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As program coordinator of the Sunshine Coast ISA, I have been recently involved in implementing a Yarning Circles Project to support the engagement of staff in their use of the EYLF in both Indigenous and mainstream early childhood settings in two specified regions in Queensland.

The Yarning Circles Project was an exciting learning journey that utilised action learning theories to promote shared discussions relevant to Indigenous inclusion and the EYLF. Through the series of yarning circles, participants from all backgrounds of early childhood education and community engaged in yarns that focused on their ideas, needs, questions and understandings around the introduction of the EYLF.

The project relied on the use of visual technology to link participants in two regions that would otherwise not have ready access to each other. One is located on the southern coast of Queensland, the other in the central north. The Access Grid is a video linking network that we were able to access through two universities to facilitate professional conversations in relation to:

- the development of inclusive practice and greater knowledge of Indigenous cultural issues
- the inclusion of the EYLF in the development of service delivery
- the professional development of the early childhood education and care staff working within these settings.

During these yarning sessions participants from two locations—Sunshine Coast and Mount Isa—shared stories through the video linking technology. This provided opportunities to unpack sections of the EYLF which raised many discussions about professional practice.

Beyond the Yarning Circle we established an action learning model that provided opportunities for participants to explore the principles of the EYLF and Indigenous inclusion practices that were relevant to their contexts and settings. Participants were exposed to the thinking and ideas of others in different locations and contexts, which encouraged deeper analysis and a collegial approach to addressing common challenges. Action learning is a strategy that involves identifying issues to be explored, establishing key actions, implementing the actions, reflecting upon practice change and impact, and establishing the next phase of strategies and priorities for implementation (Borgia & Schuler, 1988). This model provided a learning strategy that supported varying learning styles, as all participants brought vast experiences and stories that helped everyone in the group to implement change at their own levels of knowledge and practice.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff were encouraged during these yarns to contribute their knowledge of culture and context and make connections to support a broader understanding of Indigenous perspectives. This provided participants with an opportunity to share their personal ideology in a safe open environment. These discussions were a comfortable way for participants with varying levels of understandings about quality Indigenous inclusion to learn from each other in what became a supportive, collaborative venture. We were all learning about the things we would not perhaps ask about in a different forum. One outcome of the project was the organisation of a cultural tour of the Sunshine Coast area. Many staff from the local early childhood settings joined in a one-day visit of local Aboriginal sites to learn more about the Indigenous cultural heritage of their local area.

From this project I, along with another staff member from the ISA Sunshine Coast, have grown the idea to engage in a larger action research project in partnership with the Queensland Professional Support Co-ordinators (PSCQ) in other parts of the state. As an Indigenous early childhood professional and program coordinator at ISASC this ongoing action research journey is supporting my cultural learning and is continually providing me with professional partnerships and understandings that feels like a powerful ripple effect through our early childhood community.