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Michelle currently works as the Director of Postgraduate studies in Social Health & Applied Psychology at Macquarie University NSW, Australia. Through the Department of Psychology a Postgraduate course for Indigenous Health Workers is delivered, in community and on campus. Michelle has found answers to many questions asked by her maternal grandmother about their family- where are we from and who are we, really? Michelle's family connections take her back to the Monaro district in NSW, Australia and to the central Coast of NSW. One of Michelle's professional passions is exploring balance between academic requirements and structures, and community and individual learning needs.

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***Listen and Talk, Research to Strengthen – Birthing the Indigenous Health Worker Course***

The Indigenous Health Worker program (Social Health, Macquarie University) provides postgraduate training to health professionals in working with Indigenous clients who are experiencing problems in their lives, especially problems with their use of alcohol and other drugs.

Growth of this course depended upon a collaborative research process inclusive of Community priorities and academic priorities. “Listening to the voices” was at the core of creating any sustainable, community determined course. Participatory research enabled the birth of a course that continues, at each stage of delivery, to refine itself – acknowledging and enhancing the work of Indigenous Health workers within their communities.

Research processes contributing to course development focused strongly on qualitative ways of exploring Indigenous community strengths and needs. Indigenous community and academic community dilemmas and priorities formed a framework for the development of a postgraduate opportunity for learning.

Students and staff found a Narrative approach (White, 1997; Wingard & Lester, 2001) to be culturally appropriate and congruent with their own personal and professional journeys within the research and development phase of the Indigenous Health worker course. A Narrative approach has since formed the foundation of learning and teaching. This presentation will share stories, art-work, and music that communicate their meanings of their research and learning experiences, exploring the impact on their work on their academic and Indigenous communities.

White, Michael (1997) Challenging the culture of consumption: rites of passage and communities of acknowledgement. *Dulwich Centre Newsletter*, 2/3 38-42.

Wingard, Barbara & Lester, Jane (2001) *Telling our stories in ways that make us stronger*. Dulwich Centre Publications, Adelaide.