



## Banburra Methodology

Figure. Banburra methodology- Coolamon holding digging sticks, water hole symbols, message sticks and weaving symbols.

*Excerpt taken from Lotjpa-nhanuk: Indigenous Australian Child-rearing Discourses (Thesis)*

The Coolamon, a gathering tool used by my Ancestors, holds the symbols for this methodology. The First Nations knowledge accessed for this study has been silenced or marginalised from over two hundred years of colonisation in Australia. Critical awareness of this context means all data collected has been influenced by, to different degrees, dominant Western ways of thinking. Colonisation continues today through the dominance of Western theories, from this a process similar to digging needs to be implemented to re-reveal First Nations perspectives.

### Digging

This study was conducted through Banburra (Yorta Yorta language meaning 'to dig') methodology. Banburra methodology includes a type of discourse analysis I have named Relational Discourse Analysis (RDA). RDA follows a similar process to other discourse analysis methods except that the values within RDA have been constructed from my relational worldview, and the purpose of RDA is not to deconstruct language to reveal dominance of Western perspectives but to re-construct languages and phrases to re-reveal First Nations perspectives. Through RDA, publicly available articles authored by First Nations Australians were selected for analysis to reveal First Nations discourses for a particular area of research. RDA represents digging because it re-reveals a field of knowledge subjugated by colonisation. This research process aims to emancipate First Nations discourses, or similar ways of talking about a particular subject, and position them as equal but different to Western perspectives.

### **Waterhole**

The symbol for water represents Gulpa Ngawal (Peeler, Bowe & Atkinson, 1997) which means 'deep listening' in Yorta Yorta. This methodology has required that I remain connected to my spirit; my animals the crow, Eagles, dragonflies and other animals have all informed this study. Through Gulpa Ngawal I have also tried to listen to my Ancestors; it was their dreams that initiated this study, at times of struggling they centred me again and reminded me of the 'track' to stay on. In research there are many side tracks to become lost on. The waterhole is my intuition that I believe is informed by my Ancestral memory, or cellular memory (Steinhauer, 2002) and my spirit. It is also Garraba which means 'wait a little' in Yorta Yorta language. Garraba or 'sitting' is my way of expressing the Aboriginal concept for being quiet, still and waiting. At times when I couldn't understand or I felt blocked in my methodology I would 'sit', listening for a fresh perspective through Gulpa Ngawal that would enable me to continue the research again. Gulpa Ngawal does not occur in just one section of the study but is a continuing way of being throughout the whole process.

### **Message Stick**

The message stick represents the process of sharing. It was a communication tool used by my Ancestors. It has been important to communicate with many people connected to the study, listening to diverse First Nations voices. Message stick also represents the ways in which I have communicated my research through the proposal for this study, supervision sessions, publication and conference presentations, the thesis itself and any forthcoming publications. Message stick reminds me to consider 'who is my audience' and 'what are the main points I want to convey'. Lastly it keeps me accountable to my Aboriginal Community, this is the track I have been running and this is what I would like to say. Sharing has enabled my Community to give me feedback about all aspects of this research process.

### **Weaving**

The concept of weaving is my way of undertaking this study and disseminating the findings. Weaving continues today as a way of being for Yorta Yorta women. The literature review has been a process of weaving international and Australian literature to reveal similar themes. RDA is a method of weaving First Nations knowledge together and looking very carefully at the weave to see if any patterns in language can be seen. An important element of weaving in this study is to ensure each strand of knowledge maintains its connection to Country and Community. This was done through referencing authors, mentioning geographic locations and using First Nations languages and First Nations English phrases that are found in the literature. In the light of colonisation and the well-oiled machinery of Western knowledge this study acknowledges that we need to collectively position our ways of knowing as equal but different to Western knowledge, and that one strand of grass is not as strong as multiple strands weaved together. However this research doesn't endeavour to create a pan-Indigenous set of knowledge, but reveal through weaving or RDA, the strengths and similar principles that we can put forward in this colonised world without losing the relatedness of where each strand originates from. The dissemination of this study also includes the act of weaving; stakeholders connected to the subject being researched will be asked for a 'both ways' approach. This means implementation of the findings will be a weaving of Western theories and First Nations theories developed from the re-revealed discourse. Enabling both fields of knowledge and worldviews to inform and create programs, policies and services.