

NAFEA Reflection

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Over May 2018, I undertook placement at Yirrkala Homelands School as part of my Master of Teaching (Secondary). While there, I spent four weeks working with Homeland Centre Teachers and Visiting Teachers delivering lessons to students in a range of Homelands Centre schools. Within this schooling context, Homelands Centre Teachers are the head Yolŋu teacher for their Homeland. While Visiting Teachers instead travel to Homelands Centre schools each week to provide communication, curriculum and support for Homeland Centre Teachers. These schools were located in remote areas of North-East Arnhem Land, which to get to, required travel via plane or car each week. My teaching experience involved working with multi-level secondary classrooms, though which I team taught with Homeland Centre teachers to provide learning that assisted students to develop both English Language skills and understanding of both Yolŋu and Ngapaki (non-Yolŋu/Western) knowledge.

This placement experience provided me with a wealth of skills that not only allowed me to develop an understanding of broader teaching techniques and abilities. But, helped me to begin to learn about context specific skills and knowledge. This included learning about Yolŋu kinship systems and knowledge, political movements and Yolŋu Matha language. Within a wider teaching skill set, I further developed my English as an Additional Language (EAL) teaching abilities and learned how to facilitate multi-level learning within a classroom.

This individuals that I met and worked with, and the experiences that I had during placement had a significant impact on me. As a result, I have since applied for and started a position as a Visiting teacher as the Yirrkala Homelands School, of which I am currently in my second week of work. Through my position, I aim to continue the work that I undertook on placement and contribute to Homeland Schooling within the North-East Arnhem Land region.

Support from NAFEA made a considerable difference within this experience. Considering the costs of travel from Melbourne to Yirrkala and living expenses during placement, funding through the NAFEA Student Scholarship meant that I was able to independently support myself. I am very grateful for assistance through this placement and am eager to see the incredible experiences that NAFEA is able to support in the future.