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Developing Curricula, Resources and a Cultural Immersion to Prepare Medical Students to Work with and Improve the Health of Indigenous Australians

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Why is this important?

All medical, nursing and allied students require an understanding of different cultures to be able to work effectively and safely with all of their patients, clients and other team members.

What has Bond University Medical School done?

2012-2015 Bond University:

- Renewed its undergraduate medical program
- Established a cross-cultural Indigenous Health Group of nine
- Developed a comprehensive Indigenous Health Program over five years including:
  - 9 x one-week Indigenous problem-based learning cases Yr 1-3
  - Inbuilt assessment processes
  - A two-day cultural immersion for all first year medical students off-campus
  - A clinical placement in a remote Indigenous community Yr 5
  - A comprehensive evaluation process
- Commenced a five-year longitudinal study to measure the impact of early cultural awareness training
- Published four peer reviewed journal articles
- Presented six national and international conference presentations
- Awarded the Faculty, Vice Chancellor’s and National OLT Citation for our work 2015.

Program principles

- Commence the Indigenous health curriculum early
- Teach international perspectives first
- Use small interactive groups to explore difficult issues
- Teach confronting issues later
- Use cultural immersion offsite
- Make the program innovative and fun
- Evaluate and publish the work.

What were the educational outcomes?

Student evaluations were consistently very positive calling it ‘...a rare opportunity’ that they felt ‘privileged to be a part of’.

Comments:

- ‘To hear the story first hand was really eye opening.’
- ‘...what I have experienced in the past two days is something that will stay with me for the rest of my life.’
- ‘I feel it has helped equip me to better understand the position of future Indigenous patients so that I can help them in a respectful and practical manner ...made me more culturally aware and sensitive.’
- ‘I felt I was in a safe environment to share my beliefs, values and culture.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Immersion Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators contributed positively to my experience</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I identified my emotional reactions to the history</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can describe the influence of culture on perspectives, attitudes, assumptions,...</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was satisfied with the workshop</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can identify my own cultural values and reflect on their implications for health care</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more confident with Aboriginal &amp; TSI peoples</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could explore issues important to me</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can explain the connection between history and health outcomes for...</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can describe Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander history</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean achievement on a scale of 1-5 (n=271)