Attachment 1

Excerpts from *Shepherdson College Languages Policy which* provide some background to our school context:

Who are our Students?

Elcho Island and its surrounding Homelands are part of the multilingual community of Northeast Arnhem Land. Most children in our community use Dhuwal as a common language of communication in school and in the community. Dhuwal is a language that encompasses a number of mutually intelligible languages or 'dialects'. For many children, Dhuwal is not the language of their family (or clan) and they are expected to learn their family languages, especially their father's language, which may be quite different to Dhuwal. For historical reasons, at Shepherdson College, Djambarrpuyŋu, a Dhuwal language, is the language of formal instruction.

The term Yolŋu Matha (Yolŋu: 'people' and matha: 'tongue') is often used to refer to the languages of Elcho Island and North East Arnhem Land in general. It is a term that encompasses the many related languages of this area. People who live mostly in Homelands tend to speak the language of their family and often this is not Dhuwal or Djambarrpuyŋu. When these students are in town and come to the main school, they experience added issues in the classroom. Dhuwal or Djambarrpuyŋu, may be their second or third language and English their third or fourth. This is the case for other children who live in Galiwin'ku as well.

Some children learn to listen to three or four languages during their schooldays. They practise languages by singing, imitating and copying adult performance. People can often understand other languages but have difficulty speaking them.

An Explanation of Yolŋu Languages

Djambarrpuyŋu is one of about fifty Yolŋu languages and dialects of North East Arnhem Land. It is a language which most people have in common at Galiwin'ku. It is widely spoken at Galiwin'ku, Milingimbi and Gapuwiyak but it is by no means the only language spoken in these places. Each clan has its own dialect and several different clans are represented at all the major communities in North East Arnhem Land.

The various languages and dialects are commonly distinguished by the word used for 'this'. In Djambarrpuyŋu the word is 'dhuwal'. There are other clans which also speak dialects using 'dhuwal' (see below). In linguistic terms it is possible to group various dialects as one language. One language includes those dialects using 'dhuwal' or 'dhuwala' or 'dhay'yi' for 'this'. Listed below are the language groups and the word for 'this'.

At Galiwin'ku, Dhuwal dialects are most widely spoken. Traditional Dhuwal speaking clans at Galiwin'ku are: Djambarrpuyŋu, Buyu-yukululmirr, (Ḻiya-gawumirr) Marraŋu, Ḏäṯiwuy and Ḻiyagalawumirr. There is also a substantial number of Dhaŋu speakers from the Golumala and Gälpu clans. There is also a smaller group of Djaŋu speakers from the Warramiri clan. There are several clans where the clan dialect is only spoken by older people. These include the Wangurri and Ŋaymil clans which traditionally speak Dhaŋu. Some members of the Golpa clan are speaking Dhaŋu, although their own dialect is Nhaŋu. There are also some Dhay'yi and Dhuwala speaking members of the Dhaḻwaŋu clan and Dhuwala speakers from the Gumatj and Gupapauyŋu clans living at Galiwin'ku.

The table following created by Lisa Dayŋgipu Bukulatjpi shows the different languages spoken at Galiwin'ku according to Moiety, the word used for 'this', clan and tribe.

Nhämunha dhäruk ga yolŋu ga nhina dhiyal wäŋaŋur Galiwin'ku ä?

Yirriwanditj	Dhuwakunditj
dhäruk: Dhuwalamirr Mala: Buyalamarr Bäpurru: Gaykamaŋu,Gumbula	Dhäruk: Dhuwal Mala: Djamparrbuyŋu Bäpurru: Dhamarrandji
Dhäruk: Dhuwalamirr Mala: Rrakpala-Gumatj Bäpurru: Yunupiŋu, Burarrwaŋa	Dhäruk: Dhuwal Mala: L̲iya-gawumirr Bäpurru: Garrawurra
Dhäruk: Djaŋu Mala: Wurruymu Bäpurruny: Warramiri-Bukulatjpi	Dhäruk: Dhuwal Mala: Gapiny Bäpurru: Dät̲iwuy-Ganambarr
Dhäruk: Djaŋu Mala: Birrkili Gupapuyŋu Bäpurru: Garawirrtja	Dhäruk: Dhaŋu Mala: Nyal̲purr Bäpurru: Gälpu-Gurrwiwi
Dhäruk: Dhaŋu Mala: Mandjikay Bäpurru: Munyarryun, Dhurrkay,	Dhäruk: Dhaŋu Mala: Dhurili Bäpurru: Golumala-Gon̲d̲arra
Dhäruk: Nhaŋu Mala: Golpa Bäpurru: Gandaŋu	Dhäruk: Dhuwal Mala: Dhuruli-Marraŋu Bäpurru: Wanambi
Dhäruk: Dhayi Mala: Bal̲awuku Bäpurru: Wununŋmurra	Dhäruk: Dhuwal Mala: Liya-galawumirr Bäpurru: Guyula

Dhäruk: Yukuny Mala: Ritharrŋu Bäpurru: Bi[iŋal	Dhäruk: Dhaŋu Mala: |aymil Bäpurru: Ganambarr
Dhäruk: Dhuwalamirr Mala: Mandjikay Bäpurru: Guyamirrilil	Dhäruk: Nhaŋu Mala: Rirratjiŋu Bäpurru: Marika
Dhäruk: Mala: Bäpurru:	Dhäruk: Nhaŋgu Mala: Malarra/Gurrindi Bäpurru: Gama`aŋga

Shepherdson College is a Bilingual School

At Shepherdson College, children's prior-to-schooling conceptual development is built on and in their first language and their beginning literacy and numeracy learning at school takes place in their first language. This allows them to understand what the teachers are saying and meaning, and by extension, what is being taught. Thus, when the children are quite young, a lot of their school learning takes place through the first language. In the early years, English is introduced orally at first, and the time allocated for oral English increases as the students move up through the school.

Studies of bilingual education in other educational contexts show that children who learn in and through their first language first, need to develop certain academic skills and abilities before beginning learning in and through the second language. Research evidence shows the optimal time for beginning formal academic work in a second language is about the middle Primary grades, that is Year 3 or 4. Even though for various reasons they may have not sufficiently developed conceptually and academically in Yolŋu Matha (their first language), or orally in their second language (English), because of system constraints our children on reaching Year 3 are considered ready to transfer their literacy skills to English.

As they move up through the school, the children receive more and more instruction in English, and lesser amounts of instruction in Yolŋu Matha.

Shepherdson College supports the maintenance of Indigenous languages and cultures through its bilingual program in accordance with the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework (NTCF) of Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (DETNT).

What are the roles of the different Languages?

Our students start off in preschool, learning mostly in their first language, Yolŋu Matha. As students gain the foundations of formal learning and become more confident in a school environment, they receive more instruction in English. In upper primary and secondary, students should be competent in first language literacy and begin spending most of their time learning in English, that is, transferring the knowledge they have of literacy in their first language to a second language, English. Students still need opportunity to maintain and develop their first language literacy in these senior years. Usage of Yolŋu Matha and English is not bound to lessons taught formally in those learning areas. Other learning areas, including Maths, Science, Art etc may be taught primarily in either language or through the planned use of both languages.

Our ability to implement this program varies according to a range of factors:

- whether there is a Yolŋu or Balanda teacher in the classroom
- whether the subject material lends itself more to western or Yolŋu concepts
- whether there are appropriate resources in Yolŋu Matha or English
- whether or not Yolŋu and Balanda teams have planned the lesson(s) together with English and Yolŋu Matha roles defined.

- Attachment 2
- **This essay written by Valerie Bulkunu in 2010 shows the important role children's first language has in the school curriculum in making their learning meaningful and connected to their real world**
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Integrating the Curriculum for the Future

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- The primary responsibility of teachers is to equip children for the real world through education. Therefore, the education that teachers facilitate must be directly relevant and connected – or 'integrated' – to the real world. This is the basis for the concept of 'integrated curriculum'. Integration is about making connections and links. In a teaching context, integration means connecting the curriculum to the real world by exploring the 'bigger picture' rather than separating and isolating subject areas, so students gain learning that is more relevant and meaningful to their environment. This essay will discuss how and why the curriculum could become more integrated by comparing Western and Yolngu approaches to education, and discusses the importance of balancing the two.
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- The Yolngu world and the West have many differences. In the Western world, many things are categorised and kept separated, but for Yolngu people, every aspect of life is deeply connected to everything else. This cultural difference is reflected in their approaches to education. The Western education system separates subject learning areas and uses a complex curriculum with specific and detailed outcomes. Perhaps this approach is used because it seems easier for teachers to manage, and easier to get results and measure desired outcomes. This approach concentrates on teaching smaller, focused subject areas in order that students might develop deeper knowledge. However, even though a child might develop deeper knowledge in certain areas, unless this knowledge is integrated with other subject areas and somehow connected to the child's world outside school, this knowledge may not be meaningful enough for the child to be able to use it.

- The Yolngu approach to education is directly connected with the child's world. Different learning areas are deeply integrated with each other and with different parts of life. The contents of teaching are very clear and meaningful to each individual child. Education is holistic, including everything from kinship relationships and obligations, to country, culture, language, Dreaming and laws; and everything is connected to everything else. Identity is strongly connected to kinship and country, and important skills such as hunting and dancing for cultural ceremonies are included in the child's education, as well as vital social knowledge such as *raypirri* (discipline), respect and values.
- Through this integrated approach, Yolngu children learn about maths, science, language, history, natural environment, law and society, the arts and everything else that is included in the Western curriculum. Yet because this teaching is deeply integrated to everything and builds on the child's prior learning, the knowledge is more meaningful and equips them for the real world.
- In 2000 the Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Nurturing Centre was set out at Galiwin'ku. Yalu Marnggithinyaraw means ' the Yalu for becoming knowing'(Christie, 2000). *Yalu* is a useful metaphor for the Yolgnu approach to education. *Yalu*, which means nest, is a place where children develop their cognitive thinking and independent learning. It is a nurturing place for the child, which is connected directly to the child's family and land, and produces community and harmony. This understanding of education and learning is very different to the Western school system, and is demonstrated in the different way Yolngu teachers teach children. They integrate informal (or prior) knowledge by connecting it to other learning areas, and connect formal knowledge in the classroom to the outside world. Yolngu people naturally like to explore the connections between things because the knowledge and concepts are very relevant to their identity, whereas Western society (usually) only explores links within the lesson or subject.
- Western society and Yolngu society have different laws, attitudes and social systems, and different knowledge and values to education. They should respect and learn from each other. Recently, Western pedagogy has started to recognise the importance for integration and has

started focussing more on curriculum integration. For example, the Queensland Government's *New Basics Project* (2003) talks about 'productive' pedagogies and focuses on "Connectedness to the world" and "Knowledge Integration". However, from a Yolngu perspective, school curriculums are still very isolated and non-integrated. Lessons are still structured around the different subject areas rather than the 'big picture'. This is the biggest difference between the two perspectives.

- The NT Curriculum Framework (NTCF) has a strong focus on integrating the curriculum; however its contents, subjects and learning outcomes are still all very separate and need to be integrated much more. It is very positive that the NTCF has included more Yolngu learning areas such as *Indigenous Language and Culture*. This has been very well designed and documented, however it is not respected, valued or integrated enough in schools. For example, the curriculum doesn't acknowledge Yolngu maths (local seasons, calendar, tides etc) and only teaches Western maths.
- Similarly, Yolngu teachers have a different style of teaching which is not included in or accepted by the current curriculum. Yolngu teachers are already connected to the children in their classes through kinship so they have special ways of relating to them already. The way of asking questions of individual children is a very balanda way of teaching. For Yolngu people, asking questions can be a sign of bad manners and focussing on just one child can make the child feel shame. So a Yolngu teacher might work more with groups of children, with less focus on individual children. The NT Curriculum talks for pages about *Indigenous Perspectives*, but if this were truly integrated, the curriculum would make space for Yolngu teachers to teach in their own style (Yolngu pedagogy). Children need to learn how to read and write in their first language properly. This means that children should not just have one hour of Yolngu Matha program, but the Yolngu Matha should be used in the classroom with English in all lessons. For example, during maths lesson, the children should learn the mathematical terms in English as well as Yolngu Matha. Language is a very powerful tool for children to be able to fully

understand English/Western concepts and at the same time, it also strengthens the child's primary (Yolngu) language.

- Western pedagogy is starting to become more aware of the need for deeper integration in the curriculum. However, even though there is a lot of talk and focus on curriculum integration, the basic curriculum structure hasn't changed. Subjects are still mostly isolated from each other and even though integrated programs may be taught in schools, this is mostly determined by the individual teacher's approach and teaching style.
- One way to overcome this problem is to have a local Yolngu curriculum recognised by the government. This has already been implemented in Yirrkala, and is working very well. Yirrkala Garma and Galtha Curriculum brings together Western Maths in Space and Number with Yolngu kinship system (Gurrutu) and Yolngu location (Djalkiri). An example of an integrated unit of work was using Land Rights as the topic where children learnt about western ways of owning land and Yolngu ways being responsible for the land, the history of the Land Rights Act and so on. They made maps of Dhuwa and Yirritja Land and learnt which clans were responsible for land. On the western side they learnt about balanda mapping, about leases, and buying and selling land.
- Another way, without changing the current curriculum, is to prioritise *Indigenous Language and Culture* in schools in Indigenous communities. For example, at Shepherdson College in Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island, primary teachers are using Yolngu Matha sounds and alphabet to teach literacy rather than beginning with the English alphabet. In addition to this, schools need to show they value curriculum integration by providing teachers with Professional Development training on how to design integrated units of work, so teachers can work together for a more integrated curriculum.
- Finally, in the same way as *Yalu*, the school curriculum should also teach children how they as an individual are connected to the world. This will engage students and make the learning more meaningful to them, which will help them achieve their learning standards. It will help them connect to the outside world, and in the long run, it will equip them to have better opportunities

and to become better educators for the next generation. We have to find a balance between Yolngu and Western approaches for integration in both theory and practice, and to establish a mutual respect for both Western and Yolngu knowledge. If students only learn from a Western curriculum, the children will lose their identity, culture and language; however, if don't attend school and only receive traditional Yolngu education, the children may not make national standards and may be ill-equipped for the world outside their local community. The only way to equip Yolngu children for both Western and Yolgnu worlds is through integrated education.

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