

EMBEDDING INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES IN IT INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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PROBLEM

Entrepreneurship and IT Innovation courses often focus on Western models (e.g., lean startup, Silicon Valley case studies), excluding Indigenous knowledge systems and innovation practices. This limits cultural inclusivity and relevance, especially for regional or Indigenous students.

PLAN

The plan involved collaborating with Indigenous entrepreneurs and advisors to co-design a module introducing students to Indigenous worldviews of innovation, with a focus on sustainability, community benefit, and intergenerational thinking. Drawing on literature that supports the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in education (Nakata, 2007), the module incorporated culturally grounded methods such as the **Yarning Circle** and the **Hui Process**. These approaches, rooted in respectful dialogue and collective decision-making, were adapted for student group work and project development, enabling learners to explore innovation through both Indigenous and Western lenses.

ACTION

Students were introduced to Indigenous entrepreneurship through case studies such as Jack Reis (Baidam Solutions) and Mikaela Jade (Indigital), illustrating how Indigenous values shape innovation in ICT. Guided by the concept of **Two-Eyed Seeing**, students explored Indigenous approaches to solving real-world challenges (Habash, 2024). They incorporated **Yarning Circles** as a culturally respectful method for team collaboration and co-designed ICT solutions addressing community needs—such as language preservation, digital inclusion, and Indigenous business support. Students reflected on the impact of Indigenous perspectives on their understanding of innovation, ethics, and professional identity. Their reflections and project outcomes, alongside feedback from Indigenous collaborators, offered meaningful insights into the effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching.

REFLECTION

The action was well received by students and Indigenous collaborators. Students valued learning through real-world case studies and culturally grounded methods, which broadened their understanding of innovation beyond profit-driven models. Many highlighted the impact of **Two-Eyed Seeing** and **Yarning Circles** in fostering inclusive thinking and respectful teamwork. Indigenous partners appreciated the meaningful integration of cultural protocols. Some students initially found it challenging to move beyond Western frameworks. Future improvements include providing cultural competency activities early in the module, involving Indigenous co-facilitators, and offering clearer guidance on applying Indigenous principles in technical or business contexts.

Habash, R. (2024). Two-Eyed Seeing: An ethical space of engagement to shape engineering and computing education for sustainable development. *Sustainable Horizons*, 12, 100118.

Nakata, M. (2007). The cultural interface. *The Australian journal of Indigenous education*, 36(S1), 7-14.

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