

THE
BELONGING
PROJECT



Report 2014

Phase 4: The Global at Home:
At Home in the Global

Report Authors

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Why Belonging Matters

“Over time and through various experiences, students’ sense of belonging, of personal acceptance, or having a rightful, valued place in a particular social context tends to stabilize and consistently influence one’s commitments and behaviours” (Strayhorn, 2012).

The need to belong is a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and when applied to the higher education sector plays a crucial role in academic outcomes for students. When a sense of belonging and social connectedness at university is explicitly activated it enhances students motivation to achieve and succeed (Walton, Cohen, Cwir & Spence, 2011).

Throughout our longitudinal research we have proven that it is possible to embed an ethos of belonging into formal and informal curriculum activities. In doing so, we have built confidence and capacity for students in disciplinary, interdisciplinary and global learning environments across the whole student lifecycle.

Using small-scale, low-cost initiatives informed by The Belonging Project’s Narrative Model we encouraged and delivered a range of positive interactions between staff and students to provide real life employability outcomes and establish skills critical for lifelong learning and success.

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Project Team

Academic Leaders

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Bronwyn is Programs Director in the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University. Bronwyn's research areas in her PhD are: best practice models of selection and retention, and building students' professional identities from first year. In addition to her role as an Academic Team Leader for The Belonging Project, Bronwyn has been an Academic Team Leader for the Learning and Teaching Investment Fund project First Things First: Transition and Transformation of the Student Cohort Experience (2013) and has been an academic member of the OLT project Developing Graduate Employability (2014-15).

Bronwyn won a Learning and Teaching Award with The Belonging Project team members in 2013 and has had her teaching with Mr Terry Johal documented as best practice as part of RMIT University's Peer Partnership Program. Through the educational design consultancy at RMIT she has engaged in embedding professionally relevant pedagogy through 'real world' projects with industry. She has taught onshore and offshore for the past fifteen years within a Creative Industries program at RMIT.

Rachel Wilson

Rachel has been teaching within the higher education sector for over 20 years, specialising in the Screen Production discipline. Rachel has a number of teaching awards including a team 2008 ALTC citation. Prior to undertaking a role as Program Director (Media) 2012-2013 in the School of Media and Communication, Rachel was the program's Selection and Careers Officer.

Rachel's professional background is as a media practitioner. Her current research includes archiving, memory and representations of trauma. Rachel served as the President and National Secretary of the peak discipline body Australian Screen Production Education and Research Association (ASPERA) from 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 respectively.

Project Team

Dr. Natalie Araújo, Research Officer

Natalie has completed a PhD in Social Anthropology, Juris Doctor in Law, MA in Latin American Cultural Studies, and holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Latin American Studies. She has ten years of experience in tertiary teaching and curriculum design. Natalie has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the UK, USA, Colombia, Vietnam, and Australia. She has also served as Chair of the American Association of University Women's Student Advisory Board.

Consultants

Associate Professor David Carlin

David Carlin is an Associate Professor in the School of Media and Communication and co-director of the nonfictionLab Research Group. He is a writer, creative artist, teacher and researcher. David's recent work includes the widely acclaimed memoir *Our Father Who Wasn't There* (2010); his creative nonfiction, essays and articles have appeared in Griffith Review, Overland, TEXT, Newswrite, Victorian Writer, Continuum and other journals.

David's current creative and research interests include literary nonfiction forms and genres (essay and memoir), memory studies, narrative and digital archives. His ongoing projects include the prose memoir/ biography *The Abyssinian Contortionist* (UWA Publishing, 2015), mixed media exhibition *Vault; the nonstop performing history of Circus Oz* (premiered at 2014 Melbourne Festival), the interactive digital archive, Circus Oz Living Archive and cultural exchange/collaborative residency program, WrICE (Writers Immersion and Cultural Exchange).

Dr. Lucy Morieson

Lucy graduated from RMIT in journalism before working as a researcher and reporter, most notably at online news publication Crikey. Inspired by her work in the world of online publishing, she returned to RMIT to complete her PhD on the political development of online journalism in Australia. While pursuing her PhD research, she also taught extensively across a range of courses and programs in RMIT's School of Media and Communication. Her role as Research Officer with The Belonging Project (2011-2012) provided an opportunity to combine the writing and interviewing experience developed as a journalist and researcher with the insights into the student experience gained through her teaching work.

Dr. Kath Lynch, Senior Coordinator Learning and Teaching Science Engineering and Health

Kath Lynch has worked for over twenty years in the Australian higher education sector in teaching and research focused on migration, international and transnational education. She has a post-graduate degree in cross cultural communication, her Master's study focused on the academic adjustment of Japanese students to western learning environments, and her Doctoral research examined how Australian universities prepare and support academics who teach transnationally. She is a senior learning and teaching coordinator at RMIT and her current research project is investigating inclusive teaching practices and the learning experiences of diversity groups in the STEM disciplines.

Laetitia Shand

Laetitia is a professional manager in communications, arts, design and academia. From a background in commercial product marketing she has since worked extensively in academic research management. From 2011–2013 she was Project Manager for the Circus Oz Living Archive ARC Linkage Project at RMIT University. She has recently co-edited RMIT Design Research Institute's six-year retrospective publication 'RMIT Design Research Institute Designs on the Future' (Melbourne Books 2014).

Karli Lukas, Academic Services Officer School of Media and Communication

As both an Academic Services Officer and graduate of the School of Media and Communication, Karli brought unique analytical and holistic perspectives to the project. Her extensive knowledge of RMIT staff networks and processes enabled her to contribute to position papers and represent the project lead team on various working parties.

Abbreviations and Key Terms Nomenclature

Abbreviations

FYE – First Year Experience

HEPPP – Higher Education Participation Partnerships Program

L&T – Learning and teaching

LTIF – Learning and Teaching Investment Fund

MC2015 – School of Media and Communication’s curriculum renewal plan

SLC – Socio-Economic Status

Key terms

Co-creation: Students actively co-create their university experience and should be genuinely engaged in processes and decisions that involve them, by providing feedback, and, where appropriate, creative input in the change processes.

Disciplinary: Bounded fields defined by their specific frames or reference, traditional objects of study, theoretical canons, technologies, and methodologies.

First year student: A student who is yet to complete 96 credit points of study (equivalent to one full-time year) in their current program at RMIT University.

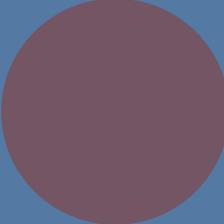
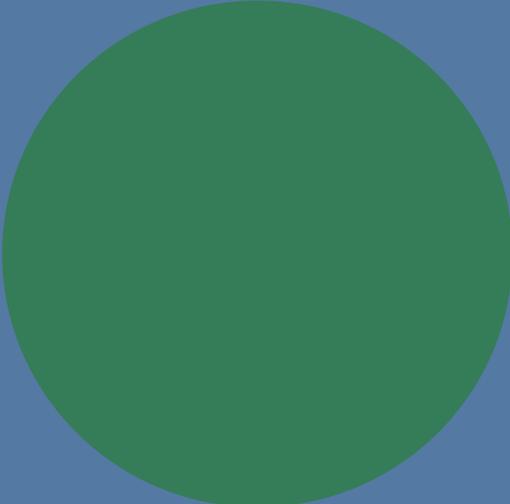
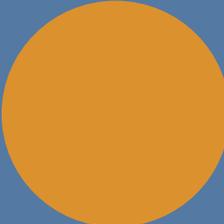
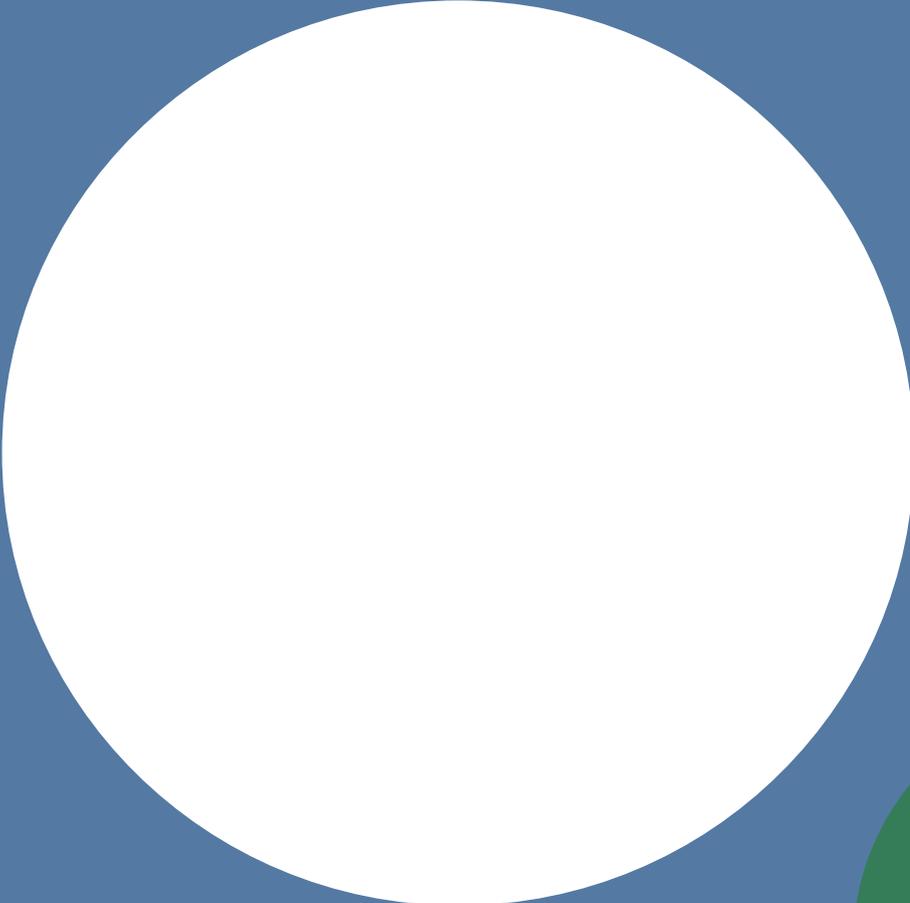
Intercultural: An approach to understanding and working with diverse cultures in ways that: recognises commonalities and differences; creates connections with others; fosters collaboration, and cultivates mutual respect.

Interdisciplinary: Learning and teaching practices which develop not just disciplinary knowledge, but also cultural competencies that facilitate the creation of new knowledge, theory, and concepts that extend and transform disciplinary boundaries.

At RMIT there are a number of terms that are institution-specific and, as such, do not have the same meanings to external audiences. The following table sets out these differences to avoid confusion when reading this document:

Elsewhere	RMIT Term
Subject	Course
Course	Program
Faculty	College
Online learning management system	Blackboard

The Belonging Project: Introduction



About the Project

The Belonging Project is a four-year (2011-2014) longitudinal learning and teaching research project seeking to develop and define a new approach to enhancing student engagement and graduate outcomes in the School of Media and Communications. The project grew from collaborative work undertaken within the School to develop and document a common pedagogical approach and create a unified learning and teaching narrative. The initial project idea was conceived by School academics Rachel Wilson and David Carlin in 2010, with Bronwyn Clarke joining the team in 2011.

The project aims are:

1. To develop strategies to support the participation and integration of students from diverse backgrounds, circumstances and cultures, including in particular students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds.
2. To enhance student satisfaction and retention rates.
3. To increase opportunities within program structures for students to choose from a variety of interdisciplinary, international and/or industry/community-based learning experiences.
4. To help develop and make known a distinctive RMIT student experience, setting the University apart from other institutions in the sector.

The work of The Belonging Project is designed to support RMIT's strategic goals; to be global in reach and impact; to be work-relevant and industry-partnered; to be urban in innovation and impact, and to support the participation, retention and/or success of low SES higher education students in undergraduate studies. Importantly, the project is aligned with the three-year undergraduate degree structure in order to achieve findings with transferability to other schools and higher education institutions.

The Belonging Project uses the concept of belonging as a tactic to engage participating staff and students, and as an ethos applicable to the institution as a whole. Thus, the ethos of belonging appears as a concept embracing the results and recommendations of the project, and as a critical characteristic of learning and teaching practices supporting positive student engagement and graduate outcomes.

Major sources of project funding have come from Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) and RMIT's Learning and Teaching Investment Fund (LTIF). HEPPP was formed as part of the Australian Government's social inclusion agenda to broaden the participation of students from low socio-economic backgrounds who possess the ability to study at university but, due to systemic barriers, may not have been afforded the opportunity.

Phase	Tier	What we did
Phase One: <i>Planting the Seeds</i>	Foundation	Literature review, sector best practice mapping and application to school, testing of The Belonging Project Model, and development of first year experience initiatives.
Phase Two: <i>Focus on the Interdisciplinary Experience</i>	Tier One: <i>Disciplinary</i>	Implementation and testing of the first year experience initiatives: Coordinated Orientation Week Activities; Cohort Day Out; Student Informal Spaces; Academic Transition Initiatives, and End of Year Festival of Events and Exhibition.
Phase Three: <i>Focus on the Interdisciplinary Experience</i>	Tier Two: <i>Inter-disciplinary</i>	Development of a model of interdisciplinary practice and continued evaluation of the first year experience initiatives.
Phase Four: <i>The Global At Home: At Home in the Global</i>	Tier Three: <i>Global</i>	Development of a three-stage approach to test the development of global competencies through case study initiatives, and continued maintenance of academic output of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary tiers.

Diagram 1: The four phases of The Belonging Project

The Belonging Project Narrative Model

The Belonging Project is structured around The Belonging Narrative Model of Student Engagement (Diagram 2) developed and tested through the four phases of the project (Diagram 1).

This model aims to foster student engagement and employability, and is designed to be flexible, adaptable and transferable. It embeds the acquisition of disciplinary, interdisciplinary and global competencies through a three-tiered approach to the student experience. This approach, which is underpinned by an ethos of belonging and mapped to the student lifecycle, views each student’s sense of identity and belonging as developing incrementally across the course of their undergraduate degree program (Diagram 3).

The approach proposes that students initially identify most strongly with their program cohort. Thus research within the first tier focuses on building connections (within year and across-year groups) supporting the development of disciplinary and professional identity. In the second tier, as students begin to make sense of their discipline in relation to other disciplines, research focuses on creating collaborative interventions within a rich interdisciplinary environment. In the final tier, students start to think of themselves as future professionals within a global and intercultural context, with research focuses on facilitating global intercultural experiences. In combination, this three-tiered approach offers a flexible means to support students to develop their identity as professional, employable and ethical global citizens.

The Belonging Project Narrative Model does not approach each tier as rigidly successive and locked to a particular year. Rather, elements of all tiers are present across the three year undergraduate student experience, but with a shifting emphasis. While the model is designed with the

particularities of the RMIT University context in mind, it is also intended to be flexible. The model does not prescribe specific structures or forms of ‘belonging’, but offers a way of working in our environment that can be reimagined and reinterpreted in different institutional and disciplinary settings.

In line with the project model, The Belonging Project approach acknowledges that universities are spaces where value is co-created by consumers within complex frameworks of actors and resources (Karpen, Hall, Katsoulidis & Cam, 2011). Students are positioned as co-creators of their university experience, and are actively engaged in change as a means to empower their experience.

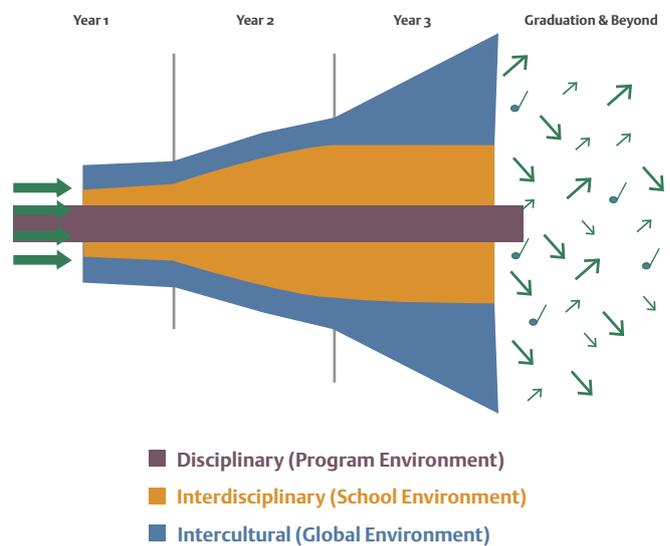


Diagram 2: The Belonging Project Narrative Model of Student Engagement.

Sense of identity and belonging is built incrementally through:	
Tier One: <i>Disciplinary</i>	Students establish a strong disciplinary and professional base within a diverse disciplinary cohort .
Tier Two: <i>Interdisciplinary</i>	Building on the disciplinary base, students become more aware of the interdisciplinary community of the wider school and university .
Tier Three: <i>Global</i>	Students test their disciplinary and interdisciplinary identity and knowledge through working in a wider world of intercultural and global links and experiences and identify as professional, employable and ethical global citizens .

Diagram 3: The three-tiered approach to the student experience

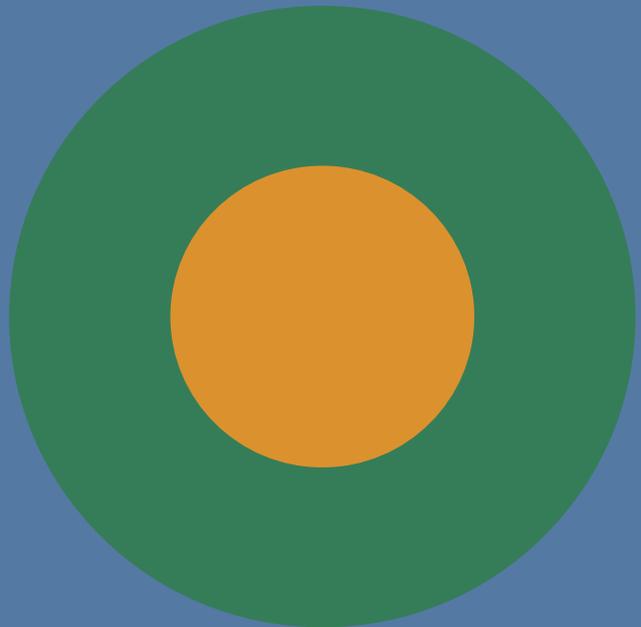
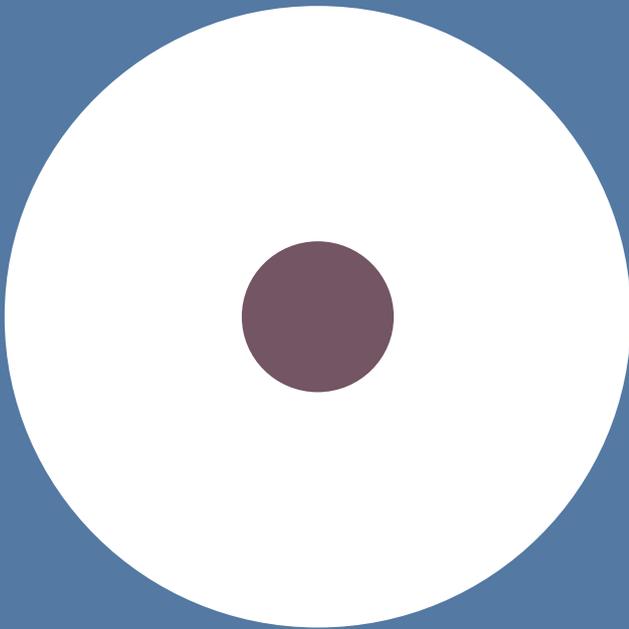
Guiding principles

The Belonging Project research interactions and interventions have been informed by a set of **guiding principles** (Diagram 4) evolved through the four phases of the project:

The Belonging Project's Guiding Principles	
Co-created	To utilise co-creation techniques wherever possible and to promote staff ownership by identifying and supporting 'champions'.
Capacity strengthening	To aim towards capacity strengthening through the incremental building of cultural capital and capacity over time.
Embedded	To be embedded within the formal and informal curriculum.
Grassroots	To develop and support numerous low cost grassroots initiatives recognising that in order to develop trust and long-term success, initiatives must be driven from the ground-up.
Holistic	To be holistic in order to successfully encompass the entire student lifecycle
Inclusive	To be inclusive of both the formal and informal curriculum, and of staff (academic and professional) and students. Each is central to the development, implementation and sustainability of the project.
Iterative	To be iterative, integrating cycles of reflection and evaluation into every stage of the research, as guided by an action research methodology.
Low cost	To aim to be low cost in order to ensure sustainability.
Student centred	To adopt a student centred approach in order to mirror contemporary practice and encourage active knowledge creation and deep learning.
Sustainable	To be sustainable in order to ensure ongoing viability.

Diagram 4: The Belonging Project: Guiding principles

**Tier Three:
The Global at Home:
At Home in the Global**



Tier Three: The Global At Home: At Home in the Global

In 2014, The Belonging Project aimed to embed global competences in the curriculum across the entire student lifecycle for students in the creative disciplines, while continuing to support and expand upon initiatives undertaken in the disciplinary (Tier One) and interdisciplinary (Tier Two) phases of the project.

The Global at Home: At Home in the Global explored the idea that the core discipline-based cohort experience can be improved by integrating both interdisciplinary and international experiences across the whole student lifecycle. This idea arose out of our initial research into this third tier of The Belonging Narrative Model which identified the

overlap between resources for the interdisciplinary and global tiers.

Our work in 2014 built upon the knowledge acquired through the previous phases of the project and worked towards the development of an integrated model for targeted interventions in curriculum design and pedagogy. These interventions supported students to develop intercultural skills, knowledge and awareness through a series of staged experiences situated 'at home' in local contexts. The research and initiatives were predominantly carried out within the School of Media and Communication utilising existing University infrastructure.

Phase Four: The Global at Home: At Home in the Global was divided into three stages, each of which reflected a key point of emphasis:

Stage one: Identify and acknowledge existing global diversity in the classroom ('feeling global')

Stage two: Fostering global perspectives ('doing global')

Stage three: An 'at home' global peak experience ('being global')

Why focus on the global experience?

Every university in the world is faced with the challenge of creating the very best student experience with fantastic outcomes that reflect the society that we live in today. (Martin Bean, RMIT University, 2015)

Our focus on The Global at Home: At Home in the Global can be contextualised in terms of the overall student

experience, student employability in the creative sector and graduate outcomes; RMIT and the changing university sector; and the School of Media and Communication context. It is with our Belonging Project Narrative Model and these contexts in mind that we approached our work on the global experience.



Improving the student experience

Focussing on the global experience at home can enhance the student experience and can positively impact upon graduate outcomes and employability, with research affirming that internationalised learning is vital for students to:

1. **Develop the complex skills required for changing professional contexts:** Global skills such as increasing intercultural awareness and communication skills can work to build student capacity and employability within an increasingly transnational professional environment.
2. **Develop connections to broader groups:** International and intercultural learning is essential to the welfare and sense of identity and belonging of students as members of a school environment, university culture, and of a professional community. This learning can also provide opportunities for tertiary education and research that are not confined by the domestic situation, through constructing links between students and international administrations, leadership bodies, cultural and community groups, and actively engaged alumni networks around the world.
3. **Develop engaged global citizenship:** Adopting the goal of supporting student to become actively engaged, empathetic global citizens can also work towards broader societal goals.
4. **Enhance personal perceptions of self within intercultural environments:** Intercultural studies are important in social development and wellbeing as a means of broadening horizons and facilitating critical reflection, self-reflection, self-esteem, and perceptions of empowerment.



Broader context for the global experience

RMIT and the changing university sector

Over the past twenty years, Australian universities have increasingly focused attention toward globalisation of the curriculum and internationalisation of the student experience. Employers, universities and professional bodies agree that Australia needs to develop professionals who are highly skilled and ready to face the challenges of increased global competition (Bridgestock, 2011; Crossman & Clarke, 2010; Universities Australia, 2014; Wye & Lim, 2009). More than ever professionals need to be responsive to economic, social, cultural/global, technical and environmental change, capable of working flexibly and intelligently across a range of business contexts, and in possession of a broad range of skills learned in many contexts and through a range of experiences.

During this same period, study abroad and study tours have remained the dominant model of intercultural exchange for universities. While these programs offer students able to access them meaningful opportunities for the empathetic engagement with cultural Others, and the development of cosmopolitan consciousness and multicultural identity (Bellamy & Weinberg, 2006; Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic, & Jon, 2009; Ribeiro, 2005), they are not unproblematic. As Waters and Brooks (2010) have noted in the UK context, students who are able to access study abroad opportunities “remain a highly privileged group and their experiences [may] serve only to facilitate the reproduction of their privilege” (p. 217). Moreover, the ‘fly-in, fly-out’ nature of these exchanges may limit the effectiveness of fully reciprocal relationships. As a result, layers of privilege that replicate both socio-economic disparities within nations and the geo-political inequalities across national borders may become embedded within institutional practices.

Within this globalised context of education and work, RMIT seeks to improve the international quality and impact of student educational outcomes, and deliver a student experience that is characterised by global engagement and which is able to attract students nationally and internationally.

As RMIT’s *Internationalisation Plan 2011-2015* documents, the institution is currently rated well in global rankings. It is ranked first for overall international student enrolments, being first for offshore enrolments, top ten for international student enrolments onshore in Australia, and fifth for total outbound student mobility. With teaching, research or industry engagement presences in a variety of countries and regions including RMIT Vietnam – the country’s first and only fully foreign-owned university delivering internationally recognised degrees – RMIT is well recognised in global academic communities.

According to RMIT’s *Strategic Plan 2015: Transforming the*

Future, the type of student experience provided by RMIT should be “Global in attitude, action and presence, offering our students a global passport to learning and work” (Strategic Goal 1). Furthermore, it should be “characterised by its global engagement, international mobility and cross cultural opportunities” and a “curriculum which is internationally relevant and incorporates cross-cultural learning” (Priority 3), and “Support global engagement by all RMIT staff by...initiating development and improvements to internationalise academic programs” (Priority 4). (RMIT, 2015)

The School of Media and Communication Context

The developments in our industry towards convergence of disciplines and a continued blurring of the boundaries between professions continue unabated. Digital is now a central driver of any future business models and digital consumption is increasingly a global phenomenon (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2011, p.23). Some characteristics of contemporary and future-oriented industry and professional practice include a collaborative digital enterprise as a new operational model and transient team projects requiring staff who can not only work with others but also adapt to new problems and situations. “Future graduates in Media and Communication will need to be connected across disciplines and borders” (Peterson & Hansen, 2012, p. 3).

As a result of these broader developments, the School of Media and Communication has conducted a major program of curriculum renewal and alignment. These changes have been documented in the School’s most recent strategic plans and influence all planning and policy documents within the School. Importantly, these policies have created a specific mandate:

To foster the development of graduates as critical and creative thinkers, multi-skilled and collaborative practitioners, and responsible leaders with a global perspective... We need to ensure that our curricula reflect the expectations around collaborative and interdisciplinary projects, about international practice, and about mastering digital skills as well as more specialist discipline skills. We also need to look for increased opportunities to facilitate student interaction with international industry practitioners and engagement with international real-world briefs (Peterson & Hansen, 2012, p.3).

The focus groups in Phase One of *The Belonging Project Planting the Seeds* (2011) revealed that while many students demonstrated that they were already thinking internationally and positioning themselves as future global professionals, this was not necessarily something that they considered as part of their student experience. While a minority took advantage of existing exchange or study abroad opportunities, for most these were not worth the bureaucratic hard work. The University’s ‘global passport’

is instead consigned to something to be utilised after their studies as part of their future professional lives, with a number citing Asia or the US as places they saw themselves working in future.

However, many students reported a persistent divide in the classroom between domestic and international cohorts, which reminds us that space is not just about interaction but also about belonging. Media ethnographer David Morley (2001) argues that home is not simply a physical space but also a place where one can be *rhetorically* 'at home', confident of being understood, of sharing the same discursive space (p. 425).

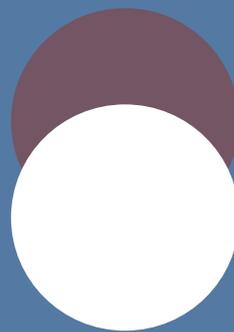
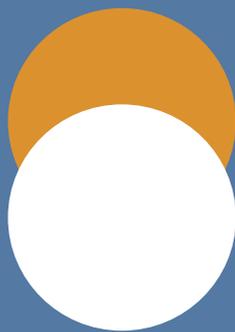
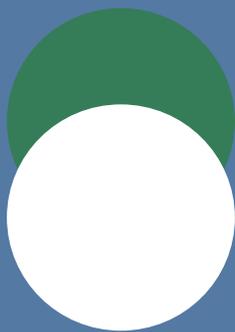
It is worth noting that many international students possess a form of global cultural capital that domestic students may lack. The international students who participated in our focus groups already positioned themselves as thoroughly 'global' citizens and were planning their next international experience for postgraduate study or for work.

Whilst the concept of an internationalised or global curriculum is not new (Leask, 2008, 2010-2011 & 2013) many staff are confused about how to apply the ideas of teaching to, and for, a global cohort to create meaningful classroom experiences. Study tours and exchange programs will continue to remain the peak global experience for a limited number of students but there is growing evidence that globalising the curriculum works best for the whole student cohort when it is embedded across the formal, the informal and the hidden curriculum (Leask & Bridge, 2013, p.81).

For these reasons, in the third tier of its research, Global at Home: At Home in the Global, The Belonging Project has examined existing intercultural practice within the School of Media and Communication and explored low-cost possibilities for pedagogical innovation and virtual collaboration as means to develop sustainable, equitable and accessible intercultural opportunities within student lifecycles.



Methodology, Methods and Process



Methodology, Methods and Process

Methodology and methods

As with previous tiers, Tier Three of The Belonging Project, Phase Four: The Global at Home: At Home in the Global drew on narrative methodology (Abma, 2000; Bruner, 1990; Gola, 2009) and action research (Greenwood, Whyte, Harkavy, 1993; Kemmis, 2007) to capture and share knowledge. These approaches are the foundation of The Belonging Narrative Model. They have allowed us to work as collaborators with stakeholders, with an emphasis on co-creation central to our approach to change within the School.

In 2014 the methodology and methods built on the holistic and embedded qualitative action research methods utilized thus far in the project (Morieson et al., 2013). In practical terms we continued research practices that are primarily qualitative, ethnographically informed, and narrative based, as reflected in the case studies undertaken in this phase of the study. In this third tier, research has been produced through participant-observation by an embedded researcher who observed and participated in the redevelopment of the existing courses, the Interdisciplinary Communications Project and its deployment via a hybridised study-tour. In addition, we incorporated the ongoing critical reflections of the core teaching staff, and drew upon interviews with 18 of the 20 participating students, interviews with teaching and support staff, and student’s formal and informal written reflections. Participants in earlier iterations of the course were also interviewed for comparative purposes.

Process

In 2014 The Belonging Project employed established best practice of the global/internationalised curriculum to test initiatives, produce a framework and develop a series of resources for staff. We also examined existing intercultural practices within the School of Media and Communication and explored low-cost possibilities for pedagogical innovation and virtual collaboration as means to develop sustainable, equitable and accessible intercultural opportunities within student lifecycles.

The following key questions informed the inquiry underpinning this phase of the study:

- What is involved in the facilitation of a relevant global curriculum for particular student cohorts from the creative disciplines?
- What are the particular global perspectives most relevant to students from the creative disciplines?
- What does a ‘whole of school’ framework for a relevant ‘at home’ global experience look like and what would make it sustainable into the future?

To answer these questions, we selected three courses within the School of Media and Communications which offered opportunities to explore the points of emphasis

identified as key global competencies that RMIT graduates are expected to develop. The potential to use these courses as case studies in this phase of The Belonging Project also offered an ideal opportunity to continue the work undertaken in Phase Two and Three of the study which commenced the process of embedding sustainable practices within existing RMIT programs.

Case study courses	
Courses	<p>COMM2324 Interdisciplinary Communication Project - RMIT Melbourne</p> <p>COMM2386 Interdisciplinary Communication Project - RMIT Vietnam</p> <p>Criteria: The only school-wide interdisciplinary electives incorporating a study tour.</p>
Courses	<p>GRAP2199 Communication Design History and Theory A</p> <p>GRAP2200 Communication Design History and Theory B</p> <p>Criteria: Sequential courses offered to a large cohort of creative industry students in their first and second semester of first year.</p>

Tier Three of the project progressed through three distinct research stages, each reflecting a key point of emphasis, in order to achieve its proposed outcomes. As the project evolved, a number of aspects of each stage were reconsidered in response to staff, student feedback, testing and the issues faced. In addition, we conducted a staff survey to inform a professional development session for staff to explore and examine cultural definitions, dynamics and resources, the results of which contributed to the development of the three research stages.

In addition, The Belonging Project in 2014 has:

- Continued to evaluate and adapt the pilot initiatives and to advocate for the recommendations presented in our 2012 and 2013 reports.
- Disseminated the project’s research and findings extensively in national and international conferences and via internal and external channels.
- Developed additional recommendations relating to The Global at Home: At Home in the Global in the School of Media and Communication.

Initiatives for Phase 4: The Global at Home: At Home in the Global

Stage one: Identify and acknowledge existing global diversity in the classroom ('feeling global')	Case Study: Data-packs and professional development workshop
Stage two: Fostering global perspectives ('doing global')	Case Study: GRAP2199 (Communication Design History and Theory A) Case Study: GRAP2200 (Communication Design History and Theory B)
Stage three: An 'at home' global peak experience ('being global')	Case Study: COMM2324 (Interdisciplinary Communication Project - RMIT Melbourne) Case Study: COMM2386 (Interdisciplinary Communication Project - RMIT Vietnam)

Project participation in 2014

In 2014, the following programs, courses, students and staff benefited from participation in The Belonging Project:

Program participation

Six programs across two locations directly participated in the project initiatives:

- Bachelor of Communication (Media)
- Bachelor of Communication (Professional Communication)
- Bachelor of Communication (Journalism)
- Bachelor of Arts (Creative Writing)
- Bachelor of Arts (Photography)
- Bachelor of Design (Communication Design)

Student participation

144 student in four courses participated in the project pilots and initiatives:

- COMM2324 (Interdisciplinary Communication Project - RMIT Melbourne)
- GRAP2199 (Communication Design History and Theory A)
- GRAP2200 (Communication Design History and Theory B)
- COMM2386 (Interdisciplinary Communication Project - RMIT Vietnam)

The following students participated in interviews:

- 18 students were interviewed in depth about their peak 'at home' learning experience (COMM2324 & COMM2386), and
- 16 design students (GRAP2199 & GRAP2200) were interviewed about their perceptions of the global curriculum initiatives.

Staff participation

59 staff participated in the project through surveys or a workshop:

Survey participation:

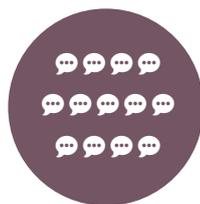
- 38 staff participated in a survey investigating staff professional development and support needs to inform the three phases of Global at Home: At Home in the Global.
- 6 staff responded to an additional survey pertaining to specific information required in designing a facilitated professional development workshop.

Facilitated professional development workshop participation:

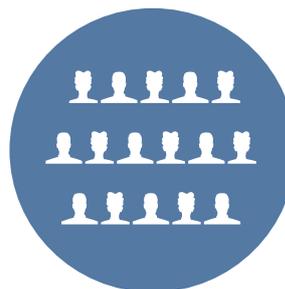
- 15 staff participated in a workshop on the topic 'Harnessing The Cultural Diversity in Your Classroom in Group Work'.



144 student participants



34 student interviews

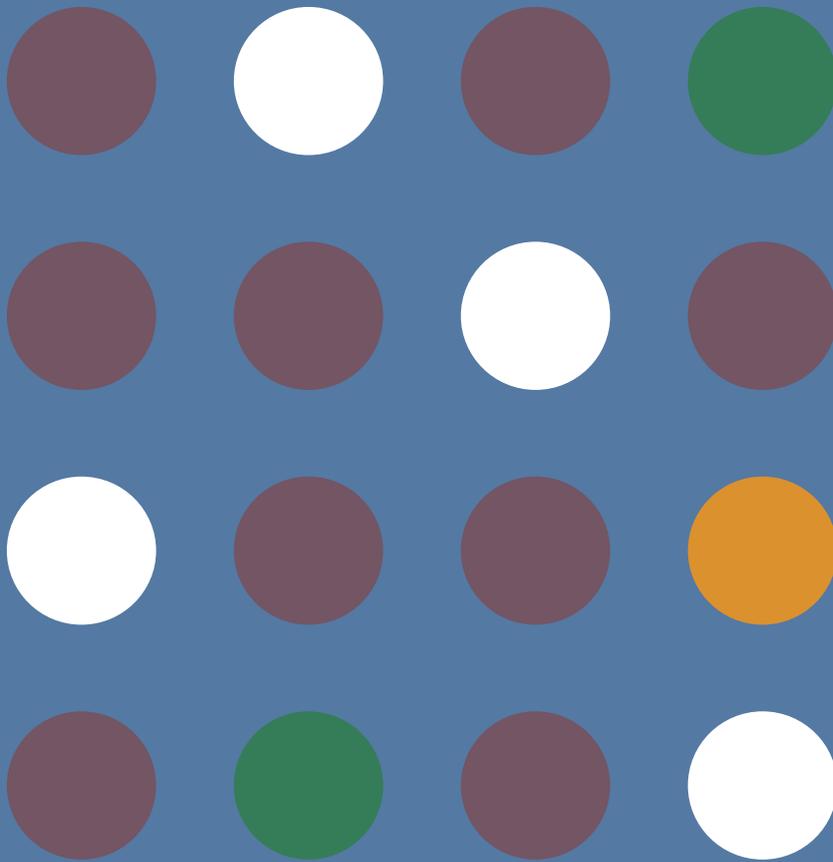


59 staff participants



44 staff survey respondents

The Global at Home: At Home in the Global: Detail and Analysis



Stage One: Identify and acknowledge existing global diversity in the classroom (‘feeling global’)

In this stage, the project team developed and trialled a series of small-scale formal and informal curriculum activities situated at critical points of entry (e.g. first semester, first year and mid year entry) to assist staff and students identify and explicitly acknowledge the existing global diversity within their classrooms. In support of these activities, The Belonging Project team:

- Completed a literature review and applied the findings to develop and trial initiatives in stages two and three.
- Undertook a staff survey initiative to explore current School practice and document staff needs to inform the development of a toolkit/resource pack relevant to discipline needs.
- Developed a prototype for de-identified data-packs for the purpose of providing staff with key socio-economic data on their cohorts.

Staff survey initiative

The project team ran two surveys issued to all academic staff in the School of Media and Communication inviting comment on professional development needs within the concept of ‘The Global at Home’. The survey results (Appendix 1) indicated a strong demand for help and support to embed global competencies within curriculum.

Key comments included:

The university needs to invest in these resources and in staff training which would identify what the particular cultural group has experienced in previous education. This is actually more critical than blanket cultural sensitivity training, and

might help staff deal with the learning style of individual students and their particular backgrounds. Again, however, these forms of training will encounter other policies and regulations which contradict sensitivity or exceptionalism. The classroom experiences in Indonesia at all levels, including university, are vastly different to those in Australia.

We should refine our ideas about what international experiences are valuable for RMIT graduates. More support for our international students’ international experience (ie. in Australia) should be developed.

I have both international experience and contacts. I know how to embed these in my programs and courses. What I do not have at RMIT is any supporting infrastructure (systems, processes and technological support) to enable these to be taken to an appropriate level. Having to apply for external funding to ‘internationalise’ is rather sad for a university that purports to have a global outlook. RMIT’s systems are antithetical to good practice in this regard.

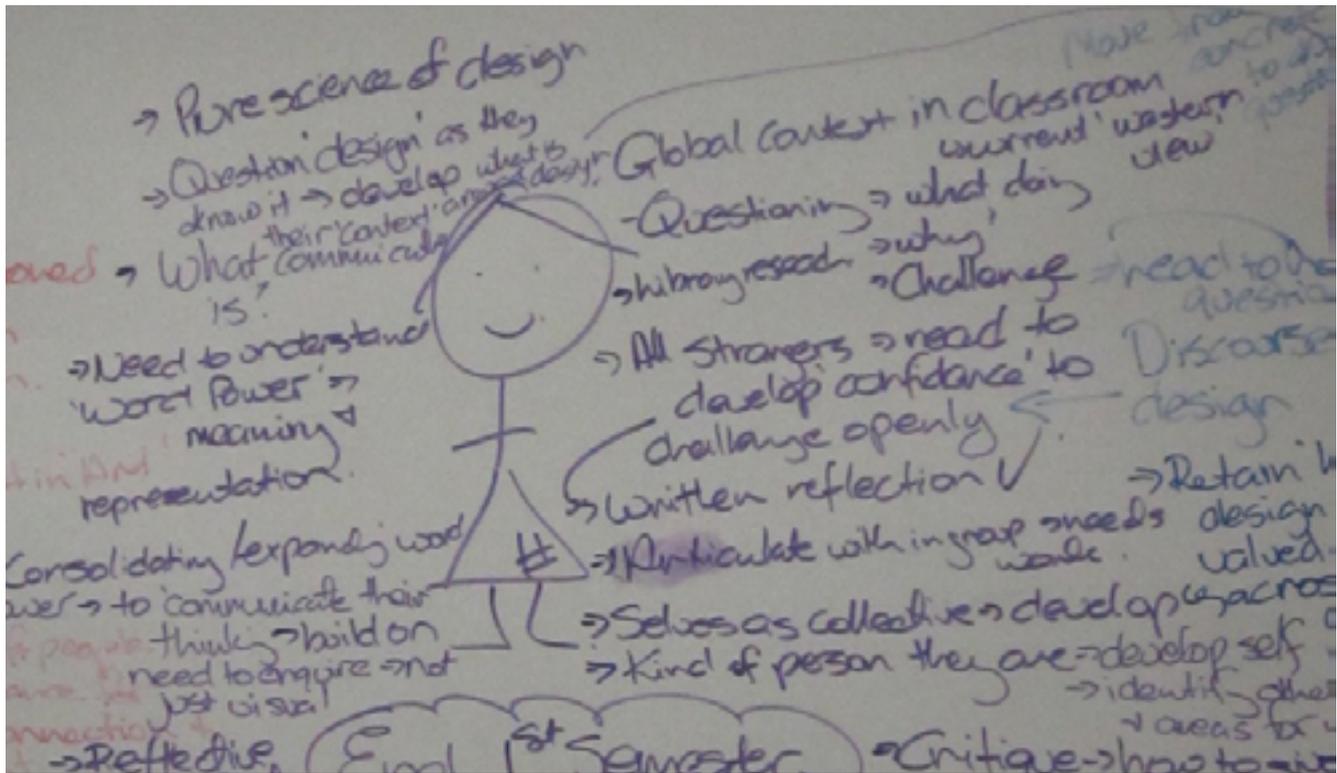
When asked in particular about what would be most useful for staff to support students to achieve a peak global experience ‘at home’, staff nominated the following additional information which indicate a need for workshops, case studies and vignettes:

Dynamic speakers who have been in the classrooms recently, less managers from professional units in the universities.

Information to help students work together in multicultural groups...If the workshops are tailored to postgraduate coursework then I’d come, but the undergrad stuff seems quite different.



Case study: Data-packs and professional development workshop



Data-pack initiative

The data-pack initiative was specifically designed to provide evidence-based information within a facilitated workshop model aimed at encouraging teaching staff to provide tailored classroom experiences for all their students. To achieve this objective, The Belonging Project worked with central intelligence units within RMIT to mine, analyse and present key student data for explicit use in both planning and curriculum development at a School-level. This data was de-identified and presented to relevant staff from Bachelor Communication (Journalism), Bachelor of Arts (Creative Writing), Bachelor of Arts (Photography) and Bachelor of Design (Communication Design) in visually represented data-packs. The data-packs contained key demographic and educational information while adhering to strict privacy protocols. Information contained included: the number of low socio-economic status students; number of equity students; geographic data; English as second language status; first in family status; age distributions, and educational background.

The project team ran a series of facilitated workshops with staff aimed at unpacking the information contained in the data-packs. These workshops were designed to address broader ethical concerns associated with using the material and to ensure that staff utilised the material to develop meaningful embedded curriculum interventions. When conducting the workshops we utilised the 'Facilitated Program Workshop Model' developed through the 2013 *First Thing First* LTIF project.

Ruth Moeller, College of Design and Social Context (DSC), Senior Advisor Learning and Teaching (SALT), was invited to work as an independent facilitator with the program teams. The workshops commenced with an exercise designed to assess participant's initial perceptions of what they believed the commencing student cohort looked like at all entry points within their program. Participating staff then documented their thoughts, following which the data-pack information was presented. In all cases the data presented indicated that there was much greater diversity within the cohort than the teaching staff had initially realised. This revealed a gap between evidence-based information and staff perceptions and preconceived ideas, particularly in relation to student background demographics, such as first in family, gender ratios, age range, SES status and English as a second language statistics.

The new evidence-based information was discussed and program teams began working on a series of more inclusive initiatives for transition and assessment opportunities that better harnessed the diversity within the student cohort. The involvement of Ruth Moeller in the process facilitated teaching staff access to ongoing learning and teaching support for the initiatives beyond the first workshop. This strategy ensured that evidence-based information underpinned sustainable transition developments across program curriculum and also acknowledged the increasing student diversity present in each program.

Professional development workshop and resources: 'Harnessing the cultural diversity in your classroom in group work' initiative

In response to results of the staff survey initiative, The Belonging Project designed and delivered a professional development workshop on 'Harnessing the cultural diversity in your classroom in group work'. This workshop, delivered by Pauline Keogh from RMIT Study and Learning Centre (SLC), was designed to help staff prepare course material and content reflecting a range of international perspectives on the value of group work. A pack of corresponding resources, collated by Dr Kath Lynch, College

of Science, Engineering and Health (SEH) who has been researching in this area for a number of years, was provided to staff as part of this workshop (Appendix 2).

Attendees reported that they found the workshop very useful in identifying a range of cultural perceptions related to group work expectations. More importantly, the workshop enabled fruitful discussion and the sharing of stories and strategies for classroom implementation. A number of staff reported workshop follow-up and the implementation of many strategies highlighted in the resource pack.



Stage Two: Fostering global perspectives ('doing global')

The Belonging Project developed and trialled a series of learning and teaching tasks within targeted courses aimed at encouraging deeper intercultural learning (beyond 'getting to know' your cohort) and extending international perspectives within the creative disciplines.

Informed by research undertaken in 2011 as part of The Belonging Project: Planting the Seeds (Morison et al., 2013), The Belonging Project undertook two case studies aimed at introducing global perspectives in the first year of the Bachelor of Design (Communication Design) program. Two courses within the first year were selected for the case

studies: GRAP2199 (Communication Design History and Theory A) and GRAP2200 (Communication Design History and Theory B).

Through specific curriculum interventions within the courses, we aimed to support the students in developing their professional identity for globalised workplaces. In completing two assessment tasks that explicitly promoted global perspectives, students extended their cultural awareness and were prompted to develop internationally relevant creative communication solutions.

Case study: GRAP2199 (Communication Design History and Theory A)

The GRAP2199 first assessment task took place in week three of semester one 2014. The task asked students to begin exploring their nascent professional identity by producing an artefact (a lanyard) that represented both their values and attitudes as a communication designer, as they understood it to be at week three. Working from the proposition that students begin building their professional identity from the moment they accept their place within RMIT, students were presented with the task in their first class in week one.

In week three the students presented their outcomes to peers, academic staff and selected industry representatives at an after hours industry event. In addition to wearing their self-designed lanyards, the students were required to document how they introduced themselves to five other students (whom they had not yet met), three academic staff members and three industry representatives. They were also required to provide evidence of having booked two post-event meetings with people they spoke to at the event in order to explicitly begin establishing their professional networks. Finally students were required to reflect on a series of prompts about their experience of completing the task and how their perception of the profession may have already begun to shift.

The second assessment task involved the production of a two-part 'zine'. The objective was to encourage students to explore the experience of working within randomly constructed collaborative teams in order to better understand professional practice as a design practitioner. The first part of the task required the design and production of a hand-made concept zine, within a 48-hour period, based on a two-dimensional design artefact sourced from a street within the Melbourne central business district. Each group was responsible for all aspects of production, including research, content writing and editing,

and photography. The goal was to build student confidence in their ability to work in a collaborative team to produce work within a short time frame using effective delegation of roles based on the identification of individual skill sets. Students presented the zines in a pop up exhibition space, and professional practitioners were invited to review the zines and provide feedback to the students.

The second part of this assessment task required students to develop a prototype zine within a five-week period. Students were asked to reflect critically on the experience of producing the concept zine, including an assessment of the skill sets within their initial working group and the opportunity to renegotiate new collaborative groups if required. Students used digital technology to manage project communication, including file management, meeting communication and task coordination, and as a result started to recognise how to better organise their practice, make better use of time, research more deeply, and understand the breadth of roles and skills required as a design practitioner.

What the GRAP2199 case study participants told us

I had not thought that I was part of a very big profession until I realised how many different countries we all come from [were here] tonight...this is my network for the future.

Nico the typography teacher is from Amsterdam and has travelled the world with design, I had never thought that I might do this, I now think I see where I might go and do as a designer very differently after this event.

I never thought that first years could produce work of this standard. I'm shocked by how far we've come. I feel really motivated to keep improving and keep making connections. I'm confident in my abilities and my ability to communicate them.



Case study: GRAP2200 (Communication Design History and Theory B)

The GRAP2200 second semester course assessment task was driven by a live industry brief. This represented the first time first year students had been invited to work on a brief with industry partners. The Belonging Project team approached Deloitte (a major international multinational company with whom there was an established relationship) and they in turn invited an international-based client to participate with the students on the brief. An extensive consultation process between academic staff and Deloitte resulted in a global service design brief presented to students for execution. The design brief centred on a project on which Deloitte and the client had been working for three months, and both parties were interested to see the student's perspectives on solutions to a particular project problem.

Throughout semester two, Deloitte and the client worked with the students on a weekly basis on the development of design concepts, prototypes and pitches. The final student presentations took place at RMIT with a number of representatives from Deloitte and the client in attendance. Feedback from the industry partners was overwhelmingly positive, and resulted in a number of students being offered internships at Deloitte in order to implement the solutions they developed. This project also led to Deloitte offering a

number of first year program prizes for the program's end of year exhibition, additional summer internships and an invitation to work regularly with first year Communication Design students on similar projects.

What the GRAP2200 case study participants told us

I think that [the focus on intercultural design and culturally relevant perspectives] is great. It was not something I had generally considered before the course. It was really beneficial. I think it was really good in that it was broadening out my considerations. Whereas once I would have looked at a piece of design and just considered whether the key demographic was male or female, young or old, now it seems more about global context, cultural connotations, and the assumptions that are put into design. So yeah, I really like that element. I think it's been very encouraging and useful in broadening our thinking.

I think the focus on (cultural) assumptions here is really great. It makes you more open to other ideas.

Yeah, our other subjects focus on skills - drawing, illustration. This is the only subject that gets you to look at those skills in a broader context of culture.



Stage Three: An ‘at home’ global peak experience (‘being global’)

The COMM2324/COMM2386 Interdisciplinary Communication Project (ICP) course is offered at both the RMIT University Melbourne and RMITVietnam sites. In Melbourne, the course is offered as an elective open to all second and third year undergraduate students in the School of Media and Communication (twelve programs in total). In Vietnam, the course is offered to students in the Bachelor of Communication (Professional Communication).

Working with student enrolled in the ICP course, The Belonging Project developed and tested an initiative that combined the experience of virtual mobility with a study tour. This ‘at home study tour’ initiative involved students completing the course requirements in cross-

campus mixed teams across an entire twelve-week course. The first two weeks of the course took place in home cities via teleconferencing teaching and virtual learning using Google drive, Blackboard (RMIT’s online learning management system) and Facebook. Weeks three and four were conducted in face-to-face ‘study tour’ mode, with the remaining eight weeks returning to virtual mobility and teleconferencing. The model extended the cross-cultural learning over a twelve-week semester and provided students with real world learning, teaching them how to collaborate within multi locational international interdisciplinary teams.

Case study: An ‘at home study tour’ initiative

The ICP course enabled students to experience cross-cultural study in a foreign country (Vietnam) as well as working with industry and community partners to develop and execute a ‘real life’ communication project. This combination of formal study and project work provided the Australian students with a rich understanding and experience of working in an Asian context. By working alongside their fellow Vietnamese peers, the Australian students developed a working knowledge of intercultural communication through shared learning activities and assessment tasks.

Utilising hands-on, face-to-face project work, the ‘at home study tour’ extended student intercultural literacies beyond

the virtual learning modes established in the first weeks of the course. Working together, the students from both locations deepened their knowledge of collaborative work practices which respect and value cultural difference in project work. Unlike projects involving one-way learning in favour of Australian students learning about Asia, this project facilitated reciprocal learning in which students from Vietnam gained first hand learning about Australia and Australians through interaction with the Melbourne students and academics.

This was the second study tour offered within the ICP course. Many lessons had been learnt from the inaugural study tour to Vietnam in July 2013, with the 2014 iteration



being the first to extend the project over the full twelve-week semester. This dramatically changed the dynamics within the course making it a more reciprocal, consistent and equal experience for all students, in contrast to the ‘fly-in, fly-out’ nature of other exchanges.

The study tour was enabled through an AsiaBound Grant providing ten students each with a \$2,000 grant to study in Vietnam. The AsiaBound Mobility Grant enabled The Belonging Project to revamp the recruitment process to incorporate a written application, rather than focusing only on grade point average (GPA). This change resulted in the study tour attracting a number of students from low SES backgrounds.

In support of the ‘at home study tour’ initiative, The Belonging Project:

- Identified and mapped the feasibility of an ‘at home’ peak global experience relevant to students within the creative disciplines in Media and Communication including cross institutional/campus assessment activities, virtual global experiences or ‘at home study tours’.
- Worked with Vietnam colleagues to trial a co-created global assessment activity in the form of a re-designed ‘at home study tour’ delivered at both course sites.
- Mapped the logistical and conceptual barriers to wider application of these activities, and created a detailed case study and review for the purposes of transferability across the School’s range of programs and professions.

What the students told us in interviews about the application process

It was really good. It made me think – like it [ICP] was a subject that I was going to do anyway – but then it [the application process] put it in an international context for me.

I was stressed because I really wanted it. It came to a point where I really wanted it. I was kind of nervous. I even showed my application to my mum to see it was fine. I spent a lot of time just filling it in.

I think for me, the application, just reading the questions, it kind of became real. I’d sort of planned on doing like an exchange the whole time and I’m in my last semester now and it never really came about. I think for me, the application, it kind of helped me realise that I wanted to study abroad. I’ve studied for 15 years or something now in Australia, so it made me realise it’d be good to do something outside the country as well.

The overwhelming feedback from student participants affirmed that the ‘at home study tour’ initiative was an extremely valuable experience.

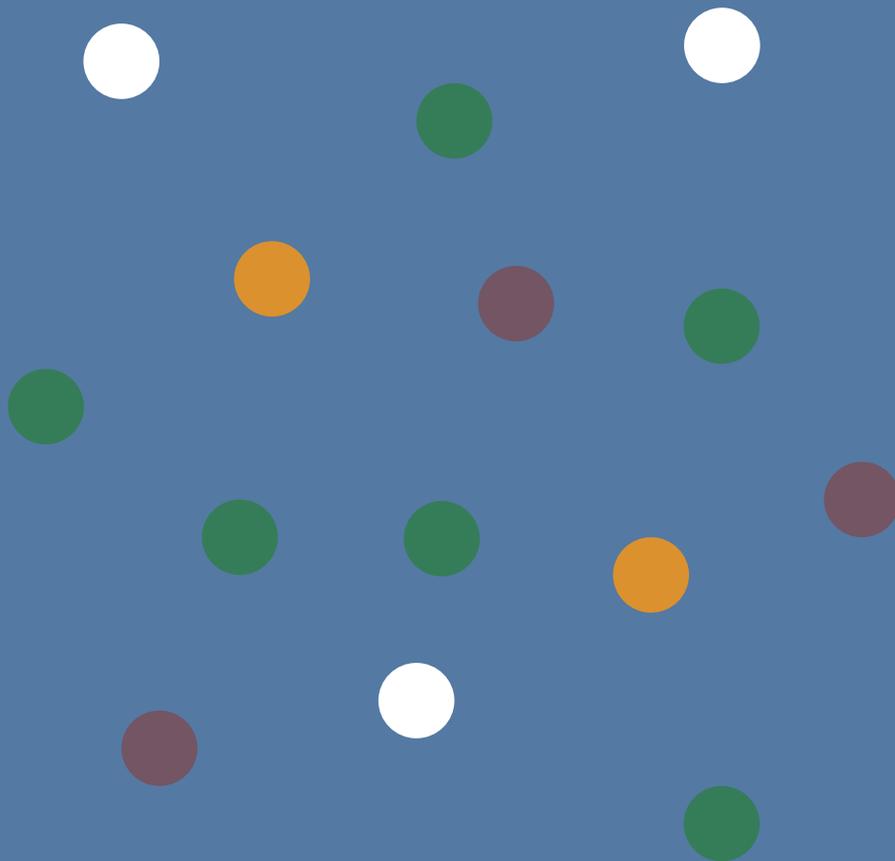
What student’s reflective journals told us

I think the main value of this course is working in an interdisciplinary setting in an international environment, something that is becoming increasingly important in the 21st century communications field. I learnt that problems are best solved as a team and with everyone given an input. I also learnt that although there may be obvious cultural differences that need to be identified and considered, if you are open to working with others, polite, friendly, and actually do the work, it isn’t that hard at all to work cross-culturally. This is what I found out working with my group, as we didn’t encounter any significant difficulties due to working across different cultures.

Cross-cultural communication was a fundamental aspect of our study tour – without it, our group would not have functioned nearly as effectively as it did, and our campaign would not have been completed at such a high standard. Travelling to a completely different country, whose culture resembles values often quite contradictory to our own, meant the Australian students had to quickly adapt to cultural discrepancies. Competency in communicating cross-culturally in a professional context, as well as within interpersonal interaction, was the foundation of cohesive and cooperative group work. I learnt that cross-cultural communication wasn’t just coming into someone’s country and simply being empathetic; it involves understanding the cultural nuances and historical makeup endemic to the country, and working with awareness of these cultural factors. I believe being aware, empathetic, and open-minded are the three elements conducive to effective cross-cultural communication.

One of my most treasured memories of Vietnam was sitting with some of the Vietnamese students and hearing their stories about their lives, families, upbringing etc. It emphasised how important hearing and retelling other people’s stories are to me. In a few months I will be graduating and in a few months after that, leaving Australia to travel, collect stories and write. This was a possibility I had been toying with prior to the ICP project, but I can truly say that I returned with that possibility having turned into a definite.

Tiers One and Two in 2014: Reporting on the First Year Experience Initiatives and Focus on the Interdisciplinary Experience



Tier One in 2014: Reporting on the First Year Experience Initiatives

In 2014 The Belonging Project evaluated three of the five Focus on the First Year Experience pilot initiatives in the light of recommendations contained in the 2013 report. Capacity to further develop and evaluate all five pilot initiatives was limited by project funding and resourcing available within the project team.

The three pilot initiatives evaluated centred around key social activities supporting the development of student engagement and wellbeing, with a particular focus on the initial entry stage of the student lifecycle:

1. Coordinated Orientation Week Activities
2. Cohort Day Out
3. Student Informal Spaces

Outlined below is the development and evaluation that occurred in 2014 that relates to these initiatives. For detailed information and background on the initiatives, please refer to the 2012 and 2013 reports available on The Belonging Project webpage

Initiative 1: Coordinated Orientation Week Activities

The student lead model initially developed for the school welcome in 2012 is now accepted as core school business. The Belonging Project team members continued to be consulted on its operational implementation with team members continuing to provide observations supplemented by student feedback and data for its continued improvement.

Initiative 2: Cohort Days Out

The Belonging Project continued to support and monitor Photography and Creative Writing in undertaking Cohort Day Outs in Semester 1 as part of extended transition programs. The cohort day has become considered core curriculum business in these programs.

Initiative 3: Student Informal Spaces

The Belonging Project continued an involvement in the Student Informal Spaces initiative (Atelier Space) and efforts to continue to establish the space as a model for other Schools. The project team once again worked with key stakeholders in the School to facilitate another set of major improvements to the Atelier Space in 2015. The importance of this space to the ongoing culture of the school was recognised in the form of considerable financial support from both the Dean of Media and Communication and RMIT's Property Services.

In implementing this latest refurbishment, The Belonging Project team utilised co-creation principles by engaging a graduate of the Bachelor of Design (Interior Design) program to collaborate on the design and management of the process. Through a series of observations, surveys and meetings (including via a specific Facebook group) The Belonging Project team gathered a range of student opinions which directly informed the plans for the upgrade of the space. The upgrade delivered increased capacity, better acoustic separation and noise minimisation, and better zoning for different activities including a dedicated wall for student exhibitions. In interviews, students continued to report that the space had contributed to their overall sense of wellbeing and has become an important space for informal collaboration.



Tier Two in 2014: Focus on the Interdisciplinary Experience

Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching

2014 was a year of immense change for the staff in the School of Media and Communication. Most of the undergraduate teaching staff were involved with the curriculum renewal and transition process ready for the wholesale implementation of MC2015.

The MC2015 curriculum renewal was predicated on the idea that a shared structure between all undergraduate programs was required for authentic interdisciplinary collaborations. As such there was little specific work to be conducted by The Belonging Project team.

The team did however continue to gather case study interviews with staff who teach interdisciplinary offerings

in the School of Media and Communication to map their approaches to interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Team members were also invited to join program teams during the process of renewal to reiterate how to embed belonging principals and ensure interdisciplinary opportunities were present in the overall design of the new programs.

The Belonging Project team continue to monitor the barriers to interdisciplinary work and remain concerned that budget reporting mechanisms have the potential to disrupt interdisciplinary work between academic clusters. For detailed information and background on the initiatives, please refer to the 2013 reports available on The Belonging Project webpage.



Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations



Discussion

As reported previously, 2014 was a year of immense change for the School of Media and Communication, The Belonging Project and the focus of the University. Of particular impact on The Belonging Project, the School of Media and Communication continued work on the major program review for full delivery in 2015 (MC2015). We point to this complete overhaul of the School's offerings to highlight one of the major hurdles we faced in 2014, being that of change fatigue by teaching staff. A decision was made by the senior executive to conduct a hard transition for all enrolled students to the new program structures in 2015. This resulted in staff having to concurrently teach the existing program, develop entirely new curriculum materials for 2015 and complete individual transition maps for all re-enrolling students. It is for this reason that we chose to shift aspects of the initial focus of *The Global at Home: At Home in the Global*. This shift saw us refocus the project toward the examination of existing intercultural practice within the School and low-cost possibilities for pedagogical innovation and virtual collaboration as a means to develop sustainable, equitable and accessible intercultural opportunities with student lifecycles.

The Belonging Project also experienced a number of significant changes. In 2014, our major funding source shifted from HEPPP to LTIF supplemented with HEPPP funding and prize money from an RMIT Teaching Award granted in 2013. Staff changes included our Project Officer returning to her substantive position within the School. In keeping with our established principles to be inclusive of all staff in the School including professional staff, we were eventually able to employ Laetitia Shand who has subsequently transitioned over to a full-time role as the Short Course and Working Integrated Learning Co-ordinator for the School of Media and Communication.

Internationalisation and employability in the higher education sector

Changes within the higher education sector have had an impact on The Belonging Project. Higher education institutions are increasingly facing the critical question of how best to position themselves at the intersection of rapidly evolving training and industry sectors (Wright, Davis, Bucolo, 2013). Like many universities, RMIT has responded to these pressures by explicitly encouraging programs "to foster the development of graduates as critical and creative thinkers, multi-skilled and collaborative practitioners, and responsible leaders with a global perspective" (RMIT, 2012). In conjunction with a new Australian Quality Framework agenda, this strategic goal has precipitated a period of unprecedented curriculum redevelopment and reconceptualisation of delivery modes across the sector. This shift has tended to emphasise the role of a number of practical internationalisation strategies including: internationally engaged work-

integrated-learning, study tours, and intercultural virtual collaboration. These initiatives have provided some limited space within the curriculum for global ethical awareness and the development of globalised professional identities although we would argue there is much more that can be done beyond these.

In 2014 the softening of the Australian economy precipitated a change in the Federal Government's strategy in relationship to higher education. Employability became the primary focus for the sector and subsequently much of the work The Belonging Project completed in 2014 can be read through this employability lens. The Belonging Narrative Model was specifically designed to address the employability needs of graduates in a creative context in which industry is rapidly shifting toward new operational standards and cultural milieus (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). We contend that the holistic approach to professional and personal development represented in our model actively speaks to the ways in which "future graduates in Media and Communication will need to be connected across disciplines and borders" (Peterson & Hansen, 2012, p. 3).

Overall, The Belonging Project's approach to employability continues to build upon the established best practice. We have adopted and adapted approaches that contend the complex learning necessary for employability must be promoted across a whole undergraduate life-cycle in order for students to sufficiently evidence claims about professional readiness (Knight & Yorke, 2002). Holding that internationalisation and employability are fundamentally linked in increasingly global employment markets, we have drawn on global/internationalised curriculum models as proposed by innovators such as Betty Leask and Michelle Barker. These approaches recognise that employability must be conceived of broadly, developed consistently, and supported in both formal and informal curriculum.

Harnessing diversity: Recognising and celebrating the students' existing diversity and strengths

As Keneley and Jackling (2011) have noted, individual student's cultural and SES backgrounds may play a significant role in their commitment to and appreciation of the generic skills that form the foundation of many employability approaches. While existing dominant models for employability acknowledge student's diverse career interests, the responsiveness of these models is limited by the self-awareness and communication abilities of already enrolled students. However, for many students, including those from low SES backgrounds, first in family, and those who may otherwise be socially isolated by geographic, cultural, or personal circumstances, "the culture of the institution [may be] foreign and at times alienating and uninviting" (Krause, Hartley, James & McInnis, 2005, p. 9). Students may not automatically possess the high-level



foundational skills, confidence and life experience to express clearly career goals.

Whilst the concept of ‘knowing your students’ is not new to the higher education sector, staff access to precise data pertaining to cohort makeup is often limited, unless they independently seek such information directly from students. Typically, such data collection takes the form of ‘ice-breakers’ or ‘getting to know you’ worksheets undertaken in the first weeks of a teaching period. This is problematic for three primary reasons. First, the collection of relevant data relies entirely on the initiative of teaching staff who may be time and resource poor at a busy time in the teaching period. Second, the individual assumptions and biases of staff may determine the kinds of information gathered. Third, and perhaps most significant, essential data about cohort composition and diversity only reaches staff after the majority of curriculum and assessment has already been put in place.

Accurate knowledge of cohort diversity is key to supporting the transition of higher education students and effectively promoting student engagement. The Belonging Project’s partnership with RMIT’s Office of Business Intelligence and the College of DSC’s SALT represents an example of effective collaborative harnessing of institutional knowledge and expertise aimed at supporting staff to better understanding of the diversity of experiences, abilities and orientations in their student cohort. The dissemination of de-identified data-packs prior to the commencement of the teaching period has led to more responsive and relevant curriculum planning. Importantly, the distribution of data-packs supported by staff workshops has assisted staff to acknowledge their assumptions, often

incorrect, around cohort diversity and has resulted in staff gaining a transformative understanding of what students could realistically be expected to have achieved at the conclusion of a teaching term. The workshops also provided staff with a forum to brainstorm responsive and adaptive cohort strategies not only for individual subjects, but also for programs as a whole. Importantly, participation enabled conversations between staff members teaching at different levels to ensure smoother transitions between year levels. By bringing programs together with this information and support, staff at all levels were able to respond to existing cohort diversity and make meaningful plans for the changing diversity of cohorts at multiple transition points within programs.

Project results suggest that accurate and accessible information concerning cohort diversity may also facilitate more adaptive, responsive and innovative approaches to assessment and other indicators of student success. In addition, equipping staff with this information early and throughout the cohort lifecycle enables educators and higher education institutions to mediate student and employer expectations. In doing so, it may facilitate new approaches to employability exercises and opportunities such as those explored in the initiatives as part of Stage two: Fostering global perspectives (‘doing global’).

The data-pack initiative continues as an ongoing project through RMIT’s Office of Business Intelligence within policy and planning. We are confident that the need for this data has been established within RMIT policy and planning, and our aspiration is for this information to be provided to programs across the university two weeks prior to semester commencement in the future.

Embedding a global employability framework

There is a growing body of literature, particularly from the UK, that advocates embedding employability frameworks early and throughout the student life cycle (Fallows & Steven, 2000; Knight & Yorke, 2002; Knight & Yorke, 2004). Expanding on existing best practice models of employer embedded curriculum and assessment design, The Belonging Project worked in a first year core Bachelor of Communication Design course to create assessment opportunities that support students in developing aspects of their professional identity within the context of the interconnected, globalised world.

The participating cohort comprised of 50% local (Australian) student and 50% onshore international students with a range of cultural backgrounds and language skills. Staff worked directly with industry employers to design three assessments across two semesters that directly brought these first year students and employers together to work collaboratively on a series of live design briefs building towards global and employability skills.

The first of the assessment tasks, a design brief, required students to reflect upon and represent visually the unique voice and attributes they bring to interactions with clients. This task focused students' attention on reflecting upon and communicating their own strengths to a third-party, and culminated in an exhibition in week three of first semester attended by employers. In interviews, students identified that this early exposure to employers helped "clarify professional goals" as well as "build confidence" in their pre-existing skills. In focus groups, students reported that this early intervention promoted a deeper sense of belonging to the professional discipline, increased their enthusiasm for the discipline and cemented their commitment to improve generic and specialist skills for future employment anywhere in the world.

The second assessment task built upon this foundation and developed student skills in adapting their outputs to the needs of audiences. Students in groups were given 48 hours to produce a zine, an informal publication, and then several weeks to adapt their initial prototype based on employer and professional feedback. Following the model established in the first assessment, this culminated in an open exhibition attended and judged by employers from a broad range of professional and personal backgrounds. Because students had the opportunity to receive direct employer feedback at the prototype stage and then incorporate this into the design presented at the exhibition, they were able to engage in a genuine dialogue with the participating employers. Students interviewed following the exhibition reported that this reinforced a sense of belonging to the profession and encouraged the development of their professional identity from first year.

In the final six weeks of the second semester, students worked directly with an international company to create a

pitch for a genuine client whose company was expanding into global marketplaces in both the UK and Asia. Students were expected to adhere to existing professional standards, communicated by the employer. This required students, all of whom were first years, to incorporate foundational skills and push beyond them. Importantly it also encouraged them to move beyond their own cultural understanding to develop internationally relevant communications and creative solutions for the short-term, long-term, and future innovation needs of the client.

Directly connecting students, educators, employers, and, indeed, clients encouraged a sustained dialogue from the beginning of the higher education experience. As one student noted in a focus group, this allowed students to develop their professional identity "organically and naturally" while simultaneously building core disciplinary skills. For the student, this meant that while "different people may take different things out of [the assessments], everyone is taking something away in terms of skills and contacts." While this structure was beneficial to a cohort of students with varied skills and needs, it was also valuable to the participating employers and clients. Participation placed fewer time and resource demands on employers than typically presented by work integrated learning (WIL) commitments, and yet allowed for a longer-term engagement. One of the employer representatives expressed his views on the value of participation:

To see these students grow over the semester so quickly and professionally is surprising. Their ability to clearly communicate about their design process and understand the client's language was very advanced. We want to watch these students in second and third year. There are a number of students that I think we will want to employ as graduates.

In this way, participation allowed for the emergence of more meaningful understandings of the baseline skills and capacities that can be expected and achieved from graduates. Importantly, employer-embedded assessment served to increase equity and professional connections for all members of the cohort by facilitating relationships between employers and students who might not otherwise participate in these types of global project experiences in first year.

Developing intercultural competencies through peak global experiences

The re-conceptualised Interdisciplinary Communication Project was designed to provide students from diverse backgrounds with opportunities for sustained work-integrated intercultural engagement. Viewed from the perspective of the Australian cohort, the initiative was a success. Of the ten Australian participants, six identified in interviews that without grant support they would not have been able to participate. All spoke to increased awareness of the Vietnam campus and the majority noted their transformed perceptions of Vietnam more broadly. Overall,

the Melbourne-based students echoed the belief that the hybrid offering had, in the words of an interviewee, allowed for intercultural relationships to develop, “as organically as possible”. Despite these results, full reciprocity and equitable intercultural engagement remain ongoing issues. Reflecting on the teaching experience, course coordinators asserted that time-shifting and prolonged engagement resulted in overall better student experiences. However, like students, they noted that prolonging cross-cultural interactions did not completely negate the ethnocentric behaviours that had characterised earlier iterations of the subject.

It is, of course, overly ambitious to assume that any single curriculum experience can produce full intercultural competency. Intercultural awareness is developed through a spectrum of experiences that shape both ‘mindsets’ and ‘skillssets’ (Bennett, JM, 2008; Bennett, J. & Bennett, M., 2004; Bennett, M. & Adelphi, 2001). Like any learning experience, these opportunities provide basic tools for

capacity building, if not full transformation. The acquisition of these capacities occurs in stops and starts. Importantly, as demonstrated by the Melbourne students’ growing awareness of inequities, intercultural awareness develops over time.

The study tour model trialled by The Belonging Project attempted to provide students with such a space. Our research, however, strongly suggests that broader reflection on the institution limits, assumptions and obstacles to equitable engagement is necessary. Too often study tours are treated as a cure-all: a one-stop answer to the development global citizens. The challenge for educational institutions and educators is to recognize that “study abroad in and of itself does not lead to [that] development” (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002, p.43). Meaningful intercultural learning requires purposeful design that shapes spaces not only of encounter but also of sustained reflection.

Conclusion

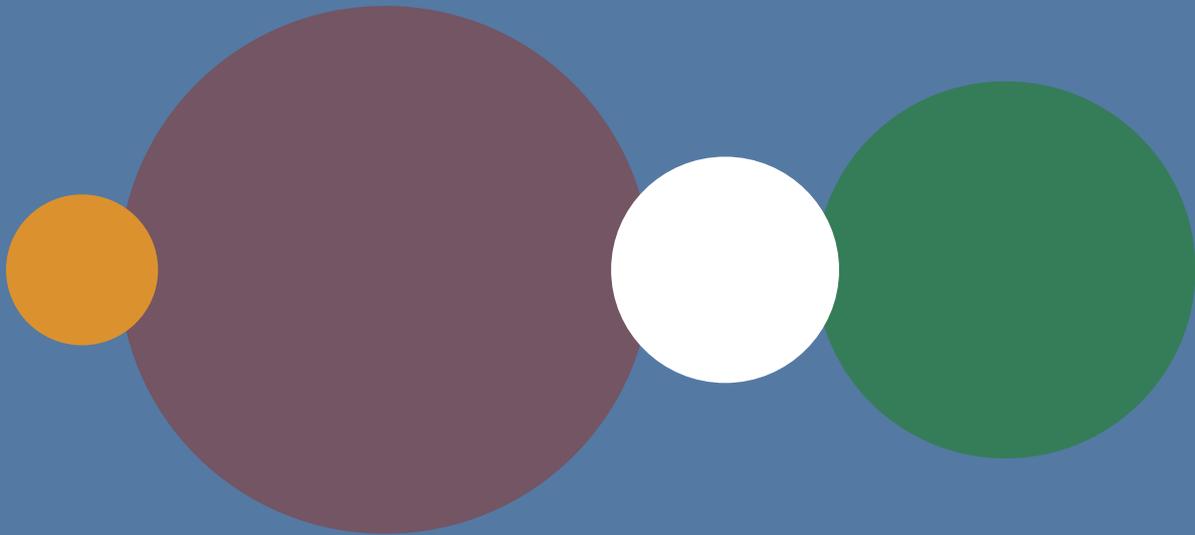
The Belonging Project team evaluated the impact and implications of the 2014 initiatives (Appendix 3) and continued to make a significant contribution to the day-to-day practice of staff in the School of Media and Communication. During 2014, the project team consolidated the work undertaken on the first year experience by supporting, monitoring and evaluating the third iteration of a number of our first year pilots. The team also expanded the core competencies embedded within these transition initiatives to inform further capacity building exercises related to interdisciplinary learning and teaching.

In addition to the increased scholarly dissemination of research previously discussed, the 2014 phase of The Belonging Project has led to many significant ongoing linkages both within RMIT and with external stakeholders. It has also offered opportunities for increased engagement with other schools and colleges across the university in the development of transferrable resources.

Recommendations

1. Continue to develop accessible and sustainable professional development and learning and teaching resources around internationalising the curriculum to support the development of intercultural competencies in disciplinary contexts across all year levels ‘at home’.
2. Establish global/international learning and teaching ‘communities of practice’ at the College level.
3. Recognise that internationalised learning and teaching requires meaningful interactions between staff and a platform for sharing learning and practices across the College.
4. Align learning and teaching strategies and policies across all RMIT campuses, in order to support sustainable integration of diverse academic cultures.
5. Investigate and develop reciprocal travel opportunities for our partners involved in study tours (in particular for RMIT Vietnam).
6. Increase equity to global experiences, including increasing the participation of low SES students in global experiences, facilitating sustained intercultural engagement for those unable to participate in long-term study abroad, supporting the development of more equitable relationships between participants in global experiences, and developing reciprocal travel opportunities for our partners involved in study tours (in particular for RMIT Vietnam).

Dissemination and Outputs



Dissemination and Outputs

In 2014, we disseminated our research through national and international channels. These included:

Conference presentation

Presentation of the Belonging three-tiered model of student belonging at the international First Year Higher Education conference in Darwin and at the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA) Conference in New Zealand.

Journal and conference submissions

Araújo, N., Carlin, D., Clarke, B., Morieson, L., Lukas, K., & Wilson, R. (2014). Belonging in the first year: A creative discipline cohort case study. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 5(2), 21-31.

Araujo, N., Wilson, R., Clarke, B., & Carney, L. (2015). The Global at Home, At Home in the Global. *Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia Conference*, University of Waikato, New Zealand, November 22-25. (under review for Conference Proceedings)

Morieson, L., Araujo, N., Clarke, B., Carlin, D., Lukas, K. & Wilson, R. Belonging in Space: Informal Learning Spaces and the Student Experience. *Higher Education Research and Development* (under review)

Forthcoming conference submissions

Why Belonging Still Matters. *STARS Conference*, Melbourne, July 2015 (refereed paper, under review)

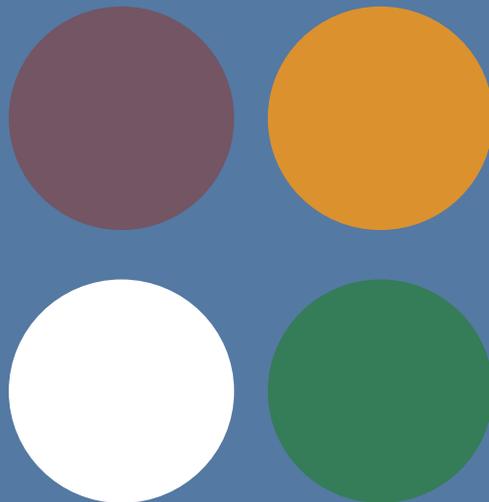
The Belonging Project: A Good Practice Report. *STARS Conference*, Melbourne, July 2015 (Good Practice report under review)

Student Engagement for Employability: A Belonging Project Case Study. *HERDSA*, Melbourne, July 2015 (Abstract accepted, refereed paper under review)

OLT Funding

Our contributions to the University were recognised through the support of the development of our EOI, Academic-Employer Co-Created Assessment for the Creative Industries for a OLT funding for a strategic project in 2016.

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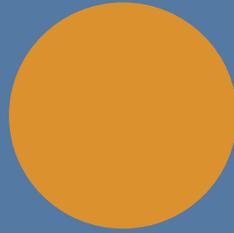
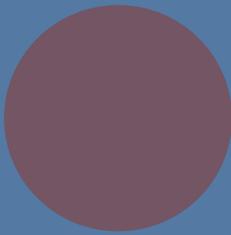
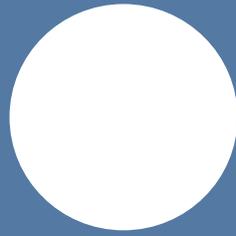


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Appendices



Appendix 1

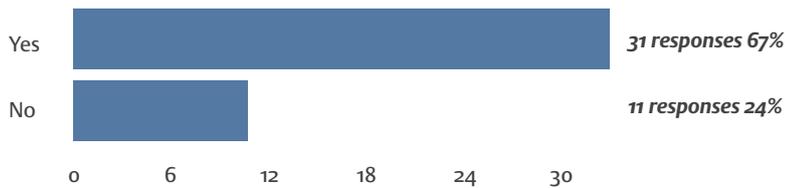
Global at Home: At Home in the Global: Staff survey results

Summary - 39 Responses

Phase 1: Being Global - A Peak at Home Global Experience

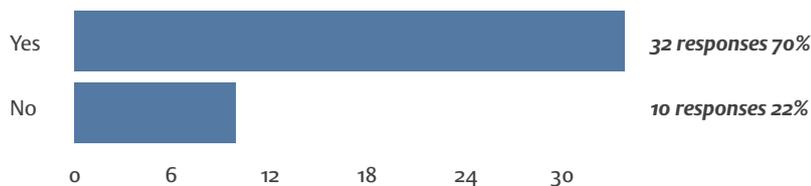
Question 1

Workshops or information sessions on how to make international contacts and connections that support classroom experiences.



Question 2

Workshops, case studies or vignettes on how to facilitate “at home” global experiences such as such as cross-institutional/campus assessment activities, virtual global experiences.



Written Responses

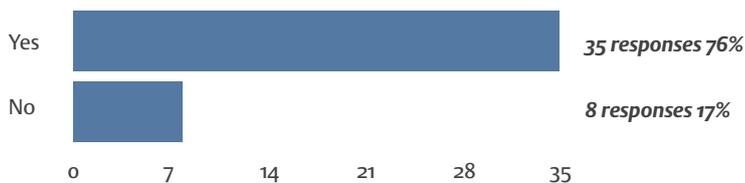
- 1) Information to help students work together in multi-cultural groups.
- 2) I have both international experience and contacts. I know how to embed these in my programs and courses. What I do not have at RMIT is any supporting infrastructure (systems, processes and technological support) to enable these to be taken to an appropriate level. Having to apply for external funding to ‘internationalise’ is rather sad for a university that purports to have a global outlook. RMIT’s systems are antithetical to good practice in this regard.
- 3) Anything you have to offer
- 4) The university isn’t rely serious about being global. It targets markets and invests in haphazard ways around these targets. The most obvious and ridiculous

- example of this is the RMIT Europe project which has the same credibility as regal honours. It was generated by a few self-interested senior academics and is doomed to cost a lot and produce virtually nothing. No-one is prepared to say as much. The reason European universities want to engage with emit is largely as a conduit to Asia, which is where emit should be focusing all its energies.
- 5) dynamic speakers who have been in the classrooms recently, less managers from professional units in the universities.
- 6) I really don’t know. If the workshops are tailored to postgraduate coursework then I’d come, but the undergrad stuff seems quite different.
- 7) Workshops on taking students on overseas field trips/study tours.

Phase 2: Doing Global - Fostering Global Perspectives

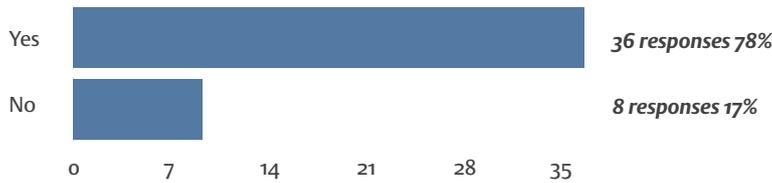
Question 1

Case studies or vignettes of assessment tasks that privilege and promote international perspectives.



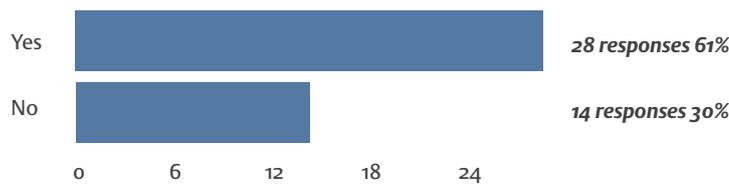
Question 2

Case studies or vignettes of assessment tasks to aligning to notions of a global professional identity.



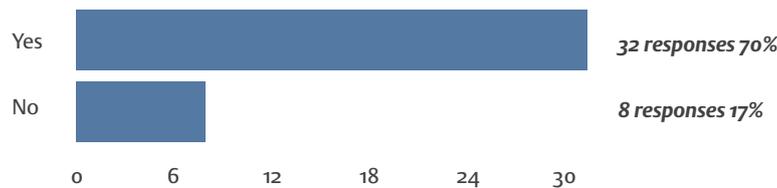
Question 3

Workshops to help prepare course material that embodies international perspectives.



Question 4

Participating in a community of practice around global professional, academic and social perspectives.



Written Responses

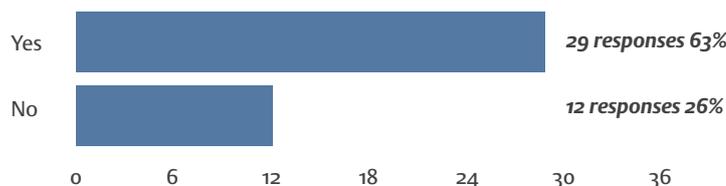
- 1) Have mentors or champions that can work in smaller groups rather than large meetings/workshops
- 2) see above - it has to be with postgrad coursework in mind.
- 3) These options all sound too time intensive-keep it simple. We use international cases, examples and perspectives. The global professional sounds most intriguing.
- 4) Not me personally, but these things would be useful for others. I have very close research and academic ties in Indonesia, so I have a pretty intimate knowledge of these systems. The idea of blanket cultural sensitivities strikes me as a little

- strange. I think this is also a failing with the policy. No-one whom I've encountered in senior management could define 'global' let alone mobilise it through effective academic training. I think, again, it simply means international market, rather than genuine cultural engagement. While we might train our academic staff in curriculum and assessment sensitivities, they would undoubtedly encounter a range of policies that are designed to standardise curriculum and suppress nuance.
- 5) I'm not really sure what this means "Participating in a community of practice around global professional, academic and social perspectives"

Phase 3: Feeling Global- Identifying and Acknowledging Existing Global Diversity in the Classroom

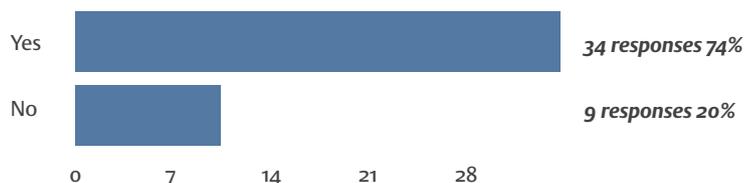
Question 1

A report or data pack prior to the start of semester that provides a detailed overview of the cultural diversity within each of your classes.



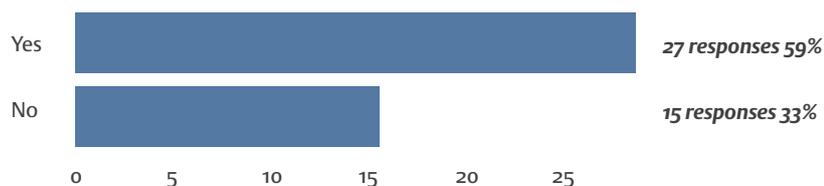
Question 2

Online resources in harnessing the cultural diversity within your classroom.



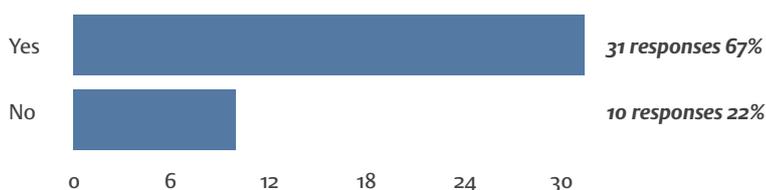
Question 3

Workshops on cultural diversity in the classroom.



Question 4

Other online resources, for example, the 'inclusive teaching' website <http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/inclusive>



Written Responses

1) I would appreciate a discussion of this issues beyond the rmit values and corporate speak. a deeper confrontation of what global means, what the western gaze means, what orientalism means. It seems to reduce to actions without talking as much about the why. Also, lets get some of the people who don't usually turn up for these things. I dont know how you would do that :p

2) I've indicated "no" for workshops but the answers could be maybe. Examples tend to be of efforts where much time was invested. If the workshop was of quick, consciousness-raising tips to integrate into our curriculum and teaching style, that would be beneficial.

3) The processes for running study tours need to be streamlined. The workload involved in running them must be better reflected in the WAM. The disconnect between the rhetorical support for study tours and other international experiences, and the lack of financial support for them, must be resolved. We should refine our ideas about what international experiences are valuable for RMIT graduates. More support for our international students' international experience (ie, in Australia) should be developed.

4) I had a look at the above website and did not find it helpful for teaching international students. Most of the suggestions were very general, and refer to approaches I already use in the classroom. I would prefer some real world examples/case studies of classroom activities and assessments that 'harness cultural diversity'.

5) These are good ideas. The university needs to invest in these resources and in staff training which would identify what the particular cultural group has experienced in previous education.

6) This is actually more critical than blanket cultural sensitivity training, and might help staff deal with the learning style of individual students and their particular backgrounds. Again, however, these forms of training will encounter other policies and regulations which contradict sensitivity or exceptionalism. The classroom experiences in Indonesia at all levels, inc university, are vastly different to those in Australia. How do we deal with this? The university needs to invest in resourcing and training, well beyond vignettes and case studies.

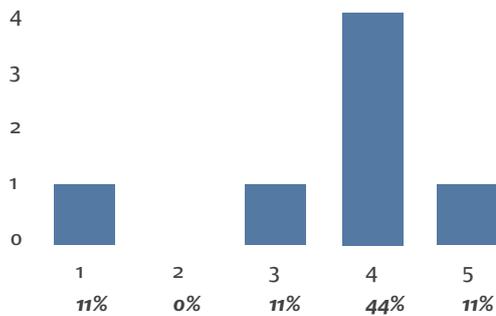
Harnessing the Cultural Diversity in Your Classroom in Group Work

Summary 9 responses

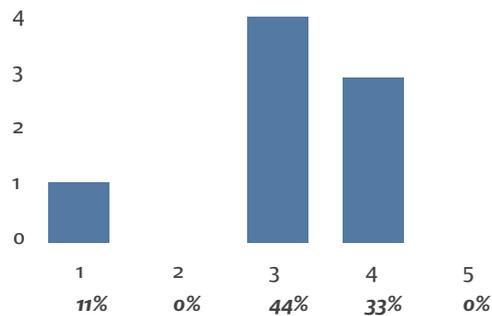
Personal Details							
Discipline / Program	Courses	First Language	Other Languages	Country of Birth	Parents' Country/ies of Birth	Time having lived / worked outside Australia	Number of years teaching at RMIT
Communication Design test masters media, phd Music Industry Comm Design Media Master of Media, PhD Juice Bar in DRI Journalism	Media 1 Studio 2/4; Capstone Design Studios (mostly) Reporting with Sound and Image	Indonesian English	french none french, italian	Indonesia England New Zealand Australia	Indonesia England New Zealand Australia Czech	25 20 years (grew up in Indonesia) 12 years 8yrs	2 4 8 10+ (Melb.) 13 14 years

Your Current knowledge

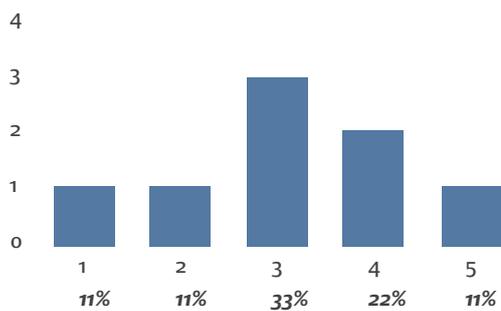
Question 1: Cross-cultural communication skills and behaviours



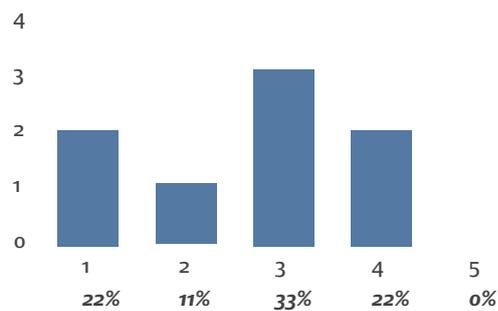
Question 2: Customs, values and beliefs of another culture



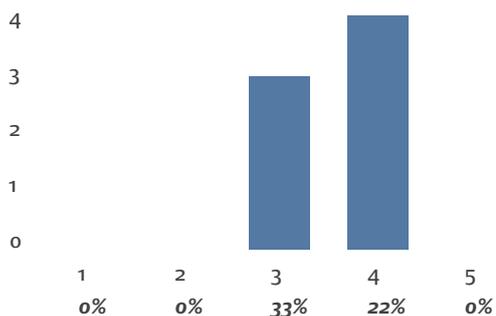
Question 3: Your own culture's influences on your thought patterns and behaviours



Question 4: RMIT/School's policies on issues regarding cultural diversity



Question 5: How confident are you in dealing with people from different cultures?



Question 6: Your Experience: What do you find challenging when teaching culturally diverse groups of students?

- 1) Knowing where students are from.
- 2) Helping students with different classroom habits and learning patterns to work with each other.
- 3) As a young teacher it was challenging to find a language that allowed local and international students to work together at same level.
- 4) Getting the dominant group (usually Anglo) to be interested in non-dominant perspectives and to see them as relevant to their practice/lifeworlds.
- 5) Enabling all to feel comfortable enough to have a voice and participate in class room activities.

Question 7: What would help you improve how you teach culturally diverse students in groups?

- 1) Online materials as well as workshops that students can go to understand the expected classroom and learning practices at RMIT, so there is at least a standard everyone is aware of.
- 2) Although I'm sure there's already something like this at RMIT.
- 3) Nothing.
- 4) Great if school can formalize some training around this.
- 5) Knowing more about different cultural groups and how their customs and up-bringing impacts on how they learn.
- 6) Refresher workshop - a grab bag of ideas to use/adapt/experiment with.
- 7) Peer support.
- 8) Stories of effective intercultural experiences.

Question 8: What have you discovered works well when teaching culturally diverse groups?

- 1) Lots of discussions and sharing of opinions and thoughts. For new groups, mixing students up, splitting them up from friends etc to get them to interact with others they may not ordinarily mix/work with.
- 2) Huge emphasis on RESPECT for all and do exercises that allow internationals to save face and build self-esteem. I have been working on this and tend to use a special language in class that emphasizes how we are all privileged to work in a global classroom alongside diverse groups. Also good to focus on benefits of this so that students must articulate for themselves how/why useful to work with different cultural groups.
- 3) Travel City-based site visits.
- 4) Depends on the aims of the particular class session and its context. You have to start from anew every time in terms of evaluating what might be needed.
- 5) Activities that force students to go into small groups that are not their usual circles of friends (with an already clearly-delineated expectations of standards of behaviours to create a safe space for all and what the outcomes of the activities are).

Question 9: How much do you think cultural differences affect interactions?

1) Significantly.

2) High level.

3) Cultural differences - especially not knowing about how other cultures operate (and why) has a huge impact on interactions.

4) Hugely. It is good to make open reference to the relative value of cultural communication, customs and appropriacy. It would be great to have some workshops to get staff involved and experienced with this.

5) A lot. Especially if people don't feel they are in a safe space.

Question 10: Any other comments on this workshop and resources:

1) I have some experience in working as a journalist as well as in training and teaching journalists and students from across the Asia-Pacific region. Happy to contribute in any way I can.

2) Am available to help if required. thanks, this is a great idea!

Appendix 2

Harnessing the cultural diversity in your classroom in group work: Professional development workshop and resources

Culture: definitions, dynamics and resources

(Keogh & Lynch)

Group Work Processes

Understanding the principles of ‘generic’ student group work is the foundation on which to build knowledge and skills in managing ‘culturally diverse’ student groups.

Difficulties with group work may reflect inappropriate use of the method such as:

Group Work	http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/groupwork/index.shtml
Group Work Templates	http://sydney.edu.au/business/learning/students/study_research_writing/groupwork/template_downloads

- Not planning for ways to deal with conflicts.
- Not providing clear and specific tasks and timelines.
- Setting tasks that are better done individually than in a group.
- Using groups to manage large classes rather than to encourage learning.
- Assessing the group as if they were generating individual work through to taking no account of individual effort.

Resolving these problems lessens the likelihood of frustrations arising from (mis) management being directed by one group of students at another or misinterpreted as arising from language competence or cultural misunderstandings.

Group Membership

Methods	Advantages	Considerations
Student self-selection	Students choose who to work with	Students overlooked or rejected Inequity in skill distribution Inequity in task distribution
Selective appointment Groups formed on the basis of criteria i.e. mark aspirations, meeting times, complementary skills, specific competencies	Students have common goals Less pressure on low achievers Student skills recognised and rewarded as being proficient Appreciation of diversity required in group work	Low achievers not exposed to higher expectations Friends with shared aspirations not accepting a newcomer Less opportunity to develop new skills in unfamiliar roles
Random selection	Opportunity for students to learn from new people Opportunity to enhance communication skills	Student concern about skills and attitudes of other students Students resent lack of choice
Selection of topic choices	Students interested in topic Students working with interested others	Inequity in skill distribution Student concern about skills and attitudes of other students

Table 1: Group Selection Options Kriflik & Mullan 2007:15

Culturally Diverse group work

With a strong foundation of group work processes in place you are ready to build and teach culturally diverse student groups. Four factors to consider:

1. Purpose
2. Membership
3. Tasks
4. Assessment

1. Purpose

Be explicit and explain to students the purpose of using culturally diverse group work and interactive learning

Help students see group work as a legitimate learning method and encourage them to see interaction as valuable, especially since cross cultural interaction outside of the classroom is often very limited.

2. Membership

Letting students choose who will be in ‘their’ culturally diverse group might be the best way to set membership if:

- It is relatively early in the program
- You do not know your students well
- The task is relatively short-lived and/or straightforward
- They need to work within familiar rules and behaviours
- Assessment stresses the final product.

Arguments against self-selection include:

- Some students’ preference for multicultural groups, perhaps as a chance to interact with fellow students and to practise using informal, discipline-specific English
- Providing early, low-stakes practice with formative feedback to prepare for later summative assessment that includes cross-cultural competence.

Teachers may decide to allocate group membership where:

- Tasks clearly warrant a global perspective
- Students are expected to develop group skills
- Teachers know individual students' skills and competence
- The group process is being assessed as well as the product
- The programme is producing graduates with cross-cultural competence

When you are 'engineering' culturally diverse group membership, bear in mind:

- Distribution of international students. Ensure at least two in groups where home students predominate. If some students share a language, ensure the issue is addressed and the group reaches agreement about its management.
- Global conflicts. Students from some areas will not necessarily find it easy to work together. If you know your students, you could explore this aspect with them.
- The size of the group and the relative diversity of membership. Five to seven is considered optimal; very diverse groups (however you define this) may need to be smaller.

3. Tasks

A suitable culturally diverse group task involves all group members, rewards all members' skills and previous experience, and (ideally) encourages the kind of synergy that turns students' diverse skills and knowledge into an asset rather than a liability.

You could do this by:

- Choosing a collaborative verb** (compile a catalogue, comment on others' contribution, collect applications of a theory and compare their significance, assemble a portfolio of examples, prepare positions on an issue or prepare for a debate by first documenting and justifying a wide range of possible positions).
- Setting a complex problem** requiring joint effort (e.g. prepare for a product launch, redesign an old advertising campaign or role-play a public enquiry).
- Requiring roles** (chair, note taker, reflector etc.)
- Asking students to draw on skills in the group** (e.g. a strong organiser who finds oral presentations difficult or someone with statistical skills who feels less confident about their English).
- Making all students equally unsure via 'fuzzy' tasks** (with clear task briefs) or unusual contexts such as finding a solution that would work in Antarctica so all start with an unfamiliar context.

If cultural knowledge is essential, (e.g. a nation's media ownership laws or television content ratings then state this explicitly ('I am assuming you know about xx') and provide advice on filling general knowledge gaps.

Adapt the context in which the task is set to recognise all students' sensitivities. For example, one course set a case study in a brewery which meant students with religious reasons to avoid alcohol had to set aside strongly held views before they could engage with the task. Of course are teaching a course on managing breweries or any of a range of issues where students are likely to hold strong beliefs, then these become part of the learning outcomes. If this is not the case, choosing another industry would work equally well.

4. Assessment

Culturally diverse student groups may need longer to achieve the final outcome as the group will first need to time to explore new areas and ways to communicate effectively.

Unless the task lasts for many weeks, if you are only assessing the final result, you may be inadvertently making diversity a disadvantage. If you assess both the product (i.e. what they must do) and the process (i.e. how they do it), you are telling students to put effort into both rather than aiming for a 'perfect' final artefact.

Assessing culturally diverse group work is more effective if:

- All students know what will be assessed and how marks will be allocated.
- Difficult aspects such as cross-cultural communication or managing conflict effectively attract a percentage of the final mark that reflects the effort involved.
- It is clear how students track and record their own and others' efforts.
- Marks are allocated to reflect individual effort. Judging individual effort is problematic in all group work and even more so where culturally diverse membership is involved, especially if peer assessment is used. Criteria for a 'good performance' need to consider the relative importance of English language competence. In general, both home students and international students over-estimate the impact of English on a student's ability to contribute though students with low English competence will struggle with all aspects of group work, especially in the early months.
- Assessment methods (e.g. a poster, video clip, oral exam) are rehearsed with formative feedback on how to improve.

Facilitating group work

Despite students' and teachers' best efforts, conflict in group work is virtually inevitable. In culturally diverse group work, the differences that often cause the conflict will also often prevent students from drawing on shared assumptions and communication styles to resolve them. The teacher, therefore, needs to intervene by:

- Setting ground rules for participation and discussing how the group will manage conflict.
- Making clear what the group will do should conflict arise
- Planning ahead for addressing conflict.
- Observing or tracking group activity to spot the signs, if possible, before the situation becomes serious.

Managing 'difficult moments' in a culturally diverse group may be challenging but if the emphasis remains on learning from the experience and gaining useful intercultural and cross-cultural communication skills, students can develop skills they can use next time. As they will probably encounter many such culturally diverse groups during their university and career life-time, it may be that enhanced group skills are the most useful outcome of assessed, course-specific independent group work.

Acknowledgement: Permission granted 19 Nov 2014. These ideas are adapted from the Economics Network <http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/internationalisation> and are based on a chapter in a book, *Teaching International Students: improving learning for all* (eds. Carroll and Ryan, 2005 by Routeledge). The full text includes references to studies and research to support the recommendations, and another chapter by Glauco de Vita in the Brookes Business School about using group work where the cultural differences themselves form part of the assessment.

Definitions	
Culture and communication styles	Describes the patterns of expression and rules for interaction that reflects the values and norms of a culture. Differences can be derived from the extent to which meaning is transmitted through actual words used or implied by the context for e.g. high and low cultural context.
Cultural differences	Refers to the degree of actual difference between two cultures.
Cultural diversity	Relates to the diverse ethnic, religious and language dimensions of all people in our University community.
Culture general	Refers to those general characteristics that can be found in any culture such as communication style, values, etc. It is also a method of studying intercultural communication in which one deals with the aspects of culture and communication that apply to all cultures.

Definitions	
Cultural generalization	Refers to the categorization of the predominant tendencies in a cultural group; in other words, the tendency of the majority of people to hold certain values and beliefs and engage in certain pattern of behaviour.
Culture specific	Refers to the distinctive qualities of a particular culture. It can also be a method of studying intercultural communication when the cultural characteristics of a culture are studied and used to explore the broad, general characteristics of the structure of cultures.
Culture stress	The fatigue that occurs when new behaviours are practiced in a different culture. It is mostly a short-term response to stimulus overload, e.g. trying to drive a car on the different side of the road, hearing comments about ourselves in the local language.
Dress	An almost universal dress code has evolved among teenagers but, interestingly, there are still differences particularly with religious beliefs and values, such as what informs modesty.
Ethnocentrism	The view held by members of a particular culture that the values and ways of one's own group are superior to others and that all other cultures are judged inferior with reference to this view.
Ethnorelativism	The assumption that cultures can only be understood relative to one another and that particular behaviour can only be understood within a cultural context. This is the opposite of ethnocentrism.
Inclusive practice	Recognises diversity as a resource that enriches our core activities. Incorporating cultural diversity into university life promotes mutually respectful relationships and has the potential to create an innovative, creative and productive environment.
Language	The less language ability one has and the more essential language is to functioning well in the host culture, the more difficult it will be to function in the culture.
Stereotype	Can be defined as the uncritical (and often pejorative) application of a generalization, often negative, to every person in a cultural group; or, extrapolating cultural characteristics from only a few people in a group. This is usually based on race, religion, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, socio-economic status.
Values	Cultural generalizations about what a group of people think is good or ideal, even though they may not always act in accordance with the principle.

Source: Adapted from the Online Cultural Resources for Study Abroad, University of the Pacific <http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

Culture and Communication: It is helpful to be aware/understand that the following aspects play a role communicating across cultures

Greeting Rituals	How long is an appropriate greeting? Are compliments fitting? Are different status people greeted differently? What physical behaviour (e.g., handshaking—how often, other touching, if any) is expected? There are many different greeting rituals such as bowing, cheek-kissing, holding the palms of your hands together (prayer position).
Honourifics	What titles are used to address people? When are first names appropriate (if ever)? What difference does status make in using titles? Some places such as Germany and Japan have strong rules about how to address people and in other places, such as the Netherlands and Australia, the rules will be more relaxed.
Non-verbal communication	Includes all behaviour that modifies, adds to, or substitutes for spoken or written language.

Culture and Communication: It is helpful to be aware/understand that the following aspects play a role communicating across cultures

Eye Contact (Oculistics)	Refers to the use or avoidance of eye-to-eye contact during a conversation. Some cultures are more dependent on direct eye contact and believe it is a sign of active listening and, often, sincerity and honesty and others find it rude and uncomfortable.
Gestures (Kinesics)	Relates to the movement of hands, head, torso, etc., as messages both verbal and nonverbal. Gestures may parallel speech or be employed independently as commands, commentary, or even to deliver contradictory signals.
Personal Space (Proxemics)	Relates to your personal space or “comfort zone” during conversation. The “size” of our specific “space” is unconsciously acquired in early childhood. Interpersonal space in sitting, standing, and speaking all has cultural meanings and may trigger intense emotional responses when violated. There is also a public, social, and intimate appropriate sense of space.
Paralanguage	Aspects of communication that accompany speech such as tone, pitch, syllable stress, speed, and “accents.” Paralanguage often carries important clues and cues about relationships including superiority/inferiority, sarcasm, and sincerity/deception.
Time	When is “late”? Are there cultural differences in what might be an appropriate reason to be late?
Monochronic Time	Cultural belief that time is the given and people are the variable; the needs of people are adjusted to suit the demands of time—schedules, deadlines, etc. Time is quantifiable, and a limited amount of it is available. People do one thing at a time and finish it before starting something else, regardless of circumstances.
Polychronic Time	Cultural belief that time is the servant and tool of people. Time is adjusted to suit the needs of people. More time is always available, and you are never too busy. People often have to do several things simultaneously, as required by circumstances. It’s not necessary to finish one thing before starting another, nor to finish your business with one person before starting in with another.
Vocabulary	What jargon is shared by the other person (if any)? When are you using slang or culture-specific metaphors (such as football parallels or references to television shows)? What words and ideas are specific to your particular peer group (e.g.: gnarly, man, dude, sick, bro, cool. etc.)?

Source: Adapted from the Online Cultural Resources for Study Abroad, University of the Pacific <http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

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Appendix 3

The Belonging Project: Evaluation of impact and implications of the 2014 initiatives

The three Phases of the project were evaluated progressively over the year of the project. It will continue the approach of the Belonging Project philosophy of 'connected to the grassroots', inclusive, and iterative over the student life cycle of the year.

Phase 1 – Feeling Global: Literature review, review and apply findings to develop trial initiatives, map and collate best practice within the school, develop draft toolkit resources, and develop de-identified data-packs.

Source of information Key evaluation questions	Project Team	Literature	Staff	Students
What did a successful project look like from the literature/ existing/best practice? (was this identified)	✓	✓		
Were the final parameters and boundaries of the project clear? How do these compare to the original scope of the project?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Do outcomes require modification from the evidence collated from Phase 1?	✓		✓	✓
Were there any unintended outcomes from this process?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Have the key concepts underpinning the project after Phase 1 research been met?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Are the key concepts and values that will drive the project from this point? Are the project outcomes and outputs reflective of that or do they need to change?	✓		✓	✓
What factors have impacted on the outcomes of this part of the project? (Have they been documented)	✓	✓		
Have the outcomes articulated for each key stakeholders cohort?	✓	✓	✓	✓

Phase 2 - Doing Global: Development and implementation of workshops on international perspectives, and Draft Toolkit

Source of information Key evaluation questions	Project Team	Literature	Staff	Students
Have you identified what does/do successful toolkit & resources look like?		✓		
Have the intended outcomes from phase 1, informed the development of learning and teaching tasks within courses?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Do the outcomes of the project need to be refined?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Were there any unintended outcomes?	✓	✓	✓	✓
How can the toolkit be made to be effective within the context of creative industries, but sufficiently transferable and flexible?	✓	✓	✓	
How have stake-holders needs impacted on the co-creation of the toolkit?	✓	✓	✓	✓

Phase 3 - Being Global: Development of a cross institutional/campus assessment between Melbourne and Vietnam, implementation of this and evaluation to inform framework, toolkit and resources.

Source of information Key evaluation questions	Project Team	Staff	Students
What has been identified as the blockers and enablers of cross-campus virtual assessment and has this informed the outcomes?	✓	✓	
Have the practical challenges in coordination of global connections been presented?	✓	✓	✓
Have you have successful project outcomes and do they look like success.	✓	✓	✓
Have the parameters and boundaries of the project been clear?	✓		
Do the outcomes of the project need to be refined?	✓	✓	✓
Have you developed key concepts and values that have drive the project? Do project outcomes and outputs communicate these?	✓		

Overall Project Evaluation				
Source of information Key evaluation questions	Project Team	Staff	Students	Key evaluation questions
Were there any variations from what was planned, what and has the why been documented	✓			
Has the project been co-ordinated over each phase of activity?	✓			
To what extent have the intended outcomes been achieved? Were there any unintended outcomes? (is this documented)	✓	✓	✓	✓
How could have the project be improved?(is this documented)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Have the needs of the stakeholders been met?	✓	✓	✓	
To what extent are the outputs useful and transferable to other staff to develop or adapt their curriculum?		✓	✓	

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