

An Evaluation of Students' Use of the Yanyuwa Website

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1 Background

In 1999, Dr Frances Devlin-Glass from Deakin University's Faculty of Arts was awarded a National Teaching Development Grant from the Committee for Teaching and Staff Development (CUTSD). The grant was to fund the development of two linked websites and a CD-ROM designed to facilitate understanding of the cross-cultural issues involved in the representation of aboriginal myth. Co-applicants for the project were Dr John Bradley from the University of Queensland and Dr Richard Baker from Australian National University, both of whom are regarded as experts on Yanyuwa culture.

The websites were developed in response to a particular pedagogical problem detailed as follows in the application for funding.

Australian Aboriginal mythology is often presented to readers in decontextualised ways which impoverish both the culture and learners. Print-only, print-and-visual, and cinematic representation of myths have often tended to erase their cultural, geographic and historical specificity. In addition, such material is usually white-authored, and is often blind to the cross-cultural implications of choice of medium. What is omitted in these modes of representation are considerations of the relationship of mythic narratives to particular places and to other ways of knowing (including social relationships, cartography, food-gathering, and law).¹ (p.3)

To address these concerns, the first website developed was a database in the form of a map and incorporated indigenous and European source material. Important cultural information about the Yanyuwa people and their country was archived on the site and will continue to be archived. As expressed on the website, 'it constitutes a forum from which the traditional owners of this land can proclaim its meaning, and communicate that to a wider non-indigenous audience. The information focused on 26 sacred sites under the content headings of People, Country, Stories and Song, Everyday Life, and History. Links to external sites were also provided. This website belongs to the Yanyuwa community and functions as a mini-museum available to a wide audience.

The second website, Metacogs, was a pedagogical site dependent on site 1. Teaching activities invited students to use the Yanyuwa website to analyse historical, political, and representational issues, colonial and post-colonial methodologies, cross-cultural notions of the sacred and cross-cultural literary genres. This site is accessible only to students enrolled in specific units but is not yet widely used.

¹ Devlin-Glass, F. (1998). Application 1999 National Teaching development Grant (Individuals). Committee for Teaching and Staff Development

1.1 Use of the websites

During 2001, the Yanyuwa website has been used by the Yanyuwa people, and students studying in four different discipline areas at four different universities. These are Anthropology at the University of Queensland; Literary and Feminist studies at Deakin University; Geography and Landuse Policy at Australian National University, and Ethnomusicology at the University of Queensland.

Although Metacogs was not widely used, the pedagogical intent of this website was reflected in the assessment requirements for ANTH1010: *Aboriginal and Islander Australia*, in 2001. Students were asked to interrogate the Yanyuwa website in respect to the Sacred, Representations, or Genre. Three tasks for each option encouraged students to compare Western thought and representations with Yanyuwa constructions. The assignment required students to examine particular parts of the website in detail and to consider differences in epistemology and modes of discourse. Deakin students were also required to examine the website in detail using inter-cultural and feminist perspectives as analytical tools.

A redesigned version of the Metacogs website has recently been developed and will be used in 2002 by a large cohort of students studying ALL101: *Narrative Formations A: Australian Texts and Contexts* at Deakin University. Students will be surveyed later in the year.

2 Evaluation Objectives

This evaluation focused specifically on students' use of the Yanyuwa website in two units: ALL380, *Women, Literature and Feminist Theory* at Deakin University, and ANTH1010, *Aboriginal and Islander Australia*, at the University of Queensland. In particular, the evaluation sought to identify issues relating to:

- Computer experience and access
- Website useability and navigation
- Students use of the website and their perceptions of its value
- The perceived impact of the website on students' learning.

2.1 Data gathering methods

Data was gathered in the following ways:

- A survey was delivered to students studying in the two units mentioned above. Responses were received from 35 students altogether, 30 from UQ and 5 from Deakin. 26 of the respondents were females, the majority of whom were studying first year Anthropology. Most were aged between 17 and 24. About a third of the students were mature-aged.
- Telephone interviews were conducted with three UQ tutors.
- The websites, assessment details, four sample assignments, and documentation relating to the project were analysed.

2.2 Limitations of the evaluation

The scope of this evaluation is limited in the following ways.

- The Yanyuwa people's perceptions of the value of the website have not been sought for pragmatic and economic reasons.
- Survey data was not gathered from ANU and Ethnomusicology students because the website was used as an additional resource rather than the focus for particular assessment tasks.
- Students' use of the metacogs website was not evaluated because it was not widely used. Future evaluations should focus on the integrated use of both websites.
- The response rate from students who did use the website was small, so it was difficult to determine whether findings were unambiguously representative of the whole cohort.

3 Evaluation Findings

3.1 Computer experience and access

3.1.1 Computer experience and enjoyment

There appear to be no issues in respect to computer confidence and enjoyment. The majority of students (28) enjoy working on a computer, 16 of them have extensive experience, that is they make daily use of several applications. A further 17 are moderately experienced. Only 6 do not enjoy computers and 2 have minimal experience. They tended to be mature-aged students.

3.1.2 Access issues

Access did not appear to be an issue for most students—only 9 reported experiencing any difficulties. Three mentioned incomplete links. Other difficulties were idiosyncratic and included an inability to access through Deakin, server difficulties which were recognised as being unrelated to the site itself, an inability to remember the website URL, and an inability to open a page on two occasions. Staff believed these difficulties were more attributable to students' inexperience with computers rather than to technical problems *per se*.

All students except one used a Windows computer to access the website. Most connected via an intranet [either from University of Queensland (19), or via another Local Area Network (LAN) (8)]. Seven used two access points, the intranet and modem. Internet Explorer was the browser most commonly used (23). Eight students used more than one browser.

3.2 Technical issues

3.2.1 Navigation, useability and design

There were no significant issues with navigation and useability – 11 students found it easy, 12 moderately easy and 11 OK. Only one found it difficult. Nonetheless, 15 students mentioned various navigational difficulties. The most common problem was moving from one section of the site to another (8). This sometimes resulted in students having to re-access the site. Working with more than one browser window open at a time was an issue for 3 people, while individuals had problems trying to follow the site map, trying to find the information being sought (because some wasn't cross-linked). Other aspects mentioned were the use of frames and having to scroll too much.

Students were asked to rate the navigational and design features of the Yanyuwa site on a scale of 1-10. As indicated in Table 1, font sizes and colours, and the screen design and layout were rated very highly by about half the students and moderately highly by a further third. Drop-down menus and control panels also rated reasonably well. Aspects rated less highly included the links and the windows opening from links.

Table 1: Navigational and design features of the Yanyuwa site.

Feature	9/10	7/8	5/6	> 5	Missing
Control panels	9	13	5	6	2
Drop-down menus	12	9	7	6	1
Links	11	9	9	5	1
Windows opening from links	9	9	8	6	3
Font sizes	19	13	1	2	0
Font colours	18	13	2	2	0
Screen design/layout	17	10	4	4	0

3.2.2 Main technical difficulties

More than half the students (18) found slow download time to be the main technical problem. Eight specifically mentioned image files (photos and maps) while 7 had problems with audio files being inaccessible or too slow to download. A couple of students noted that some files were not yet operable. A few students appeared to accept that slow download time was a function of the computer being used to access the site rather than a problem with the site itself.

3.3. Using the Yanyuwa website for learning

3.3.1 Students' perceptions of the educational purpose of the Yanyuwa website

Most students (22) believed the educational purpose for the website was to increase understanding of, and provide insights into, Yanyuwa indigenous culture, particularly aboriginal mythology, history, language, kinship, and how they relate to their world. Some however (11) perceived it was to allow Yanyuwa people to represent themselves in order that others could experience the dynamism and diversity of their culture through their eyes.

It was like meeting and speaking to Yanyuwa people in person as it gave you their life stories, culture and experiences. It also provided understandings about why they live the way they do and what they believe.

A few students noted that a further purpose of the website was to demonstrate the willingness of the Yanyuwa people to help others learn. It would also enable people to *see current issues and to help kill the thought that aboriginal people are traditional people up north with little technology*. A couple of students thought the website aimed to preserve indigenous Australian cultures to dispel stereotyping.

Students' perceptions are aligned quite well with tutors. They specified the purpose as giving students a 'direct line' to Yanyuwa culture to demonstrate differences between how the indigenous people represent themselves and how non-indigenous people represent them. They wanted students to see the broadness of their way of life and appreciate they are not 'frozen in the past'.

3.3.2 Preferred learning styles

Students' preferred learning styles varied considerably though only 8 chose text only. Nine preferred to learn visually with a further 11 nominating visual in combination with other styles.

Students who preferred text believe they learnt more from reading and generally found it easier and less time consuming than other styles. They tended to cite technical difficulties or computer inexperience as reasons for preferring text. However, 3 of them realised the added value provided by the visual and audio aspects of the website. They found these *very effective in explaining the Yanyuwa culture*. It appears that once they experienced the website, they were more open to learning in ways other than text.

Two students whose preference was for text acknowledged the importance of discursive activities for enhancing learning because *discourse and interaction are fundamentally stimulating*. Again, experience appears to be important in the formulation of attitudes to learning styles and approaches.

Students who preferred to learn visually found the maps and photos most useful for learning. While they appreciated the accompanying explanatory text, the fact that there was not too much of it was appreciated. For example, to be able to *see exactly the paths of dreaming beings* as they read the story made it more real and easier to follow.

Students who like to use visual media in combination with other styles, (oral and written), suggested that it is the combination that contributes to a fuller understanding of concepts. They found the Yanyuwa site most suitable because it *encompassed a broad range of very effective teaching/learning techniques*. They suggested that all styles should be accommodated *to capture as many interested students as possible*.

3.3.3 Students use of the website.

Most students (23) used the website for 5 hours or less, 7 used it for 5-10 hours, while 4 used it for more than 10 hours. Use of the site was driven mainly by assessment requirements, though a few were sufficiently interested to examine parts of the site not related to assessment.

Making connections between different parts of the site

Twenty students found themselves making connections between different parts of the site. As one said:

The site lent itself to easy navigation and connection between points of interest and allowed for expansion in the direction of personal interest areas.

Of those who specified the particular connections made, 6 mentioned all sections of the website, 3 mentioned country and people, while individuals mentioned country and food, country and history, or country and dreaming maps.

Twelve did not really make any connections. Explanations for this suggested there was some confusion resulting from the number of windows that had to be opened for a particular subject, or students were too pre-occupied with the section of the site needed to complete their assignment.

Parts of the site examined in detail

Most students examined in detail the parts of the website that related directly to the requirements of the assignment they chose to complete. For 13 this was the Dreamtime maps and stories which were used extensively for the assignment based on this aspect of culture. However, most of them *didn't go to other parts of the site as they were not relevant to the essay question*.

Only 8 examined all or most of the site in detail mainly because they were interested, while 9 scanned the parts of the site not related to their assignment. Some focused on the text because *there was not enough time to explore picture/sound/video files*.

Individual students mentioned the Sacred, Kinship, ceremonies, and the oral history of the Yanyuwa people as the main focus of study.

It is clear that assessment was an important element in student engagement with the website. It is probable that many of them would not have examined any aspect of it in detail if they had not been required to do so to complete an assignment successfully. This has implications for any proposed use of the website in the future. More effective learning that changes conceptions and attitudes is more likely to be achieved if the use of the website is linked to assessment.

3.4 Students' perceptions of the value of the website

3.4.1 Impressions of the value of the website as an educational resource

Most students indicated that the website was a valuable educational resource – 15 rated it highly and a further 9 rated it as having medium value. These students found it comprehensive, well-organised and enlightening.

Wonderful. A much better way to learn about a group's culture than in a text book. Much more enjoyable for children and great for the Yanyuwa who have control over the content and images presented. Could also be incorporated in Yanyuwa children's education.

Incredibly valuable – it surpasses the simple collation of 'stories' or 'pictures', and gives a comprehensive, easy-to-use, enjoyable viewpoint of indigenous experience through indigenous voices. It has been especially rewarding being able to analyse and assess the site as part of ANTH1010, as it provides an excellent foundation for understanding complex issues and concepts.

Eight students were undecided about its value mainly because they had technical problems or because aspects of the site were incomplete when they were using it. They were appreciative of the concept, but frustrated with broken links or audios that didn't work. As one student commented:

At the point I was using it, it was not the best for educational purposes. Much of the content and many of the images and multimedia clips were not there. Perhaps if I could use it when finished as a major course resource, it would be useful.

Only three derived minimal value from the website, but they used it for less than an hour. One felt that students needed some prior understanding of the Yanyuwa people to use the site, another thought it needed more depth and the third felt forced to use it because of the assignment but did not derive value from it.

3.4.2 Impressions of the website content

Presentation of the content

Most students were very positive about the website content, language, and photographs. The subject material was seen to be comprehensive, interesting, and clearly presented, though a couple noted some restriction in the depth of information available. The diversity of the content and various forms of presentation facilitated learning and made it more enjoyable for most students.

As a way of learning and understanding the implications of Yanyuwa culture interpreted into a Western context, the content is very useful.

Photos

Numerous positive comments were made about the photographs used on the website: *as the saying goes, a picture can tell a thousand words*. Students felt they helped to provide a sense of place and encouraged a

more personal involvement in the content of the site. This made learning more interesting and made students feel more connected to the content material. Representations were seen to be more realistic. A few students would have liked more photos on the site.

Videos

Some comments noted that the site was still being developed. In particular, a few students were frustrated because they could not access the videos which they believed would have enhanced the website and their learning.

Language

Most students were happy with the texts and stories used in the website. They liked the fact that the language was in an aboriginal voice, allowing them to hear first-hand from the people themselves. The accessibility and personal aspects of the language was attractive to most students because it made the information *less abstract* – only one thought it was not suitably academic enough for a University course. A few students thought there was too much detail, while a couple would have liked more depth in terms of descriptive explanations as to why they do particular things and how it reflects on their lives.

While the assessment provided the impetus for students to visit the website, the content, the language and the use of audio/visual material was engaging and motivating enough to keep them interested and help them learn effectively.

3.4.3 Value of the website as a medium for enriching understandings of Yanyuwa culture

The majority of students (19) thought the website was a better medium than print for enriching understandings. Reasons for this were:

- The website personalised Yanyuwa culture in ways that would be difficult to do in print form. There was a *feeling of virtual contact*. Students thought print resources would be more difficult to read, more difficult to write, and would appear less real.
- The website enabled students to make connections between different aspects (people, stories, places) of culture. *It provides a more detailed explanation of why they do things, what they believe, and how their lives reflect what they believe.*
- The colour and variety of visual material enriched understandings: *maps and photos give a much greater sense of connecting the culture with whatever aspect of Yanyuwa we are discussing*
- It is easier to access such information via the website
- It is more interesting, engaging, and enjoyable than reading print material.
- Existing print resources about particular aboriginal groups are limited. *It would have been far more difficult because the literature on particular aboriginal groups can be very limited.*

Seven students thought that print would have been preferable because:

- It is much less time-consuming and easier to access information in print than to log on to a computer, find the content, and print it or read online which some find difficult for long periods of time.
- These students felt they learnt more effectively from print because they could annotate it easily and memorise more efficiently.

Two students believed it was the integration of a number of resources and experiences that enriched understandings, including lectures, print materials, and the website. Ideally it is the totality of the learning environment that strengthens learning as this comment suggests:

My understanding has been immeasurably enriched – the combination of the website, subject content, and current literature (particularly J. Bradley’s ‘Yanyuwa Country + Li-Anthawirriyarra’) provided the means through which I could arrive at a far better understanding than with simply print resources alone.

3.4.4 Ways in which the electronic medium enhanced learning

Most respondents (28) cited ways in which the electronic medium enhanced enjoyment of learning. These are summarised as follows:

- Having easy quick access to detailed information helped learning because it saved research time, reduced the need to visit a library, and facilitated quick cross-referencing. *I couldn’t have learnt about, or even known, the existence of this tribe if not for the electronic medium, so electronic-ness is absolutely vital.*
- Immediate access to photos, maps, and audio files clearly helped to maintain interest and added to its friendliness. It was seen to be more visually appealing than books and journal articles generally are. *Being able to put faces with names and even voices is great – it’s interesting. I would not have bothered with a book, but the layout of webpage and mix of pictures kept me interested.*
- It was more enjoyable for students who use computers a lot and don’t like having to read books for information.
- A few students mentioned the value of the interactive elements of the website *It allowed me to experience the dynamic (ever-changing) nature of Yanyuwa life and culture, thus far outweighing in value the often static representations found in standard texts.*
- The website also enabled students to connect elements to form a big picture. It was useful for them to be able to compare directly stories and histories with people and places.
- Students liked being able to work at their own pace and investigate various elements of the website according to their interest. One student *discovered many things that would never have been touched on in lecture material because of time constraints.*

Only three students found the website unhelpful mainly because it took more time for them to find the information they needed, or because they preferred to learn from a book.

Clearly, if the electronic medium is used in unique, innovative ways, it has significant potential for enhancing students' interest in, and enjoyment of, learning.

3.5 Tutors' perceptions of the value of the website

Tutors impressions of the value of the website were very positive. They believe it has excellent potential and enjoyed using it both for teaching and research purposes. As a general learning tool, its value for them lies in the fact that *it gives a voice to the Yanyuwa people and provides a great way to overcome isolation experienced by remote communities*. The uniqueness of the resource was valued because students could not normally access the Yanyuwa people or hear their stories and perspectives first hand.

Tutors also believed the electronic medium was beneficial for learning because students would not otherwise have gained access to the stories and perspectives of an indigenous community living in a remote part of Australia. They thought the medium provided more interactivity, more realism, and more flexibility in respect to accessing this unique content.

One tutor queried whether the website content represents cross-generational views. He was concerned that most of the perspectives from the Yanyuwa people came from the elders, not from the younger generation who may see things differently.

3.6 Students' perceptions of what they learnt by studying Yanyuwa culture

The study of Yanyuwa culture has led several students to new understandings of aboriginal culture that in turn have resulted in some questioning of western culture. While the learning process is too complex to attribute specific learning outcomes to the use of the Yanyuwa website alone, themes emerging from students' comments indicate that it is a powerful medium for challenging assumptions and changing perceptions, particularly when used in conjunction with face-to-face or online discussion classes. Students' perceptions of what they learnt varied in substance and in the emphasis given to particular aspects of their learning. However, the following themes were evident.

3.6.1 Increased general knowledge about the complexity of aboriginal culture

Most comments indicated that students gained an insight into the general complexity and diversity of Aboriginal culture – they had not been aware of such richness before studying Yanyuwa culture. Terms such as *amazing, incredible, surprise* were used by students to express their newfound awareness of the

intricacies of detail involved in cultural aspects such as language, rituals, dreaming stories, maps, and history. Some students were surprised at how little they had known before studying the Yanyuwa culture.

It has made me wonder how I got so far into life without really understanding the issues surrounding aboriginal culture, particularly because I believed I was very open-minded before.

3.6.2 Recognition of previous lack of understanding about Aboriginal culture.

Some students recognised that their understandings of Aboriginal culture were very limited until they studied the Yanyuwa culture. They also recognised that their existing knowledge was gleaned through the western media, and was therefore not necessarily an accurate representation of aboriginality.

My understanding of Aboriginal culture was severely limited and probably biased by my reading of it in the media. It's all been a revelation.

Some realised how far removed western culture is from the land and natural world. They contrasted this with the impressive degree of knowledge the Yanyuwa possess about their environment.

The Yanyuwa are closely connected to the natural world; we are adrift in a manufactured second nature.

3.6.3 Increased understandings of the Aboriginal sacred

In articulating their understandings of the sacred, students' emphasised different aspects of their learning. However, most realised the complexity and importance of the sacred to aboriginal culture, and the extent to which all aspects of culture are interconnected in ways that infuse their lives and blur the lines between the sacred and the secular. *Everything has a meaning and Yanyuwa people must be aware of it at all times.* In particular, some students developed understandings about the association between the sacred and the land, and the degree to which parts of the environment are sacred. Comments that indicate changes in perception include:

I did not realise the association of religion and site was as important as it is.

Previous to working on Diwurruwurru and in ANTH1010, I had only a very vague, generic concept of what the aboriginal sacred signified.

I have gained an understanding about how truly sacred things are to aboriginal people.

My understanding changed a lot because it made me more aware and helped me to go on learning by studying other similar subjects.

I can understand and respect why things are sacred. I see how everything is connected in some way.

Their myths are land-based in a way I couldn't understand fully until reading the translations of the texts.

3.6.4 Respect for a different worldview and acceptance of its validity

A few students developed an appreciation of the importance of recognising and accepting different worldviews. They began to understand aboriginal interpretations of past events and present day society and appreciated the inappropriateness of interpreting Aboriginal culture through Western perspectives.

Yanyuwa cultural aspects can't be translated into a Western context and still be understood.

Students have learnt that to understand aboriginal culture it is necessary to accept this difference in worldview.

3.6.5 Importance of self-representation and preservation of culture

A number of students realised the importance of allowing Aboriginal people to represent their culture in their own way providing *a direct insight into a culture without screening of academic textbooks*. There was also recognition of the need to preserve the Yanyuwa culture, just as it is important to preserve any culture. because all are unique and intrinsically valuable.

3.6.6 Broader understanding of Australian history:

Students have a greater appreciation of how aboriginal society was affected by colonisation and understand more clearly *what the aborigines went through when white settlement arrived*. They accept and understand why aboriginal people have a different way of perceiving the world and Australian history.

I have learnt about the diversity of indigenous experience in Australia, and the subsequent resistance to colonial policy.

Some students do now look at their own culture with different eyes.

It has certainly exposed me to a different history of Australia, and has led me to more critically analyse my previous knowledge.

3.6.7 Developing understandings about postcolonial and/or anthropological methodologies

Students found it difficult to articulate what they believed they learnt about postcolonial and/or anthropological methodologies. Only 12 students responded to this question. They learnt that anthropologists have an important role in preserving the knowledge and culture of indigenous groups, but *they do not have to (nor should they) assume automatic authority, or position themselves as 'speaking for the other'*. They also learnt that methodologies in the past have appropriated aboriginal culture and been too rigid to account for dynamic cultural continuity. They recognised that indigenous people should have a greater degree of control over the way their culture is represented and that *indigenous voice and agency is paramount*. They believe methodologies should *include the active participation and/or consultation of the people*.

3.7 Tutors perceptions of students' learning

Tutors pointed out that students' learning came about as a result of a number of experiences, including lectures, tutorials, readings, and the website. It was difficult to separate out what was learnt from the website alone. However, they believed the website was unique in providing students with a way of accessing how Yanyuwa people perceive the world. It also helped them become aware that Yanyuwa culture is not dying, that it is dynamic, living and changing.

Tutors noticed a huge range in what students learnt overall. Some didn't learn very much at all from the website, because they used it minimally. Most however did demonstrate new understandings about aboriginal culture and how it differs from Western culture. By ensuring that assessment tasks required students to engage with the website in some detail and focus on issues relating to the uniqueness and diversity of Yanyuwa culture, they had to learn in order to complete their assignments satisfactorily. One tutor noted:

Even those who resisted it and got angry showed some shifts in knowledge. This was evidenced by the way they talked, their writing. Some even became advocates for aboriginal rights.

Tutors believe as a result of the chosen assignments, some students learnt about the link between the Sacred and how aboriginal people think and feel about the land, some learnt about the complexities of the levels of knowledge in Yanyuwa society, and some *gained new insights into Yanyuwa headspace*. These views are consistent with students' perceptions of what they learnt.

Tutors regard themselves as inexperienced in teaching online. Students were introduced to the website in lectures, then referred to it when completing their assignments. It generated some discussion in a few tutorials. There was a suggestion that tutors need to learn how to teach online and need to generate more discussion about issues raised on the website. However, another felt that students are internet literate so do not need help in this regard.

4 Conclusion

It is clear that the Yanyuwa website is a valuable teaching and learning resource. It is well regarded by teaching staff and most students who responded to the survey. As a medium, the WWW has provided access to people and knowledge that is otherwise not easily accessible. This opens up possibilities for learning that have not previously been available. Rather than presenting re-interpretations of aboriginal culture in academic language, the use of the Yanyuwa people's voice through direct language and concrete examples was a powerful way of broadening students' understandings, challenging their assumptions, and dispelling stereotypes. Students believe they learnt about the complexity of Yanyuwa culture and the extent to which all aspects of culture are intertwined. They also believe they have broadened their understanding of Australian history and appreciate aboriginal perspectives on colonisation. Furthermore, the website has

helped to increase understandings of the Aboriginal Sacred and create awareness of, and respect for, a different world view.

The website is a powerful resource for promoting reconciliation—everyone involved has reaped the benefits. Yanyuwa people now have a resource that they own and control. They can use it in ways that benefit their community and can also use it to inform non-indigenous people about their culture. Self-representation was an empowering aspect of the whole project for the Yanyuwa people. At the same time, it is a unique resource for students studying in a variety of disciplines because the content can be interrogated in a number of ways for different purposes. In addition to being used in the areas mentioned earlier in the report, it would be appropriate for a range of humanities and social science subjects such as Australian studies, Australian history, sociology, and religious studies. It would also be valuable in vocational areas such as social work, police studies, public relations, teaching, nursing, law, and so on. As Frances Devlin-Glass remarks, the website is:

A good example of intercultural dialogue which attempts to ensure that Aboriginal people are interacting on a basis of equality, and as teachers and experts of their own culture. (Email, 13/3/02.

The power and potential of the website will be more fully realised when the website is completed. As the data indicated, if the technology doesn't work in the way intended, learners can be frustrated and the potential of the resource for learning is less effective. Further, the content and purpose of the website needs to be fully and systematically integrated with the content and purpose of lectures, tutorials, and printed texts in whatever disciplines it is used. When directly linked to assessment as it was for the students surveyed, it is more likely that students will engage, reflect, and learn.

Wider dissemination of the website will require promotion of the project, its outcomes to date, and its potential for expansion. Evidence from this evaluation suggests this is well worth doing.

5 Recommendations

1. As a result of evaluation findings it is recommended that:
2. The website content be completed, with further use of images, audio and visual material.
3. Redundant files be removed, and links fixed so that students' use of the content can be optimised.
4. A CD-ROM be developed to facilitate easy access.
5. Students be informed about the minimum computer requirements to enable download at an acceptable speed.
6. The Sites map be more clearly signposted from any part of the website.
7. A user instruction booklet be developed.
8. A laboratory-based tutorial be provided for on-campus students to familiarise them with the website and its purpose.
9. The website content be integrated more fully with lectures and tutorials in order to increase students' awareness and use of the website.
10. Students be taught specifically about the significance of the Sites map and how to use it.
11. The Metacogs website be more fully utilised as a teaching and learning tool.
12. That assessment requirements continue to be linked to the website content to encourage students to interrogate it in ways designed to achieve specific learning outcomes.
13. The Faculty of Arts through its Committee for Teaching, promote the website to staff teaching in other discipline areas.
14. The University promote the website to a wide range of tertiary institutions.
15. The website be disseminated to a wider public audience.

Footnote

Since the completion of this evaluation, there have been three further important outcomes of the project.

1. At present, Deakin University is investigating a scheme whereby Yanyuwa people are invited to visit the University for a two week period per year to teach students in different discipline areas who are already familiar with their website. This scheme is already operational at the University of Queensland.
2. The originator of the project, Frances Devlin-Glass, has been invited to Darwin by the Northern Land Council and the Tropical Savannas Research Group to talk about the use of the web for cultural preservation of Indigenous culture and education. They are interested in the site(s) as an example of what might be done in other communities.
3. There are plans to expand on the site and to move into DVD production of Yanyuwa Dreaming Narratives. The Indigenous knowledge is available and the community is keen to find ways of preserving it through the use of Internet technology. The challenge is to find partners for production purposes.