



Stepping up and Stepping out: co-constructing with community Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work curriculum

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Case Study Project (2015)

Need for specific and appropriate teaching and learning resources which are currently not available in Australia

Purpose of the Project:

To develop “*case studies*” that demonstrate social work practice and facilitate learning about how to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people respectfully

We hope this also makes our social work programs more accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and encourage and inspire them to study social work as a way of helping and building their own communities.

A culturally responsive pedagogical framework:

- Approaches curriculum design as a an opportunity to facilitate teaching and learning which is critically conscious of society and its institutions
- Models some of the principles and practices of culturally responsive social work
- Reinforces the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of Knowing, doing and being

Knowing, Doing and Being in Social Work

- **Knowing** - Relatedness to Entities of People, Land, Animals, Plants, Skies, Waterways and Climate
- **Being** - how to be respectful, responsible and accountable in relatedness with self and Entities
- **Doing** – the lived expression of relatedness

(Martin, 2008)

The Importance of Consultation

- Embedding Indigenous knowledges ensures that Indigenous people's voices actively shape curriculum in higher education
- Community consultation is a central approach to creating content that moves beyond 'problematizing' Indigenous peoples, to enabling structural equality, ownership and control over Indigenous knowledges

Community Consultation

- Cultural protocols were developed for this project to guide the consultation process
- We worked with our Indigenous Higher Education Units on each campus as part of this consultation process
- We consulted with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and agencies across the 3 campuses
- Consulted our social work colleagues

Community consultation process

1. **Research** – aware of community diversity; developing *mutually beneficial* relationships.
2. **Initial contact** – building a relationship; meaningful dialogue
3. **Subsequent contact** - maintaining respectful and courteous lines of communication
4. **Follow up** – Feedback and outcome of consultations shared with participants. Further invitations for collaborative relationships being explored e.g. potential governance groups within Social Work

Community Consultations

Consultation Participants	Number
Indigenous social work and counselling practitioners	16
Academic staff from ACU Social Work discipline	13
Indigenous academics	4
Aboriginal social work graduates	2
Elders	7
Social work students (Indigenous)	2
Social work students (non-Indigenous)	67
Indigenous Allied Health Australia	1
Indigenous student support units at ACU	7
ACU Office of Student Success staff	2
TOTAL	121

Feedback focus

- Gender
- Role models
- Family relationships
- Diverse identities
- Language
- Social work role
- Role of cultural supervision
- Role of educating yourself

Case Studies

2 case studies

- 1 video about **Harrison** and his experience with a social worker, Rob at a local Youth Centre highlighting issues of identity and impact of colonisation and cultural supervision for the worker
- 1 video about a young mother **Kelly** as 'first in family' studying at university; seeing social worker, Rosemary at uni Counselling Service highlighting issues of working with families and family obligation and reflective practice

Project Outcomes

- The 2 video case studies are now embedded in 1st year and 3rd year BSW units taught in Semester 1, 2016.
- A Learning and Teaching Guide to accompany each video was developed.
- Development of journal article