadership Policy for Remote Indigenous Schools (IELP).

- The Gap

1. The overall number of educational leaders with a demonstrated intercultural understanding of Indigenous education does not match the number of schools in remote communities.
2. There is no policy relating to the identification and development of aspiring and current educational leaders’ intercultural capabilities.
3. The need for a strategy for leadership succession and succession planning to ensure the ongoing success of the IELP.

- The Approach

There are five levels of approach to implementing a policy that can be used to increase the number of intercultural educational leaders and develop a strategy for succession planning:

1. The first is explicit system-wide recognition and support for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational leaders already working in the system and already occupying the intercultural space to enable them to carry out their work from a solid policy foundation.
2. The second is the identification and encouragement of Indigenous teachers already in the system to participate in professional development programs aimed at increasing their intercultural capabilities, and to increase the number of intercultural educational leaders at Principal and senior management levels.
3. The third is to introduce younger Indigenous teachers to the concept of interculturalism - as it applies to their current schools context – in order to advance career pathways leading to future intercultural leadership positions.
4. The fourth is the identification and encouragement of non-Indigenous teachers already in the system to participate in professional development programs aimed at increasing their intercultural capabilities, and to increase the number of intercultural educational leaders at Principal and senior management levels.
5. The fifth is to introduce younger non-Indigenous teachers, who are new to the system, to the concept of interculturalism, in order to advance career pathways leading to future intercultural leadership positions.

- The Targets

20 Year Targets

a. Non-Indigenous staff members occupying leadership positions at all levels of education – primary, secondary, tertiary and TAFE – to be monitored to ensure comparable participation with Indigenous staff.

b. Succession planning strategies for Indigenous staff to ensure continuity of quality applicants be regularly reviewed.
c. Participation rates of Indigenous persons in tertiary education at teaching, administrative and leadership levels be increased.

d. The participation rates of Indigenous community members in pre-service teacher education courses to be comparable with that of non-Indigenous community members.

10 Year Targets

a. Targets for participation rates in professional development and intercultural leadership programs be established.
b. Strategies to develop future intercultural educational leaders be implemented to build an increased participation rate of Indigenous students in secondary education.
c. Recruitment programs for pre-service teachers be increased with a view to increasing intercultural participation.
d. Succession planning strategies for Indigenous educational leaders be reviewed and updated.

5 Year Targets

a. Encourage Indigenous students to consider teaching and intercultural educational leadership as a career path.
b. Ensure that the concept of interculturalism is understood by tertiary educators and incorporated into pre-service education programs.
c. Introduce succession planning strategies for current intercultural leaders.
d. Offer a range of scholarships and opportunities for Indigenous tertiary educators to create and develop a culture of intercultural leadership, intercultural leadership research and scholarship, and intercultural leadership skills in tertiary courses and professional development activities.
(ii) Leadership training and support

The Intercultural Educational Leadership Framework can inform a variety of professional development programs for new and continuing staff. The below example is modeled on a web-based program for Principal Australia’s Dare To Lead initiative. This example focuses on exploring Intercultural Relational Capabilities and could form the basis for the school’s Learning Together sessions.

### Intercultural Leadership Capabilities for Remote Indigenous Schools

**What is systems leadership?**

Systems leadership is deemed to be inclusive of all systems personnel, irrespective of formal positions of authority. System leaders recognise the importance of the connections between different issues, different individuals and different institutions. They understand that it is these connections that create systems, which are more than the sum of their parts. More >>>

**What is an intercultural educational world?**

An intercultural educational world is "a way of talking about the knowledge systems of two cultures working together in an educational context. It consists of a number of interconnected spheres:

- **A. Interculturalism/both ways** - Leadership in the intercultural/both ways sphere focuses on building an 'even understanding' with the system. More >>>
- **B. Intercultural identity** - Leadership in the intercultural identity sphere is having the confidence and determination to move from the known to the unknown, using current knowledge as a springboard to gain new conceptual academic understandings within the intercultural space. More >>>
- **C. Intercultural education** - Leadership in intercultural education focuses on reciprocity and obligation in the areas of curriculum, knowledge, policies and power. It is also about balance. More >>>
- **D. Intercultural service** - Leadership in the intercultural service sphere recognises that policy and organisational structures serve the intercultural system i.e. those engaged in intercultural education at community, classroom, school and central office levels. More >>>
- **E. Intercultural community** - Leadership in the intercultural community sphere acknowledges that each community is different in terms of culture, language and history; and, that there are certain cultural protocols, rules and boundaries related to different communities which need to be learned through interactions and relationship building. More >>>
- **F. Future intercultural focus** - Leadership in the future intercultural focus sphere demonstrate a commitment to a vision for education and who look to the future as well as the present. More >>>

**What are leadership capabilities?**

Leadership capabilities are founded on a value-based and ethical framework designed to integrate values and culture into future education policy and decision-making. Leadership capabilities are an integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively not just in familiar and highly focused specialist contexts but also in response to new and changing circumstances. Intercultural leaders demonstrate a range of capabilities:

- **A. Personal** – intercultural leaders have a sense of 'self'. More >>>
- **B. Relational** – intercultural leaders nurture relationships. More >>>
- **C. Professional** – intercultural leaders understands teaching and learning in intercultural contexts, are strategic and have high expectations of all involved in the educational profession. More >>>
- **D. Organisational** – intercultural leaders influence policy and curriculum, and understands management for intercultural schools. More >>>
- **E. Intercultural** – intercultural leaders possess the skills and abilities to work and learn within the cultural overlaps of an intercultural educational context. More >>>
### Intercultural Relational Capabilities

Read each of the following statements and decide if you agree or disagree, and why. Firstly do this activity on your own, and then use it as the basis for beginning conversations with the rest of the team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational capabilities:</th>
<th>Agree/disagree:</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe that the school -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ recognises our community’s cultural protocols, rules, and boundaries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ recognises that it is affected by and reflects everything that is happening in the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ understands that relationships are complex and diverse but establishing the right relationships is critical.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ knows that it is not a separate entity, and engages in partnerships with - and works and supports - other community agencies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ recognises that healthy family relationships is integral to our school and encourages families to work together for the sake of the kids.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ recognises that forming and maintaining sound relationships take priority which means that administration can wait.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ understands mentoring relationships benefit the school and the community and that mentoring occurs both ways.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ realises that relationships within the school and across the community must be sensitive, honest and transparent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ acknowledges that relationships are based on equality and are inclusive where all opinions are valid and one view doesn’t dominate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ endeavours to make new partners and new staff feel welcomed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ build and strengthen relationships between staff and understands that this is important towards better educational outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ values opinions equally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(iii) Links with ACU and BIITE for formal professional training

The Linking Worlds report proposes that effective leadership in intercultural schools requires authentic understanding and related action; and that this can only be achieved through a dedication to ongoing leadership learning. Authentic intercultural leadership is particularly attuned to the values, beliefs and behavioural uniqueness of the students, teachers and others which comprise the remote school community. The Intercultural Leadership in Remote Indigenous Contexts unit could be offered as a specialisation unit in ACU National’s undergraduate teacher education programs; a core unit for BIITE’s undergraduate teacher education program; and/or a specialist unit in BIITE’s and ACU National’s post-graduate educational and educational leadership programs.

Unit Title:
Intercultural Leadership in Remote Indigenous Contexts

Unit Descriptor:
This Unit examines educational leadership within remote Indigenous contexts. Three key focuses include the meaning and practice of educational leadership within remote Indigenous schools, intercultural leadership capabilities and system leadership.

Learning Objectives
On completion students will:

- Reflect critically on historical, socio-political, cultural and contemporary conceptions of educational leadership
- Articulate traditional and contemporary theories of educational leadership
- Critically examine pre-determined and self-selected critical issues confronting leaders who work in remote Indigenous school contexts
- Engage with issues of difference, including Indigenous perspectives, in relation to contemporary school leadership practice in remote Indigenous contexts
- Describe and critically analyse leadership roles that actively promote equity and diversity
- Practice action learning towards an understanding and application of intercultural leadership

Teaching/Learning Strategy:
A range of teaching and learning strategies are used in this Unit to achieve the learning objectives. These include readings, lecturers, tutorials, group discussions, case studies, action learning project and online debates to reflect on leadership in remote Indigenous contexts, and action research projects.

Assessment

- Task 1

The first piece of assessment for this Unit enables students to critically reflect on a hypothetical case study of remote Indigenous school leadership and apply new concepts to leadership that this Unit explores. There are two parts to this task. Part A is collaborative and asks students to reflect on a case study by role playing with a partner through email to explore and problematise a case study, and posting their ideas and reflections on the discussion board. Part B requires students to read and critically reflect on two of the readings provided. Working with their partner students will develop a joint action plan to address the dilemma embodied in the case study. Aim to write up your action plans in approximately 300 words.
• **Task 2**

Students will undertake an independent action learning project to explore and critically analyse a contemporary issue related to leadership in Indigenous context. Those students already working in a classroom (including practicum experience), will be encouraged to base their investigation in this setting.

**Content Overview:**
This Unit consists of three modules:

**Theory and Practice of Educational Leadership**
- Traditional educational leadership theories
- Contemporary concepts of educational leadership including 'system leadership'.
- Nature of professional practice and leadership within intercultural worlds

**Intercultural School leadership**
- Leadership capabilities; personal, relational, professional, organisational and intercultural
- Intercultural leaders as change agents
- Orientation to action learning techniques

**Current Issues of Leadership in Remote Indigenous Schools**
- Leadership roles and responsibilities, autonomy, accountability and purpose
- Leadership in action
- Leadership and inclusion: culture, incusivity and Indigenous led collaboration

**Major Learning Resources:**


APPENDIX B

Research Protocols: Information Brochure
**Linking Worlds:**
**Strengthening the Leadership Capacity of Indigenous Educational Leaders in Remote Education Settings**

**What is the project?**
The Linking Worlds project looks into the work of Indigenous educational leaders in remote community schools. We want to find out what Indigenous educational leaders do. We want to know what their ‘vision’ is for their schools and what support they need to carry out their vision.

**Who paid for it?**
The Linking Worlds project has been funded by the Australian Research Council; the Northern Territory Catholic Education Office; the Northern Territory Department of Education, Employment and Training; and, the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council.

**What is the duration of the project?**
Linking Worlds started in September 2005 and will end in September 2009.

**Where did this idea come from?**
The idea for the Linking Worlds project came from stories told by Indigenous educators. For example, Brandon Garraadj from Gumbalanya wrote about the importance of Indigenous educators supporting their children and describes it in this picture.

Brandon says: *This picture describes the knowledge of the binij people before they go on to the western world … The old man is not just pointing but giving his words ‘kummayali’, which we call knowledge … The grandson will use all the skills given to him by his granddad. No matter what happens he just has to focus on his studying and never look back … We must always support our children for their further education because it is very important. They are the ones who are our future.*

**Who are the researchers?**
The researchers come from the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and the Flagship for Creative and Authentic Leadership at the Australian Catholic University (ACU). Between them, they have had many years of experience of education work in remote Indigenous communities.

**Have they got permission?**
The project has permission and support from the NT Catholic Education Office and the NT Department of Education, Employment and Training. Participating schools can withdraw at anytime. Participants give their permission by signing a ‘consent’ form. The researchers will also seek permission from Land Councils each time they wish to visit communities. Also, ACU’s and BIITE’s Ethics Committee have approved this research.

*At all times, the visiting researchers will obtain the correct permits and observe community customs.*

© Brandon Garraadj, 2001
How will the information be collected? What will you be doing?

There are four ways that the researchers will collect the information:

1. **Metaphor Workshops** involve researchers working with groups talking about educational leadership issues.
2. **Face-to-face Interviews** involve researchers interviewing invited educators with experiences in remote Indigenous schools.
3. **Document analysis** involves researchers reading and reviewing relevant educational policies and reports.
4. **Historical research** involves researchers reading historical documents on schooling in remote Indigenous communities.

How much time will this project take?

Researchers will deliver Metaphor Workshops over six months in 2008 at locations throughout the Northern Territory. In most cases the workshops will take place when educators are meeting as a group, however, researchers will also visit schools if they are invited. Interviews will take place with invited educators at convenient times and places during 2008. Document analysis and historical research will be completed by mid-2008.

Can I leave the project at any time?

Participants can leave the project at any time without having to say why.

What are the benefits of the project?

If you participate, you will be involved in a research project. You can learn more about research. This might give you credit towards a course. You can tell us what you think about educational leadership in your community. Your views might lead to changes that will benefit you, your school and your community.

What will be done with the information?

The information will be published in a report. The report will include your ideas about educational leadership. The report will be presented to all participating schools. The report will also be presented to BiTE, ACU, the NT Catholic Education Office, the NT Department of Education Employment and Training, and the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council. The information may appear in other publications, or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify you in any way. The final report will be available online at www.acu.edu.au/linkingworlds

Who can you contact if you have any questions or concerns?

You can talk to Robyn, Lyn, Tony or Jack. If you have any worries about the project, you can also talk to the BiTE’s or ACU’s Ethics Committee.

**BiTE Research and Ethics Committee**
Free call: 1800 677 095
Emails:
robyn.ober@batchelor.edu.au
lyn.fasoli@batchelor.edu.au
Phone: 1800 677 095

**ACU Human Research Ethics Committee**
Telephone: 02 9701 4159
Emails:
t.darbon@mary.acu.edu.au
j.frawley@mary.acu.edu.au
Phone: 02 9701 4000
APPENDIX C

Data Collection: Metaphor Workshops
Metaphor Workshops

- Participants define and describe educational leadership issues in remote Indigenous communities through metaphor workshops.
- Principals from remote CEO schools
  - NT DEET’s Indigenous Leadership Forum
  - BIITE’s community-based education students
  - BIITE’s graduate seminar
  - APAPDC tri-state conference
- Metaphors are a way to describe something.
- Metaphors state that something is something else.
- Metaphors often draw on cultural symbols, monuments, images or emblems.

Educational leadership is a ...

In groups:

1. Discuss what are the characteristics you wish to describe
   - How is educational leadership viewed and defined?
   - Who is an educational leader?
   - What kind of leadership is needed?
   - What do educational leaders do?
   - How are leaders supported and encouraged?
   - What is the role of the community and the system in educational leadership?

3. Illustrate the metaphor

5. Share, explain and discuss the metaphor
I guess just looking at some of the metaphors here, the idea of leadership seems to be residing essentially in a person and we moved away from that idea completely to the idea of leadership being more of what it can’t create being a servant kind of concept which is what it should be. It’s about a certain kind of concept leading to real education and life opportunities for children. So I think that’s where we started and Rhonda is the artist here and I don’t know whether I’m going to do justice to the interpretation of her iconography there. But I think the idea was that this side here represents learning for children occurring – well the whole thing represents learning occurring, or education occurring in a number of different contexts. This over here represents the learning that comes from family, so these are the grandparents with grandchildren, children learning in that context and the educational leadership that occurs completely outside of the institution of school but absolutely critical to laying the foundations for children. This represents possibly more formal learning within – we were looking specifically in the context of indigenous education, the children are learning from elders I guess in various forums. I guess for young men it might be in a certain context, for young women in another context. So that’s another kind of learning that’s really critical for children. So these are all connected in the modern world. So that needs to still be happening, this needs to be happening, the children also need to have experiences of learning in kind of like I guess a school setting where they get that knowledge too of the world beyond their own immediate context. So this represents school so that’s why I guess there’s a mixture of both pink and brown there. So I think the overriding theme is that educational leadership is happening everywhere. It’s not about it being in one person who happens to be called the principal, it’s about a whole ... I guess it’s the old metaphor that it takes a village to raise a child, it’s everybody in their own way to the educational development of the child.
APPENDIX D

Data Collection: Interviews and Focus Group Questions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>How might an understanding of the factors that impact on educational leadership in remote Indigenous communities assist in strengthening the capacity of educational leaders?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-questions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prompts or ancillary questions</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. How is educational leadership viewed and defined in remote Indigenous schools? | a. Who and what is an educational leader?  
b. Are educational leaders the ones with the ‘title’ or are there other people who are educational leaders in your school/community?  
c. How do you know when a person is acting like/being a leader/is a leader? |
| 2. What kind of leadership is needed for remote Indigenous schools? | a. Who do leaders lead?  
b. What vision did you have for the school? Was it realised?  
c. What values did you promote? How did you promote these?  
d. What advice would you give to current and future leaders? |
| 3. What do educational leaders do? | a. How did you become an educational leader?  
b. What skills, knowledge, qualifications and abilities do educational leaders have?  
c. What is meant by authority?  
d. Did you think/reflect about what you were doing in your leadership? How did this thinking?  
e. What were some of the hardest things you had to do?  
f. Who is involved in decision-making?  
g. Who is involved in planning?  
h. Who communicates with whom and why? |
| 4. How is effective leadership encouraged and supported? | a. What or who helped you to make difficult decisions?  
b. What was it you did well as an educational leader and felt proud about?  
c. What kept you strong?  
d. In an ideal school, how would an educational leader be supported and what would that support look like?  
e. What would Principals need to do to become more effective? |
| 5. How do educational leaders negotiate partnerships between their schools and their respective communities? | a. How is the community involved in schooling?  
b. Whose values are supported in the school/community in relation to education?  
c. How does the school engage the community to manage conflict?  
d. How are your skills used in the school and in the community?  
e. Are there any gaps between the school and the community? If so, what are they?  
f. What role does kinship play in schooling?  
g. How do you manage kinship obligations and the demands of working in a school operating within western cultural rules? |
| 6. How do educational leaders negotiate their relationships with the system/sector beyond their communities? | a. How does the Principal get appointed?  
b. How do other staff get appointed?  
c. What professional development opportunities do staff need?  
d. How are these best delivered? |
APPENDIX E

Data Collection: DEET Lead Stories
I just want to express myself, about my own experience of being a leader in my community.

It took me about two years when I first ran a program for the executive staff. Through those years I have learnt how the education system runs within the department, learning new things that I don’t know, how the system works, how the system runs through other people in different areas. It was just a task for me to do, going through that process. One other thing that I found was just getting a clear picture of what it means to me, so how will I work with it in my own community to help people in my community and the school. Firstly its just , what I felt, how I felt, they don’t have to look at me as a leader, just a woman, that’s how I felt people should see me, but learning through all those processes like understanding of the western concepts and the department, the power they have, the strategies they plan. To me it seemed like, firstly I learned that people are still attached by the string. Like they want to lead people within their workplace still attached by a string. “I want you to do this, I want you to do that”. To me I felt it real, I wasn’t quite sure whether to go through it or just make it up and adapt it into my own culture.

In the community, seen as being a leader, I get involved in many ceremonies, like preparation, one of the biggest ceremonies we have up in that area is the men’s business and I’m seen as one of the ____ Which is the same one like ____ said and its my mothers ceremony and every family had to realise who are the custodians or the caretakers and we run the show, we organise everything. People look after ladies, old people, women, young girls. I work with kids, helping families that might have problems like in a community when they have problems or looking after old people who have difficulties and helping them or helping other families. I’m a female leader who’s holding both cultures and I look at myself and I’m in the middle and with my both hands I’m holding the western concept, western ideas and knowledge that I use in part of my workplace and then I hold on my other hand my own culture. Learning to become a leader I went through most of the PD that was run through by the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP), which helped me gain more understanding. It’s a good program. It’s not like this program, it’s not going to change you to a big leader or guru or someone who’s somewhere high but it’s just a concept and ideas how different people, when they’re seen as the leaders and what power they have, structure they have and it’s a real, real helpful, I’ve learned through my ELP program. It’s not a way of changing your life into someone new, it’s just the ideas you learn, whose got a lot of experience or expertise and just to get ideas from them. I’ll try, one of my visions if I see myself as a leader, I have to try and show myself as a leader where people can recognise me. I’ve been doing a lot of work with different agencies working with them and it’s the first time meeting other people that I don’t know, meeting new faces that I have never worked with before and it’s a career pathway really where I’m heading. I’ll try just to, apart from my health, I mean if I feel sick I still drag myself to work but working back home, the first priority I see is students, the staff and the school. Helping parents understand what education is because one of the issues in our community is low attendance and we’re trying to get a message across to some of the parents, some don’t have an educational background and we’re trying to help them get engaged to help get the students to school every day. That’s one of the tasks we’re trying to do. To work on that plan.