

LEARNING SPACES

YOUTH, LITERACY AND NEW MEDIA
IN REMOTE INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Islander Studies	LKC	Library and Knowledge Centre
ANU	Australian National University	NAPLAN	National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara	NITV	National Indigenous Television
ARC	Australian Research Council	NPY	Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
BIITE	Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	NT	Northern Territory
BRACS	Broadcasting in Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme	NTFO	Northern Territory Film Office
CAAMA	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association	NTL	Northern Territory Library
CDU	Charles Darwin University	PAW Media	Pintupi Anmatjere Warlpiri Media
DET	Department of Education (NT)	RIMO	Remote Indigenous Media Organisation
DKCRC	Desert Knowledge Co-operative Research Centre	SAE	Standard Australian English
FHF	The Fred Hollows Foundation	TEABBA	Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	VET	Vocational Education and Training
ICTV	Indigenous Community Television	WA	Western Australia
ITIC	Information Technology and Indigenous Communities	WETT	Warlpiri Education and Training Trust

Aboriginal language words

<i>anangu</i>	Aboriginal person (Pitjantjatjara language)	<i>ngapartji-ngapartji</i>	reciprocity, 'I give you something in return' (Pitjantjatjara language)
<i>kartiya</i>	non-Aboriginal person/whitefella (Warlpiri language)	<i>yapa</i>	Aboriginal person (Warlpiri language)

Foreword



SHIRLEY
BRICE HEATH

An anthropological linguist, Professor Shirley Brice Heath has spent more than three decades studying how and when young people learn the future anew. She has recorded the ways they survey, critique, adapt, complement, and alter the learning environments around them. She has documented from her time spent, year after year, with young people, who feel intensely that schooling and its limited perspectives on literacy and numeracy do not match the rapid pace of change. As a consequence, young people around the world find ways outside of schooling to create their own opportunities to experiment and innovate with new technologies. They devise entrepreneurial ventures to promote their learning and integrate literacies of all types from visual to financial into their ways of interacting. Since 1980,

she has been a frequent colleague of anthropologists, linguists, and educators in universities across Australia. In the United States, she has worked closely with researchers who are exploring the changing learning contexts of adolescents and Indigenous populations.

We live in an era of innovations and cutting edges. Changes come too rapidly to be noted by those of us who do not live with them on a daily basis. We may ask whether or not it matters that the world does not see or take note of the ways that habits of communication shift, while governments and age-old institutions, such as education, remain relatively unchanged in their patterns of operation or their expectations that their beliefs and means need not change.

Where are the adaptations and adoptions taking place, and why do they draw international attention? Adopters and adapters are young people, from those who find the national brand of education their government offers inadequate to their needs to those who go along with the norms of schooling and see certificates and diplomas as building blocks toward employment.

Learning Spaces offers us the rare opportunity to step inside innovative uses of technologies, mergers of global technologies into local knowledge, and community advocacy of local history and ideology. This work joins the volumes of research that point to the limited goals and means of schooling and illustrate the vitality of young people's desire to be challenged to

build knowledge and skills for the future and to escape the boredom and inertia of textbooks, lessons, and passive classrooms. Readers will find within the wide range of examples illustrated here in detail models of ways to meet the twin goals of keeping Aboriginal youth in school and simultaneously taking advantage of their leadership toward change.

This volume reminds us that envisioning change primarily through formal education will increasingly limit human potential. Institutions have across human history developed in order to maintain the status quo; hence, they have within them inherent protections against change that may come so rapidly as to overthrow or dislodge the power and predictability they present. However, in times of rapid technological change that reaches into the most intimate aspects of human relations and socialization, change in ways of learning must come. These ways honour and instantiate some of the oldest and most trustworthy capacities of humans: attentive and sustained listening and observing, working out new ways through trial and error, and adapting both technologies themselves and ways of using them.

The lessons from this volume relate most directly to the nature of learning within communities and organisations. These entities, unlike institutions, have been created throughout human history in order to provide adaptability and flexibility for change. They are built in and through change, and within them, change has astonishing promise.

The cases within this volume call on us to observe, listen, imitate, and create from the cases of change documented here. Doing so promises innovation and inspiration. Even more important, these cases help all of us keep in mind the humanity and the human that learning by creating provides. The young people who move through these pages are motivated and proud of having had the opportunities that make possible their linking together of historical knowledge and contemporary means of communication and performance. The means illustrated here have enabled them to develop skills that will help them move into the future as adults engaged with the health and life of their own communities, connected to their language and culture as their way of being in the world of the local so as to know the world of the global.

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