

Teaching from Country

Dhanggal 25 Oct 2008

Spoken on video in Darwin

Christie: Okay, Dhanggal, thank you for coming to our workshop and working on your website. We are hoping that you are going to be able to start doing some teaching from (Darlua) or from ... when you go to live there. We are interested in finding ways for the Yolngu who are living out in the remote places to teach the people that are in Darwin here and other places around the world and we want to help the people (work through) some of the issues about Yolngu knowledge and Yolngu teaching and Yolngu land and Yolngu ... in terms of education. So I wondered if you could tell us something, your ideas about how teaching from country is different from teaching (from mostly) inside a classroom, what are the differences and what do we need to know if we are going to do the process properly. And you can speak in English or in Yolngu, what do you want to do?

Dhanggal: Either (*laughing*). To make it easier.

Christie: (If there are words in) Yolngu then use them.

Dhanggal: Yeah, I'll use them. The difference between teaching from the actual homeland or the community is that the resources are all there in the first place, and Yolngu, when teaching, we don't make notes. It's all in our minds. The learnings that we've stored or documented that are there, and whenever a person wants to learn about something or wants to know about something, and particularly about Yolngu, (from), we don't run around finding books that I can give to those people, but we've got it there within us and we just give to them step by step what they need to learn. And being outside makes us feel

0:03:00 we have that freedom to be able to talk and teach people in a way that can't be taught in the classroom, because in a classroom it usually makes us feel as if we're trapped in. But teaching outside we feel that freedom, and somehow knowledge is kept like that. If we're in a classroom, somehow those knowledge that we need to pass on or teach people about is sometimes trapped and we go out and then we think oh, I should have said this to them in the classroom. (*Laughing*)

Christie So what about the teachers out in the countryside, out in the country. If the students are in the classroom and they are getting taught around a computer. Is that going to make it a problem or is it going to make it easy or what? Are there questions there that we need to think about?

Dhanggal: In a way, it is Meinmuk, it's good to have that new technology. We just have to find that out, whether it's like; the students are in the classroom and I guess like many other students that are in the classroom, they have to take that information in individually, and what they take in they will be able to share it amongst the other students and to get much more understanding.

Christie: So if you went to ... and you were able to teach to the students here, what would you want to talk to them about and what sort of technology would you use?

Dhanggal: Well, as for ... we don't have any mobile coverage there and only the landline, I don't know whether that's appropriate or not. And we need the thingo, the satellite dish to be installed, in that area, so that could make the teaching more easier.

Christie: And what would you be interested in teaching about?

Dhanggal: Teach students to really know about themselves, who they are, and in ways of explaining through the Yolngu side, to see things which are good about it, that is within themselves, to know who each person really is and what they can achieve from the teachings, from the Yolngu lecturers.

Christie: And that's for balanda students as well?

Dhanggal: That's for balanda students as well. The first of all they have to find out for
0:07:00 themselves who they really are.

Christie: And you telling your story from ... will help them to do that?

Dhanggal: That's right.

Christie: How?

Dhanggal: Because I'll be at home and feel that what you would call that, power within, and Yolngu or any person that has the knowledge to pass things to other people, that a lot of people miss out on. Finding themselves, who they really are, what they should achieve.

Christie: What about the work you've been doing in the last few days. Could you see that being useful?

Dhanggal: It is useful, yeah. I've enjoyed, for the two days I've been here, I really enjoyed it and I'm looking forward to it.

Christie: So you can see how making the website you might be able to use that in ... ?

Dhanggal: It's useful, yeah. Even though I don't, like I said, I'm here, putting in something about myself and some things that I don't know myself that others know, yo. And that helps me when people tell me what I really know, yo. Ma.