

# ASCILITE 2024

## Navigating the Terrain:

*Emerging Frontiers in Learning Spaces, Pedagogies, and Technologies*

### Indigenous Pedagogies in Digital Learning - Evaluating the impact and efficacy of YarnPods - embedding Indigenous knowledges and perspectives through yarning podcasts

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YarnPods are an innovative digital learning tool designed to integrate Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into higher education curricula. Featuring First Nations' voices and stories through yarning podcasts, YarnPods enable teachers to authentically embed Indigenous knowledge within their disciplinary contexts. Drawing on Indigenous pedagogies such as storytelling, knowledge sharing, and *dadirri*—deep listening, which refers to “a deep contemplative process of listening to one another in reciprocal relationships” (Ungunmerr-Baumann et al, 2022) - YarnPods offer educators a transformative teaching approach. This approach shifts the narrative from learning *about* to learning *from, with, and for* Indigenous peoples, histories, culture, and Country. By creating culturally safe spaces for dialogue, reflection, and shared learning, YarnPods also address the concerns of non-Indigenous educators, helping them navigate the complexities of incorporating Indigenous perspectives into their teaching practices without fear of misrepresentation or 'getting it wrong'.

My Gamilaroi heritage—along with my deep connection to Country and inherent ways of knowing, being, and doing passed down from Elders—has profoundly influenced the design of the YarnPod concept and emerging framework. The framework provides a structured, respectful, and culturally sensitive approach to engaging with Indigenous subject matter experts and serves as both a resource for educators and a model for interaction. Built around five core elements, the framework emphasises active listening and reciprocal learning. After consulting with a local Dharug Elder and scholar in a yarning circle, we determined that these elements should be connected by interwoven lines, symbolising the rivers of shared knowledge that flow during a yarn.

At the heart of the YarnPod framework are ethical principles, carefully shaped through consultation with Indigenous Elders and scholars within my institution and community. In adherence to AIATSIS ethical guidelines (2020), YarnPods safeguard Indigenous intellectual property while ensuring cultural safety of guests, students, and educators. Indigenous guests are invited through established networks and community connections, and before recording, written consent is obtained for both the recording and distribution of the YarnPod. A verbal caveat in each episode clearly states that the knowledge shared remains the intellectual property of the knowledge holders and is shared with their consent for educational purposes.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (2018) informed the introduction of YarnPods to educators, encouraging deeper understanding through experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting—mirroring traditional Aboriginal pedagogies. “Cultural experts such as Elders hold knowledge in the traditional stories, in the ceremonies, and in the practices; teaching is by mentoring and learning is by doing and application” (Hogue, 2016). This promoted higher level learning by enabling educators to develop understanding through experience and reflection, and global research based on ELT supports the cross-cultural applicability of the model. During this process, educators were provided with audio-only exemplars and resources allowing them to hear and practice deep listening and reciprocal dialogue, assisting to reduce anxieties associated with incorporating these pedagogies into their teaching practices.

From a Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) perspective, YarnPods demonstrate the potential to decolonise education by embedding Indigenous voices and storytelling traditions into the curriculum. By aligning with Indigenous oral knowledge systems, YarnPods provide a scalable and

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adaptable model that can be applied across various disciplines, making them a valuable tool for integrating Indigenous perspectives authentically within higher education. Podcasting, as a digital medium, enhances flexibility, accessibility, and engagement by connecting learners to Indigenous stories and voices through tone, inflection, and the intimacy of spoken word. YarnPods are embedded within the Learning Management System for students using the Echo360 platform, offering closed captioning and downloadable transcripts to support a wide range of learners. The result is a versatile learning tool that allows students and educators to access Indigenous knowledges in remote, hybrid, and in-person settings.

To date, YarnPods have been embedded into 16 units across six different disciplines in the Faculty of Arts, reaching more than 2000 students. Along with the YarnPod recording, students are provided an audio-clip to introduce the concept, an episode notes page detailing references and a glossary of terms, and a reflective space with prompts tailored to the content of the yarn, where they can critically examine their own perspectives and reflect on their learnings.

The research behind YarnPods investigates their effectiveness as a pedagogical approach for embedding Indigenous knowledges into curricula. Initial findings through reflections, surveys, and one-on-one yarns indicate that YarnPods enhance students' understanding and appreciation of Indigenous culture and perspectives, while educators report that YarnPods provide a culturally responsive teaching resource that alleviates concerns of misrepresentation. Future developments include scaling YarnPods across additional faculties and introducing assessable student podcast activities, contributing to a deeper evidence base for YarnPods as an innovative digital learning tool.

The successful integration of YarnPods highlights the importance of culturally sensitive design in educational resources, showcasing their potential as a powerful digital tool for embedding Indigenous perspectives. Positioned at the intersection of emerging technologies, pedagogical innovation, and Indigenous knowledge-sharing practices, YarnPods provide a culturally responsive and technologically advanced platform that fosters reciprocal learning relationships and meaningfully addresses the challenges of decolonising education.

*Keywords:* Indigenous Pedagogies, YarnPods, Digital Learning, Higher Education, Storytelling, Knowledge Sharing, Deep Listening, Cultural Inclusivity, Educational Podcasting

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