

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE BLOODY EUCALYPTS!! USING PLURALISTIC PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO DECOLONISE CURRICULA AND ADVANCE BOTANICAL AWARENESS IN FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE BIOLOGY

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The weaving of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledges into higher education curricula is a priority of Universities Australia and remains an ethical obligation for all educators to right the wrongs of the past and make noise to fill the 'Great Australian Silence' (W.E.H. Stanner's 1968 Boyer Lectures). To do so in a culturally respectful way necessitates both co-design and decolonisation of oppressive/restrictive western scientific frameworks. Alternative ways of acquiring and holding knowledge do exist!

Similarly, as Biology educators, we must address the 'Botanical silence' in Science curricula, where animals are generally prioritised at the expense of plants. This is a symptom of Plant Blindness - a term coined to encapsulate the tendency to ignore plants in our everyday lives (Wandersee & Schussler, 1999). As educators, we have a duty to address this organismal bias.

In response, we have conceived a new Practical, '*Bulu – shadow of a tree*', whose content sits in the shadows cast by the behemoth of western science (e.g., Indigenous knowledges, plants, sensorial experiences, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)). We highlight the constraints of western knowledge acquisition by exploring subjective, botanical, sensory experiences (smell, touch, and taste) that create deep, personalized, place-based memories for students, spawning familiarity and belonging.

This outdoors Practical class requires deep observation of plant morphology as we expose the hidden beauty of plants - leaf aromas. We use native plant species, focusing on *Eucalyptus* spp., to instigate a series of self-reflections to explore the role of subjectivity in Science (Botany) and intellectual property of researchers and their discoveries. Can we objectively describe smells as a means of sharing knowledge? If not, should we abandon our senses and limit our own knowledge acquisition to methodologies sanctioned by colonialist frameworks; frameworks historically used to control First Nations knowledge? Who benefits from the Eucalyptus industry?

We will detail how we have employed olfactory pedagogies to enhance place-based learning methodologies thereby initiating conversations, creating campus belonging and stimulating critical reflections on a range of ethical, methodological, and legal (ICIP) aspects of native plants, their products, and derived industries.

REFERENCE

Wandersee, J., & Schussler, E. (1999). Preventing Plant Blindness. *The American Biology Teacher*, 61, 82-86. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4450624>

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