Chapter 13
Students and Academics Working in Partnership to Embed Cultural Competence as a Graduate Quality

Amani Bell, Stephanie Barahona, Gulnaz Beg, Susan Coulson, Roman Eymont, Jodie Hartman, Tom Hubble, Natalie Leung, Michael A. McDonnell, Jiaru Ni, Tai Peseta, Ehssan Sakhaee, and Jonnell Uptin

Introduction

Since 2014, the University of Sydney has been experimenting with a new initiative motivated by the research on "students as partners". In 2014, six students were selected as Ambassadors of the Sydney Teaching Colloquium (STC)—the University's annual learning and teaching conference—as undergraduate researchers. In that year, the focus was on assessment standards. In 2015, another six Student

A. Bell (✉) · J. Hartman · J. Uptin
Sydney School of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia
e-mail: Amani.Bell@sydney.edu.au

S. Barahona
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

G. Beg
Faculty of Science, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

S. Coulson · J. Ni
Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney, Camperdown, NSW, Australia

R. Eymont
Faculty of Engineering, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

T. Hubble
Engineering and Environmental Geology, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

N. Leung
International and Global Studies, Sydney, NSW, Australia

M. A. McDonnell
Early American History, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

T. Peseta
Western Sydney University, Sydney, NSW, Australia

E. Sakhaee
School of Civil Engineering, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

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Ambassadors were again involved, this time focused on cultural competence for curriculum renewal. The Ambassadors supported the programme planning, engaged with the student community via social media, presented their experiences of learning and situated them within scholarly literature, and devised and executed the STC's evaluation strategy—collecting data, and interviewing presenters and participants according to a set of criteria developed by the students. The 2014 Ambassadors were co-authors of an article published in 2016 in the *International Journal for Academic Development*'s special issue on "Engaging students as partners" (Peseta et al., 2016). Through this process, they learned about academic publication and peer review. The 2015 Ambassadors followed suit and have published an article in the online journal *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education* (Bell et al., 2017). A highlight in 2015 was the presentation by the Student Ambassadors about cultural competence (The University of Sydney, 2015). The STC feedback showed that this was considered to be the session that most changed university teachers' thinking about cultural competence.

Through the initiative discussed in this chapter, we aimed to extend the Student Ambassador initiative beyond the Teaching Colloquium to better support the University's ambitious programme of curriculum renewal in the area of cultural competence. The University's strategic imperatives lend support for the initiative. The University has launched a renewed education strategy, as part of its overall strategic plan, which has flagged cultural competence as a new quality of the Sydney graduate (The University of Sydney, 2016). It is one of the key curriculum initiatives introduced in the strategic plan:

> In collaboration with the National Centre for Cultural Competence and through a shared commitment to a more collective, relational model for learning and teaching, we will embed the development of cultural competence in the curriculum. We will also ensure broad student access to the University's rich cultural and language offerings, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages, and develop culturally rich experiential learning opportunities in conjunction with community and industry organisations in Australia and overseas. (The University of Sydney, 2016, p. 36)

The plan states that cultural competence will be embedded as a learning outcome in every degree, via "meaningful learning activities" including "access to study of culture and languages", mobility programmes, and "short, modular courses building cultural competence" (The University of Sydney, 2016, p. 58). The strategic plan acknowledges the importance of everyone in the University community being culturally competent, staff as well as students:

> Our academic staff should participate effectively in intercultural settings in research, in the classroom, and in the day-to-day life of the University. They should be open to a diversity of ways of being, doing and knowing, as well as looking for, and understanding, the context of those engaged in, or affected by, our research and education. (The University of Sydney, 2016, p. 13)

The University's inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages and knowledges in its cultural competence strategies distinguishes this initiative from more general views of cultural competence that focus on "understand[ing] and appreciate[ing] cultural differences and similarities within and

between groups and individuals" (Porta & Last, 2018). It commits the University to a view of cultural competence that attends to the legacy of racism and historical disadvantage that has plagued the treatment of Australia's Indigenous communities, which approach is in line with initiatives underway at other Australian universities and internationally. In the section below on cultural competence in higher education, we expand on and outline some of the challenges faced by such initiatives and follow this with a review of the literature on students as partners. These two areas of scholarship and practice have informed our work and are drawn together in a discussion of decolonising the curriculum.

Cultural Competence in Higher Education

There has been an increasing focus on cultural competence in higher education due to a range of factors. The focus reflects increasing awareness of the societal benefits of cultural competence (de Guzman, Durden, Taylor, Guzman, & Potthoff, 2016), of the need for greater diversity on boards (Groutsis, Cooper, & Whitwell, 2018), that graduates will likely work in diverse teams serving diverse communities (Monash University, 2012), and responses to the increasing diversity of student cohorts and calls to decolonise higher education. The turn to cultural competence in higher education is also a response to the polarisation of attitudes towards race, gender and religion that have characterised the Trump and Brexit eras (Kruse, Rakha, & Calderone, 2018).

In Australia—and elsewhere, such as the USA—the large numbers of international students, predominantly from China and India in recent years: "rather than increasing the diversity on campus … enabled the creation of ethnic enclaves and increased segregation of the student body" (Fraiberg, Wang, & You, 2017, p. 37). In some classes, lecturers encounter an "unexpected minority" of local students where "inverted classroom dynamics [are] linked to new arrangements of culture and power … destabilising classroom orientations and social norms" (Fraiberg et al., 2017, pp. 42, 49). Such classroom and campus dynamics can be challenging for both teachers and students and are not always explicitly addressed.

Cultural competence may also encompass teaching Indigenous Knowledges (IKs). In Australia and other countries that have been subjected to colonisation, there have been calls (in some cases very strongly made, via protests), for IKs to be incorporated into the curriculum (Rochecouste et al., 2017). Universities Australia (UA) argues that: "all graduates of Australian universities should be culturally competent" (2011, p. 8), and the definition it uses focuses on Indigenous cultures and knowledges:

> Student and staff knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian cultures, histories and contemporary realities and awareness of Indigenous protocols, combined with the proficiency to engage and work effectively in Indigenous contexts congruent to the expectations of Indigenous Australian peoples. (UA, 2011, p. 6)

In Australia, initiatives to achieve this goal are underway, and a common approach is Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators partnering with Indigenous Elders, to embed "Aboriginal Knowledges and perspectives" into the curriculum (Charles Sturt University, 2019; University of Wollongong, 2019). While these moves are laudable, such efforts are not easy because universities are embedded in, and have contributed to, structures that reinforce social inequalities. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well people from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, face ongoing problems with access to, and retention at, university (Behrendt, Larkin, Griew, & Kelly, 2012, Harwood, Hickey-Moody, McMahon, & O'Shea, 2017). Australia's Indigenous people are "still marginalised", still "positioned as the other" (Buckskin, 2013), and racism is still encountered by both Indigenous students and Indigenous educators within Australia's educational systems (Corr, 2016). It is important to reflect on these historical and ongoing issues in order to understand the enormity of the task faced by cultural competence practitioners. In short, we are asking one concept—cultural competence—to do a lot of work. In the following section, we provide an overview of the literature on "students as partners" as a key concept which has informed our cultural competence work.

Students as Partners

The concept of students and staff working in partnership to examine and change higher education has gained momentum in the past decade. Initiatives in the UK (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014), the USA (Cook-Sather, 2011) and more recently in Australia (Matthews, 2016) have highlighted the ways in which such partnerships have benefits, as well as challenges, for all involved.

At our institution, there have been several small-scale students as partners initiatives (Atkinson 2017; Bell et al., 2019), and we have noted the interest of many staff in working more closely with students. For example, when we asked participants to write (on a post-it note, for display) what they were most hoping to gain from the 2015 STC, some comments were:

- A closer connection between academics and students!
- Student opinion,
- Learning from our students,
- Student feedback,
- How to better incorporate what students have to say in our curriculum and
- More equal exchange between staff and students.

While there are many ways that students and staff have worked productively together to enhance higher education, here we focus on students as partners in curriculum design. Bovill and Bulley (2011) developed a ladder of student participation in curriculum design (Fig. 13.1), inspired by Arnstein's ladder of citizen
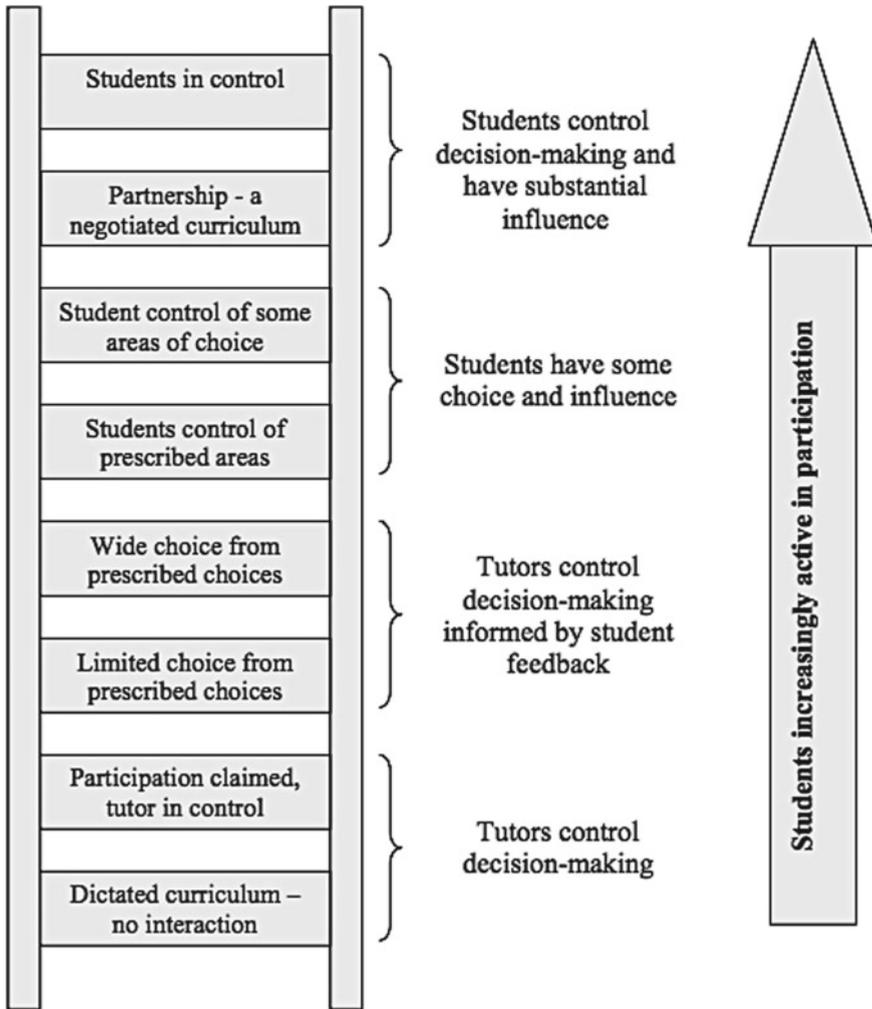
Fig. 13.1 Bovill and Bulley's (2011) ladder of student participation in curriculum design

participation in planning (Arnstein, 1969), with the aim of: "stimulat[ing] discussion of some of the levels and types of student participation that might be possible and desirable. New or alternative rungs of the ladder might be proposed by others" (Bovill & Bulley, 2011, p. 5).

The ladder is useful in thinking about the various ways students and staff might work together to change the curriculum. Another way of thinking about students as partners for curriculum design is around the different types of curriculum co-creation. Cook-Sather, Matthews, and Bell (2019) provide examples of the range of ways students and staff have worked in partnership for curriculum design, including:

collaborating on course design as a course is unfolding; re-designing in the semester
before teaching it again; deconstructing the hidden curriculum; ...influencing courses
and university-wide curriculum renewal; partnering with students in a whole-of-degree
programme curriculum review; and co-creating an institution-wide, pedagogical partnership
programme (Cook-Sather et al.)

The benefits of working in partnership with students on curriculum design include
ending up with a course that is more likely to meet the needs of students (Shore, 2012),
improving the student experience and making a course more inclusive (Brunson,
2018), immediate changes to a course (Bell et al., 2013), changes to thinking about
the curriculum for both staff and students (Bell et al., 2017; Peseta et al., 2016),
making learning activities and assessments more relevant to students' lives (Bunnell
& Bernstein, 2014), and developing more culturally responsive classrooms (Cook-
Sather & Des-Ogugua, 2018). The student partners involved in such initiatives also
report benefits, such as feeling more invested in their education and taking responsi-
bility for their learning (Charkoudian, Bitners, Bloch, & Nawal, 2015), and acquiring
knowledge and terminology about the curriculum while also gaining a sense of
agency to shape curriculum review (Matthews, 2018).

Cook-Sather et al. (2019) contend that: "expanding curriculum design and
redesign to include partnerships amongst students, academic and professional staff,
and academic developers fosters radically and productively disruptive co-creation; it
upends traditional and normative notions of hierarchy and power within curriculum
development in higher education." This radical disruption of the curriculum design
process and institutional hierarchies has parallels with the concept of decolonising
the curriculum which, as we argue in the next section, is a useful lens through which
to integrate the literature around cultural competence and students as partners.

Decolonising the Curriculum: Bringing Cultural Competence and Students as Partners Together

The two concepts of students as partners and cultural competence unsettle long-
entrenched hierarchies and the privileging of certain knowledges in higher education.
The key values of students as partners—that students have the right to be involved in
shaping their education and have valuable perspectives to contribute—and of cultural
competence—that we need to attend to our own and others' cultural worldviews—
have parallels with the concept of decolonising the curriculum. Ryan and Tilbury
argue that "actively involving students in learning development and processes of co-
creation, thereby challenging existing learning relationships and power frames, and
deconstructing dominant pedagogical frames that promote only western worldviews
are important new pedagogical approaches" (2013, p. 7).

The decolonising higher education movements around the world (although they
are particularly strong in South Africa and the UK) are often driven by students, in
some cases in partnership with staff. Movements such as "Why is my curriculum
white?" (Hussain, 2015), "Rhodes must fall" (Mbembe, 2016) and "Fees must fall"

(Hauser, 2016), all involved students who feel that the higher education sector disenfranchises certain groups and knowledges. Black students in South Africa have proclaimed *"we must exorcise the colonial ghost from the curriculum"* (Luckett, 2016, p. 416), and it is increasingly being acknowledged that "curriculum frames knowledges in particular ways. Some frames are visible, while others are not" (Anwaruddin, 2016, p. 433).

It has been noticed by many academics and students that certain knowledges are absent or marginalised in the curriculum, including those of first-generation and low-income students (Jehangir, 2010), women (Coate, 2006), people of colour (Walcott, 2018) and Indigenous people (Nakata, 2007). And where such perspectives are included in the curriculum, there can tend to be a deficit approach—for example, discussing only problems around Indigenous Australians, rather than their diversity and their strengths—the "discourse of deficiency" (Gorringe, 2015). The results of the erasure or marginalisation of these knowledges are that some students (and staff) may feel disconnected from the curriculum; and our graduates risk emerging ill-equipped to understand both structural injustices and the richness of a myriad of knowledge systems and worldviews. On a positive note, "curriculum makes space like nothing else I know in education. It can be a mighty tool of social justice for the marginalised" (Kovach, 2010, p. 6). Below, we provide details about our initiative, in which students and staff worked in partnership to make some space for cultural competence, in five units of study.

The Initiative

The Team

The team consisted of two project leaders (both academic developers), five academics (unit coordinators) and five students, together with a Student Ambassador from the previous year who initially acted as a mentor to the new student partners, and then later joined the History team. The five individual projects were in the disciplines of Project Management, Education, Physiotherapy, History and Geology. The student partners received payment for the time they spent on the initiative, in recognition of the significant time commitment that would take them away from other paid work.

The five academics were people who we (the academic developers) knew were already interested in and/or working with cultural competence as a graduate quality. The students, chosen via an "expression of interest" and interview process, were selected because they were enthusiastic about being involved and demonstrated sophisticated ideas about cultural competence, and often had deep personal connections to cultural competence. This is illustrated below via extracts from student partners' expression of interest forms:

- "Academia's eurocentricity has long been acknowledged and is … reflected in the "Northern" perspectives that are emphasised in teaching … Perspectives originating from other backgrounds are presented as … deviations from dominant discourses. Similarly, cultural power affects interactions between individuals, for example, in tutorials.… The assessment of tutorial participation through spoken, tutorial-wide interaction neglects the pervasive and dynamic operations of social and cultural power". (Natalie)
- "Culture is so much more than just religion or ethnicity. The different elements of a person's culture inform who the individual is. I would suggest having students really explore their own culture through a critical lens, for students to have not only a greater understanding of who they are but also a greater sense of cultural competence". (Jodie)
- "As an individual who migrated to Australia at a young age … I believe that it is important to be aware of the diverse cultures and backgrounds students are from. Student learning about cultural competence can be achieved through valuing cultural diversity within the classroom". (Gulnaz)

How We Worked Together

The project leaders drew on Williams' concept, "Teach the University" (Williams, 2008), to support the student and staff partners in developing their understanding of the project. Williams argues that "study of the university enjoins students [and, we argue, staff] to consider reflexively the ways and means of the world they are in, and what it does to and for them" (Williams, 2008, p. 26). The students and unit coordinators met individually, and we also had four meetings as a whole group, as follows.

1. *Induction.* This meeting included an icebreaker, a past Student Ambassador sharing her experiences, discussion of definitions of cultural competence and a group exercise linking cultural competence to each profession (i.e. unpacking cultural competence as a graduate quality). We began discussing project plans.
2. *Progress meeting.* In this meeting, we shared progress on the projects and gave each other feedback. We discussed how cultural competence was currently experienced in each unit, the challenges in embedding cultural competence and how it might be made more prominent in each unit. We considered how the project outcomes might be evaluated and shared.
3. *Critical friend meeting.* We shared the projects with an international expert on students as partners, Professor Alison Cook-Sather, who provided us with feedback.
4. *Conclusion.* We shared the final project reports and reflected on our experiences.

During these whole group meetings, we developed our shared (and differentiated) understandings of the work, discussed the difficulties of finding genuine ways of embedding cultural competence rather than "tick a box/bolt on" and shared resources, ideas and readings. Some of the readings we drew on were Arao and Clemens (2013), Zúñiga, Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, and Cytron-Walker (2007) and Virdun et al. (2013).

The projects were evaluated in different ways (e.g. focus groups, surveys, interviews). We also evaluated the overall initiative in several ways, drawing on "critical friend" feedback from international students as partners expert; reflective writing by each person at the end of the project; and a project report by each student (with input from the unit coordinators).

The Five Projects and Their Outcomes

Education

The academic partner was Dr. Jonnell Uptin, and the student partner was Jodie Hartman. Jonnell and Jodie worked on the activities and assignments in the second-year unit for pre-service primary level teachers, "Intercultural Understanding in Human Society and its Environment". Based on her experiences of the unit in 2015, Jodie provided detailed feedback and ideas to Jonnell, mainly around helping students realise that culture goes beyond religion and ethnicity, to encompass an awareness of self-identity and worldviews. Jonnell made several changes to the unit including adding an activity, which was imparted to Jonnell from Elders in the Yuin community, where each student brought in and discussed an object that was culturally meaningful to them. Over the course of the unit, students were encouraged to connect with their culture/s through tutorial activities—the idea being that once you understand yourself and your own culture/s, commonalities between cultures become apparent. The main assessment task required students to explore a culture unfamiliar to them and connect it to their own culture/s. The students' choices of cultures to study demonstrated views of culture beyond religion and ethnicity, for example vegan culture, hipster culture and prison culture. Jodie created a video based on interviews with students about their experiences of the assessment task (Hartman, 2016).

The project led to additional opportunities for Jodie, who was invited to be part of a student panel at the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) conference in July 2017. Jodie was one of three students from across Australia presenting to the entire conference of around 400 academics. Following on from the HERDSA panel, Jodie was invited to be a student keynote speaker at the National Students as Partners Roundtable in Adelaide in October 2017.

Project Management

The following text below has been reproduced and adapted from a blog post by Ehssan and Roman (Eymont & Sakhaee, 2017). The academic partner was Dr Ehssan Sakhaee, and the student partner was Roman Eymont. Ehssan and Roman worked on the unit, "Project based on organisational behaviour". They first brainstormed a number of ways that they could achieve their goal of helping the 91 students undertaking the unit to become more culturally competent and decided to create and implement two new activities within the weekly tutorial sessions.

The first activity was run in week three. An anonymous survey was conducted in week two in which students were asked to answer a variety of questions (such as "What was your first language?" "What is your favourite sport?" and "Where were you born?") in order to obtain responses, and data for the activity being implemented. A trivia-based game was created using students' responses; an example of the question in the trivia game is "What is the Japanese word for empty orchestra?" (the answer being karaoke). The pedagogical rationale for the quiz was to create questions specific to certain members of the class, and unless other students had extensive knowledge of different cultures or could guess correctly, then the most diverse group would be able to obtain maximum points and end up winning the quiz. Students were asked to form their groups of five to six people within the classroom, and Roman and the practising tutor conducted the trivia quiz. Students were not told that the most diverse team would win—the idea was that they would work this out for themselves through playing the games.

The second activity in week five involved a game where a piece of paper with eight different words (e.g. sun, house, plane) was arranged in a particular order to create a story and handed to different groups of students. These words were in different languages, and each group received a different version of the puzzle. The languages used were obtained from the data students had provided as part of the survey at the beginning of the semester, so that in each tutorial, only languages that were spoken by those students in the tutorial were used. Another sheet full of images associated with these words was also given to students. The students then needed to cut out these images and glue them onto the correct word on the sheet. The idea was for students to form their own culturally diverse groups in order to try and have enough members who spoke several languages, in order to solve the puzzle. After this, there was a riddle shown on screen where all the students in the class had to collaborate and find words on the back of their sheets to find the answer to the riddle, which required combining individual group answers to find the final complete story.

Students were then asked to go onto Blackboard (the learning management system) and fill in a short question specific to each week's tutorial. For the tutorials for weeks three and five, the question was "Please briefly describe in around 200 words your learnings and reflections for this week's lecture and tutorial". Feedback from students was positive and included the following:

- "The group activities showed us that diverse groups tend to overall perform better due to a large amount of knowledge in different areas. I thought that it was a great exercise and hope that there will be more like it".
- "Playing trivia was lots of fun, and I happened to be in a very diverse group of not only obvious diversities of gender and race, but diversities of personality and interests. This allowed us to work together very well and allowed all members of our group to contribute and answer questions, resulting in our team winning the game!"

The second problem emphasised team problem solving while promoting strength in diversity. Effective teamwork is key for project success. Future plans for the unit include providing more opportunities for students to understand and practise cultural competence. Ehssan has generously provided detailed guidelines on how to create the games, which are available online (Sakhaee, 2017, 2018).

Geology

The following text has been reproduced and adapted from a blog post by Gulnaz and Tom (Beg & Hubble, 2017). The academic partner was Associate Professor Tom Hubble, and the student partner was Gulnaz Beg. The "Introduction to Geology" unit is a first-year earth science subject which provides students with an overview of the study of geology. The approach taken was to subtly incorporate IKs about geology throughout lecture materials and excursions, in a way that would be engaging for students. The project ran for one semester, and the team regularly sought the opinions of students enrolled in the advanced stream of the unit during the semester. The subtle changes introduced as part of the project included a combination of adding material to lectures taught by Tom (who included an Acknowledgement of Country in the first lecture, and referenced Indigenous views and knowledge about landscape, past environments, and extinct fauna); and modifying the activities undertaken during a day-long field trip to the Blue Mountains, to highlight the similarities and differences between the way Traditional Owners and geologists read and interpret the landscape. A student commented:

- "I think there was one lecture where Tom was sharing an Aboriginal painting and how it was similar to contour lines on a map. I think that was a really interesting way to bring in cultural competence within the unit".

The student partner Gulnaz was introduced to the advanced class in week three and outlined the timeline of the project and how it would be implemented throughout the semester. Surveys were distributed to the advanced students at the conclusion of the study. In week 13 of semester 1, Gulnaz facilitated a focus group discussion about successful outcomes and suggestions for improvement.

The survey aimed to gain a greater understanding of students' perceptions of the importance and relevance of cultural competence within academic and corporate

environments. A total of 10 out of 15 students answered all questions within the survey, with 100% of students agreeing with the statements:

- Do you think that cultural competence is important in the workplace?
- Do you interact with people of cultural diversity within this unit and other units in your university degree?
- Do you think it is important to develop cultural competence skills early in university?

Students had mixed responses about whether they thought the incorporation of cultural competence was appropriate within the unit; for example:

- "Probably not as much as science tends to be more focused on universal processes rather than cultures, but it is still interesting to know".
- "Yes, as a lot of geological objects have cultural links that may be mentioned very briefly".
- "Yes, as we have to make sure not to go on any cultural boundaries".
- "Yes. Cultural competence is crucial to all areas of studies".
- "It's more useful in practical situations rather than just in the lectures. When it comes up in a lecture, not everyone tunes in. But once we're out on the field in a practical sense where we are exposed to cultures and ideas, that's where the real benefit will come in rather than just sitting in a classroom and going over some content".

Aspects that the team will investigate in future semesters include creating something similar to the trivia game developed by Ehssan and Roman in project management (see above). Another suggestion would be to have a greater Indigenous voice within the course such as having Indigenous guest speakers or incorporating Dreaming stories to complement European methodologies—this was also suggested by some of the students in the focus group. The approach did not focus on communication skills and intercultural communication, and this is another possible area of focus in the future.

History

The following text has been reproduced and adapted from a blog post by Natalie, Stephanie and Michael (Leung, Barahona & McDonnell, 2017). Professor Michael McDonnell was the academic partner, and Natalie Leung and Stephanie Barahona were the student partners. As a partnership of two students and an academic, they wanted to measure students' understanding and experience of cultural competence, and whether this might change through the course of a unique community-engaged public history capstone unit in the Department of History, "History Beyond the Classroom". The unit is a rare example of a Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences subject that involves community engagement as a core part of its design.

The unit requires students to frame, research and produce an original project based on an engagement with communities and organisations outside the university. Students spend approximately 10 h getting to know their chosen community or local organisation by contributing to or assisting in their work. They then collaboratively develop a major public history project that would be beneficial for the organisation. This public history project can take various forms, and past student projects have ranged from museum exhibits, walking tours, the recording of oral histories, website developments and many more (The University of Sydney, 2002–19).

The research involved participants from the semester 2, 2016 student cohort. It was the second time the unit has been offered, with approximately 30 students enrolled. Participation in this research was anonymous and voluntary, with ethical approval granted by the University of Sydney's Human Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 2016/735). Three methodologies were utilised: a survey, conducted at two points of the semester; two follow-up semi-structured interviews with students; and analysis of students' public blog posts.

Both the survey and interview results revealed that the participants possessed only vague understandings of the precise definition of "cultural competence":

- "I'm not really sure what [cultural competence] actually means … but I could probably tell you what isn't [culturally competent] and I could probably tell you the kinds of stuff it might look like".

However, they offered insightful responses about the necessity of cultural awareness and sensitivity, and readily identified aspects and experiences that had allowed them to become increasingly perceptive or conscious of different cultural modes of understanding. The data affirmed the team's view that the discipline of History already, and implicitly, has many aspects of cultural competence embedded within it.

The strongest theme across the three forms of data collection was the benefits of "real-world" community engagement to students' evolving understandings of cultural competencies and skills:

- "I mean, I think I saw that it's all good and all to talk about how we could be helpful or aware and, like, careful about how we approach people [when conducting historical research], but I didn't realise how real that was until I went out and did this community research".

While it can be said that the historical discipline fosters an awareness of perspective and difference, students' active involvement in community-based historical research in the unit is able to add new insights to these ideas. It asks students to be intimately involved in the creation of history and, in so doing, brings them into contact with its practice outside of the university setting.

The Humanities and Social Sciences are subject areas that are oriented around an exploration of peoples and how they have created social, cultural and political understandings of their world. In various faculties and disciplines, ideas and skills of cultural competence are not only implicitly conveyed through studies; they are,

arguably, fundamental aspects of disciplines such as History, Sociology, Anthropology, and Government and International Relations. As the University enters a new phase of curriculum renewal and transformation, alongside its increasing focus on cultural competence, this invites questions and reflections on how these two aspects can be more explicitly aligned.

This preliminary and, admittedly, limited survey of "History Beyond the Classroom" students has indicated that the provision of real-world scenarios and research possesses a powerful ability to invite students' critical reflection on principles of cultural competence. Indeed, even in this small-scale research, it is apparent that cultural competence is both a theoretical and a highly practical notion—and, moreover, it is through practice that its complexities become fully apparent.

Physiotherapy

Dr. Susan Coulson was the academic partner, and Jiaru Ni was the student partner. In the third-year undergraduate unit "Physiotherapy in Multisystem Problems", Jiaru and Susan conducted pre- and post-surveys of students' understandings of cultural competence before and after receiving lecture and tutorial content that focused on cultural competence for clinical practitioners. The aims were to understand students' own perceptions about their cultural competence and, through teaching and encouraging self-reflective practice, to facilitate students to become more culturally competent pre-service practitioners.

Jiaru interviewed about 20 students a few days after their clinical placements and asked about their experiences related to cultural competence that they had encountered during their placement. Jiaru created a number of short video vignettes showing students discussing the situations they encountered during clinical placement when they treated someone from a culture that was different from their own. These videos were used in tutorial classroom situations to generate discussion among other students around such issues as negotiations around communication regarding gender and language differences, or professional examination of musculoskeletal disorders which may have required specific exposure of certain parts of the body. This facilitated further discussion and self-reflection on how students' perceptions of cultural competence changed after completing their clinical placements.

The survey showed that the students developed a more comprehensive understanding of cultural competence and were ready to apply clinical skills with considerations of patients' cultural backgrounds. There were significant changes in students' self-reported confidence, in their knowledge about what it means to be culturally competent and to provide effective verbal and non-verbal communication across a range of cultures. A significant improvement was also found in their awareness of the similarities and differences among and between various different cultural groups.

When reflecting on what cultural competence meant to them, student responses included:

- "Being able to show respect to people who are of different cultures to you even though there's a lack of insight and understanding of the culture".
- "Providing a patient experience that takes into consideration the cultural beliefs and background of the patients we are treating".

Physiotherapy students reported that they were already practising with some level of cultural competence during the clinical placement, even before the lecture and tutorial content. The students have been consistently educated on how to practise in a culturally competent way throughout their years of learning, which has impacted their style of practising during the clinical placement.

Reflections on the Overall Initiative

All team members were asked to reflect in writing and aloud at our final project meeting. The benefits reported by students and staff partners are similar to those reported in other studies about curriculum co-creation (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2017). The student partners enjoyed: "the students' willingness to learn and participate in class". They gained "interpersonal interaction, interview skills, ability to make a survey, analysis of the data, presentation skills and lastly, but not least understanding of cultural competence". They also gained insight into "the specific ways the university is undertaking to promote cultural competence", and "a new found confidence to part of a discussion with and work alongside academics".

In addition, the student partners gained skills in cultural competence that they saw would be useful in their careers:

- "When starting a new job, I will be able to directly appreciate first-hand the values that diversity brings forward to a team and how it promotes growth. This will be a critical aspect of my career as for much of it; it will involve working in multidisciplinary teams of varying numbers". (Roman)
- "One thing I'll take forward into my career would be managing to work effectively and diplomatically alongside different voices, opinions and groups". (Stephanie)

The academics gained "a deeper insight into what is working and not working [in the unit]". The academics commented that they would continue to embed cultural competence in their units. For example:

- "We will carry the same activities into the next iteration of the class and refine it in several ways (e.g. for the diversity trivia we aim to integrate other forms of diversity (age, gender). It helps students appreciate the value diversity brings in teams and apply it to their future teamwork both at the university and also in their future career". (Ehssan)

The different ways of perceiving cultural competence reveal disciplinary variations, for example viewing cultural competence as the ability to work as a diverse team (project management) through to embedding IKs (Geology). It could be seen as

a strength of the initiative that everyone took such a different approach, although we feel there was perhaps a missed opportunity to broaden disciplinary perspectives of cultural competence through emphasising and discussing the interdisciplinary differences. It is not always easy to think beyond disciplinary silos and developing "epistemic fluency"—"the capacity to understand, switch between and combine different kinds of knowledge and different ways of knowing about the world" (Markauskaite & Goodyear, 2019)—is a complex endeavour for educators and students alike.

Further reflections on how the overall initiative might be improved include having more meetings, involving more disciplines and more effective promotion of the initiative, including promoting it across the University's different campuses. We had hoped to produce a range of resources that could be used as exemplars or conversation-starters by other academics and students. We made some progress towards this outcome, with presentations at various internal and external events, blog posts on the *Teaching@Sydney* blog and the videos produced by Ehssan and Jodie. Coming at a time of intense institutional change, the project fell in a period of "peak over-work" for academics, making it difficult to get everyone together for meetings. The individual project approach felt a bit less coherent than in previous years when we worked with student ambassadors for a particular event (the STC).

In our discussions about the initiative, with our critical friend Alison Cook-Sather, we talked about the importance of the process of teaching cultural competence, rather than just focusing on the content. Making space for students' reflections is a key aspect of the process, especially to allow them to acknowledge uncertainty. Educators need to think of questions to ask that invite analysis and reflection. Student agency is also important where possible, for example giving students a choice about readings or projects where they choose what they investigate (this was evident in the education and history projects). We also wondered about the possible resistance—both to students as partners and to cultural competence—within our university. This resistance is complex, and we have empathy for staff who are facing many changes. Within the constraints of the neoliberal academy, how can staff find enough time to attend to cultural competence as a graduate quality, amid all the competing demands and other pressures on the curriculum?

Our five projects "measured" cultural competence in different ways: through surveys, interviews and focus groups. The university is moving towards the more formal measurement of its nine graduate qualities, including cultural competence, and "a description of each student's mastery of these so-called soft skills will be attached to their academic transcript from 2020" (Baker, 2018). This is a complex undertaking, and measurement and cultural competence are uneasy bedfellows. Areas for future research and practice include ongoing iterative studies; the mapping and embedding of cultural competence at the degree programme level; and understanding more about student, staff, disciplinary employer and societal perspectives of cultural competence.

Recommendations

In order to expand this small-scale initiative, we have two key recommendations. First, such work needs to be supported by an institutional ethos of cultural competence (and we acknowledge that the University is working towards this; see, for example, Sherwood & Russell-Mundine, 2017). Cultural competence needs to be embedded throughout an institution's structures and practices, with leaders who support and model it. Both educators and students need support and time to develop their understandings of cultural competence.

Second, student-staff partnerships for curriculum design require time, funding, and institutional championship and commitment. In this case, we were fortunate to have internal funding in order to pay the student partners. An alternate model is to provide academic credit for student partners. Educators' time could be recognised via workload calculations, or payment in the case of sessional staff. Aligned to the first recommendation, institutions need to foster an ethos of partnership, where both staff and students feel welcome and equipped to participate in reimagining and reshaping their universities.

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Amani Bell is an Associate Professor of work integrated learning in the University of Sydney School of Health Sciences. Previously, she was an academic developer at The University of Sydney. Her research takes a participatory approach to exploring the challenges and opportunities of higher education.

Stephanie Barahona holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from The University of Sydney and has worked alongside Professor Michael McDonnell. She is currently completing her Honours degree in higher educational history. She has been a member of the student advisory council at the National Centre for Cultural Competence, University of Sydney, since October 2016.

Gulnaz Beg holds a Bachelor of Science from The University of Sydney and has worked closely with her lecturer Tom Hubble. Since graduating, Gulnaz has been working in an advisory role for a non-profit organisation, liaising with corporates to engage in cultural competence, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Susan Coulson is a Senior Lecturer in Physiotherapy at The University of Sydney. She teaches musculoskeletal studies, professional ethical practice and multidisciplinary health care to undergraduate and Master degree students. Cultural competence, as well as her clinical/research practice in the rehabilitation of facial nerve disorders, are integrated into her teaching.

Roman Eymont was an undergraduate student, working with one of his lecturers, Ehssan Sakhaee. He has since graduated with Honours from his civil engineering and project management course. He currently works in a construction firm which has a strong emphasis on promoting cultural competence and initiatives.

Jodie Hartman was a third-year student in the Bachelor of Education (Primary). She has been a student representative to the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney, and is passionate about the need for cultural competence in education.

Tom Hubble is an Associate Professor in Engineering and Environmental Geology at The University of Sydney, where he teaches introductory geology and rock engineering subjects to undergraduate and postgraduate students. He promoted cultural competence to students and colleagues of the Faculty of Science from 2013 to 2017.

Natalie Leung was in her fourth year of a Bachelor of International and Global Studies (Honours). She has a strong interest in widening participation in higher education and has mentored students in Higher School Certificate (HSC) Extension History.

Michael A. McDonnell is a Professor of Early American History at The University of Sydney and teaches a community-engaged public history unit of study called "History Beyond the Classroom." He is keen to embed cultural competence skills development in his teaching practice and think about the role of the discipline of history in fostering cultural competence.

Jiaru Ni was an undergraduate physiotherapy student who worked closely with Dr. Susan Coulson. Since graduation, he has become a clinical physiotherapist and works in a private hospital. As always, he hopes to help people to improve their quality of life.

Tai Peseta joined Western Sydney University as Senior Lecturer in the Learning Transformations Team, Learning Futures Portfolio in March 2017, following academic appointments at The University of Sydney, La Trobe University and The University of Melbourne. Her research interests include academic practice and labour, doctoral curriculum/research education, and Ideas of the University.

Ehssan Sakhaee is the Director, Learning and Teaching, in The University of Sydney's School of Civil Engineering. His research looks at the human factors that affect motivation, engagement and productivity in individuals, teams and organisations.

Jonnell Uptin is an academic in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney. Her research and teaching are concentrated on refugee youth, and teaching students from disadvantaged backgrounds. She is particularly interested in the role that intercultural understanding plays in assisting educators and schools.