

# Access to what? OER, Libraries and Social Justice

Sarah Lambert

Deakin University

CRIG seminar 10/11/20

# OER texts in Australia

- Thanks to Rajiv for the international context
- Australia is coming off a low-base (Bossu, Bull and Brown, 2012) and the pace of exploration is picking up
- Caveat – 12 NCSEHE month project, impossible to be across everything!
- Informed by the published literature, the OER-SIG network, and the 5 unis who are participating in the research

# OER texts in Australia

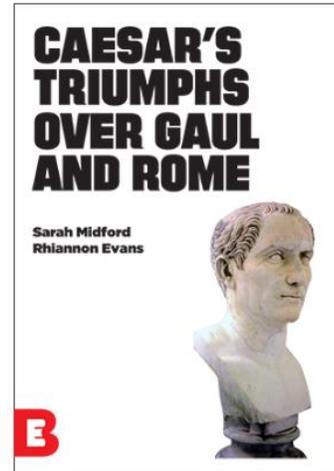
- USQ : pioneers and early leadership (Jim Taylor, Ken Udas, Helen Partridge, David Bull); strong leadership currently at USQ through Adrian Stagg OEP-SIG
- UTas also active early esp research through Corinna Bossu
- La Trobe uni major OER text publishing project (“eBureau”)
- Many unis have an OER Libguide; some have harvested OER citations and imported into their catalogues eg Deakin

Recent OER text  
examples in  
Australia

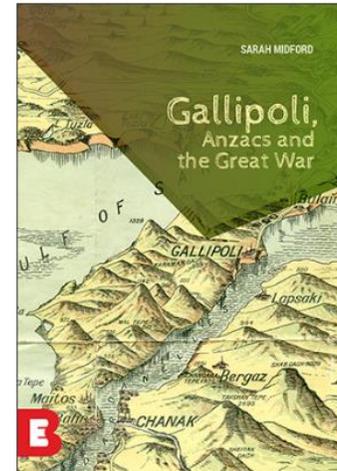


# La Trobe's eBureau

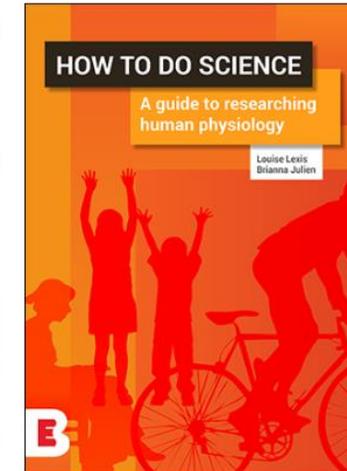
<https://library.latrobe.edu.au/ebureau>



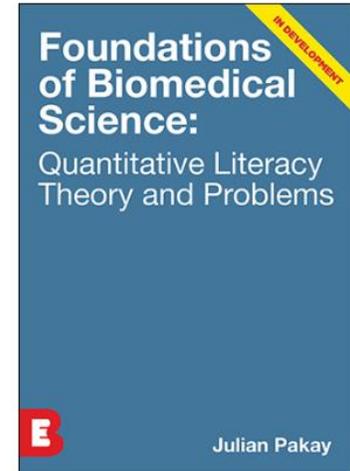
Caesar's triumphs over  
Gaul and Rome



Gallipoli, Anzacs and the  
Great War



How to do science:  
A guide to researching  
human physiology

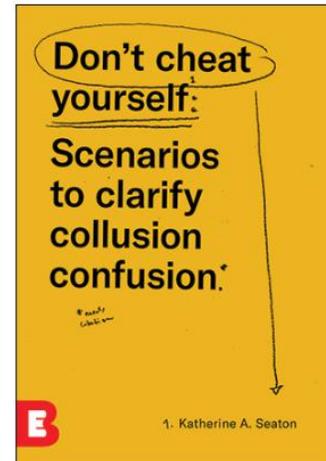


Foundations of Biomedical  
Science: Quantitative  
Literacy Theory and  
Problems

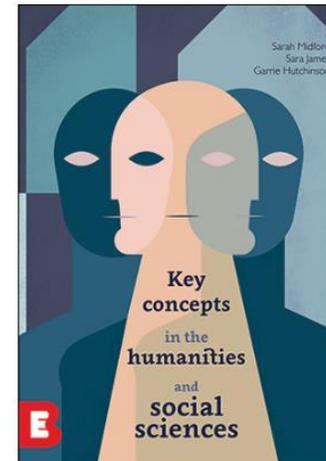


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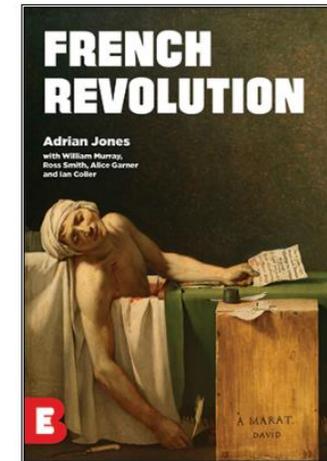
First titles published in 2017



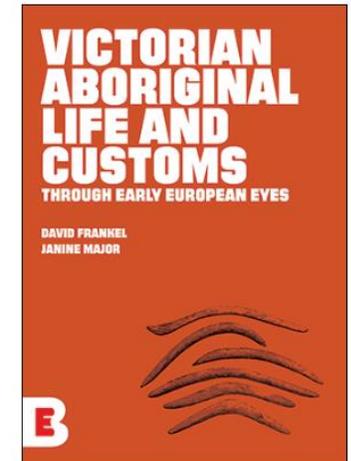
Don't cheat yourself:  
Scenarios to clarify  
collusion confusion



Key concepts in the  
humanities and social  
sciences



French Revolution



Victorian Aboriginal life  
and customs through early  
European eyes



# QUT's PressBooks pilot

<https://qut.pressbooks.pub/>

← → ↻ 🔒 <https://qut.pressbooks.pub> 🔍 ☆ 📄 | ☆ 📦 Not syncing 👤 ⋮

## QUT eBooks

Queensland University of Technology's Open Textbook Platform

### OPEN TEXTBOOKS AT QUT

Open Textbooks are openly-licensed materials which allow you to create, reuse, adapt and modify. QUT has a commitment to use OERs to widen access to education and to improve both the cost-efficiency and quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### CREATE A BOOK

QUT eBooks is a publishing platform that gives you the ability to adapt or create your own Open Educational Resources. QUT is currently piloting the use of this software in 2020.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

# USQ's PressBooks

<https://usq.pressbooks.pub/>

First Australian Uni to join Open  
Textbook Library network

The image shows a screenshot of the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Open Access Textbooks website. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Contact', and 'Sign In'. The main heading is 'University of Southern Queensland Open Access Textbooks'. Below this, there are two columns of text. The left column, titled 'WHAT ARE OPEN TEXTBOOKS?', explains that open textbooks are written and reviewed by staff at universities globally and cover a wide variety of disciplines. The right column, titled 'WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?', lists three benefits for students using open texts: they are relieved of a major financial burden, they have equitable access to learning resources from the first day of semester, and they retain access at the end of the semester. Below the text is a browser window showing the URL 'https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/'.

The bottom part of the screenshot shows the Open Textbook Library interface. It features the library's logo, a search bar with the text 'Search the Library' and a 'GO' button, and a navigation menu with links for 'Browse Subjects', 'About Open Textbooks', 'Submit', 'Discovery', and 'Open Education Network'. A central message states 'Transform higher education and student learning' and notes that open textbooks are licensed by authors and publishers to be freely used and adapted. A purple box on the right indicates '806 open textbooks'. Below this, there is a section for a textbook titled 'Wellbeing' by Susan Carter and Cecily Andersen, published by the University of Southern Queensland. The book cover is visible, and there is a 'BROWSE SUBJECTS »' button and a 'READ MORE »' button.

# RMIT's Textbook Heroes

Tracks cost savings to students and  
teaching benefits

<https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/oer/textbook-hero/>

## James Harland



Associate Professor James Harland  
School of Science  
james.harland@rmit.edu.au  
Course: COSC2627

Discrete Structures in Computing

**Saved students: \$34,862 in 2018**

**Saved students: \$34,092 in Semester 1 2019**

By prescribing an OER Textbook: *The Book of Proof*



### Comments from Assoc. Professor James Harland:

What is the main challenge faced by your students? How do they learn and what do they find difficult?

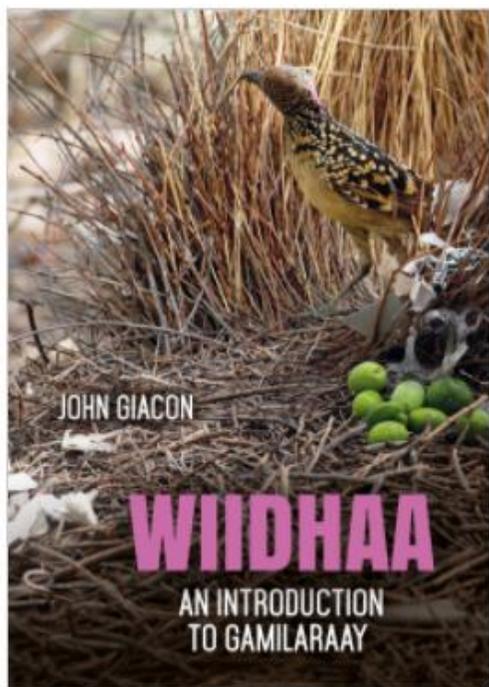
*Discrete Structures in Computing is a highly conceptual course, which introduces students to several mathematical concepts which are typically new to them (including formal proofs, proofs by contradiction, proofs by induction, predicates, relations, graphs, trees) as well as the mathematical language and symbols in which these concepts are expressed. This means that a comprehensive and detailed textbook is a must.*

What change have you made to respond to this challenge?

# ANU Press

(OA Press)

ANU Press brochure (2020): >921 titles  
“ANU Press was the first and is now the largest open access university press in the world”, has a series on Indigenous knowledges and topics



## Wiidhaa

### An Introduction to Gamilaraay

Authored by: John Giacon 

Buy print (\$50.00)

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22459/W.2019>

Please read Conditions of use before downloading the formats.

Download/view free for

PDF (186.5MB)

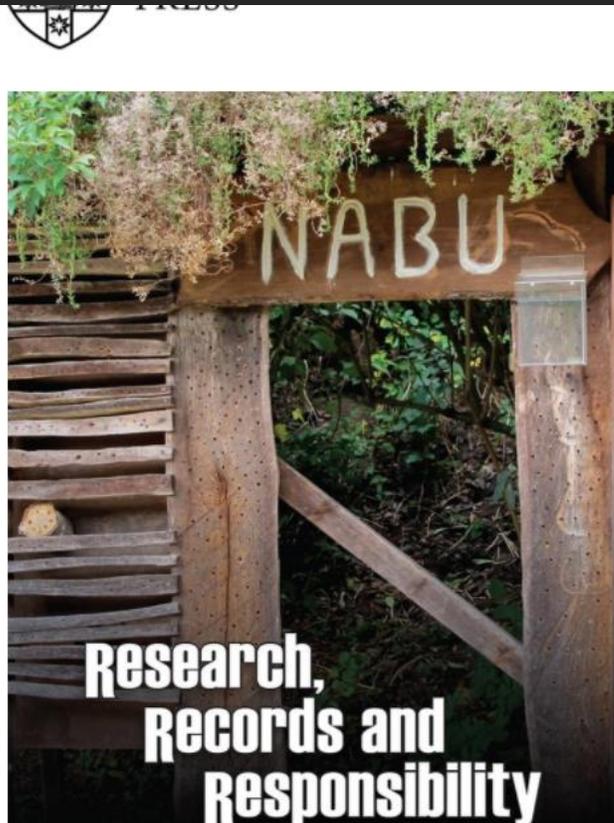
PDF chapters

EPUB (181.9MB)

“The first Indigenous language etextbook, which revives and preserves the Gamilaraay language”

# Sydney Open Library (SOL)

[“SOL” hosts academic monographs and textbooks](#) published by Sydney University Press in open access, covering subjects across the humanities and social sciences. SOL was launched in 2019 with over 40 titles.”



## Research, Records and Responsibility

Edited by Amanda Harris, Nick Thieberger and Linda Barwick

[Read online](#)

[Download](#) ▾

[Buy paperback](#)

ISBN: 9781743324431

DOI: 10.30722/sup.9781743324431

Publication date: 02 October 2015



The Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC) has been on the cutting edge of digital archiving, building a significant historical collection and community of practice engaged in the preservation and accessibility of research materials. Over the ten years of PARADISEC’s operation, the repository has grown to represent over 860 languages from across the world, including cultural materials from the Pacific region and South-East Asia, North America, Africa and Europe.



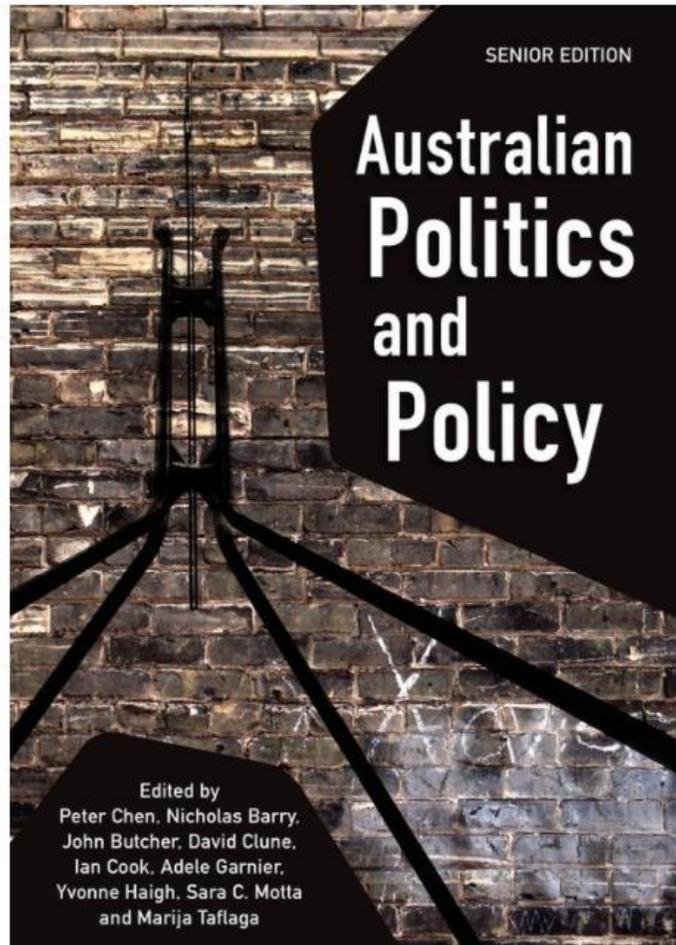
SYDNEY  
UNIVERSITY  
PRESS

[Sydney Open Library](#)

[About SOL](#)

[Browse ▾](#)

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## Australian Politics and Policy: Senior Edition

Edited by Peter Chen, Nicholas Barry, John Butcher, David Clune, Ian Cook, Adele Garnier, Yvonne Haigh, Sara C. Motta and Marija Taflaga

[Read online](#)

[Download ▾](#)

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ISBN: 9781743326671

DOI: 10.30722/sup.9781743326671

Publication date: 1 November 2019

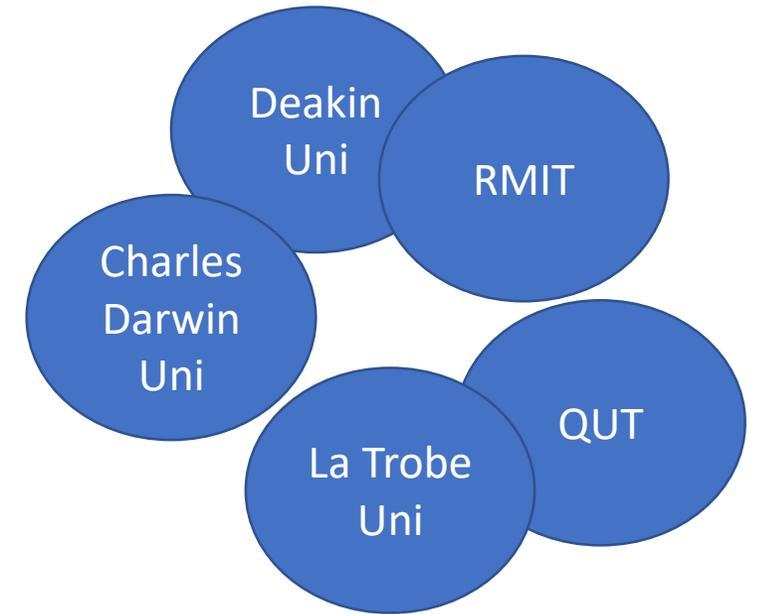


The first completely customisable, open access textbook on *Australian politics, A Politics and Policy* provides a unique, holistic coverage of politics and public topic use in junior and senior university courses. With an online database of 40 chapter book innovatively enables instructors to compile a bespoke edition to suit their needs, or to include individual chapters in course readers.

With contributions from Australia's leading politics and public-policy scholars, the textbook includes material on Australian political history and philosophy, key polit

# Open Textbook as Social Justice: research

- 64 interviews
  - 19 students at 2 unis
    - Cohort 1: Masters mostly international, blended/online;
    - Cohort 2: Undergraduate mix of local and external
  - 45 staff at 5 unis
    - Key staff: libraries, eLearning, leadership/policy
    - OER adopters, adapters and authors



Funded by



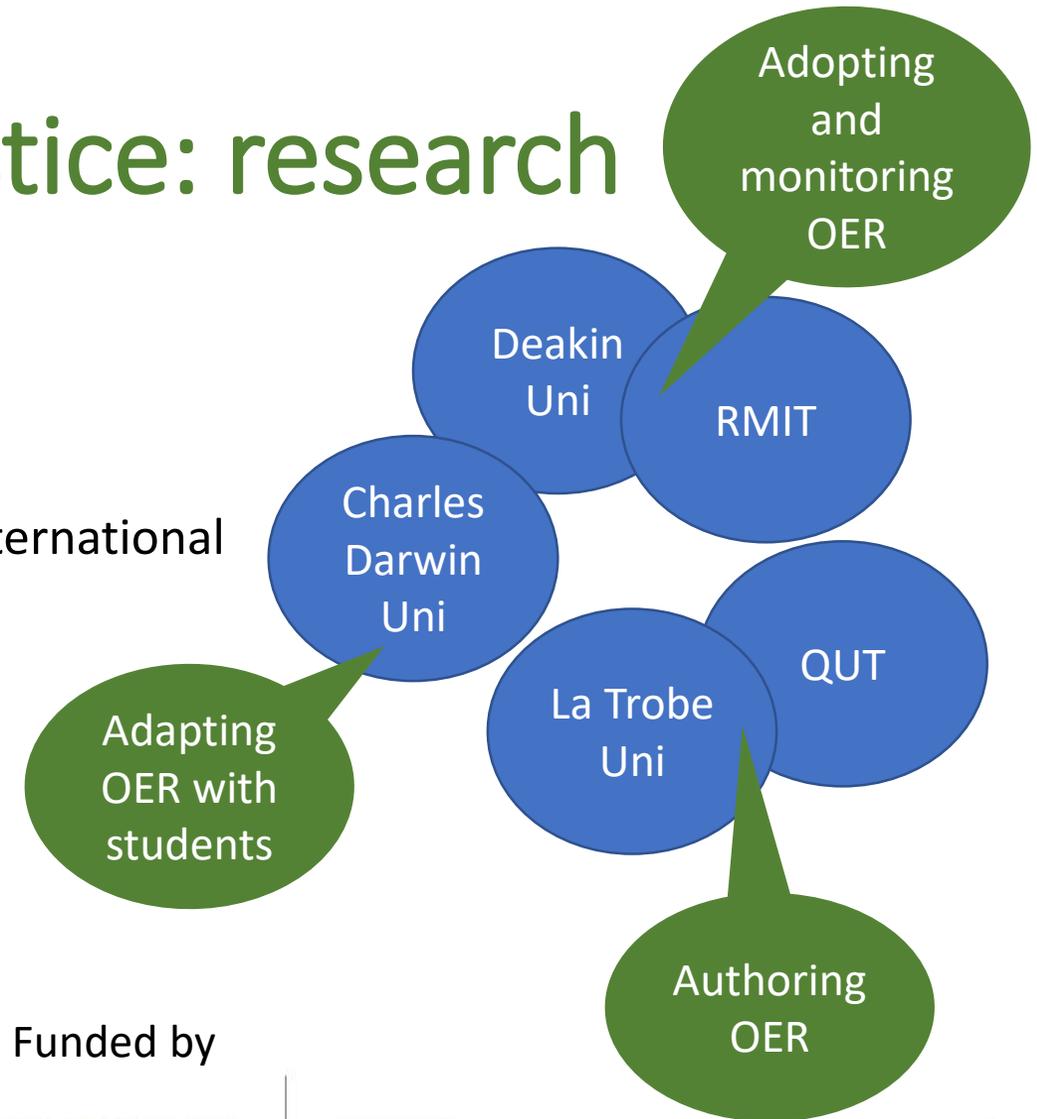
**NCSEHE**  
National Centre for Student  
Equity in Higher Education



**Curtin University**

# Open Textbook as Social Justice: research

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Funded by



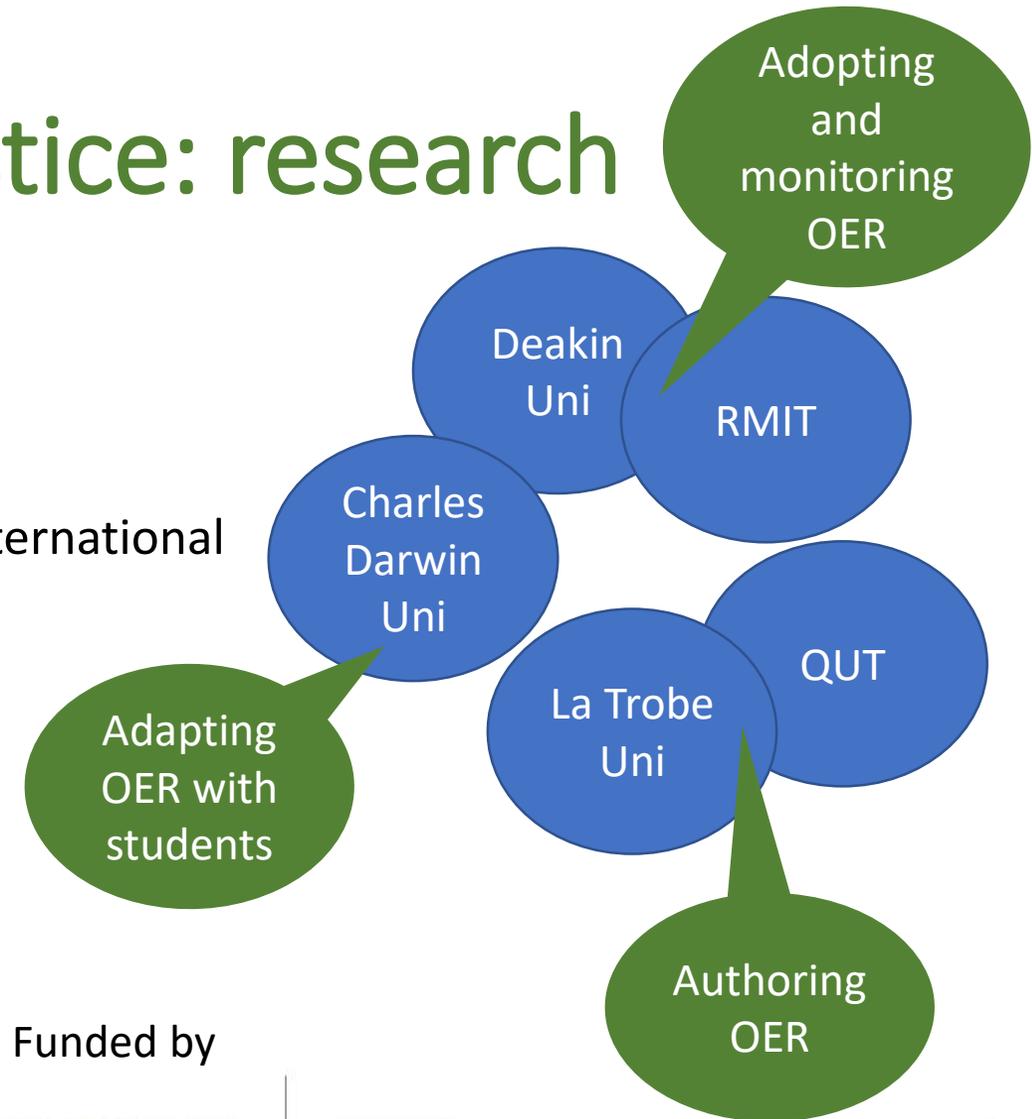
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    - OER adopters, adapters and authors
- National online survey of teaching staff



Funded by



**NCSEHE**  
National Centre for Student  
Equity in Higher Education



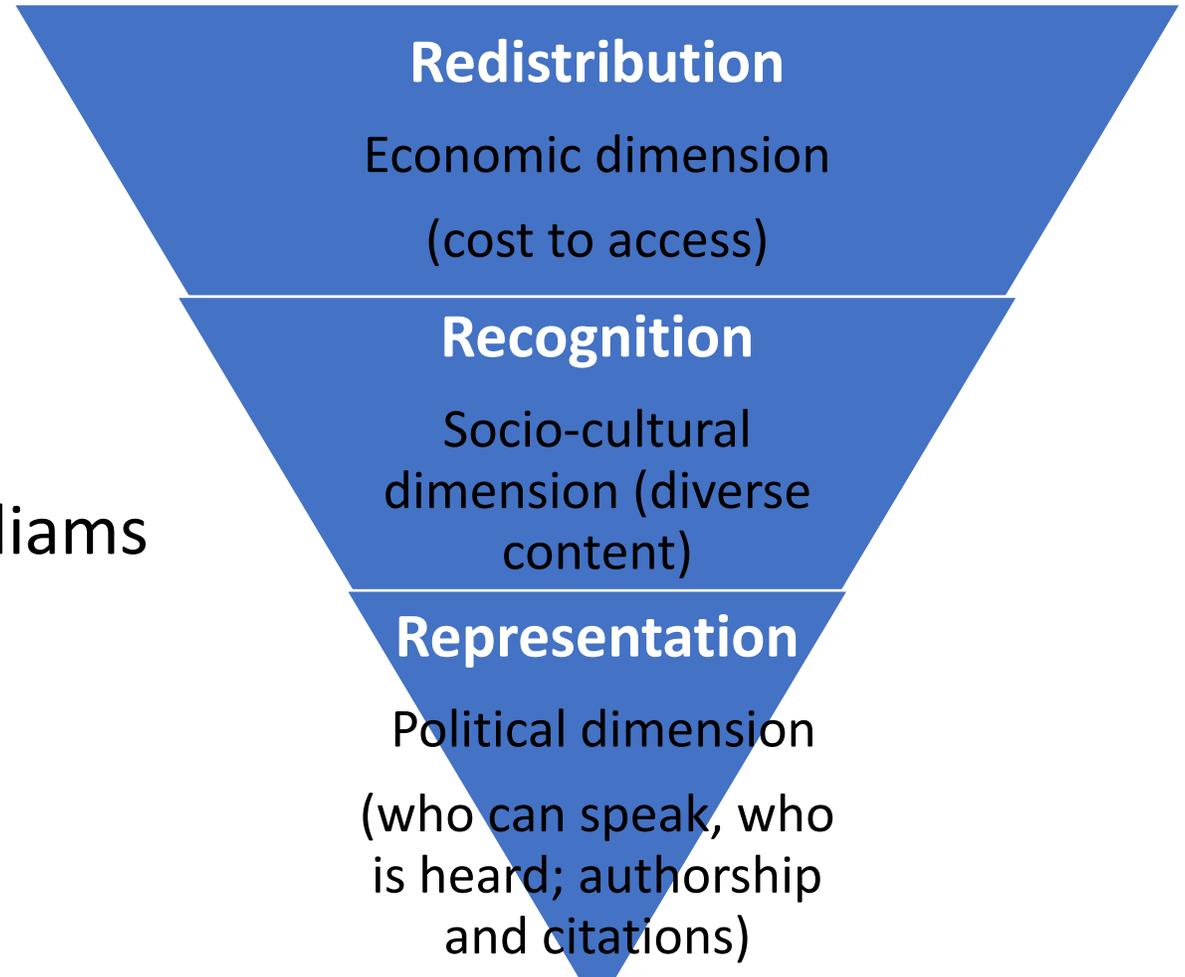
**Curtin University**

“To what extent do **OER texts** have the potential to act as **social justice** initiatives in Australian Higher Ed as they do overseas?”

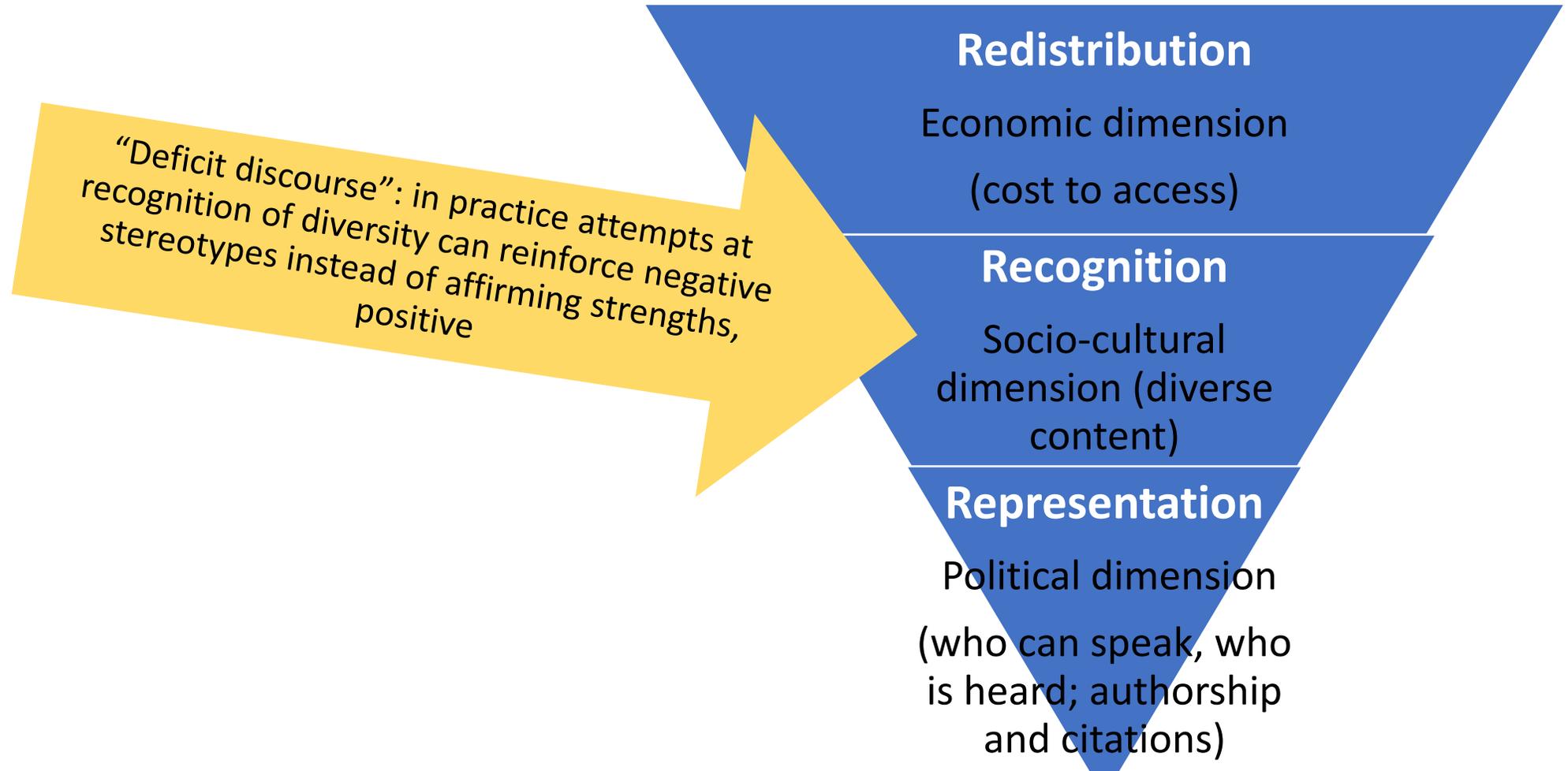
Overarching Research Question

# What do I mean by social justice?

- Nancy Fraser - Three different principles or “angles”
- Interpreted for open education (Lambert 2018; Hodgkinson-Williams 2018)



# What do I mean by social justice?



# What do I mean by social justice?

*“Deficit discourse”: in practice attempts at recognition of diversity can reinforce negative stereotypes instead of affirming strengths, positive*

**Disability → Ability, Capability**

Let's talk about your abilities,  
Tell me what you need to get  
this assignment done?

## Redistribution

Economic dimension  
(cost to access)

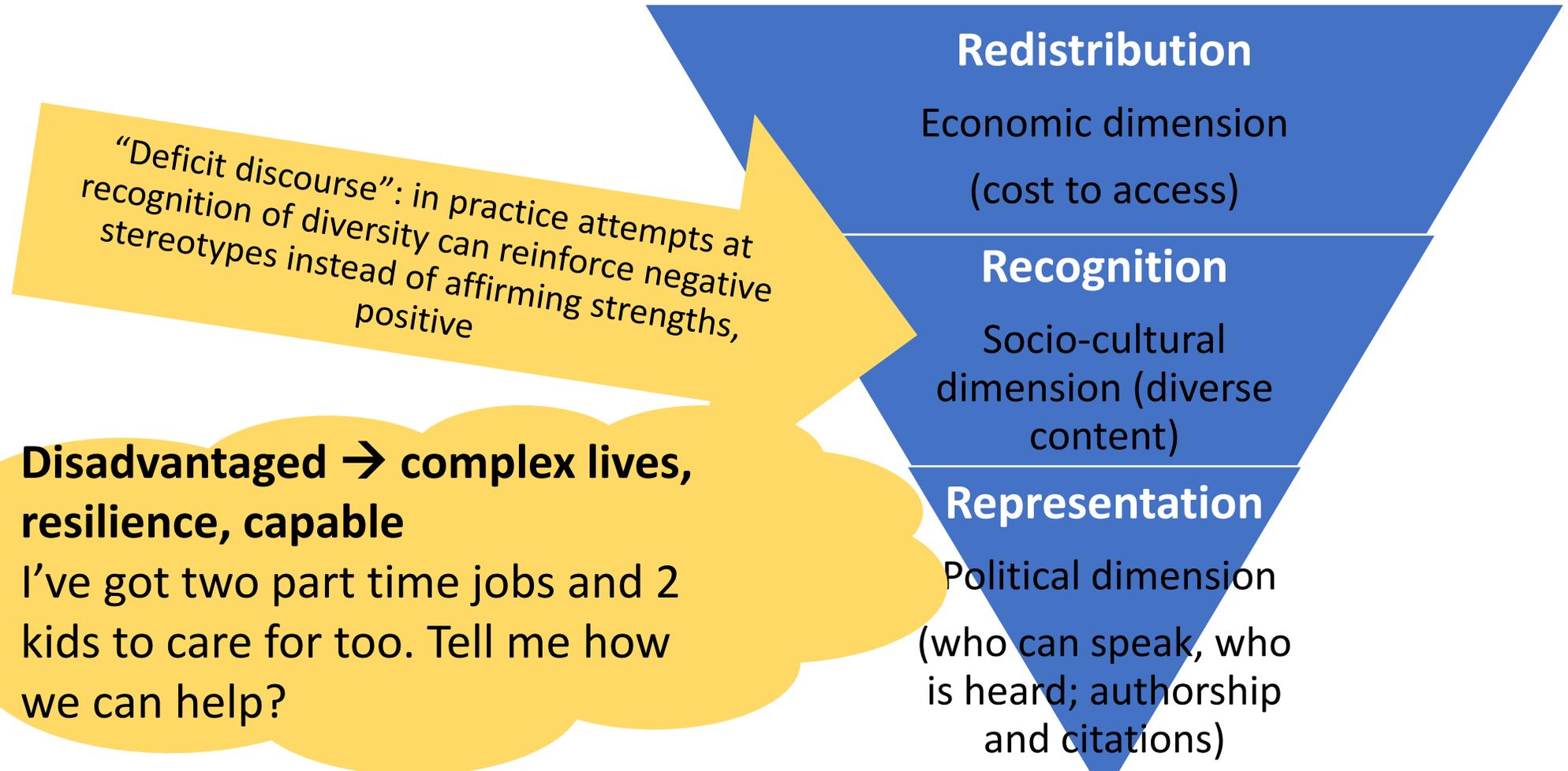
## Recognition

Socio-cultural  
dimension (diverse  
content)

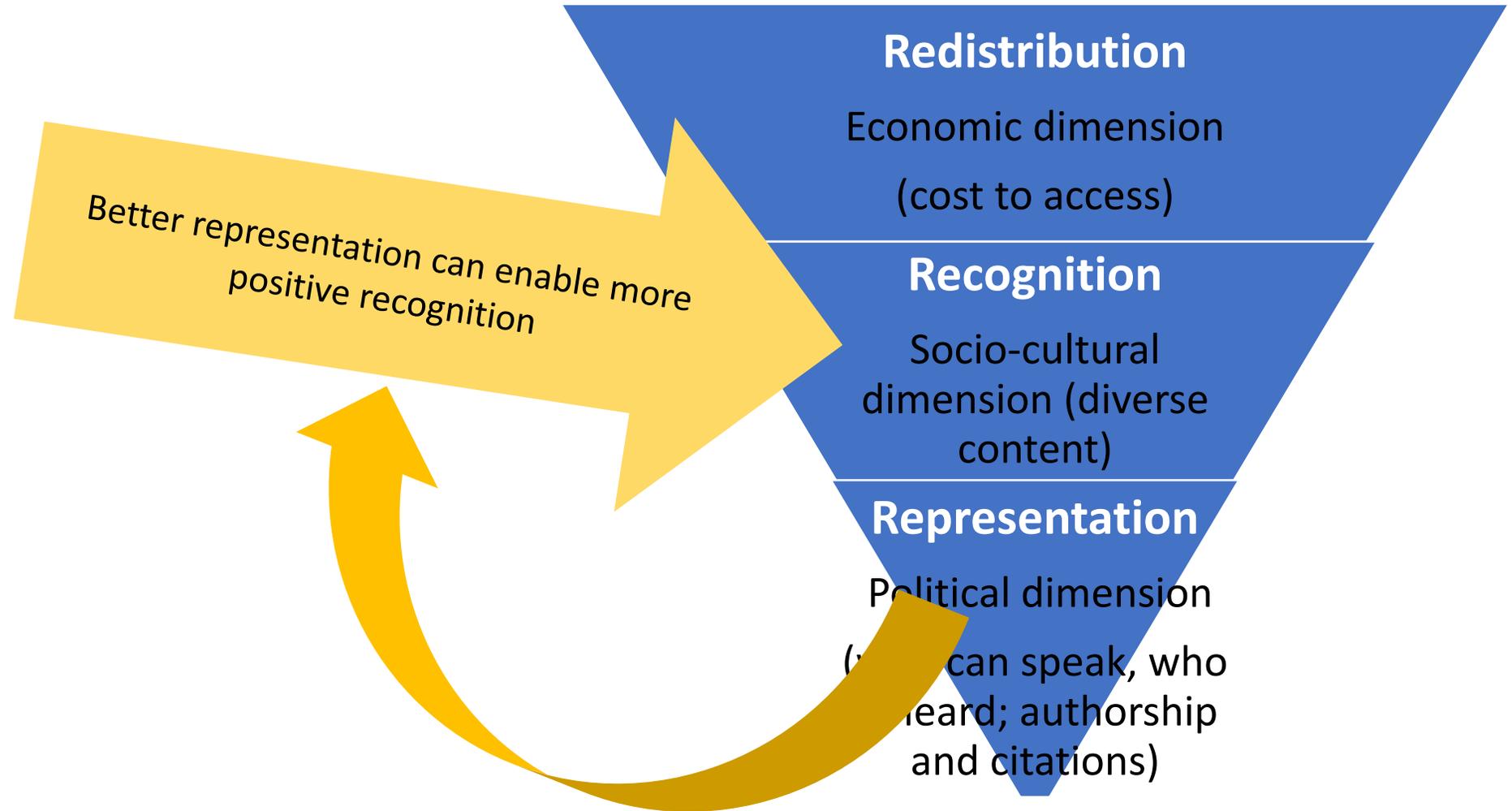
## Representation

Political dimension  
(who can speak, who  
is heard; authorship  
and citations)

# What do I mean by social justice?



# What do I mean by social justice?



Social Justice is why  
these examples are  
so compelling...



# Business Writing For Everyone

Arley Cruthers

*Business Writing For Everyone* is an inclusive guide to writing in the workplace. The book takes a process-oriented, storytelling approach to composition: focusing less on genre and more on the decisions that effective business communicators make. *Business Writing For Everyone* also contains interactive H5P activities for students to test their learning, and activities for further reflection that instructors can use in the classroom or assign as homework.

 **Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial**



# Business Writing for Everyone

- By Arley Cruthers, see the [adaptation statement](#)
- Canadian content, changed names to reflect classroom composition, Gender neutral language, First Nations representation and recognition
- “The author also collaborated with Brenda Fernie, who is the president of Seyem, the economic development branch of the Kwantlen Nation, to produce a series of narratives that connect to the topic explored in the book.”

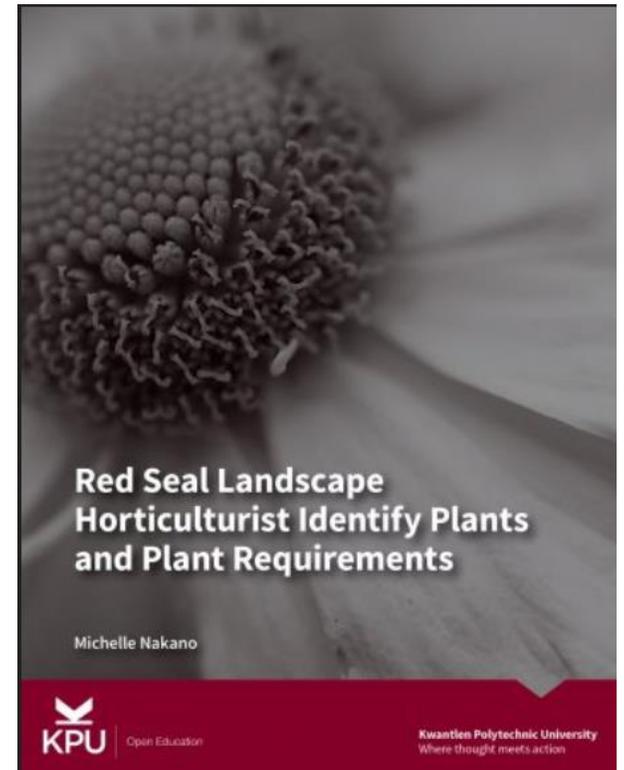
# Text for KPU Botany course

- By Michella Nakano
- seamlessly weaves in First Nations usage of plants for survival over millenia

## *Introduction to Plant Identification*

All living organisms on Earth rely on the process of photosynthesis for food energy and oxygen. Humans depend almost entirely on plants for clean air and a livable climate as well as for food, medicines, materials, and well being. Around the world, groups of people with their own distinct history, culture, and society have learned to identify plants and their properties. For Indigenous peoples, the accumulated traditional knowledge of plants has allowed them to thrive in diverse environments for thousands of years.

Traditional knowledge passed among generations through the oral traditions of hunter-



First paragraph of  
first section of the  
book

# Diversifying OpenStax Psychology text

- Nusbaum, A.T., 2020. Who Gets to Wield Academic Mjolnir?: On Worthiness, Knowledge Curation, and Using the Power of the People to Diversify OER. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 2020(1), p.4. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/jime.559>
- Impact: “Overall, first-generation students had a reduced sense of belonging related to their financial circumstances. However, this effect was ameliorated for first-generation students who read the diversified chapter, compared to those who read the original chapter.”
- NB: Sarah Ahmed writes about the increased emotional effort required to fit in to an organization, if you’re seen as different

# Charles Darwin University

- Dr Johanna Funk, teaching Cultural Capability
- Adopting and adapting OER
- Addition of [4 new case study chapters written by students](#)
- Each case was the students' major assignment
- Dr Funk tweaked the assessment in 2020 to give students **the option** to publish their work
  - co-ordinated, reviewed/quality checked their work, modified in PressBooks

# CONTENTS

HIDE ALL CONTENTS

Introduction

## I. Principles of Capability

1. Cultural Capability in Australian Case Studies

2. Creating safe work spaces for Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people

3. Dirt Cheap 30 Years On; Uranium Mining on Aboriginal Territory in Kakadu

4. Discrimination against Asians during COVID19

5. #toostrongforyoukaren ; Racism against Aboriginal Australians in rural Victoria

6. References

# Research: Do the students care?

- **Redistributive justice – cost of textbooks**
- “seriously shocked at the prices”, “financial burden”, “outrageously expensive on top of study costs”
- Extreme gratitude for free digital library access “a blessing”
- Just not worth it, rely on PPTs, only use the texts for two weeks/exams/one semester/difficult topics
- Happier if a text is used for the whole year, or a reference for the whole course
- Borrow or buy cheaper digital options including from PDF sites

# Research: Do the students care?

- **Redistributive justice – impact of digital licencing restrictions**
- All students except 2 were impacted to some degree by the digital licencing restrictions
- From irritation to inconvenience to refusal to use
- Some were forced into purchasing books, especially for open book exams
- Particularly difficult for external students (over 1000 kms from the library)
- Encouraged a whole host of “hacks” or workarounds and strategic behaviours to get unrestricted copies
- Those who went without some/all of the texts had anxiety that they were not so well prepared for exams

# Research: Do the students care?

- **Recognitive and representational justice**
- Many said it depends on the topic
  - Foundations topics thought to be less important (“maths is just maths”)
  - Social sciences and health very important, “applied” topics
- Most students provided examples of under-representation of women and indigenous people as both authors and topics for the textbook
- Some provided examples of under-representation of Asian and non-white people, Euro-centrism

# Research: Do the students care?

- **Recognitive and representational justice – comparing different units**
- Half the students interviewed had experienced a unit which had inclusion and socio-cultural recognition woven through the whole curriculum, the teaching moments and the texts
- They had a lot more to say, very concrete comparisons between this and other units and other texts

# Plenty to say, concrete comparisons

- S09 “It [content]’s not representative of anyone. The photographs tend to be dominated by white people for a start and they don't look Australian. Most of the time I think they just use stock photo library. And the content is very often very Eurocentric so you don't get input from a lot of scholarly material that's out there from Asia or India and there's an enormous amount of Indian work on [topic X] for instance.”

# Plenty to say, concrete comparisons

- S12 “There was so many different cultures represented and so many different readings represented on how to think about different things in different ways.”
- In other units, “I definitely think that definitely the nursing, I felt like it was very much male orientated coming from like the more male side.”
- S12 “I noticed the men names always seem to come first and they always look very Anglo, the names, so no, they're not very Multicultural. So, there isn't a lot of diversity in the authors.”
- S15 “In the sociology one as well. It's all old white guys from a hundred years ago.”

# For others, a bolt from the blue

- Other students in a Masters Business cohort needed to be shown some examples to evaluate the importance, “a bolt from the blue”
- Not front of mind, new terms, not used to discussing these ideas
- Had to cast their minds back and re-consider their texts
- **“but I don't really care about that. So maybe I didn't notice”** Later reflects that actually women are missing in her Business texts, particularly in Finance.

# The aha! moment

- S01 immediately began connecting the idea of correcting under-representation in texts to similar projects he is doing on multi-culturalism and SDGs, he was energised by the conversation.
- [S01, male, Business, post-grad, international student]:” **it really triggers... it triggers the mind... as a very simple example in this conversation.** You said to me, you know, a very simple example... and suddenly I started thinking about my textbooks [00:58:09] and I was not really able to come up with that (gender or indigenous representation examples) and which made me think ... ah well she has a great point ....but then eventually right and then eventually **all of the indigenous examples .... if I would have been reading all those things they would have been very normal to me** because for a student, I think books and lectures are really are really you know ... they stick to the head...”

# Now that I think about it...

- S06 notes gender imbalance in business texts, generally “**have men, men and men again**”; also gave very specific examples of lack of cultural diversity, ie “**Nelson Mandela**” is missing as a business/comms leader in the textbook.
- S04 Generally not a problem, but then later noted there were **no Asian women** in her textbooks and “**it's a little bit unfair but I think because the men ... They can do really well, but I think women can do it as well as they can.**” Also noted **no black people** in the textbooks.

# Now that I think about it...

- Vietnamese student “lit up” recalling the first time he read a journal paper by a Vietnamese professor
- “Yeah. Absolutely excited...yeah I remember earlier when in my first semester. I see one of the writers in the paper and actually **they are my kind ... my first Vietnamese lecturer in the university** in yeah, so it's kind of a really interesting to see them and you know how you know their title (*e.g. Professor*)...that he’s going to be like going on...to the world.”

# Gendered racism front of mind...

- **Recognitive and representational justice – life experience**
- S07 provided a long and passionate narrative about personal experiences of gendered racism in her work life and practicum/internship placement
- S07 didn't take any time to think about it: **“barely women are mentioned. It's all about the men. Even the textbook for retail management, which is a female dominated workforce, did not have women visible in it.”**
- Many international students consulted and interviewed very keen to get involved in projects to diversity contents as part of assignments or voluntary work experience

“What a great idea! I didn’t think of that!”

- Staff interviewees - recognitive and representation justice ideas were also not front of mind
- However they usually embraced them enthusiastically and grasped the importance right away

# There are many positive examples too!

- WAHED presentation 17/11/20
- Focussing on staff interviews
- Many good examples of Australian staff actively working to diversify their texts
  - Curation of more diverse reading lists
  - Authoring of more diverse textbooks - both OER and commercial
- Staff survey data
  - 94% interested to adopt in future (n=108)
  - 88% would use open texts if they had institutional support (n=107)
  - 73% interested in adapting for Australian context (n=107)
  - 67% interested in adapting to diversify content (n=106)
  - 66% interested in being part of a community to author textbooks (n=105)

# What can the Library do? Powerful actions!

- **“Look at this excellent example”** Show examples of OER texts with embedded diversity
- **Keep the focus on the students:** remind them about the stats on affordability, and cultural diversity or your own cohorts
- **Reviewing readings lists for diversity:** provide support
- Help the university **Connect the dots** between their equity policies/strategies and their aspirations for open access, OER and digital strategies.

# What can the Library do? Powerful actions!

## “Wonder-twin powers, activate!”

- Diversity policies and Digital Learning strategies
- OER/teaching and OA/research: form a co-alition and work together
- Libraries and L&T centres: PressBooks is GO!



# References

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- Nusbaum, A.T., 2020. Who Gets to Wield Academic Mjolnir?: On Worthiness, Knowledge Curation, and Using the Power of the People to Diversify OER. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 2020(1), p.4. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/jime.559>
- Note: this article describes and evaluates a project to diversity the OpenStax Psychology textbook through an open call to review, annotate and improve the textbook. A fascinating paper with plenty of practical detail on the mechanics of the project and the impact on First in Family students at university