

World Dreaming: World Congress of Psychotherapy 2011

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ABSTRACT

Hybrid Creatures: Mapping the emerging shape of art therapy education in Australia

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This presentation is the culmination of a PhD research project that provides the first organized view of art therapy education in Australia. Inspired by the spirit of art therapy and the conference theme the presentation will be in the form of an *'arts based dreaming'*. It focuses on the theories that are used in this specialized teaching and learning process. It evolved from the authors' immersion in the field as a migrant art therapy educator to Australia from the UK. As a piece of qualitative research a *bricolage* of methods were used including visual approaches to gather and analyse information from: literature; institutional sources; and key participants, including the author on the theories and practices of art therapy training programs in Australia. This also included investigating other places in the world shown to be influential (USA and UK). A body of knowledge has been created in the form of a *'Cosmology and Genealogy of art therapy education in Australia'*. The presentation will reflect the artistic aspects of the inquiry and embody the findings that show a diverse and multi-layered field of hybrid views and innovative approaches. Important issues for art therapy education were identified as: the position and emphasis on art; working with the therapy/education tension; the gender imbalance in the profession; Indigenous perspectives; intercultural issues; and difference. The horizons of the field revealed the importance of: developing the profile of the profession; the growth of research; and a trend towards discourses on arts and wellness.