



## TRANSFORMING PEDAGOGIES WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES

### Heroic Endeavours and Relationships

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#### *Warning*

*Please be aware that this digital content may contain references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may have passed away.*

### **Context**

Indigenous affairs in Australia have come into the spotlight recently with the dramatic intervention into Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory in response to the NT Government's *Little Children are Sacred* report. This has brought many of the issues facing Indigenous Australians to the public through various news articles and commentary. While many in Australia have little direct contact with Indigenous Communities, those who work closely with communities are aware of the complexities of outback life and the need to promote harmonious relationships between the two cultures who live and work in partnership, especially in Central Australia. There is a clear need of teachers to prevent sweeping generalisations which can be used by some to promote a distorted view of any culture and instead promote a climate of understanding, respect and value in the classroom.

### **Dealing with the issue of racism**

In the English subject context, it is advisable not to 'directly address' the issue, as it can bring some feelings to the surface which are influenced by values and ideas that are based on long held stereotypes and often irrelevant anecdotes. It is far more useful and appropriate to take a step back and study a rich text that contextualizes the issue. From past experience it is quite advisable to even study a text which deals with the consequence of racism from a different culture so that students develop their own connections between racism, violence and a continuation of oppression that results. This allows space and safety to discuss issues without any risk of bringing culture into the discussion before students have had a chance to examine

and explore their own values.

## Limitations

Prior to looking at the TLF resources, I have looked at racism through Afro-American culture and then linked it through an Australian text. This has been done through looking at *To Kill a Mockingbird* and studying the civil rights movement and its beginnings with the murder of Emmett Till (through the documentary shown on ABC and available from Amazon) then linking to *Rabbit Proof Fence*. This unit of work has successfully been delivered to Year 9 classes in the past. The main limitation of this unit has been the lack of relevant and accessible information regarding Indigenous Australians that interest a diverse range of abilities and integrate with technology. TLF learning objects and digital resources have changed that.

## The revised unit

This unit aims to connect more specifically with Year 8 and 9s to give background to the issues raised in *To Kill a Mockingbird* through the theme of *Heroic Endeavours and Relationships*. It will link *Nightjohn* by Gary Paulsen with a range of learning objects and digital resources that specifically relate to sporting heroes (Michael Long), media heroes (Mervyn Bishop), the poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal and then connecting to images and political movements such as the Mabo Judgement, Aboriginal Land Rights Act and Vincent Lingiari/Gough Whitlam/Wave Hill Walkout.

Initial activities focus on digital resources (primarily photographs) while students engage in a shared/independent reading of the text *Nightjohn* by Gary Paulsen which involves the usual activities associated with a text response:

- Character analysis
- Chapter summary
- Analysis of context/history/geography
- Setting/plot
- Review
- Page/language analysis

## Digital resources and focus questions

*Dr Stirling, alligator shooting Daly River, 1891*

 TLF ID R4199



*From the collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Photograph by Paul Foelsche.*

### Focus questions


- What does the title suggest about the understanding of Australia and its environment?
- Discuss clothing and its appropriateness for the environment.
- What do you think was the role of the whites and the indigenous people in the photograph.
- Justify your opinion (1 paragraph).
- Choose one of the white hunters and one of the indigenous trackers. Write a description of both.
  - Now write a narrative or recount which looks at how both individuals came to be in the photograph. Make sure you are descriptive. Each piece of writing should make use of language devices including metaphors and similes.

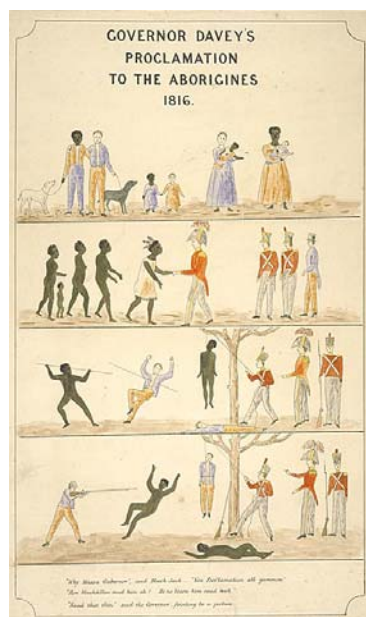
*Indigenous Australians defending their land, c1817 TLF ID R4024*

Focus questions

- From what perspective is this painting taken?
- What are the messages/meaning of this painting?
- What image of indigenous people does this painting present? Discuss whether this image conforms or confronts popular images presented about 'First Contact'.
- Write a description of what is happening, either the perspective the white 'settlers' in the ships or the traditional indigenous people on the cliffs.
- Discuss the purpose of this painter. Why did the painter create it? What was the message to the viewer?

*A proclamation to Indigenous Australians, 1829*

 TLF ID R4384



*Reproduced courtesy of National Library of Australia*

Focus questions

- Students are to write a description of what is happening in each slide which focuses on:
  - the events occurring
  - relate back to the Governor's proclamation
  - the nature of a proclamation
  - the role of satire
  - the text, especially the meaning of 'gammon' and its contemporary use in NT language
  - message and purpose

*Rugby League players Peter Stirling and Arthur Batson, 1981 TLF ID R6143*

Focus discussions around:

- The power of photography
- Photographer's/audience perspectives
- Choice of black & white image
- The power of sport to unite - the cultural relationship of sport in Australia
- Racism in sport and the power of sport to assist in overcoming racism (consider issues such as instantiation/exceptions and the role in generalized racism)

## **NT perspectives in photography**

The role of Orders of Australia - students to investigate the award.

- How is it awarded?
- What does it mean?
- The importance of such awards for Australia and its culture.
- Check for existing understanding/knowledge of indigenous land rights, Vincent Lingiari/Gough Whitlam/Wave Hill Walkout, Native Title Act / Mabo High Court Ruling, Aboriginal Land Rights Act.
- Directly link with text study - Indigenous Wage rights/abuse of slaves.
- Extension activity. Students are to examine the warning shown regarding the possible displayed of deceased persons which may offend some indigenous people. Students are to consider the term 'kumanji' and write down why many Australian Aboriginal Cultures consider it offensive to mention the names or display images of deceased individuals.

*Gough Whitlam and Vincent Lingiari at Wattie Creek 1975 TLF ID R6141*

Focus tasks

- Students are to research Vincent Lingiari, Gough Whitlam, the Wave Hill Walkout and the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.
- Examine the award of 'Order of Australia'.
- Explain why Vincent Lingiari was awarded the Order of Australia.
- Write a paragraph about their research and explain why many see Lingiari as a heroic figure in contemporary Aboriginal history.
- Learn where Wave Hill and Kalkaringi are in the NT.

## Extension activity

### Focus tasks

- Examine self-government in the Northern Territory and its significance.
- Respond to the photo
  - The use of black and white (unnecessary [colour available] in 1978);
  - Positioning in photo and any significance.

Students are then to use the following learning objects to study important indigenous heroes. Students must write on at least two. One paragraph on each chosen which will be linked in the summative essay task to the text. Students should focus on the achievements both personal and for the wider Indigenous/Australian culture.

The use of learning objects should initially be a shared activity. Students should write on each studied, then choose two of those Indigenous Australians studied to write on in detail.

Indigenous Leader	Description	TLF ID
Charles Perkins*	Social Activist	LO ID 5209
David Unaipon	Inventor, writer, on \$50 note	LO ID 5211
Michael Long	Footballer	LO ID 5210
Oodgeroo Noonuccal	Poet	LO ID 5210
Mervyn Bishop**	Photographer Mission life Photographer The early years The old days	LO ID 4109 LO ID 4111 LO ID 3247 LO ID 4108 LO ID 4110

\*It is essential that Charles Perkins is studied - direct link in Learning Object to American Civil rights movement, especially the Freedom Ride. American Civil rights movement should be studied and could be linked to Emmitt Till murder which arguably began the whole movement through the disgust and outrage the farce trial resulted in - including the disgust of many whites (especially from the northern states of the USA).

\*\*Learning link. The Constitutional Change 1967 allowing Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders to be considered citizens - Mervyn Bishop's role as photographer for newly formed Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

## Summative assessment task

### Essay Question

You are to write an essay which answers one of the following questions

1. In relation to *Nightjohn* by Gary Paulsen and your research into Indigenous Leaders, discuss the role of racism and reconciliation in defining a nation.

2. Compare and contrast the heroic deeds of Nightjohn to at least two contemporary Indigenous leaders.
3. What is a hero? What elements of Nightjohn's character were heroic? Discuss the heroic actions of Nightjohn and some of the important Indigenous leaders studied.
4. Some people are rewarded for their actions of heroism while others are never recognised. Nightjohn is a fictional account of a slave who certainly fulfils the criteria of a hero. In Australia, national heroes are recognized with 'Orders of Australia'.

Discuss the importance of recognizing national heroes such as Charles Perkins OAM and Vincent Lingiari OAM. Connect the actions of these national heroes with Nightjohn.

## Assessment

### Writing

- 4.1.3 Identify and use basic essay structure eg introduction topic sentences, body, conclusion
- 4.1.4 Compose reflections demonstrating an understanding of the beliefs./values in texts studied
- 4.1.7 Compose creative and analytical responses to texts
- 5.1.9 Express personal opinion and voice through written responses to texts
- 5.3.4 Engage in a wider reading program to enhance writing technique/style across a range of genres
- 5.2.5 Write descriptive pieces that create an atmosphere and incorporate symbolism
- 5.3.7 Use revision strategies to improve coherence/clarity e.g. re-draft more research to strengthen argument
- 5.2.7 Make connections between texts in creative and analytical responses.

*Source: Northern Territory Curriculum Framework*

## Implementation

This program has been implemented successfully by Mrs Julieane Spina at Tennant Creek High School in a Middle School environment of years 8 and 9.