



Achievements statement

Activating community-based Indigenous language and culture resources for university teaching: report on the development of a digital shell and pilot delivery

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To address the dearth of opportunities to learn Australian Indigenous languages at Australian universities, a 'digital shell' was developed in the form of an online template, to enable Indigenous authorities to share their languages and cultures online, on their own terms, and in a way accessible to university programs.

Collaboratively with the Bininj Kunwok Language Project Reference Committee, a team from Charles Darwin University developed an online course for learning Kunwinjku (a language from Western Arnhem Land) using free and flexible software tools.

The project team created a website with a learning management system and populated it with four introductory units on the language and culture of the Bininj (Indigenous people) of West Arnhem Land, specifically the Kunwinjku language. Over 150 people expressed interest in participating in the pilot project, with over 130 making a start and a round 30 completing all four trial units, under the supervision of the language owners.

The Bininj reference committee worked with the non-Indigenous project team to outline content and create materials for the learning units that encompassed cultural information, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, useful phrases, reading and activities. These included a range of video and audio materials created especially for the course, as well as drawing on existing materials from other sources. The project demonstrated that it is possible to develop online training in collaboration with language authorities that can be delivered at reasonable cost through freely available, easy-to-use and flexible software.

As a result of this project, some other language groups have expressed interest in adapting the shell for their own materials, there are proposals to include the material for induction for new staff working in the region, and the Australian National University is supporting expansion of the Bininj Kunwok course into a fully accredited semester unit in 2019.



The Bininj Kunwok course, the digital shell, instructions for use and a detailed report are all available at <http://language-shell.cdu.edu.au/>.