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Widening participation in service learning

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Abstract

Work-integrated learning (WIL) and service learning are widespread approaches to experiential, practice-based learning in Australia. Both are associated with extensive bodies of research that support their benefits to students, industry, and the community at large. What is less explored, however, is the accessibility of such experiences. In Australia, there are several groups of students that are at a disadvantage in terms of participation in WIL and service learning. When considering access to higher education as an emerging human right, the importance of addressing these inequalities becomes even more clear.

This chapter draws on case studies of pedagogical and curriculum changes that challenge existing power structures from within the curriculum and improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of WIL. This includes a research project that informs redesigning WIL experiences to better suit the needs of students with disability, a pilot project to improve international student access to service learning, and the development of a Community Internship module that weaves First Peoples’ knowledge and perspectives throughout. While by no means exhaustive, these cases represent the start of ensuring that all aspects of higher education, including experiential, practice-based aspects, are accessible to all students.

Introduction

Work-integrated learning (WIL) represents a widely accepted approach to experiential, practice-based learning in Australia. WIL refers to any programs or initiatives that integrate formal academic learning with work-based practice to help tertiary student develop workplace skills and prepare them for their transition to the workforce (Jackson, 2015; Patrick et al, 2009). Service learning represents a more community-oriented form of WIL that aims to instil a sense of citizenship within students. Morgan and Streb (2001) argue that it is imperative that citizens develop the following civic values: political engagement, connectedness with community, tolerance, and a belief that individuals are able to affect change. Taking a more holistic view of university education, service learning aims to give graduates not only academic and professional skills, but also a sense of civic values and responsibility (Mabry, 1998). This requires careful course design that places equal emphasis on the learning and the service provision, so that both service providers and recipients benefit equally (Furco, 1996). While service learning is relatively underdeveloped as a pedagogical approach in Australia, there is a significant body of work that details the benefits of service learning for students, most notably the far-reaching review of Eyler, Giles Jr, Stenson and Gray (2001) who found that service learning is associated with increased graduate employability, cultural competence and a stronger sense of civic responsibility.

Service learning provides an opportunity for students to have a hands-on, practical experience with human rights. Teaching human rights in Western universities can sometimes lack the nuance and understanding needed to impress the importance of human rights issues upon privileged students. Australian states and territories are increasingly introducing legislation formalizing the recognition and value of human rights. As such, an understanding of human rights is rapidly becoming an important graduate attribute. Teaching human rights requires freedom, respect, equality and diversity.

While, both service learning and WIL, more broadly, are associated with extensive bodies of research that support their benefits to students, industry, and the community at large. What is less explored, however, is the accessibility of such experiences. In Australia, there were several groups of students that were susceptible to issues of equity and access including “international, employed students/students with family responsibilities, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, those with a disability, Indigenous students, and those from regional and remote areas” (Patrick et al., 2009, p. 24). When considering access to higher education as an emerging human right, the importance of addressing these inequalities becomes even more clear.

This chapter details case studies of pedagogical and curriculum changes put in place to challenge existing power structures from within the curriculum, and improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of WIL for groups that have historically been excluded. This includes a research project aimed at exploring the WIL experiences of students with disability, a pilot project to improve international student access to service learning, and the development of a Community Internship module that weaves First Peoples’ knowledge and perspectives throughout. While by no means exhaustive, these cases represent the start of ensuring that all aspects of higher education, including experiential, practice-based aspects, are accessible to all students without discrimination or exclusion.

WIL and service learning in Australia

Practice-based education, commonly referred to as WIL, is a stalwart of the curriculum across a range of disciplines and institutions within the Australian higher education sector. Though WIL is widely utilised as a pedagogical approach, definitions vary across disciplines and even within schools. Given the definitional difficulties surrounding WIL, there is some consensus in the literature that it is best engaged as an ‘umbrella’ term for programs that

integrate student academic and workplace knowledge (Patrick et al. 2009). In summation, Orrell (2011) refers to WIL as intentionally integrating theory with practice knowledge.

Considering WIL as an umbrella term covering a wide range of experiential learning activities, service learning sits firmly underneath. Service learning is based on the premise that a university education should produce graduates with a strong sense of citizenship, alongside the requisite professional skills and academic knowledge (Mabry, 1988). Berry suggests that universities should aim to produce “fully developed human beings” and argues that a sense of citizenship is essential to this process (1987, p. 77). Service learning aims to instil such values by providing experiential learning experiences that place equal value on the provision of service and learning, and equal benefits to both the providers and recipients of said service (Furco, 1996). Simply imparting academic knowledge and professional know-how limits tertiary education and overlooks the formative nature of the diverse experiences that students encounter at university. In contrast, service learning creates a space for students to develop a sense of citizenship, alongside more traditional graduate attributes.

Integrating service learning and human rights into the curriculum

WIL has long been a feature of university programs in Australia and Griffith University is no different. There has however, been a recent refocus on the provision of centrally offered internships to incorporate aspects of service learning, community engagement, and human rights. The Community Internship (CI) course at Griffith University is available to both undergraduate and masters-level students. A multidisciplinary course, all students at the institution are eligible to enrol in the course. It is offered as a free choice elective and in a small number of programs the CI course is listed as a core component. The majority of students enrolled in the CI course have chosen to complete the course as a free-choice elective. Composed of two interrelated components, the course comprises academic lectures, workshops and assessments combined with a voluntary internship of 50 to

80 hours of community work with a community partner. The course is pedagogically structured to scaffold and develop reflective student learning as the internship progresses alongside the academic component. This allows students to learn in a dialogically reflexive environment providing multiple opportunities for student understanding to be assessed and reinforced.

The academic components of this service learning course allows students to consider significant social issues within the context of a human rights framework. Students are encouraged to consider human rights issues and how they impact their local communities, nationally and globally. Students are required to consider their own privilege, and how their activities can impact the rights of others and what actions they can take to contribute to a more equitable society while considering the environmental impact of humankind. These underlying principles were fundamental to the design of the Community Internship course.

Students learn about the ongoing issues affecting human rights continue to impact modern society globally. Students confront issues they would not come across in some of their courses. Students also learn how much of the development of human rights over the past half a century in Australia and internationally have been related to and informed by the demands of First Peoples. Within an Australian context, human rights issues are also examined in relation to our own historical abuses of human rights. Students learn about the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from the parents according to governmental attitudes and policies from the early 1900s up until quite recently. This era in Australian history is known as the Stolen Generation and has had a monumental impact not only on those involved but the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Progress on Indigenous rights is slow in Australia and First Peoples continue to face many issues today in asserting their rights as Indigenous people and overcoming the legacies of colonisation. This approach highlights the importance of a human rights framework and

encourages privileged students, are the majority in tertiary education in Australia, to challenge their pre-conceived notions and their own layers of privilege.

Case studies

The CI course places a strong emphasis on service learning and human rights. The course consistently attracts strong enrolments and positive student feedback. The challenge that remains though is to ensure that this course is accessible and meaningful to all students. This chapter details three case studies from the CI course of different approaches to increasing accessibility and participation in service learning through the CI course ranging from research, to curriculum development, to the provision of standalone, tailored experiences. The first case study involves a research project exploring the WIL and service learning experiences of students who identify as having a disability. The second case study details an intervention to increase international student participation in service learning. The final case study explores the efforts to closely interweave First Peoples' knowledge throughout the CI curriculum.

Exploring the experiences of students with disabilities in WIL

In Australia, around eighteen percent of the population live with some form of disability (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019). Nearly fifty percent of those approximately four million people are considered to be within the prescribed 'prime working age' being between 15 to 64 years of age (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Given the increasing emphasis on employability in Australian higher education, and the anecdotal evidence suggesting that students with disability were unable to engage fully in WIL, it seemed there was a clear gap in knowledge in this area. Thus, a research project was undertaken by CI course research staff in order to explore the experiences of students with disability in service learning and WIL. This research project is ongoing, but an initial review

of literature reveals a distinct need to develop service learning programs that are accessible to students with disability.

Approximately one million people with disability are either employed or looking for work (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017). With the challenges facing those looking at entering the workforce, and improvements in public policy, a growing number of people are turning to tertiary education in order to improve their employability or work-readiness (Brett, 2016; Conor & Richard, 2014; Noonan & Pilcher, 2018). The right to equal access to education is enshrined in Section 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2007).

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2017), higher levels of education contribute to people's development and capacity to attain life goals, and are contributors to securing employment and earning capacity (Fuller, Bradley, & Healey, 2004; Schueller & Seligman, 2010). Approximately eight percent of students attending university in Australia have some kind of a disability. Only fifteen percent of people aged twenty and over with a disability have a bachelor degree or higher, compared to thirty-one percent for individuals without disability (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019). Strnadová, Hájková, and Květoňová (2015) suggest that it is mainly environmental barriers (e.g., institutional, attitudinal and disability-specific) contributing to a lower tertiary retention rates. For students with disability entering the tertiary environment, there are a range of additional challenges they often encounter throughout their tertiary experience (Abes & Wallace, 2018; Dong & Lucas, 2016; Eckes & Ochoa, 2005), and the number of students with disabilities entering tertiary settings is increasing yearly (Brett, 2016; Pumfrey, 2008). Students living with disability, often require additional time to complete their degree programs when compared to their peers without disability (National Council on Disability, 2003). Retention and success rates are also lower for students with disability when compared

to other students (Kilpatrick et al., 2017; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011) and these students also face additional challenges following completion of their degree (Fuller et al., 2004).

Barriers for student experiences range from disability disclosure (Grimes, Southgate, Scevak, & Buchanan, 2019) to social and organisational barriers including difficulties in accessing disability support (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). Students able to self-advocate and/or disclose their disability status for academic support and disability services may be better equipped to succeed at university (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). In general, students with disability reported that there is limited understanding of disability within the tertiary environment (particularly among students with a non-visible disability; Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Strnadová et al., 2015), and perceive stigma to be one of the barriers against disclosure (Kendall, 2016). Hence, being able to manage and overcome these obstacles could be instrumental in succeeding academically (Kreider, Bendixen, & Lutz, 2015; Moriña, 2017; Shevlin, Kenny, & McNeela, 2004; Skinner, 2004). In support of this, students with disability who demonstrate traits such as resilience, or the ability to grow and excel when challenged with adversity may be better prepared academically and beyond (Moriña, 2017; Skinner, 2004). Therefore, it is important to better understand the experiences and strategies used by students with disability which may help improve the tertiary experience and transition for other students.

Despite research findings highlighting the benefits of employing individuals with disabilities, such as improved profitability, enhanced competitive advantage, and promoting a more inclusive work culture (Lindsay, Cagliostro, Albarico, Mortaji, & Karon, 2018), the full-time employment rate for undergraduate students with disability is approximately ten percent lower than individuals without disability (QILT, 2016). Reasons for the disparity in employment have been attributed to factors such as: the person's condition hindering them from working, difficulty in finding employment, discouraged from previous attempts, limited

skills, and potential discrimination from employers (Ameri et al., 2018; Anand & Sevak, 2017; Bricout & Bentley, 2000; Hipes, Lucas, Phelan, & White, 2016). For instance, a recent report identified that graduates with disability were facing barriers with the recruitment process (e.g., during job interviews), and that employers were reluctant to make reasonable accommodations (Harvey, Andrewartha, Edwards, Clarke, & Reyes, 2017). Furthermore, there appear to be differences in the hiring practices of employers (Ameri et al., 2018; Bricout & Bentley, 2000). Such that, employers who were surveyed on hypothetical job applicants with differing disability conditions, rated job applicants without disability as more employable than applicants with disability (Bricout & Bentley, 2000). Furthermore, Dalgin and Bellini (2008) reported that, individuals who disclosed a psychiatric history were significantly less likely to have a successful job application compared to applicants with a physical condition, despite having identical qualifications (Hipes et al., 2016). Subsequently, individuals with disability have reported experiencing challenges in disclosing their condition, and were worried about workplace stigma and discrimination (Lindsay, Cagliostro, Leck, Shen, & Stinson, 2019). Interestingly, Bricout and Bentley (2000) found no significant differences between physical and non-visible conditions on employability ratings. These findings suggest that stigma may continue to exist in the job sector despite anti-discriminatory legislation (Mitra & Kruse, 2016; Schur, Kruse, Blasi, & Blanck, 2009), and that there are mixed findings between individuals with physical and non-visible conditions.

Supplementing tertiary education with work experience (and potentially service-learning) is regarded as a vital aspect of ensuring employment after graduation (Brooks & Youngson, 2016). Moreover, Brown and Hesketh's (2004) research on graduate recruitment found that employers are increasingly placing greater value on

‘behavioural competencies’, such as personal attributes and skills. From participating in service-learning, students engage in activities that concurrently benefit the community and tie in with their studies (Dymond, Renzaglia, & Chun, 2008; Hansen et al., 2007), in addition to potentially improving self-efficacy and self-esteem (Eyler, 2000). Furthermore, students could potentially develop beneficial life skills external to the classroom environment, such as fostering a sense of social responsibility (Linn, 2015). In support of this, Neill and Mulholland (2003) posit that work-based learning during placement could be beneficial for the personal development of students as they learn to appreciate the impact of their actions, in addition to having the opportunity to develop their generic skills, such as communication and teamwork (Linn, 2015; Rowe & Zegwaard, 2017). These findings suggest that, students who develop well-rounded personal attributes and experiences may have the competitive advantage in terms of their future employability. However, despite these findings, there is currently limited research on the experiences and perspective of tertiary students with disability and service-learning. Existing literature on disability and service-learning ranges from topics such as inclusion and attitudes towards high-school students with disability from the viewpoint of non-disabled individuals (see Burns, Storey, & Certo, 1999; Dymond et al., 2008; Dymond, Renzaglia, & Slagor, 2011; Gitlow & Flecky, 2005; Greene, 1998; Lahav, Daniely, & Yalon-Chamovitz, 2018). For instance, Burns et al. (1999) explored the effects of integrating students with severe disabilities and non-disabled students in a shared service-learning project. Thus, rather than acting as recipients to service-learning, the students with disability shared in equal responsibilities as students without disabilities. Subsequently, Burns et al. (1999) found that in comparison to experimental groups where students with disability were not equal co-contributors, being able to co-contribute and share tasks was associated with more positive attitudes from non-disabled students towards students with disability. There is clearly a significant body of

evidence to support the importance of engaging students with disability in learning experiences that will prepare them for the workforce. This reinforces the need for further research into the experiences of students with disability in WIL and service learning so as to design more accessible and inclusive experiential learning.

International Student Service Learning Project

International students represent an important group within the Australian higher education sector. Australia attracts the third-largest number of students from overseas, behind the US and UK (Hare, 2018) and has the largest per capita number of international students of any country in the world (Babones, 2019). These numbers have significant financial implications, with the international student market in Australia worth A\$34 billion in 2018 (Ross, 2018). The importance of maintaining this market and ensuring Australia remains an attractive destination for international students is paramount in the increasingly globalising higher education sector.

Despite these numbers and the implied popularity of Australia as a study destination, international students are questioning the return on investment of studying in Australia. A recent survey found mixed perceptions in that regard and argued that Australian higher education providers must do more to ensure international graduate outcomes (Hare, 2018). Glass emphasises these findings, observing that “just because a student attends a foreign institution does not mean he or she necessarily has a meaningful international experience” (2012, p. 244). Therein lies the potential value of WIL and service learning for international students, particularly given the aforementioned benefits in terms of graduate outcomes.

Despite this potential, research suggests that international students face challenges in fully participating in WIL and service learning. Satisfaction with WIL experiences is significantly lower among international students and they were often frustrated by the lack of

opportunities compared to domestic students (Patrick et al., 2009). International students may be prevented from gaining mainstream experience by being relegated to the “ethnic sector” (Harrison and Ip, 2013). International students are distinctly disadvantaged when it comes to fully participating in WIL and service learning experiences, thus a specialised program was designed in order to facilitate this.

The international student program was designed as a pilot study to give international students the opportunity to participate in a tailored service learning experience. Participants would benefit from developing the transferable skills necessary for a more formal service learning placement and would also learn about and engage with Australian social issues. The program was designed and incorporated as part of the CI course but specifically targeted international students from across a range of schools and disciplines.

The program saw international students enrolled in the CI course engage with three local community organisations over the course of the study period. The organisations were selected based on their ongoing relationships with the university and their willingness to accommodate a different approach to service learning. Each organisation was focussed on a different social issue and, as such, students were exposed to topics including environmental sustainability, inequality, poverty, and homelessness. Students engaged with the organisations in three phases: introductory visits, fundraising, and service delivery. Introductory visits were aimed at building relationships and confidence, as well as teamwork among the cohort of students through structured group activities and learning. The second phase of the program saw students work in groups to fundraise for the Christmas programs of two of the organisations. Students met and consulted with community stakeholders, then raised funds to purchase presents for underprivileged or homeless young people. The final stage of the project was the delivery and distribution of the Christmas presents.

The international student program broadly followed the CI course model with a series of lectures and workshops supplementing the practice experience. Course content included case studies of successful fundraising campaigns as well as the use of design software to produce marketing collateral. Students were supported by two staff facilitators and a peer mentor who had previously completed the CI course. This represents significant additional support as students in the general CI course are usually supported by one academic advisor. However, Harrison and Ip (2013) note that domestic students who undertake overseas placements are not held to the stringent language standards imposed on international students in Australia, and are often supported by translators. In this context, the extra support offered to international students in this course was not excessive, and was very well-received by the students involved.

While the international student project represents a small pilot study, the initial results were promising. Students were surveyed throughout the experience and were also interviewed at the end. Student participants reported increased confidence and improved communication skills resulting from their involvement in the program. Communication skills were identified as particularly important, not only through initial student surveys, but also in the literature. Communication skills have been identified by several authors as a key barrier to international student engagement with WIL (Harrison and IP, 2013; Patrick et al., 2009, Pham, Bao, Saito, & Chowdhury, 2018; Safipour, Wenneberg, and Hadziabdic, 2017). Issues of confidence and communication led to the program activities being carefully scaffolded. Students first interacted with each other and facilitators through group activities, then worked closely with their peer mentor, before finally engaging with community partners and the broader student community. One of the staff facilitators discussed the profound changes in the students over the course of the study period, drawing on an example of one student who was initially too shy to participate, but eventually took on a leadership role in fundraising.

Creating supportive spaces to gradually build confidence and communicative skills was in direct response to the expressed needs of international students and, as such, contributed to developing an inclusive program that they were able to benefit from.

The international student service learning project achieved overwhelmingly positive feedback from the students involved. The emphasis on soft skill development and the scaffolded, supportive environment were greatly appreciated by students, who reported improved communication skills and increased confidence in their own abilities. Further, students demonstrated increased understanding of the social issues facing Australian society and reflected on how they might apply their increased knowledge and empathy to their own home countries. This pilot project has since been successfully replicated and now forms an important part of improving the service learning experiences of international students from within the CI course.

Weaving First Peoples' Knowledge into the Curriculum

Indigenous peoples are internationally recognised as being the most marginalised vulnerable populations (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013). Given the multidisciplinary nature of the course, engagement with communities and its focus on human rights, it was appropriate that the course include the knowledge and perspectives of Australia's First Peoples' as a formal component of study. Drawing on the history of First Peoples being marginalised and excluded it was decided to include and recognise the important contributions of First Peoples based both in their own traditions and cultures and through this experience of marginalisation and exclusion (Mignolo, 1999; Nakata, 2007; Mignolo, 2011; McKnight, 2016; Kwaymullina, 2016). It was important that the students understood that First Peoples have their own legitimate worldviews and terms of reference that represent legitimate ways of knowing, being and doing and to include it in course content for this reason, rather than any need to overcome any specific or general social-justice concerns.

The CI course structure and delivery allowed for inclusion of First Peoples' theoretical frameworks to be integrated throughout the course delivery as opposed to simply 'adding' First Peoples' content as a one-off topic that would tick a box. The First Peoples' knowledge and perspectives were woven throughout the course program, providing students with an opportunity to engage with First Peoples' knowledge and perspectives in an ongoing reflexive practice as they moved through the course. Further, the assessment was designed to include the place-based knowledge and students were guided in the development of practical understandings of relational being.

Given the criticism of previous attempts at 'Indigenising' or 'decolonising' course content (Nakata, Nakata, Keech and Bolt, 2012; Collins-Gearing and Smith, 2016), it was appropriate to embed First Peoples' knowledge and perspectives in a way that was authored and guided by First Peoples. A First Peoples' Reference Committee, consisting of traditional owners, members of the University Council of Elders and other Indigenous academic staff, was established as a way of creating space for First Peoples to authorise and lead the decision-making process beyond inclusion. This approach ensured First Peoples' knowledge and perspectives integrated throughout the course utilised First Peoples' methodologies to inform course design itself. Space within the curriculum was also made for an independent standalone module developed and included according to First Peoples' terms of reference. It was important to not only teach First Peoples' content, but to do so according to a First Peoples' pedagogy.

There is a growing appreciation and consideration of First Peoples' knowledge within the Western academy. Within higher education, Martin Nakata (2007) describes complex places where different knowledge systems intersect as "contested knowledge spaces". Russell (2005), suggests Western and Indigenous knowledges are considered separate and incompatible. While acknowledging the differences inherent to both knowledge systems,

Nakata suggests that the complexity of the two systems are “not clearly black or white, Indigenous or Western” (2007, p. 9).

From a human rights perspective, an important aspect of introducing students to First Peoples’ perspectives and experiences was how these experiences impacted the lives of individuals and communities (Battiste and Henderson, 2009; Nakata et al, 2014). What is important with the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and experience however isn’t necessarily the content that is taught, but ensuring the practice and process of teaching incorporated First Peoples’ ways of knowing and learning (Rigney, 2012; Nakata et al, 2014). Traditionally this has been a challenge for universities and institutions more familiar with Western knowledge systems, so it was considered important that the CI course countered the role institutions have historically played in the exclusion and denial of Indigenous peoples (Rigney, 2012; Pridham, Martin, Walker, Rossengren and Wadley, 2015). Additionally, rather than limit educational possibilities by tokenistic inclusion of Indigenous content (Nakata et al 2014) the course viewed the inclusion of First Peoples knowledge and perspectives as an opportunity to enhance them. Giovanangeli and Snepvangers (2016) suggest non-Indigenous Australian educators have limited desire and ability to engage with Indigenous topics. Including First Peoples content within the course went beyond situating ‘Western’ philosophies and worldviews against ‘Indigenous’ but attempted to factually address traditional knowledge and power relationships between Indigenous peoples and educational institutions (Carlson and McGloin, 2013; Nakata et al, 2014; Carey, 2015).

This approach was also based on developing the deeper connections and relational nature of First Peoples’ cultures and traditions (Graham, 2008; Grieves, 2008; Black, 2011; Hollinsworth, 2013; Graham, 2014). The process of including First Peoples knowledge and perspectives acknowledged that “it [was] not possible to bring in Indigenous knowledge and plonk it in the curriculum unproblematically as if it is another data set for Western knowledge

to discipline and test” (Nakata, 2007, p. 8). The course designers purposefully did not try to fit First Peoples’ culture into Western pedagogies and curricula (Riley, Howard-Wagner and Mooney, 2015) because the literature strongly criticised the incorporation of First Peoples and knowledges into Western institutions, especially within education institutions, that support this (Nakata, 2007; Smith, 2012; Rigney, 2012; Watson, 2014). The process of including First Peoples knowledge and perspectives involved reviewing the nature and form of Indigenous content and knowledge in Indigenous studies program areas and more broadly across the university curriculum (Henderson, 2005; Battiste and Henderson, 2009; Smith, 2012; de Oliveira Adreotti, Stein, Ahenakew and Hunt, 2015; Gilbert and Tillman, 2017); and the method of the delivery of Indigenous content across Indigenous studies programs and the university curriculum. It was established at the outset that content was not just included, but rather situated and made available in ways that enable First Nations theoretical frameworks (Carey, 2015; Heckenberg, 2015; Gilbert and Tillman, 2017);

The content developed for students emphasised that in order to understand First Peoples’ theoretical frameworks it is important to understand the relational links between law, land and people (Kwaymullina, 2005; Kwaymullina and Kwaymullina, 2010; Maduro, 2012). As in the majority of cultures and traditions, First Peoples’ theoretical frameworks are informed by the way that First Peoples produce and understand knowledge about themselves and the world that they live in through “Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing” (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003, p.208). These ways of knowing, being and doing are informed by creation stories and dreaming and embedded in the land and waters that First Peoples coexist in relation with.

First People teaching staff share “Aboriginal philosophy” with students in an effort to help students gain a deeper understanding the complex relational systems as described by Aboriginal scholars Ambelin and Blaze Kwaymullina as being “a pattern comprised of other

patterns, of systems inside systems” (2010, p.196). Emphasis is placed on understanding that everything in these systems is “interrelated and interdependent” and the interrelated nature of ‘place’ – often described as country – and ‘being’ from a First Peoples’ point of view (Graham, 2008; Graham, 2014; Heckenberg, 2015).

Prior to participating in the course, 75% of students rated their awareness of First Peoples as either ‘Low’ or ‘Neutral’. Data collected following completion of the course suggest the course content and delivery was well received and contributed to students being more culturally capable when working with First Australians. Three quarters of the students responding to the post survey agreed that First Peoples’ content should form part of their program of study irrespective of their discipline. While more research is needed, these promising results indicate an appreciation and identified need for more cohesive First Peoples’ content woven throughout the broader curriculum.

Conclusion

In conclusion, service learning, and WIL more broadly, are invaluable educational experiences for students when it comes to developing citizenship and an understanding of human rights. The Community Internship course at Griffith University offers service learning experiences firmly entrenched within a human rights framework. The academic components encourage students to engage with and reflect on human rights issues and how they impact communities locally, globally, and internationally. The practical aspects of this course see students undertake service learning experiences within the community in order to operationalise their theoretical learnings.

The value of these experiences serves to emphasise the importance of ensuring that service learning and WIL are accessible to all members of the student body. Research suggests that there are groups of students who have been unable to fully participate in WIL and service learning, including students with disability, international students, and First

Nations students. Thus, this chapter has detailed three different case studies aimed at improving the accessibility of service learning experiences for all students. Research strongly suggests that students with disability benefit from participating in WIL and service learning, therefore it is imperative to continue to find out more about their experiences so as to design more accessible programs. Similarly, international students have been disadvantaged when it comes to fully participating in WIL. The international student service learning project developed a tailor-made program targeted specifically at international students. By scaffolding learning, focussing on soft skill development, and providing additional layers of support, international students were able to greatly benefit from participating in service learning. Finally, making a concerted effort to interweave First Peoples' knowledge throughout the curriculum, as opposed to simply adding on a standalone topic, increases student engagement and understanding of First Peoples, particularly against a backdrop of human rights.

To conclude, service learning has immense value as a way of teaching and supporting students towards engaging with human rights. There are, however, issues of accessibility that cannot be overlooked. What this chapter has demonstrated though, is that with concerted effort to engage the entire student body in all its diversity, service learning and practical human rights education can be accessible to all students.

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