Looking at it from our way…

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The suite of stories

Hearing the Voices
Djiti Djiti
Me n Gladys
Grandfather
Shadowman + CD
Candles n Gilgies

More to come……
What are they for?

• For teachers to learn about Aboriginal English so they are more informed as they teach SAE

• As reading material for Aboriginal readers (children and adults)

• As a model for developing Aboriginal writers seeking more culturally appropriate ways of expression
The problem is linguistic

• All solutions advanced are monocultural and monodialectal and potentially assimilatory.

• The most significant repository of culture is language.

• Current testing takes no account of Indigenous students’ linguistic and culture-based competencies and their real abilities are effectively excluded.
• Standard Australian English (SAE) and Aboriginal English (AE) are both dialects
• Many Aboriginal people use Aboriginal English as their home talk
• Both dialects have complex language rules – Standard English is the institutionalised variety – which is what makes it “standard”.
Linguistics 101 (contd)

- All language conveys and determines world-views (particular ways of seeing the world)
- Aboriginal English has different rules about how and when to speak, and how to behave
- Some standard English words have different meanings in Aboriginal English
- Aboriginal English has rules that generate different word and sentence forms
- Aboriginal English has conventions and genres that differ from other ways of using English.
Stress/Intonation (prosodics)

Sounds (phonology)

Words (morphology)

Sentences (syntax)

Meaning (semantics)

Text form/text structure (genres)

The way language is used (pragmatics)

Values
Beliefs
Attitudes
Applying the iceberg

• Read one of the stories

• Note examples that illustrate Aboriginal English rules conventions or worldview

• Compare your list with others
Differences in stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authenticity</th>
<th>Fictitious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group orientation</td>
<td>Person orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy of words – contextualised – based on rich oral tradition</td>
<td>Word rich – preference for decontextualisation – based on rich written tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic view of meaning making (hence importance of pictures)</td>
<td>Word-based meaning-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumption of shared knowledge</td>
<td>Less assumption of shared knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation of text: eg topical progression</td>
<td>Organisation of text: eg: timeline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spelling punctuation and genre

The stories developed for the two-way literacy and learning project:

• preserve the voice (sound)
• preserve the grammar/syntax
• preserve the genre features
• preserve the world of meaning

- so that, for Aboriginal readers, the text would have meaning.
Double power

• Indigenous knowledge needs to be acknowledged in class

• Respect of home language offers a strong base to improve SAE acquisition

• Proficiency in a first dialect is relevant to proficiency in a second dialect

• All students benefit from analysing language and its functions
Contacts

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