



Jessa Rogers

Abstract

After the invasion of the British, boarding schools were established and administered for the education of European youth living in Australia and New Zealand. Such schools, while initially excluding Indigenous youth, soon embraced Indigenous enrolments in order to assimilate them into dominant, Eurocentric societies. The prevailing expectation was that an imperial education, based on manual and domestic labour and English language acquisition, would encourage the new European lifestyle to be adopted, and once effectively assimilated, Indigenous youth would return home and encourage assimilation within their families and communities. Boarding schools were administered by denominational organizations, with additional aims of converting students to various forms of Christianity and discouraging cultural practices and knowledges from being preserved and passed on to future children and generations of Māori and Aboriginal people in New Zealand and Australia. Today, Australia and New Zealand continue their histories of boarding school education, which have grown substantially since invasion. In contemporary contexts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian students are more likely to attend boarding schools than non-Indigenous students, and boarding schools are promoted by some Indigenous leaders and their supporters, including scholarship providers (Cape York Partnership 2015) as a means to reduce the student achievement and attainment gap frequently documented and reported on in the media. Despite the large number of Indigenous students from Australian and New Zealand who have attended and continue to attend boarding schools, anecdotal and qualitative data has not been well-documented regarding the complex history as well as contemporary Indigenous experiences of boarding school. These issues will be discussed in the context of a study which explores Aboriginal girls' boarding school experiences using 'photoyarn', a new indigenous arts method.

Bio

Jessa is an Aboriginal creative artist and educator raised in Queensland. An ANU Indigenous Reconciliation PhD Scholar, Jessa started her first three-year term on the National NAIDOC Committee under the Australian Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in 2015. Jessa won the 2014 ANU Vice-Chancellor's Staff Award (Reconciliation) and was awarded the ANU 2015 Minoru Hokari Scholarship for her PhD research looking at the experiences of Aboriginal and Māori girls attending boarding schools using

photoyarn, a method she is developing. Previously teaching, Jessa is a lecturer at Macquarie University in Sydney. Underpinned by relatedness theory, her PhD research is informed by Indigenous research methods and methodologies. Jessa holds a BEd (1st Class Hons), B.Creat.Ind (Drama) (with Distinction) and MEd (Guid&Couns).