

# ***Grabbling with complexity: identifying and facilitating cultural responsiveness in research***

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## ***Introduction***

Globalisation, transnational connectedness and everyday multiculturalism have created diverse social spheres, resulting in the concept of culture to be characterised by a process of grappling with complexity (Hames-Garcia, 2011). "Like fish in water, we [often] fail to 'see' culture because it is the medium within which we exist" (Cole, 1996, p. 8), this limits our awareness. This article discusses components of culturally responsive research and training activities that increase the inter-personal skills necessary to become culturally aware and responsive. Informed by Tronto's (2014) understanding of the ethics of care, which describes a necessity of reflection on care and its implications for the understanding of human beings in general... [that] must always emerge from the practices them- selves" (Nistelrooji, Schaafsma and Tronto, 2014, p. 487), culturally responsive research is discussed as a necessity for post-modern research practices. We argue that culturally responsive practice describes an inherent need for humans in general and researchers in particular to take responsibility to act ethically.

Cultural responsiveness in research is closely linked to an ability to reflect on one self and others (Berger, 2015; Bettez; Unger, 2016). This has been of particular interest in business and management studies (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012; Dolowan & Kawamura, 2015; Friedman, 2015; Ljubica, Dulčić, & Aust, 2016) nursing (Blanchet, 2016; Haynes, 2016; Lin, 2016) and education (Hue & Kennedy, 2015; Stead, 2014; Swartz, 2012; Bal & Trainor, 2016). While reflection is widely known as inherent to best research practice (May & Perry, 2011; Muhammad et al., 2015), only limited work has been conducted in regards to cultural responsiveness in research (Trainor & Bal, 2014). Divided into two sections this article first conceptualises culturally responsive research through a discussion of its components, before providing a number of activities that can and should be applied by researchers to improve the inter-personal skills necessary to be culturally responsive in research contexts.

## ***Methodology***

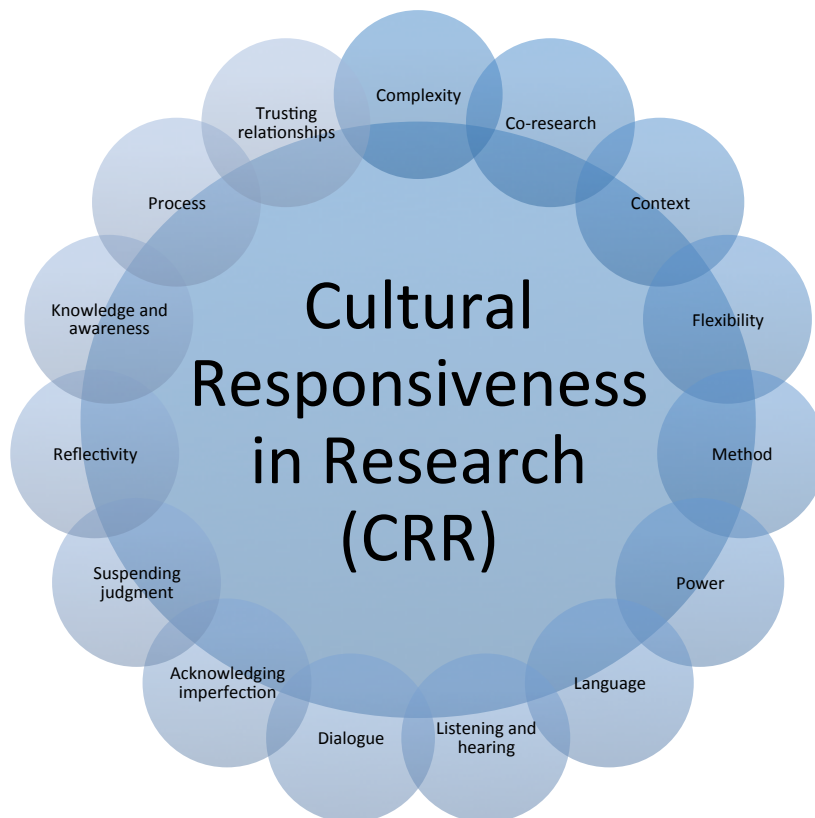
This qualitative research entailed twenty in-depth interviews which aimed to gain insights on how researchers define cultural responsiveness in research, what components they mentioned, what stories about cultural responsiveness in research they shared and what type of activities they identified as facilitating cultural responsiveness in research. Once the interviews had been completed a focus group consisting of co-researchers selected from the interview sample was conducted to collectively discuss culturally responsive research and to workshop methods stated in

the interviews into practical toolkits for researchers. Out of the twenty interviews, thirteen interviews were conducted face-to-face, four via video call and two via telephone. The sample of co-researchers interviewed was snowballed from the Young and Well. Recruitment was based on experience working with diversity and academic title. This resulted in a mix of Australia-based academics from different disciplines including Cultural Studies, Culture and Communication, Psychology, Education and Culture and Human Rights. Seven of the co-researchers, were Senior Lecturers/Researchers; five were Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Students, three Professors, two Associate Professors, two Early Career Researchers and one Emeritus Professor. The focus group was formed out of the interview sample and included one Professor from Education and four researchers from Cultural Studies: two Senior Lecturers/Researchers, one Early Career Researcher and one HDR student, all but one co-researcher. The data collected was transcribed and analysed through a thematic analysis using the qualitative analysis software Nvivo. Before publishing any findings derived from the data, member checks have been conducted to ensure that the information provided by co-researchers was understood and represented in a culturally responsive way.

<b>In-depth interviews</b>						
	<b>Cultural Studies</b>	<b>Culture and communications</b>	<b>Culture and Human Rights</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Psychology</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Emeritus Professor</b>	1					1
<b>Professor</b>	1		1	1		3
<b>Associate Professor</b>	1	1				2
<b>Senior Lecturer/Researcher</b>	3	1		1	2	7
<b>Early Career Lecturer/Researcher</b>	1	1				2
<b>Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Student</b>	4				1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Total sample size 20</b>
<b>Focus group</b>						
<b>Professor</b>				1		
<b>Senior Lecturer/Researcher</b>	2					
<b>Early Career Lecturer/Researcher</b>	1					
<b>Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Student</b>	1					
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>			<b>1</b>		<b>Total sample size 5</b>

## ***Cultural Responsiveness in Research (CRR)***

Discussions of culturally responsive research with Australian researchers and research students resulted in the identification of a number of key components of culturally responsive research illustrated in Figure 1. The significance of each component varies depending on the research context, as one aspect might be more important in one scenario than in another. However, all components of culturally responsive research require high inter-personal skills, which will be outlined in the remainder of this section.



**Figure 1: Components of culturally responsive research**

Culture is marked by processes of multiple meanings that shift and change through time and interaction. The interplay of different aspects of the self at any given time informs the way experiences are perceived (Heidegger, Stambaugh & Smith, 2010). This multiplicity of meaning in research contexts and interactions needs to be captured holistically. For example, Silvia Bettez (2015) uses the concepts of assemblage, critical reflexivity, and communion to navigate the complexity of human being and belonging, while researchers working with people or groups experiencing marginalisation tend to refer to Kimberle Crenshaw's (1991) concept of intersectionality (Bal & Trainer 2016; Campbell, 2016; Marfeld, 2016; Murbib & Soss, 2015), to describe the ways different aspects of the self impact on the ways people perceive themselves and their relationships with others. Both approaches are based on processes of reflection on the complexity of aspects informing self and other in research practices. Horsburgh (2003, p.308) defined reflectivity as a process of 'active acknowledgment by the researcher that their own actions and decisions will inevitably impact upon the meaning and context of the experience under

investigation". Through the self and through interactions with others reflectivity allows researchers to find a balance between being aware and acknowledging that regardless of the amount of research we do and knowledge we accumulate there will always be context specific information that we don't know. Co-researcher 18 explains, "... as a researcher defining what it is you're interested in, and knowing that even if your lit[erature] review uncovers a whole lot of things, and this is how it is, that doesn't actually mean that's how it is for [the specific] groups [you are researching with]". As humans, we will always be making some judgement, yet researchers are advised to reflect on their perceptions more consciously to suspend judgement where possible to increase their ability to hear and understand the experiences voiced by individuals and collectives and the plurality they represent (Lee & Zaharlick, 2013). "You've got to do your homework and you've got to know certain things. But you've also got to be alive to the fact that those things might be true at a certain level of generality, but not necessarily true in all circumstances at all times". For example, "...don't assume that people are a singularity, but if you're interviewing somebody and they are talking about being a singularity, you don't correct them" (Co-researcher 2).

An incident in which judgment caused misbehavior was described by co-researcher 2, who was running late to a meeting with the principle of a Muslim Arabic language school at which he was conducting research when he, out of reflex, put his hand forward when greeting the female principle. The principle neglected his gesture and explained that her religion did not allow her to shake hands with men; he apologised. Minutes later he got introduced to the deputy principle, also a woman, who reached out to shake the researcher's hand. His learning from this experience centred on the necessity of researchers to suspend judgment, to be able to embrace the research experience as a singularity that shares common features with other research scenarios, yet cannot be limited to these experiences:

*"So we had two women of Muslim background, who one doesn't accept the principle - doesn't like to shake hands with men, that she doesn't know, and another woman who is quite happy to ....both share the same faith and ... both work in the same context. The point of that was, I made the initial mistake of doing the reflex and not reading the situation. The second issue is that there are no rules, because the rules - there are rules, but they vary, they're contingent and they can vary enormously" (Co-researcher 2).*

Consequently, researchers need to be able to adjust their methods and objectives according to the things they learn during the research process. Despite choosing the right methodologies is important to ensure culturally responsive research, however the examples show researchers also need to be flexible enough to change their methodologies according to the situational demands communicated through the research context.

Trusting relations with co-researchers have been identified as highly important to facilitate meaningful conversations that allow researchers to make these adjustments. Sanders and Kiby (2012) expressed a need to include reference groups into research projects. Likewise, Moore, Noble-Carr and McArthur (2016) highlighted the increased necessity to work with research populations such as children and young people. It is important to invest time and resources into co-research relationships to build and maintain trust among all parties involved, as culturally responsive co-research relationships are "not just trust... there's a friendship" (Co-researcher 9). Indeed, short-term projects in which researchers conduct 'fly in, fly out' research without such relationships have been identified as potentially exploitative and problematic, as people need to feel safe and

supported about sharing their knowledge. Equality and reciprocity are therefore important characteristics of culturally responsive co-research relationships: *"...there should be this sense that we are now committed to this particular field and this group of participants"* (Co-researcher 6). As people tend to share more with a 'friend' than they might want to be heard by a much broader audience, it is further important to ensure that the friendship established continues to engage in dialogue after the interview context.

Despite the need for mutual reflection (Berger, 2015), only few research contexts allow researchers to build trusting relationships due to bureaucratic hurdles, tight timeframes or budgets. For example Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students have a limited timeframe of three and a half years available to conduct their research project, while private and industry research tend to be reframed by budgets and deadlines opposed by clients. This reduces the ability of researchers to gain deeper understanding of the research context through ongoing conversations, neglecting the fact that: the stronger the relationships, the more open the conversation becomes – the deeper the learning research is able to communicate. *"The sort of communication that's essential is two-way respectful communication in which each party ... comes to understand more deeply the cultural basis of communication"* (Co-researcher 1). Dialogue in which open questions allow researchers to voice their experiences on their terms, further breaks down positions of power within the research context, which is important for the validity of the information provided.

*"Differences of culture are magnified by, and impact the effects of differences in power. So a cultural difference where there's no power differences often can seem benign and an object for fascination. However I'd say that there are never cases where power is not to some degree an issue even within a particular society and culture"* (Co-researcher 1).

For example, co-researcher 13 shared his experiences of developing an application that directs Bangladesh youth from their home community to support services together with co-researchers to highlight the implication power can play in research if not communicated carefully. The application they designed initially indicated the slum location identified as starting point on a map represented through a Bangladesh icon. By contrast, the support services destination was visualised through the Google icon. Co-researchers criticised the design of the application as implying an evolutionary power-relation in which users transcended from their local communities marked by a local children toy to an aspirational international power icon – the support centre. Unintentionally, a visual representation of power had been created that, due to dialogue with co-researchers, could be corrected in time to represent the co-research community respectfully. The ability of the researchers to listen and hear what was being said allowed the research team to consciously monitor performances of power at all times of the co-research agreement and to democratise the research experience in any ways possible. As co-researcher 2 explained: *"A good interviewer is in the moment, has internalised the kinds of questions and knows the rules, but is also aware that in any given moment, other things will be happening, and you've got to hear and listen to those things"*. To be able to listen and hear, it is important that researchers understand local language, dialect or slang (Berger, 2015, p. 228). Language can be respectful or disrespectful, helpful or unhelpful in the context of co-research relationships. Asking co-researchers about the language they use to describe important aspects of their community including themselves, to listen and hear to be able to conceptualise their experiences in culturally responsive language is crucial for researchers to avoid unconscious disrespect. In cases in which language creates a barrier of communication, researchers

should therefore consider hiring a translator to ensure their expression does not harm their co-researchers. Implicit language needs to be carefully considered to avoid unintentional confrontation. For example, the term 'scepticism' in the context of climate change research is less loaded with implicit language than 'denial', as the terminology of 'denial' implies an active neglect that can be associated with judgment. Knowledge and awareness of such discrepancies facilitates proactive approach towards culturally responsive research practices. Co-researcher 20 explained:

*"Sometimes you don't understand the power of the language and the power of the words, so probably words that in my head make sense could be disrespectful. And if you don't know those differences, you are going to be disrespectful or rude or do something really inappropriate. So I guess that there has always been this little, not fear, but like trying to be more subtle with the use of the language, and trying to be totally accurate on the words that you're saying because you don't want to offend anyone."*

It is important to acknowledge that regardless of training and years of experience, researchers are far from perfect; they make mistakes like anyone else does (Wheeler & Omair, 2016, p.138). Essential is the researchers willingness to continuously improve their practices: *"it's not whether you stuff up, it's how you respond when you do"* (Co-researcher 5). Sitting with discomfort facilitates reflection and learning from mistakes.

Despite the opportunities to learn from mistakes, current focus tends to be placed on research outcomes rather processes. Researchers are not very good at openly discussing experiences of imperfection. *"They're not talking about the research challenges as they experience them, and they're not open about it anyway. So you don't have this safe place... to practise skills and to actually learn from your mistakes"* (Co-researcher 16). There are only limited publications outlining mistakes in research available (Cramer et al, 2016). This absence of experience-based learning makes it hard for research students, researchers new in a specific research context or new to a certain methodologies to avoid repeating mistakes. This research engaged in this gap, it opened up dialogue about the challenges faced in 'the field' and training opportunities that could and should be applied to better prepare researchers – to facilitate culturally responsive research. The remainder of this article links activities to components of culturally responsive research to support these researchers in their endeavours to be culturally responsive during their research.

### ***Facilitating CRR in research:***

Most research projects are based on literature about the community with which they are researching. Translating the theoretical knowledge into practical experiences is often more difficult than anticipated. Theoretically sound researchers lacking contextual experiences do not necessarily have the inter-personal skills required for culturally responsive research with a particular research community. At some point, most researchers will face difficulties dealing with cultural diversity often in conjunction with tight timeframes, in which actions are demanded quickly.

Discussion about the different components of cultural responsiveness in research, particularly 'acknowledging imperfection' resulted in dialogue about activities that could be used by researchers to facilitate cultural responsiveness in research, for example, adjusting project details, such as methods or questions based on the experiences gained through training. Engaging researchers in

interactive training that facilitates the development of such skills in safe environments, regardless of their level of experience, but particularly at the beginning of their careers, has been identified as a way to facilitate cultural responsiveness in research as, “...if you go into the field too comfortable, you’re probably carrying assumptions with you” (Co-researcher 6).

Figure 2 outlines the components of culturally responsive research identified by co-researchers mapped against a number of activities described as valuable for the facilitation of culturally responsive research. Each of the activities outlined in Figure 2 will be discussed in more detail divided into three types of activities – individual, group and networking activities that establish links between individuals and groups.

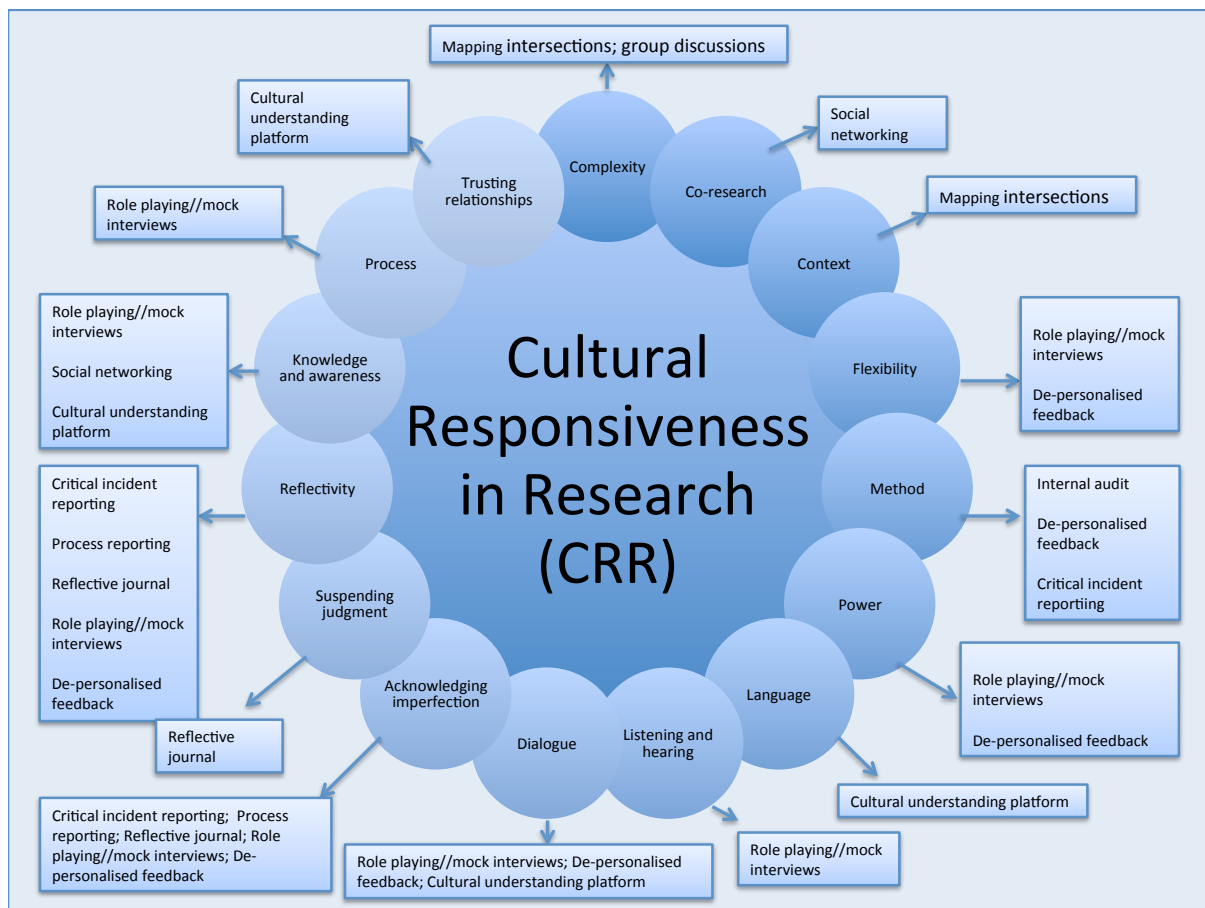


Figure 2: Activities facilitating cultural responsiveness in research

### ***Individual activities***

There are a number of individual activities available to researchers that facilitate culturally responsive research. Cultural responsiveness in research is closely linked to an ability to reflect on one self and others (Berger, 2015), reflection should therefore occur during all stages of the research process. Depending on the stage of the research, reflectivity can be achieved through activities such as reflexive reading exercises, reflection on personal opportunities, reflection on cultural identity, process reporting or reflective journals.

*“I would argue that degree of reflexivity is really important to any professional, because we are wielding a body of knowledge that sorts people in to things, and constructs problems and solves problems. So whether you are a researcher or a teacher or a doctor or a lawyer, you’ve got to reflect upon the way you’re using that expert knowledge and what you do with it” (Co-researcher 2).*

Reflective reading entails the accumulation of knowledge and awareness about the self in relation to others. “Practicing continuous, critical self-reflexivity – [is] one of the most widely emphasized components of conducting meaningful qualitative research in postmodern contexts” (Bettez, 2015, p. 393). Early reflection is currently facilitated through university training, in which HDR students are required to write a literature review showing knowledge of the research context and an ethics application demonstrating reflection on practice; or in proposals written by private researchers to secure funding prior to conducting research.

Continuous individual reflectivity can be supported through documents outlining critical questions that facilitate self-reflection. Listing questions that make the researcher reflect about their self, cultural diversity and the difficulties to address cultural complexity in research would be beneficial for the planning, delivery and outcomes of research projects. Examples of such questions are: *How would you describe your cultural identification and experiences of belonging? What is your knowledge and experience working with this group? or what language/dialect/slang do they speak and how will you be asking questions?* These questions can be directed at the self in relation to individual research projects and to organisational cultures in regards to community oriented work in the private sector. Additional questions about relationships with co-researchers, methods used and ways both relationships and data collection could be made more culturally appropriate would be helpful during the research project; whereas a document reflecting on the preconceptions of the researcher, the methodologies used, relationships established and findings concluded is a useful tool to monitor cultural responsiveness in research reporting.

Another activity that researchers can conduct independently to better understand the complexity their co-researchers embody is an exercise that maps intersecting experiences of participants. Based on the principles of positionality (Bettez, 2015, p. 934) and Crenshaw’s (1991) concept of intersectionality, different identity categories and experience of co-researchers can be outlined to demonstrate the complexity embodied through participants, rather than reducing individuals and collectives to one or few identity categories.

### ***Group activities***

Group activities such as workshops or focus groups are effective methods to make research populations and topics a multifaceted reality that demands a practical response from researchers. Group discussions can stimulate awareness about alternative ways of interaction that help capture more of the complexities. For example, multicultural education entails a training activity in which people are asked to reflect on their own cultural identity and the cultural identity of students. Co-researcher 2 provided an example from his own work, he said: “... we showed them the categories that they used to talk about the students, which are always one category; the Chinese students, the Indigenous students, the Arabic students, the Islander students... they see themselves as having three things that make themselves up, but they talk about their students as though they're one thing”. This activity can be used in research training, as reflection on the complexity of identity



particularly in the context of cultural diversity is very important in contemporary research contexts (Hames-Garcia, 2011).

Reflection can be further facilitated through an exercise that visually demonstrates personal privileges. The 'privilege walk exercise' involves getting a group of people with different backgrounds standing up in one line in the middle of a room with a facilitator asking them reflective questions directed at the opportunities researchers had (Andersson, 2014). Each time an individual has experienced an opportunity they are encouraged to step forward, if they did not experience the opportunity they are asked to remain in their position. After a number of opportunities have been asked, people will find themselves in different positions within the room outlining the privileges they experienced compared to others.

During the course of research, reflective journals can be used to reflect and improve one's practice (Berger, 2015, p.230; Dreyer, 2015; Maria, 2014; Ratering, 2016; Ruiz-López et al., 2015). In pre-defined cycles based on the length of the research project, such as every two weeks in the course of 3.5 year long HDR research project, a researcher is asked to provide a description, analysis and evaluation of a research scenario. For example, a social work researcher discloses personal information during fieldwork, which they do not feel comfortable with in retrospective. They are asked to describe and analyse the scenario using existing social work theory such as theory about self-care, boundaries or professionalism. The analysis can either be used by the researcher as a baseline to develop strategies for improved practice or as a point of discussion with supervisors or peers to facilitate collective learning.

Process reporting is another activity facilitating reflection during research (Medina, 2010). It involves the transcription, analysis and reporting of a critical period during an interview scenario. The researcher is asked to report and synthesise different aspects of the interview such as their cognitive processes, emotions, non-verbal clues and the theories that helped understand and navigate these experiences, so that peers or a trainer can reflect on the incident, to provide feedback.

*"They notice that the client looked puzzled or the client was fidgety and they noticed their own body, you know, what was I doing at the time? And then they wrote about the theory that helped them understand that, that actually not providing an interpreter is really problematic when it comes to cultural confidence and respect, you know, people from culturally and linguistically diverse background... and then I provided feedback and when we got together we talked about what could you have been done differently, what were the points that [they] saw that change could have occurred but [they] didn't take that opportunity and why, and what would [they] do next time? it provided really good fertile ground to learn from, because it was [their] own experience, it wasn't not someone else who was far removed" (Co-researcher 16).*

It is important to note that process reporting is not about doing something wrong, but about increasing responsive and effective research practice: *"There is no such thing as perfection anyway. You'll be effective or you'll be ineffective, really, when it comes down to it. And it's far less scary for people to have that ineffective/effective model in their head compared to good and bad" (Co-researcher 16).*

One HDR student who also works as a university lecturer explained how she prepares her social work student for their work in the community. She suggested:

*“Do lots of role plays, I record them, give them feedback, they have to practise using mock interview environments as well with different types of clients or other students that practise that role. In one of the unis that I work at, we actually have actors come in who play different clients with different scenarios, and they have to actually practise it and we record it and we give them feedback” (Co-researcher 16).*

Mock interviews or role play scenarios allow researchers to improve their inter-personal skills and to trial their research questions. They facilitate the translation of theoretical knowledge into practice. They enable researchers to experience what it feels like to be asked a specific question and how easy or difficult it is to respond (Moore et al, 2016; Shearer & Davidhizar, 2003).

Group activities such as workshops and focus groups can also be used to provide co-researchers with an opportunity to comment on the research process. Feedback from the community allows researchers to improve their practice.

*“The only thing that's going to have an effect on how researchers do their research; if at the end of the day the participants are able to say look, look back and say okay, you did this research with us but this is crap because - and unless that has weight, that report that you produced is just going to be accepted and you're just going to continue doing that” (Co-researcher 8).*

Moore et al (2016, p. 242) support this point, they call feedback processes that allow co-researchers to voice their perceptions of the research project an opportunity for co-reflexivity. However, co-reflective activities continue to be rare.

*“Let people themselves have the opportunity to provide that feedback. I think that's kind of key, because researchers are trained within the western academy... we're supposed to critique and analyse ...[to provide] feedback and all that kind of thing... I think communities... if they get an opportunity to talk about it, they could tell us... I don't think communities ever get that opportunity to talk about that process. Unless it's a focus group discussion specifically about giving you ideas for the next step of the project or critiquing what we did in the past project” (Co-researcher 13).*

Another way of ensuring that researchers are conducting culturally responsive research is through internal audits. An internal audit triangulates the methods and findings of research projects at one or more time points of the research (Lala, 2009). Experts or peer researchers could be provided with the research questions, methods and sections of data in a workshop, to see if their analysis confirms the findings of the chief investigator. Co-researcher 8 appropriated this method for his dissertation:

*“I distilled my list of questions... my theoretical ideas... some of my empirical questions and subsection of my data... and I got some of my fellow research peers who weren't involved in my project... in a room for half a day... and I got them to run through and answer questions about the research, the ideas and the data, and to analyse subsets of the data and then at the end of the day analysed their responses to see how they matched with my understanding. In a way it was an audit. That potentially could be a mechanism to check cultural understanding at*

*some point in the process and you could do that with expert researchers who are from that cultural tradition or you could do it with different cross-sections of people”*

Besides individual and group activities, networking has been identified as valuable tools facilitating cultural responsiveness in research (Ang & Dyne, 2015). Examples will be discussed in the following section.

### ***Networking activities***

Online social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook have been identified as valuable platforms that can facilitate cultural sensitivity in research through the transfer of knowledge between individuals and groups working in specific contexts locally and globally (see Ford & Tolmie, 2016; Lofters et al 2016; Volungevičienė, 2015; Wang, 2012). Facebook is an exchange platform that can facilitate cultural sensitivity in research for closed groups. Knowledge, awareness and appropriate behaviour can be promoted through chief investigators of a specific project or individuals working in a specific research context. “Facebook is good for very intimate groups; for a closed group. So you might have a Facebook group for your project. For example, I'm part of one. You know the Institute has a PhD Facebook closed group. It's more for organising events and sharing articles about procrastination. It's not a knowledge transfer format” (Co-researcher 17). By contrast, Twitter breaks down barriers of intimacy and closeness associated with Facebook groups. It is an open networking space in which people are able to follow any person or subject of interest. Following people known for their work in a specific context automatically opens new channels for information exchange through their engagement on Twitter. People tweet about colleagues, publications and conferences, which not only facilitates exponential growth and exchange of knowledge but also feelings of proximity academics cannot shy away from for much longer. One participant explained how she was able to easily break down barriers of formality, to connect and engage in dialogue with an academic who recognised her due to her engagement on Twitter. “I went to a digital methods summer school at [Queensland University of Technology] QUT and there was this woman and I went up to her and she said, “Oh I know you on Twitter,” and so we were able to engage in a dialogue that was more familiar than it otherwise would have been. I had familiarity with her work and to some extent she had familiarity with mine. We knew we have shared connections” (Co-researcher 17). Her experiences highlight the importance of social networking platforms for dialogue and the necessity for academics to shift away from traditional methods to facilitate culturally sensitive research through digital spaces as “...older academics in particular have a way of looking back at things with a great deal of perspective” (HDR student 2).

Building an online platform focusing on cultural responsiveness in research that engages the collaboration of experienced and unexperienced, local and international researchers from diverse disciplines would enable a global dialogue marked by the exchange of expert knowledge and experience. This platform could be supplemented with an ever evolving registry of experts who, experienced in certain contexts or methodologies, function as an advisory that supports researchers planning to conduct research in related populations through personal advise and regular updates about knowledge and methods important in their contextual fields. This global interdisciplinary discussion platform would bring researchers from different backgrounds together. However, users of such platforms need to carefully position themselves in a specific train of thought whilst being open for dialogue with others, as advice about research methods that go against personal believes and

methodological training might arise from other cultural traditions. “It can sometimes be hard to do international research outside of your own groups... whereas there will be lots of interesting research, social psychological research going on in other places that I'm just not connected with because I've got research peers who are in Australia and the UK and so I tend to work with them” (Co-researcher 8).

## ***Conclusion***

This article highlighted the importance of culturally responsive research. Intertwined in complexity and the necessity of trusting relationships, culturally responsive research facilitates the understanding of co-researchers and topic areas based on continuity and context specific knowledge. Responding appropriately to the complexity of human being and belonging requires the researcher's full concentration to read the situation and react accordingly. However, the ability to be in the moment and alter one's behaviour according to contextual clues is difficult and opens space for error. It is therefore important to try to accumulate as much knowledge as possible about the research context to establish a repertoire of responses to draw on. It is equally important to acknowledge one's own limitations to facilitate learning through the suspension of judgment, which allows the researcher to listen and hear and to show flexibility through adapting to what has been said or shown. Regardless of the seniority of the researcher or their experiences working with a particular community, researchers should engage in ongoing training. However, only few institutions and organisations encourage ongoing research training. Based on discussions with researchers from different disciplines and levels of experience, we conclude that continuous reflection is essential for culturally responsive research. This reflection can be facilitated through numerous activities that for the purpose of this article, have been grouped into three types of training: individual exercises, collective activities and networking opportunities.

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