

iPads as a multimodal learning tool to support Indigenous languages and traditional ways of learning

Abstract

Globally, First Nations languages are under threat. For millennia, First Nations languages have been passed on intergenerationally through oral transmission and multimodal traditional ways of learning. Schools and communities look towards technology as a tool for stemming the loss and maintaining, preserving and revitalising languages. The development of custom apps and online tools can be expensive and time-consuming. The multimodal capabilities of the iPad and its out-of-the-box features and commonly available apps are seemingly overlooked. How can these multimodal capabilities of the iPad as a creative learning tool cater to First Nations pedagogies, allowing First Nations students to engage in a way that aligns with their traditional ways of learning? To explore this question, this project will apply a mixed methods approach honouring Indigenous methodologies, focussing on three schools on Yolŋu Country, in remote Northeast Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, that have been part of an iPad project. Interviews (individual and group) and observations will be conducted with approximately 40-50 participants over several visits, including Yolŋu and non-Yolŋu educators and Yolŋu students, to reflect on the project and investigate the effectiveness of creative iPad learning activities aligned with Yolŋu pedagogy. Anecdotal evidence supports this premise. Given most data will be qualitative, interviews will be recorded and transcribed using OtterAI for interpretative analysis of coding and themes. Reading and interpreting of transcription data, combined with Field Notes and Memoes, looking for common themes and similarities within and across groups. NVivo will be used for data analysis. Classroom observations of students working with and without iPads will also be compared, investigating behaviour, actions, and attitudes. If warranted from qualitative data, written surveys will be conducted with educators. The creation of a framework linking Yolŋu traditional pedagogies and creative iPad activities would provide schools and communities with evidence-based research to support language program development and student learning. These results could potentially be applied to other First Nations communities and languages.