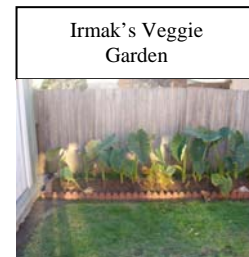


Growing, hunting and gathering food is a skill the Indigenous people of Australia have been using for over 40,000 years. For the purposes of this assignment I attempted to use these skills to prepare a meal, in today's society. This assignment compares my little knowledge on these skills with how the Indigenous people must have felt when their hunting and gathering grounds had been lost and the importance of Aboriginal education in ALL schools.



As a young child I have many memories of spending time in the vegetable garden with my grandpa. Although my memories are vague I remember standing amongst the garden wearing my gloves and helping out the best I could. With the passing of my grandpa I no longer had this opportunity. While my parents could not dedicate the time to maintain a vegetable garden they always highlighted how much they missed my grandpa's fresh veggies. Growing up it was always fun going to the supermarket and being shown how to choose the fresh fruit and vegetables and the different types of meat to buy. I must admit that my dad does not cook. The only memories I have of my dad cooking are using the barbeque. Even this is only once my mum has prepared all the meat and salads. My mum would always involve me in the cooking process even if it were just to stir a cake mixture. She would always make note about the safety procedures to follow in the kitchen. It wasn't until I was a teenager that I began cooking meals. My mum was always there to lend a hand and give advice along the way. Having younger brothers who were really fussy eaters the meals that were prepared in my house were



simple. These experiences in my house helped prepare me to be self-sufficient when I moved out of home. Moving out of home has given me the courage to experiment in the kitchen

During my childhood I grew up in an Anglo- Saxon community. Looking back I realise that I was sheltered from multicultural awareness. It was not until I began TAFE in Prahan that I became friends with people who were of varied nationalities. Understanding my new friend's backgrounds was very confusing to me. It was not that I was racist I was just unaware. I was intrigued about each of my friend's backgrounds

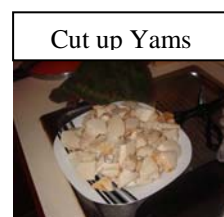


and from this I realised the role my family has played in who I am today. I love gaining an understanding of cultures and their traditions and it is for this reason why I decided to do my cooking with Irmak.

We decided to cook Kolakas (please refer to appendix 1) as Irmak had many of the ingredients in her vegetable garden. This meal is a traditional Turkish meal and the experience allowed me to gain an understanding about her culture. When preparing our meal I found it extremely difficult understanding when to pick the yams and lemons from the garden. I did not have this knowledge and I feel I learnt a lot from Irmak during this experience. The first step we took when preparing our meal was to plan how many resources we needed. We understood that the Traditional Aboriginal people only took what was needed and no more. We originally planned to cook for both of our families, however as Irmak's parents went away we cooked for ourselves. This meant that we needed to take some of the ingredients out of the recipe to ensure we only used what we needed.



Stirring



Cut up Yams

The next step was to pick 2 small yams from the vegetable garden, wash them and cut them into small pieces. I must admit I had never seen what a yam looked like straight from the garden before. We then cut the chicken into pieces leaving the bones and placed it in the pressure cooker. As we continued with the recipe I learnt more and more about the importance of food in Irmak's culture and how they use a lot of lemon and olive oil in their cooking. This style of cooking was something I had never used before and I was surprised that using such simple ingredients together to make such a beautiful meal.

This task taught me a lot about cultural awareness. I learnt about the backgrounds of the some of the foods we used and the importance food plays in many cultures. I also discovered similarities amongst my own and the traditional Aboriginal culture.

The Bunurong people traditionally hunted and gathered their own food, being careful only to take what they needed. It was generally the women's role to collect plants, berries and small animals, which largely depended on the season. Each time they



Dinner is served



gathered a root plant they would ensure that they left some root in the ground so that it would continue to grow, ensuring that there was some there for next time. The women would also teach the children these skills through the children observing them. The Bunurong men would hunt the larger animals such as kangaroo, possums, birds and fish. The men would teach the young boys about the art of hunting and bring the food back to the tribe.

My family also gathers food in this kind of way. My dad is the meat man. He will always go out and pick the meat and bring it home whilst my mum prepares the rest of the food. In saying this though I do recognise the differences in today's society and the traditional Aboriginal ways.

This task also taught me a lot about how difficult it is to hunt and gather your own food from scratch. It gave me insights into how difficult it would have been for Indigenous people during the colonisation of the European people. They took away the Indigenous land, built their houses on it and diminished everyday sources of food for Indigenous people. They implemented 'White Ways' and expected them to follow. They punished Indigenous people for hunting their own food supplies, without even recognising the fact that they had taken away their traditional way of living. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were forbidden their normal diet of fresh Indigenous meats and plants; instead they were dependent on rations of flour, sugar, tea, lard and tinned meat. Within these institutions, tribal languages, traditional ceremonies and practices were banned and punishable by beatings and hard labour (Mackean & Watson, 2004)

I cannot even begin to imagine the heartache these people went through. If a group of people told me that I could no longer attend university because of my culture I would be angry and frustrated. I spent most of my life working so hard achieving my goals to become a primary school teacher and if someone tried to take that away would not know what to do with my life in terms of my career. Being a teacher is all I have ever

wanted since I was a child. I know this comparison is nothing compared the attempted assimilation of the Indigenous culture. It saddens me putting myself in their shoes. Trying to fight for something that is apart of you and your cultural heritage. Something that you looked after and in turn it supplies you with the necessities for your everyday life and all of a sudden people from another country come and takes it away.

Two hundred years on and the vast majority of Australia now commonly know about the Indigenous people of our land and the spiritual connection they have with it. However what the majority of Australian people do not see is what has been lost for the Indigenous culture. Indigenous people were hunters and gatherers and considered themselves and the land inseparable (Partington, 2005, Pg 28). A large amount of their traditional hunting and gathering grounds have been eradicated and for the little bit of land that is left a permit/ licence is required in order to do these proceedings. One of the main sources of food for Aboriginals that lived near the coast lines was fish and now under the New Aboriginal Land Act 1991, Aboriginal people can not claim marine estates unless they fall within the provision of the tidal land (Australian Experience with Sea Rights). Society and the economy have placed Indigenous people in a position where they need to either stop hunting and gathering traditional food sources or side with what they are against and get a permit/ licence to continue their traditional life skills Either way, the governments win.

Traditional Indigenous education was life related and life inspired. Skills such as hunting, gathering and rituals were learned through observations and were practiced in a real life setting. Generally the learning was verbal, largely informal and all aspects of their life were connected with their religious belief. Histories were handed down from generation to generation, including the Dream Time, where to find food and water and ceremonial obligations (Partington, 2005, Pg 28 – 29).

The death of Burke and Wills in a country where Aboriginals had lived for thousands of years demonstrates the difficulties experienced by a group coping in unfamiliar contexts. This is the case with Indigenous children going through a non-Indigenous school system (Partington, 2005, Pg 17). As the functional perspective of teaching the dominant group is slowly fading out, Indigenous students in schools today experience

schooling similar to those experienced a generation ago (Partington, 2005, Pg 4) I want to use my skills and knowledge that I have gained throughout this unit to take on an interactionist perspective. I want the students in my class to create and re-create society through their interactions. I want the students in my class to feel valued and to be proud of their heritage and share their knowledge and skills with the class. I want to be able to teach students about Indigenous history but at the same time I realise the importance of this culture and the need for an Indigenous teacher to teach it. Inviting the Indigenous community to be apart of your classroom is a great way to integrate traditional decision-making processes with Western methods (Partington, 2005, Pg 291). Often in today's society, Indigenous students have little motivation for schooling because of the lack of equality, its alienating nature and the content being taught. If there were more incentives and role models for these students, there would be more motivation. As a teacher it is important to gain an understanding about all of my student's individual needs, values and actions. I believe this to be true as it allows me to make the home – school connection with these students and helps me to celebrate it.

Overall this experience has really opened my eyes to how difficult it is in this day in age to actually hunt and gather your own food. Before I began this assignment I thought it would be an easy task to just go fishing. As I began to discuss this with Irmak we realised the time and effort we needed for this task. Using foods from her garden that were already grown was easy but I could only imagine how different the task would have been if I had to start from scratch. It really reflects how commercialised society is now.

Relating this back to the Indigenous culture, hunting and gathering is a cultural life skill. Throughout this unit I have learnt about the Indigenous culture and what has been lost through colonisation. If only we could make people more aware of what we take for granted every day, and how important the land is for Aboriginal people.

As a teacher I can make a difference. Educating both Indigenous and non- Indigenous people about the Aboriginal culture will motivate more Indigenous students to stay in school, be proud of their cultural heritage and want to share their skills. Even making this small step in my classroom will make the world of difference to the students I

teach. I believe that these benefits should be taught to ALL teachers, as a classroom should reflect inclusive education.



The meal was delicious

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Date Accessed:

Last Updated: Not Listed

Appendix One

Kolakas

- Peel 2 small Turkish yams and cut into small pieces.
- Cut whole chicken into pieces, leaving bones and some of the skin to add flavour.
- Wash chicken and place in pressure cooker.
- Once water is absorbed and chicken is heated, add ½ cup of olive oil.
- Fry until chicken is brown.
- Add in the yams.
- Place 1 tablespoon of tomato paste and mix.
- Add juice of 1 small lemon and salt to taste.
- Add enough water to cover all ingredients and place lid on pressure cooker.
- Cook for 15 minutes, remove lid and simmer for 5 minutes.
- Serve with rice.