

Embedding inclusive curriculum: Working from the ground up

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- Research context
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- Two case studies of practice
- Discussion of enablers and barriers



Context

- The Deakin context for developing inclusive curriculum and capacity building activities from the ground up (2009/10)
 - Drivers of change: national policy agenda to widen participation and the reality of an increasingly diverse student cohort, incl. students from low SES backgrounds and students with disability
 - Institutional gap in thinking and practice: no dedicated area with interest in or responsibility for inclusive approaches to teaching and learning
 - Opportunities: HEPPP funding and the increased adoption of technology-enabled delivery methods
- Emerging knowledge about diverse student cohorts and models to support them well:
 - Non-traditional students in the UK (Crozier and Reay) and US (Tinto, Kuh)
 - Equity student experiences in Australia, incl. financial stress (James, Krause, McInnes, Devlin)
 - Transition pedagogy (Kift and Nelson)



The evolution of inclusive curriculum and capacity building initiatives

- **Initial approach (2011-2013):**
 - Fund 4 separate 3-year projects through HEPPP on digital literacy (Library), embedding of academic skills and career preparation (Student Life), embedding of Universal Design for learning principles (Equity & Diversity)
 - Targeting: courses and units high in LSES participation
 - HEPPP working group as a community of practice to share learnings and collaborate on design
- **Introduction of course enhancement process** commenced in 2013
- **HEPPP program consolidation in late 2013** led to the integration of the 4 separate initiatives into one Inclusive curriculum and capacity building project which aimed to:
 - Transform curriculum by embedding in target undergraduate courses (with high LSES enrolment): Inclusive teaching practice
 - Integrated focus on digital literacy, academic skills and literacies, career development/preparation
 - Build capacity of academic staff around inclusive teaching & learning



Project design

- ICCB design features:
 - Annual funding model
 - Central management of diverse projects across the university by E&D
 - UDL pedagogical framework; origins in disability practice
 - Faculty-chosen projects to address specific inclusive learning/teaching issues
 - Collaboration at unit level between academic and professional staff
 - Capacity building of staff through ongoing PD around UDL principles, embedding and scaffolding academic skills/literacies, career development
- ICCB program aims and methods were based on:
 - Naylor, Baik & James (2013)
 - Hockings (2010)
 - Higher Education Academy (2011)
 - Evaluations of inclusive teaching and curriculum approaches by Deakin staff.
 - * Devlin et al. (2012)
 - * Thomas & May (2010)
 - * Universal Design for Learning (CATS)



Research context

- **Evaluation methods** were based on:
 - Extensive literature review of methods to evaluate inclusive teaching and learning in HE—suggesting action research and mixed methods
 - ‘Practical’ action research (Carr & Kemmis 2009)—researchers work alongside practitioners to encourage participation and reflection on practice.
- **Outcomes:** Individual ICCB projects have produced at least 30 publications.
- **Transformational change** as an aspiration
- Retrospective analysis using Eckel & Kezar’s (2003) model of transformational change:
 - Requires evidence of both structural and cultural changes, resulting in deep and pervasive alterations to the institutional status quo, for a change to be classified as ‘transformative’.
 - Five requirements to bring about transformational change: senior administrative support, collaborative leadership, flexible vision, faculty and staff development and visible action.



ICCB projects 2014-17

- Inclusive teaching website/PD resource (EDU)
- Embedding academic literacies in curriculum, strategic assessment (BComm + others)
- Embedding digital literacies in curriculum, authentic learning, synchronous blended mode (BComm)
- Embedding career readiness in curriculum (BComm)
- Supporting numeracy development in context (BComm)
- Cultural inclusivity PD (BComm)
- Feedback and feed forward (BComm)
- Web resources, exemplars to support academic literacies (Student Academic & Peer Support)
- Institute of Koorie Education curriculum renewal
- Hype-based modules to develop digital literacy in context (Library)
- Smart Sparrow adaptive mastery learning modules to develop digital literacy in context (Library)
- Online role playing platform to develop digital literacy in context (Library)
- 'Getting Started' online digital literacy videos (Library)
- Inclusive feedback (Health)
- Benchmarking the experience of sessional staff (Health)
- International desktop audit of inclusive curriculum policies, PD approaches
- Inclusive teaching capacity building website/PD resource (Health)
- Course hub sites (Science, Engineering & Built Env.)
- 'Start Anytime' WIL units (SEBE)
- Inclusive teaching PD workshops (SEBE)
- UDL audit of target units (Arts-Education)
- UDL PD for sessional staff (Arts-Education)
- Redesign 'Intro to uni' foundation unit to UDL principles (Arts-Education)
- Embedding simple inclusive curriculum techniques in target units (Arts-Education)

CASE STUDY

Embedding digital and academic literacies in the Bachelor of Commerce

Pre-2014: Library, Student Academic & Peer Support (SAPS), Careers working separately, in individual BComm units

2014: EDU brings Library, SAPS, Careers together as ICCB partners collaborating to work with receptive unit chairs, in target units

2015: BComm course review:

- Faculty identifies poor career-readiness of students, low authenticity, motivation issues, non-achievement of Deakin graduate learning outcomes (accreditation issues)
- Course restructure, new unit chairs, new curriculum, new majors to simplify streams
- ICCB partners involved to help embed literacies in all 1st year units, career readiness throughout the course



CASE STUDY

Marketing 101: Embedding digital literacies

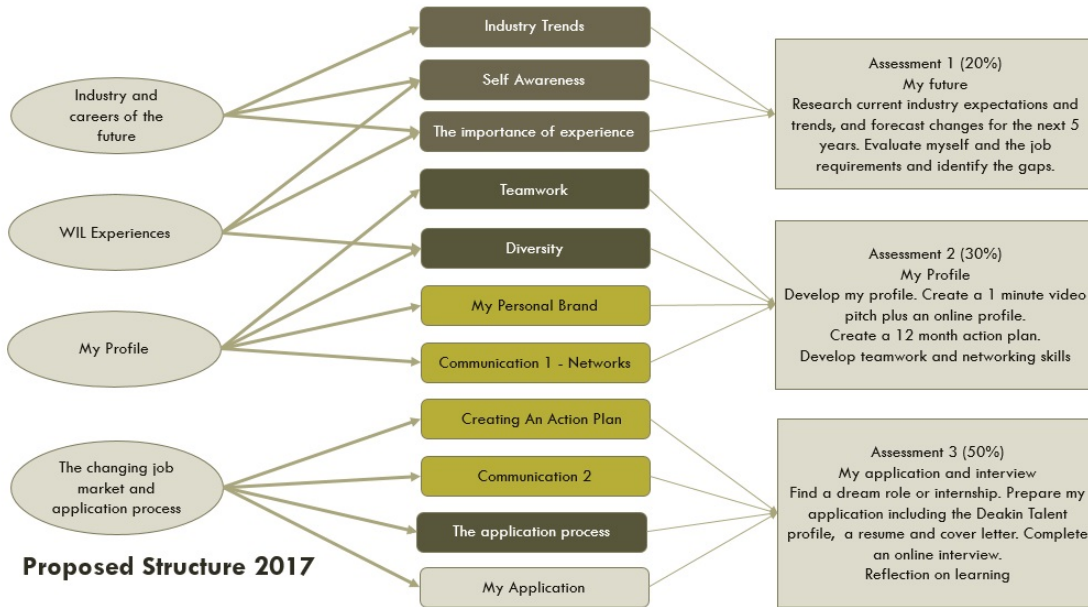
- Historically low success rates, high numbers of LSES students
- Unit chair 'early adopter' of embedding digital literacies
- **2016:** Key literacies focus distributed among core units
- Library collaborated to embed digital literacy module hurdle req.
- Many other improvements to demystify uni culture, scaffold assessments, increase flexibility (UDL)
- Team teaching, 12 hours staff meetings/PD
- Outcomes:
 - LSES student success rates improving 3% each trimester
 - Higher grades in digital literacy assessment
 - Focus group comments: they see the relevance of marketing now, appreciate the authenticity and support.
- Ongoing reviews and improvements, publication forthcoming



Digital literacy module:
authentic, activity based, linked
to assessment

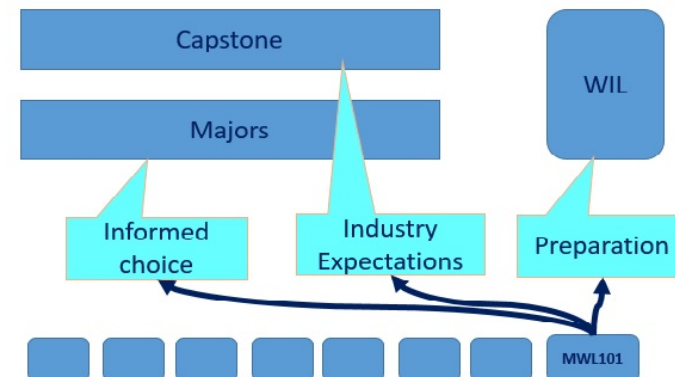
CASE STUDY

'Personal insight' 1st year core unit in employability



- **2014:** Career readiness identified as a key issue, literature review, staff + student interviews
- **2015:** Careers team collaborated to create generic career readiness modules, embedded in 3 units
- **2016:** BComm review: 'Personal insight', core 1st year unit

- **T2 2016:** Review to improve pedagogy, inclusivity
- **2017:** Further improvements to marking, assessment, communication
- Embedding career readiness assessments in 2nd year, 3rd year
- **Outcomes (T2, 2016):**
 - Mean unit mark up 4-6%
 - Students more aware of their skills, direction, gaps



CASE STUDY

Inclusive curriculum interventions in Faculty of Science, Engineering & Built Environment

2014: Little interest from faculty, curriculum development done at unit level.

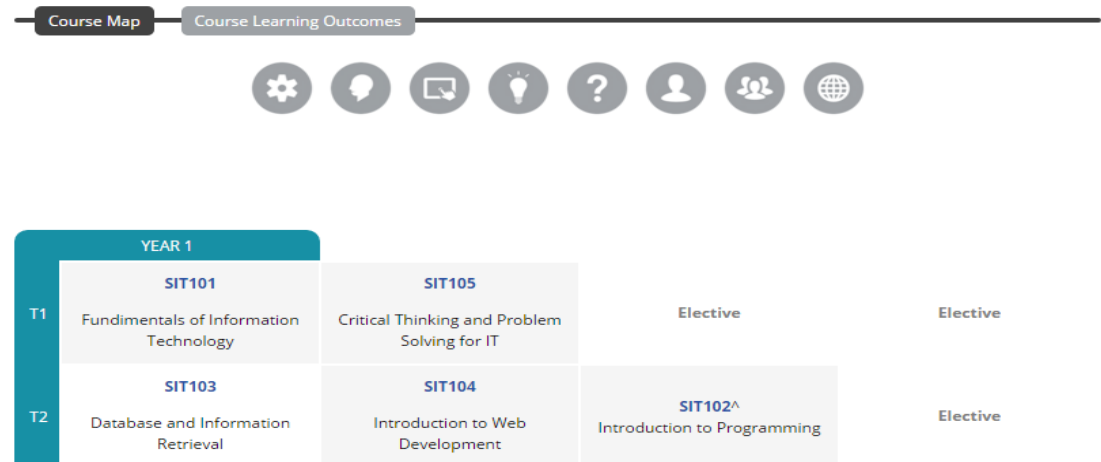
2015: School of IT survey identified student isolation, lack of community.

- Developed 3 course sites to provide a hub, with industry employment and news, course map, literacies, etc.
- Not a success.
- But the project employed a talented learning designer with good understanding of inclusivity, accessibility and IT/Science students, now taken on permanently in the Faculty.

Bachelor of Information Technology (Programming)#

Click on a **Deakin Graduate Learning Outcome** symbol to see the associated units that teach and assess this learning outcome. Click on a **unit** to see the corresponding DGLO that are taught and assessed in the unit.

To view your **Course Learning Outcomes**, select the Course Learning Outcomes tab, and navigate through the learning outcome symbols.



CASE STUDY

SEBE case study continued

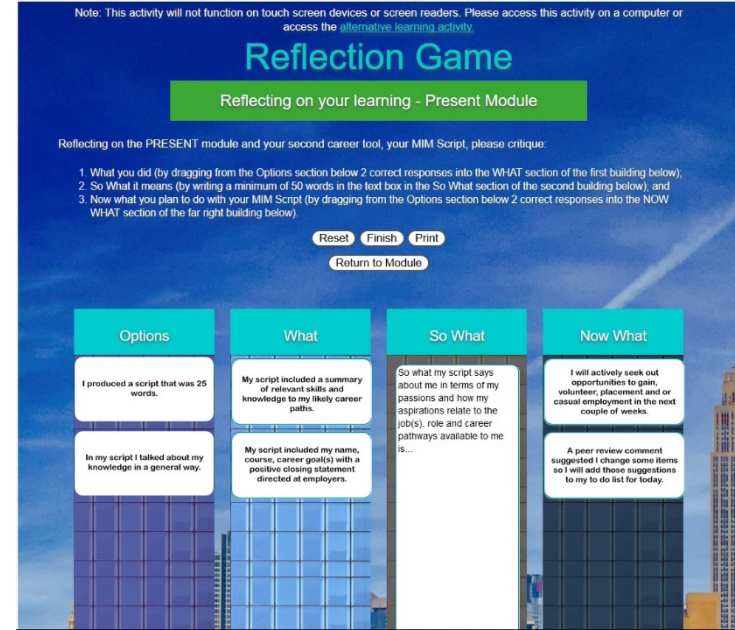
2016

- Champions of course sites project changed focus to WIL 'start anytime' units to support students on placement
- 0 credit point, mandatory, online unit with flexible start and end dates, flexible pace.
- Online flipped classroom model, using intelligent agents, conditional release, video, graphics
- Built on UDL principles, accessibility, user-testing

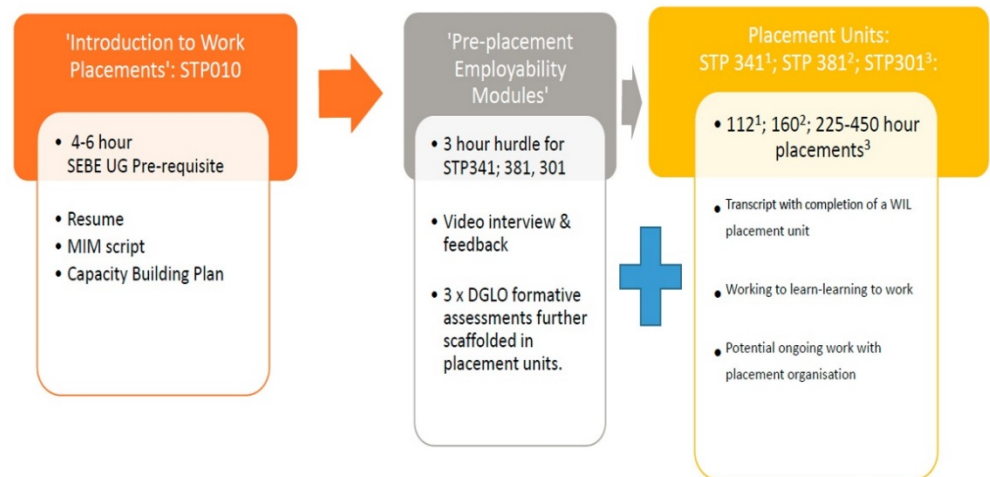
• Exemplar

2017

- Evaluation, publication, ongoing improvements



Snapshot of the SEBE student journey for START ANYTIME Pilot



Lessons learnt from the ground-up approach: enablers

- Small projects, agile project management
- Neutral central management, empowered partners
- Genuine enthusiasm and buy-in from key champions
- Integration into major course review processes



Lessons learnt from the ground-up approach: barriers

- Lack of executive and policy level support
- Working from the periphery and through influence
- Reliance on committed individuals
- Limitations of short-time funding
- Evaluations of widening participation initiatives, esp. of embedded curriculum-focused ones



Transformational change?

- ✓ Collaborative leadership
- ✓ Flexible vision
- ✓ Faculty and staff development
- ✓ Visible action

X Senior administrative support

No transformational but isolated change: deep but not pervasive (Eckel & Kezar, 2003)

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

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