

Preparation for work: Reflections on developing an international Indigenous field trip

VALENTINE MUKURIA¹

Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia

This paper presents reflections on an international field trip for Indigenous students enrolled in an Education degree at a university in Australia. The field trip was co-developed with staff, students, and community partners of a Canadian university, as a pilot project to prepare Indigenous students for work in various cultural contexts. This paper outlines considerations for planning and coordinating an international career development opportunity, from inception to completion. Successes and failures of the program are discussed, recognizing the pitfalls that plague many well-intentioned program developments. The paper then argues for an intentional and generative approach in co-developing and co-delivering international learning experiences. Finally, it offers reflections on the need for more explicit alignment between academic outcomes and career aspirations, supporting students to articulate knowledge and skills acquired to translate them into the world of work.

Keywords: International WIL, Indigenous WIL, field trip, co-design, students as partners

Any works, programs, and research about Indigenous communities ought to be undertaken with a conscious, conscientious, and ethical approach (Australian Government Australia Council for the Arts, 2007). The intentionality in designing and delivering programs *with* and *for* Indigenous communities is an integral component of engaging with a variety of stakeholders. Recognizing the relationships and motivations of stakeholders is just as integral to the outcome of a program, as is the actual planning and coordination of it. It is with this view that the paper begins with the preface acknowledging the positionality of the author as a way of framing the motivation for establishing this international Indigenous field trip. One of many hallmarks of Indigenous cultures is their position on relating to the "other" in a mutually respectful relationship and working in good faith (Kennedy, et al., 2020).

This paper is written from the positionality of the "other" when it comes to association with Indigenous Australian and Indigenous Canadian cultures. Yet, this "otherness" is beholden to indigeneity of African descent, of the lineage of the Gikuyu people of Kenya. Because of this identity, the author acknowledges membership of what is for this paper considered as "foreign indigeneity", for it remains foreign to Australian and Canadian contexts, yet shares a similar experience of Indigenous collective cultures that have lived through the atrocities of colonial rule.

As a result, the program that will be discussed arises from an awareness of the marginalization of Indigenous persons that occurs across education systems, while at the same time seeking the implementation of programs that break the cycles of misrepresentation and indignity that Indigenous persons often face. The program also stems from a recognition of the knowledge, dignity, resilience, power, and resolve of Indigenous persons that often are not within the radar of systems and structures. These misinformed systems have perpetuated the biases and assumptions about the inabilities, and deficiencies attributed to Indigenous persons.

The author, in presenting this paper, reflects on the fine line between being an "insider" and "outsider" to the various Indigenous cultures across the Australian and Canadian contexts, and with the various

¹ Corresponding author: Valentine Mukuria, v.mukuria@westernsydney.edu.au

colleagues and students that were engaged in the program. A richness of interaction occurred, and challenges were overcome through the spirit of dialogue, mutual respect, and a shared purpose of achieving a transformational career development student experience. The process of program co-design and co-delivery required the reconciliation between the author's foreign and local identities, which created a sense of challenge in two key areas. First, in the author's *credibility* as the initiator of the program and second, the acknowledgment of *power distance* associated with sourcing for partnerships and working with people across cultures which would result in the implementation of the program (Campbell & Christie, 2014; Hofstede, 2011; Meyer, 2014). Thus, throughout the program, from its inception to completion, the author constantly navigated the space of both inclusion and alienation as an academic-practitioner which entailed reflection on one's grounding, simultaneously as an academic and practitioner (Mukuria & Sydes, 2014) and one of foreign lineage to the Indigeneity of Australian and Canadian contexts. The author acknowledged being on the fringe of both the Indigenous Australian cultures and the Indigenous Canadian cultures yet possessed an inherent understanding through Indigenous African lineage. This program connected persons across various cultures and contexts, who united in the common purpose of co-designing and co-delivering a transformational program. The career development learning experience in the form of an international Indigenous field trip created a platform for engaging in discourse on the impacts of colonization on Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous ways of knowing as critical pedagogy.

BACKGROUND

In the Australian context, work-integrated learning (WIL) is understood "as an umbrella term used for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum" (Patrick et al., 2008, p. v). The Australian Collaborative Education Network Limited (ACEN), the professional association for WIL practitioners and researchers from various sectors, lists forms of WIL, which include internships, practical projects, clinical rotations, cooperative education, work placements, sandwich year, industry-based learning, and community-based learning (ACEN, 2021). This typology serves as a guide, and other institutions autonomously determine the most applicable typology. For example, there are other forms of WIL such as service-learning by volunteering, community development projects, internships, community-based research, mentoring and peer-assisted learning, community/industry reference panels with project monitoring, professional experience with practicums, field trips with partnership component, and project- and problem-based learning with partnership component (Rawlings-Sanaei & Sachs, 2014).

In the Canadian context, the Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL) defines WIL as

a model and process of curricular experiential education which formally and intentionally integrates a student's academic studies within a workplace or practice setting. WIL experiences include an engaged partnership of at least: an academic institution, a host organization, and a student. WIL can occur at the course or program level and includes the development of learning outcomes related to employability, personal agency, and life-long learning. (CEWIL, 2018)

Models of WIL adopted by CEWIL include apprenticeships, co-operative education (alternating and internship models), internship, entrepreneurship, service learning, applied research projects, mandatory professional practicum/clinical placement, field placement, and work experience (McRae et al., 2018, p. 6).

A universally accepted definition and typology of WIL may prove challenging. However, the basic integration of work and work-like activities undertaken with partner organizations and embedded within the curriculum constitute its key features (Ferns et al., 2014; Stirling et al., 2016).

Taking into consideration these definitions and models of WIL as they apply to the Australian and Canadian contexts, the activity discussed in this paper is a field trip with a partnership component, which lends itself to an experience that is designed to prepare students for WIL and more broadly for work. The field trip was embedded within the curriculum and was undertaken with partner organizations. It incorporated a form of community-engaged teaching and learning (CETL), that is, teaching and learning in, with, and through the community. The field trip incorporated community organizations and community partners as site and source for learning respectively, thereby recognizing:

... a range of approaches and strategies that involve using the workplace and community as a site and/or source for learning. As a site, students undertake a work/community-related project or a placement in a work/community environment as part of their study program. As a source, students engage with work, work-like, and community experiences to learn about the professional work, the community, possible careers, and themselves. (Gill, 2017, p.17)

Further, the institutional framework accounted for the incorporation of WIL "...into the curriculum at different levels: (a) whole units being designated for WIL experience, and (b) WIL components being incorporated into units to prepare students for WIL experience" (Gill, 2017, p. 17).

The field trip, with the aim of the preparation for the world of work, was incorporated into a unit (course) on community engagement and leadership where students achieved the unit learning outcomes and personal and professional development. The unit (course/offering) was a core requirement for students undertaking a Bachelor's degree in Education. Through this unit, students reflected on their learning and its implications on their career development and shaping of their identity as global citizens. This integration of academic and career preparation outcomes is reflected upon in the conclusion section. A recommendation is made for embedding reflection activities and resources that enable students to articulate and translate the knowledge and skills acquired through the field trip experience into the world of work.

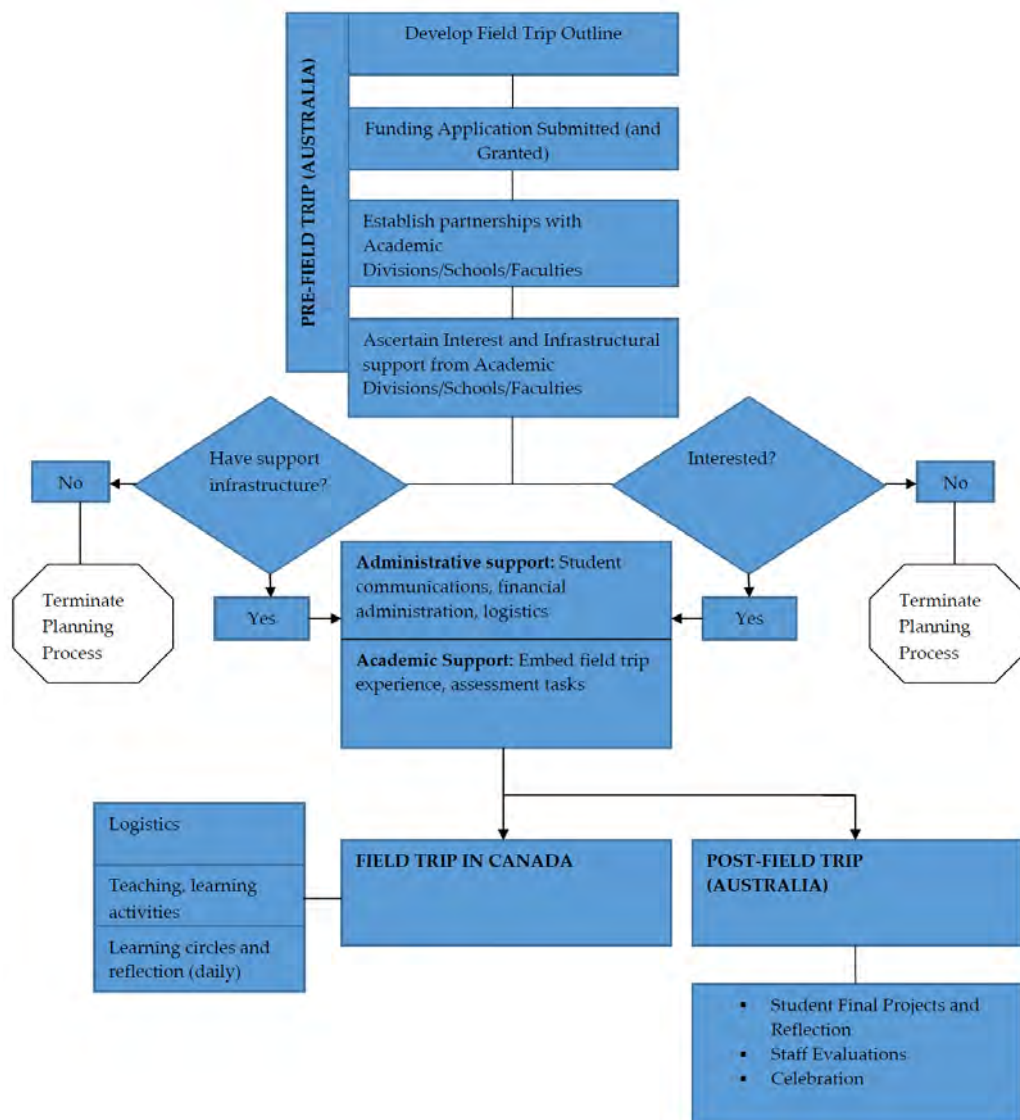
Designing the Field Trip: From Inception to Completion

The field trip was designed as a pilot project, involving an Australian university and a Canadian university. The program aimed to create an opportunity for exposure and learning focused on comparative and international education, where students would apply their disciplinary lens to examine and reflect on the contributions of their fields internationally. The students from the Australian university were studying Education while the Canadian students who participated in the program were studying Social Work.

During the field trip, Australian students had the opportunity to learn from the Canadian academics, students, Elders, and community members at the respective learning sites. Students described the field trip as a transformative experience, which had broadened their thinking about their fields of study. The students also shared reflections on how the field trip had enabled them to begin to explore and clarify career trajectories better aligned with their future career aspirations.

For this paper, the learning and teaching activities were considered to have occurred in three stages, that is, pre-field trip stage (inception), field trip stage, and post-field trip stage (completion). While these are discussed as distinct stages in the two countries, the learning process itself transcended these physical borders. Figure 1 below is an overview of the processes in the three stages.

FIGURE 1: Field trip process outline.



Pre-Field Trip

The pre-field trip stage involved sourcing funding. Successful grant applications required that proposals demonstrate the relevance of projects to students' studies and that they entail studying overseas. The field trip program proposal articulated: the alignment of the aim of the field trip with learning outcomes,) and the institutional partnership involved, with a rationale of why that partner organization had been selected.

Once funding had been secured, the process of establishing partnerships within academic divisions, schools (faculties) in the Australian university commenced. Arguably, while the program development sequence was challenging, it provided a platform upon for building new relationships. Some of the relationships were new and stakeholders wanted to know that their efforts would lead to a tangible outcome such as producing resources and artefacts. The guaranteed financial support was an assurance that the program would be implemented. The next step entailed ascertaining both interest and infrastructural support. While there was a level of interest shown by academic staff, some of the academics were not able to mobilize the academic and administrative support, as identified in Figure 1, necessary for implementing the program.

After the establishment of these partnerships, the planning of the field trip with the Canadian stakeholders was initiated. The linear progression of the stakeholder involvement may invite critique. However, the commitments to logistical support and the alignment with curriculum became a necessary and positive approach that assured the academic rigor of the field trip. Further details on the intricacies of program implementation are discussed in the program implementation section below.

Field Trip

This stage was co-designed by the curriculum advisor at the Australian university and staff at the Canadian university with their community partners. Through this partnership component, the field trip coordinators in Canada applied their expertise to identify the sites and sources of learning aligned to the unit learning outcomes. The field trip activities were integrated as teaching and learning activities. These included a welcome and closing ceremonies held at the ceremonial hall, community visits, tribal school visits, national park excursions, cedar roses crafts sessions, a wool-making session, a cultural wellness center visit, and a student-led research day. The academic course content included seminars covering topics such as the introduction to Indigenous studies in the Canadian context, the Canadian experience of the impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples and Indigenous ways of knowing in research and critical pedagogy

Post-Field Trip

During this stage, students presented their final projects and reflections. Staff at the Australian university were invited to attend the presentation and reflection sessions, which were followed by a celebration phase where students shared their experiences with their peers. Further discussion on students as partners is discussed in the section on engaging students as partners.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Considerations for Funding Program Planning and Administration

The field trip program was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, through Endeavour Mobility Grants (Short Term Mobility Program – STMP). The STMP granted AUD 2,000 per student. Additionally, third-party funding provided supplemental funds.

The three main areas for consideration in program planning and administration of the field trip program were, communicating the aim of the program, operationalization of the field trip program, and negotiating stakeholder involvement.

Aim

The aim of the program was communicated in multiple forums and to a variety of potential stakeholders, who would be responsible for implementing the respective aspects of the program. For example, the program was presented to the international office who would provide a tailor-made orientation and debriefing workshops for the students for international travel. Additionally, careers advisors were consulted to deliver career resources for personal and professional development, and resume writing support that enabled the students to articulate the skills, knowledge, and capacities acquired through the field trip.

Operationalization

The operationalization of the field trip program required a heightened capacity for relationship building and maintenance of established relationships, many of which continued well beyond the completion of the program. The inception planning stages only involved a minimum number of academic staff and a curriculum advisor, however, this nucleus of staff expanded depending on what information, resources, and logistics were to be implemented. Staff involved in the program would move from the core to the periphery and vice versa, depending on the nature of the operation and the level of expertise needed. Diplomacy was necessary for brokering relationships and for problem-solving when miscommunication and misunderstanding arose.

Stakeholder Involvement

Negotiating stakeholder involvement applied elements of the Hoy-Tarter model of shared decision-making (Hoy & Tarter, 2008). The model considers the zone of acceptance (the extent to which one views their involvement as just their job with no other stake in it), level of expertise, and level of interest. One of the limitations of the Hoy-Tarter model is the consideration of superiors and subordinates which can be said to generate a sense of power distance that seems contrary to an egalitarian approach to stakeholder equity. However, it is noted that the classification proposed by Hoy and Tarter is in keeping with the necessary dynamics of positional authority in leadership and management of programs. Another limitation within this model is the lack of explicit consideration of students as partners. It does not account for the stake and experience of students in the process of decision-making and involvement of programs such as the field trip.

Despite these limitations, the model is beneficial in a WIL context as it enables program administrators to reflect on who to involve and when to involve them. For example, at one stage the program planning came to a standstill waiting upon decisions to be made. The information was caught in a bottleneck where the decision-makers were not privy to the dilemma and did not have the necessary information

to make a decision. This delayed the planning schedule. The program administrators had to make a call as to whether to proceed with the program or not. This highlighted the need to involve the right stakeholder at the right time and ensure a communication flow in the right direction, not just in any direction.

EMIC AND ETIC PERSPECTIVES: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Designing Programs Together

The dilemma around doing with or for is raised as critical discussion by Clayton (2002, p. 6) critical discussion, “[t]o what extent can hegemony be employed in the service of social transformation, rather than merely to maintain social order?” Probable responses are loaded with perspectives that have been entrenched throughout colonial histories. Similarly, social, and political orders have created hegemonic structures (Hope & Timmel, 1984). Adding to these complexities, the contestation of knowledge, and counting and accounting for knowledge, presents a myriad of challenges. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in detail the ontological and epistemological perspectives in this discourse. However, it is necessary to examine the “adaptability of an ideology or educational programs, ...[taking] into consideration education systems, cultural influences, historical influences, global influences, local knowledge, and curriculum reform in the [country's] context...” (Mukuria, 2008, p. 75). Applying critical theory, therefore, acts as a paradigm shift through which the examination of structures in society, through historical, political, cultural, and economic lenses, can be made with particular attention to those structures that create and maintain inequality and injustice (Henry, 2000).

WIL programs should be designed cognizant of these inequalities, with intentionality on equity and guiding WIL offerings. The principle of co-designing, therefore, becomes a key driver that levels the platform upon which legitimacy of the experiences, qualifications, and expertise of program partners is recognized as a capacity that enhances the collaborative process and subsequent outputs, such as WIL units (Yosso, 2005).

Engaging Students as Partners

The inception of the field trip program followed the trajectory of traditional curriculum design and delivery, whereby the program structure was formulated by an academic. However, through the process of stakeholder engagement, novel ideas of engaging students as partners began to develop (Allin, 2015). Students proposed a student-led day, a one-day research forum for students. The aim of the session was a synthesis of learning, future collaborative research agendas, and networking. The experience of working closely with students in co-designing learning activities and content of the student-led day highlighted the potential for enriching the learning process by engaging students as partners (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Another notable benefit of engaging students as partners was demonstrated in the input and feedback received when students were invited to provide input on the relevance of the assessment tasks. It was not possible at the time to deviate from the prescribed assessment tasks (due to timelines and processes involved in review and approvals by the respective committees and academic senates). However, the students were given the latitude to use and submit a variety of outputs, such as reflection papers and artifacts (including video reflections accompanying arts and other tangible symbolic items). Students reported that the field trip broadened their thinking about their areas of study and provided an opportunity to reflect on their future educational, career, and leadership aspirations. Further, anecdotal feedback suggested achievement of personal outcomes, social outcomes, academic learning outcomes, and career-related outcomes. Some associated qualities

of these outcomes included an increased sense of self-worth identity and spirituality, communication and leadership skills, attitude transformations, commitment to social justice, and a sense of global citizenship through interconnectedness, research, and institutional collaborations.

The outcomes discussed through the variety of reflective expressions and the staff who attended the final presentation session commended the depth of reflection. It is recommended that students as partners be involved from the inception stages, to broaden the impact that students could have in co-designing modes of reflection that enhance relevant, innovative, and analytical learning activities.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

This section discusses the successes and failures of the field trip program through the analytical lens of the Work-Integrated Learning Quality Framework AAA* (McRae et al., 2018). Notably, this quality framework provides a pragmatic guide to reflecting on the “key components for quality WIL ...pedagogy, experience, assessment, and reflection P.E.A.R” (McRae et al., 2018, p. 6). The quality framework advocates for the need to have the four P.E.A.R elements in place as the foundations of quality in WIL. Since “WIL is a collaborative endeavor and the perspectives of multiple stakeholders need to be incorporated to ensure the quality of WIL outcomes” (McRae et al., 2018, p. 7), it is recommended that program administrators identify stages of involvement of stakeholders. As a pilot program to prepare Indigenous students for work, this framework is useful for reflecting on curriculum quality and design.

In this field trip program, stakeholder engagement was accomplished through a combination of stakeholder mapping and the Hoy-Tarter model for shared decision making (2008) albeit with challenges of power distance (Hofstede, 2011) and positional authority necessary to implement the program. For example, decisions about which Indigenous Elders to involve in the program in the Canadian context were beyond the purview of the program administrators and stakeholders in Australia and relied on the cultural affiliations and judgment of the staff involved in the Canadian context (Ramji et al., 2021). In this section, Tables 1-4 are used to reflect on each of the P.E.A.R elements (McRae et al., 2018, pp. 6-7) and the corresponding program characteristics integrated into the planning and implementation of the field trip.

Reflections on the Element of Pedagogy

Table 1 outlines the pedagogical elements as they were the key driver for the conceptualization of the field trip program. It had been determined that the field trip would comprise a part-WIL integration within an existing unit. Hence program characteristics such as how the field trip would be integrated into the unit were discussed. Further considerations were held to determine the scaffolding of the experience, and whether it should be embedded within a core unit or an elective (Clark et al., 2016; Rowe et al., 2014). Given the program objectives, it was determined that the field trip program was best suited for a core unit for third-year students. The duration of the field trip was pre-determined as part of the requirements of the core unit within which it was embedded.

TABLE 1: Field trip pedagogical considerations.

Pedagogy elements	Program characteristics
Integration into the overall curriculum.	The field trip was embedded as a two-week intensive occurring within a (Core) Community Leadership Unit.
Scaffolding of experience throughout the course.	Core Community Leadership Unit that required pre-requisite units to be completed. The field trip offered the international experience as one stream within the unit.
Stage in curriculum.	Third Year of the academic course (program) – With consideration to students in the latter part of their second year.
Duration of activity.	Two-week intensive field trip experience (Canada).

Lessons Learned

Pedagogical considerations in the design of the field trip occurred at a time when the WIL agenda was gaining traction though had not yet been embedded as a priority area within the institutional structures in the Australian context. While the benefits of the field trip program seemed to be widely accepted by the stakeholders, the institutional mechanisms supporting WIL on a broader scale had not yet been established; hence, the logistics, rather than the soundness of the pedagogical approach, were what presented the greater challenge.

The field trip experience was embedded within a third-year core unit (on community leadership) and was offered as an optional stream within the unit. This meant that students could opt to undertake the field trip program (subject to meeting selection criteria). The students who did not opt in to the field trip program undertook experiential learning in the Australian (local and regional) contexts. The two-week field trip program was embedded within a 13-week unit in the first semester. Students had to have completed at least one of two pre-requisite units.

Reflections on the Element of Experience

Table 2 outlines the elements of the experience, which range from funding and logistical considerations to conditions necessary for learning, all of which contribute to the success of any program.

TABLE 2: Field trip experience considerations.

Experience elements	Program characteristics
Funding	Applied for funding through the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, Endeavour Mobility Grants
Logistical considerations for successful experiential learning	Eligibility criteria for enrolment were established. Field trip opportunities and eligibility criteria were communicated to students. , Established a process of getting buy-in from stakeholders after which a session on stakeholder expectations was conducted. Discussed risk assessment, travel, accommodation, and duty of care.
Learning platforms (locations/environments)	In Australia, learning occurred through weekly seminars. In Canada, teaching and learning occurred through learning circles in places and spaces used as "classrooms without borders" which are of historic and symbolic significance, for example, National Park, Tribal School, Community visit, and Cultural Wellness Centre. Only the student-led day occurred within a campus classroom. The learning format included seminars, readings, and presentations.
Risk assessment and management	Conducted by International Office and School/Faculty at the Australian University and insurance cover was assured. All proposed study overseas programs had to be approved by an Academic Course Advisor or Director of Program on the Short-Term Mobility Academic Approval Form
Student selection process	Students were invited to submit an expression of interest addressing requisite qualities and attributes suitable for participation in the program; personal and professional learning objectives; and capacity for and contributions to teamwork. A selection panel was established, comprising of Dean, Course Advisor, Academic, Curriculum advisor (external to the school), and international office representative.
Site selection process	The field trip occurred at a Canadian university that the curriculum advisor had previously visited for conferences. Determination of the actual site visits was determined by the Canadian university staff members, relying on their local knowledge and relational ties with the Indigenous Elders.
Processes around supervision	Academics from the Australian and Canadian contexts co-supervised the learning. Australian students were accompanied on the field trip by the unit convener (Academic/Faculty) who provided both academic supervision and pastoral care. Pastoral care was also supported by another staff member from the Australian university whose student-facing role was to provide support for Indigenous students.

Student support and conditions for learning	<p>A program support officer (Canadian staff member) also provided supervision and student support for the duration of the field trip – from arrival to departure.</p> <p>Students were accompanied by two Australian university staff members (unit convener and pastoral care staff member).</p> <p>In Canada, students were made aware of the wellness center on campus. Student accommodation was specifically sought as a communal living arrangement to provide students with a continued sense of community connectedness.</p> <p>Study abroad orientation and debrief sessions were tailored-made for the students and delivered in collaboration with the International office at the Australian university.</p>
Personal and professional development (career aspirations)	<p>Resources on career development were provided.</p> <p>Students completed an evaluation survey with questions on professional and transferrable skills acquired.</p> <p>During the final presentation, students shared their reflections on areas of personal growth.</p>
Direct involvement of learners in making important contributions to host organization	<p>The Australian and Canadian students coordinated and run a Student-led day which entailed research discussions and networking.</p> <p>Student-created artwork - displayed at the Indigenous Peoples hub at the Canadian university.</p>
Conditions for learning were set and provided by the host organization	<p>Indigenous Peoples hub on campus (Canada) which supported the academic, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of students.</p>

Lessons Learned

Throughout this pilot program, there was an ebb and flow between what was achievable, within institutional frameworks, and what was not. On several occasions, stakeholders would make significant progress on pursuing areas of great prospect, only to be halted by institutional barriers. For example, while students received partial funding for the field trip program, it was unclear as to whether supporting grants that were provided for students to undertake domestic placements could be applied to an international program. This was a grey area since the criteria for the supporting grants were not explicit on whether the funds could be applied to international travel. Further, the convoluted process of remitting funds between the Australian and Canadian institutions was challenging.

The students had been informed, at the inception stage, about the partial grant that they could receive, and it had been made clear that students would be required to seek additional funding to make up the remaining trip expenses. However, with the prospect of support grants, it became unclear as to whether these grants would apply to the international field trip program. This lack of clarity created a great sense of confusion, resulting in students being unsure whether they could rely on the support funding, or if they would need personal funding. This uncertainty presented a major dilemma for the students and raised concerns about equity and access due to economic constraints. This quandary was

deliberated upon by the third-party support grant providers, academics (in the Australian context), and student support administrators. The grant providers reviewed the funding criteria, and determined that the field trip program was an innovative approach to enhancing educational outcomes and approved the funding to be utilized for an international field trip. It is also worth noting that while it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss challenges of equity and access to WIL experiences, it warrants mention that the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly shaped institutional practices, such that there now exist possibilities of undertaking virtual international WIL programs. This could eliminate some of the challenges equity and access related to international travel.

Ascertaining availability of this support grant became a field trip critical factor. The reason for this was that the financial administrators at the Australian academic institutions became involved at the stage where their role was to remit funds to secure flights. While this role and this stage are not problematic as a rule, for this program it became complicated as the financial administrators wanted proof students could cater for their remaining expenses (accommodation, local transport in Canada, and meals). At this stage, the third-party grant providers had not confirmed the use of funds towards an international field trip, and though they had agreed to provide the funds in principle, they needed proof from the financial administrators that flights had been secured that the only pending costs were associated with room and board in Canada. The lack of clarity and reliance on another stakeholder in the chain reaction created an impasse. As a result, the process of a resolution was arduous, time-consuming, and proved to be very expensive since airline ticket prices continued to escalate during this period of stalemate. A mediator (whose student-facing role supported Indigenous students) was sought to resolve the matter. The challenge was resolved through the relational respect and the good word of the mediator. This was achieved through a series of diplomatic conversations, and the (reliance on the goodwill that was afforded by the third-party provider who acquiesced to the provision of supporting documentation.

This experience highlighted the expectations gap that often plagues programs and partnerships (Patrick et al., 2008; Rowe et al., 2012; Winchester-Seeto et al., 2016). The field trip program would therefore have benefitted from a “stakeholder integrated approach” (Patrick et al., 2008, p. vi). However, flexibility around unintended outcomes and serendipitous responses to aspects of the WIL experiences components could prove to be equally beneficial. Stakeholders commit to solving challenges by using lateral thinking and a growth mindset mentality in framing setbacks and seeking solutions to what initially appear to be insurmountable problems.

One positive unintended outcome of the field trip program was the student-led research day. This session was initiated and conducted by students to set the agenda for and discuss research direction. The students determined this to be critical to conversations that would expand the platform for discussion of indigenous ways of knowing, and contributions to research from Indigenous perspectives. This field trip exposed students to comparative and international education perspectives on the impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples, as well as discourse on critical pedagogy in Indigenous ways of knowing. Teaching and learning occurred through learning circles in places and spaces used as classrooms without borders which were of historic and symbolic significance. These included visits to Tribal schools and cultural heritage sites. These experiences contributed to one significant output, also student-initiated that involved the creation of an artwork. The Australian students took the initiative and created artwork representing their ancestral lineage and presented the artwork to the Canadian contingent. The artwork was displayed at the Indigenous cultural hub at the Canadian university.

Another key lesson learned was the need to intentionally involve students as partners at the various stages of program planning and implementation. For example, with the student selection process, there was no student on the review panel, yet in hindsight following the program, a student perspective would enhance the selection process. Further, engaging students as partners created an opportunity for sharing ideas and innovations that could enhance the program content and delivery.

Reflections on the Element of Assessment

Table 3 outlines the assessment element embedded within the existing unit. The field trip was designed to assure learning in alignment with the unit learning outcomes. Further, the program characteristics extended the alignment to graduate attributes to provide a platform for discussion on personal and professional development for career aspirations.

TABLE 3: Field trip assessment considerations.

Assessment elements	Program characteristics
Learning outcomes (alignment of the unit to course learning outcomes)	Learning outcomes included: Understand comparative socio-political and cultural contexts of Indigenous history and impact on social justice. Describe relationships between Indigenous communities and institutional structures and settings. Demonstrate knowledge of Indigenous cultures and impact on research and ways of knowing. Analyze comparative models of education practices and settings. Evaluate transferability of comparative educational practices.
Relating learning outcomes to skills and attribute development (understanding the world of work, and civic engagement)	Academic learning outcomes were stipulated in the unit guide. Professional development learning outcomes were outlined in documents presented to students and discussed during the orientation and debrief sessions. The reflection activities also incorporated questions on learning for career development.
Assessment tasks	Seminar Paper Report on learning (incorporated personal development and career-related learning) Presentation (Reflection on learning, reflection on growing through challenging situations, presentations using artifacts)

Lessons Learned

One of the challenges of designing a field trip experience is ensuring that it does not come across as a superficial experience. According to the findings of a national scoping study undertaken by Patrick et al. (2008)

[t]he study identifies the importance of designing WIL as an integral and integrated part of the curriculum, rather than as a 'bolt on' experience; that is, worthwhile WIL placement experiences are dependent on a shared understanding of purpose and role, quality supervision, appropriate task allocation, student preparedness, and authentic assessment practices (p. vi).

Thus, the unit in which the field trip program was embedded was one that already had an experiential learning WIL component. In this way, there was a shared understanding of the teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks. The supervision of the field trip program became an added layer since it required not only academic supervision but also pastoral care and supervision related to international travel.

At the final presentation session, students responded to an in-class survey reporting on: learning about the capacity to manage career and work-life; work with roles, rights, and protocols, communicate for work; connect and work with others; recognize and utilize diverse perspectives; plan, organize, and make decisions; identify and solve problems; create and innovate, and work in a digital world.

The alignment of unit learning outcomes with course learning outcomes and graduate attributes became more explicit as the students reflected on their learning. Students self-reported having developed a variety of skills including but not limited to:

- command of multiple skills and literacies to enable adaptable lifelong learning;
- demonstration of knowledge of Indigenous Australia through cultural competency and professional capacity;
- demonstration of comprehensive, coherent and connected knowledge;
- application of knowledge through intellectual inquiry in professional or applied contexts; and
- bringing knowledge to life through responsible engagement and appreciation of diversity in an evolving world.

While these seem to suggest an emphasis on academic learning, the question of transferability of these skills into work and work-like contexts were discussed. The field trip increased the students' confidence and acted as a catalyst for students to begin to think of career opportunities in new ways that the students had not thought of before. For example, some students expressed interest in pursuing higher degree research programs on topics related to Indigenous knowledge, ways of knowing, and contributions of Indigenous knowledge to education and research. Some considered pursuing roles, with an education function, in non-school settings (such as developing education programs for cultural heritage sites). Others considered establishing Indigenous creative arts schools and businesses. The field trip, therefore, opened new horizons for the application of creative, reflective, and critical thinking skills in different professional contexts.

Reflections on the Element of Reflection

Table 4 outlines the element of reflection, taking into consideration the learning experiences, of both students and staff, and supporting the students in the self-reflective practices. Several characteristics were incorporated into the various phases of the program design ensuring that time was dedicated to reflection activities. In addition to the academic reflection discussed in the assessment section above, other points of reflection and evaluation were undertaken.

TABLE 4: Field trip reflection considerations

Reflection elements	Program characteristics
Critical reflection - learning from experiences	A service-learning reflection approach was applied – asking, “What, So what, Now what”? (Hatcher et al., 2004)
Support for critical self-reflective practices in, on, and for each experience	In Canada, students had briefing meetings and debrief daily. After each site visit, students, with the academic reflected on each experience. Time was allocated for journaling after each visit.
Reflection on personal and professional growth (skills, knowledge, attributes) – integrating learning from academic context to workplace	Journal entries were kept during the field trip in Canada. The final presentation was conducted after the field trip in Canada and at the final presentation session in Australia. The Australian students created an artifact that was given as a gift of appreciation to the Canadian university. Staff and students at the Australian university were invited to attend the final presentation and celebration phase.
Reflection on transformative learning (learning from “failures”)	Discussed at final presentation (Australia). Students were invited to provide candid feedback on how to enhance future field trip programs.
Transformative learning Work-Integrated Learning Quality Framework results in a shift in beliefs and worldviews and contributes to the capacity for the learner to contribute further	The students took the initiative to coordinate a student-led day which was a platform for students to discuss their interests in research areas. Students discussed research collaborations. These arose from the insights they had gained through increased knowledge and shifts in world views. The student-led day ignited interest in lifelong learning.
Staff reflection	De-brief meetings were held to discuss program overview, lessons learned, and ways forward.

Lessons Learned

Reflection activities were embedded within the unit as an assessment task. During the field trip experience, time was set aside for journaling after each site visit. Further, it was noted that living in shared accommodation lent itself to informal circles of reflection which arose organically where students would talk about their day and their experiences. The students anecdotally reported the benefits of living together and being able to discuss what they had learned, including supporting each other in learning from both challenging situations and positive experiences. The student-led research day seemed to be a highlight, not only because it was a student initiative, but also because it provided opportunities for discussion on future collaborations. It would be of interest to conduct a study on the outcome of the student-led day, to determine whether research collaborations materialized after the field trip experience.

The staff evaluation also provided important insights into the challenges and rewards of contributing to the pilot field trip program. Key issues that arose were the workload implications. As a pilot project,

the systems and structures had not been streamlined, and much of the operations occurred serendipitously. In some situations, it was not possible to know what one needed to know. For example, with the financial operations, the remittances process of the Canadian university presented an additional layer of complexity since the program team had not dealt with such processes previously. Staff were invited to attend the final presentation, and provided positive feedback on their perceptions of student learning. They were impressed by the articulation of the student experience and the artifacts presented by the students.

CONCLUSION

This international Indigenous field trip, which was a collaborative partnership between an Australian and Canadian university, demonstrates the utility of a purposefully designed program to prepare students for work and develop an appreciation culture in a global context. Exposing students to opportunities that leverage global mobility through this international field trip or international placements, for example, can help develop essential skills and knowledge to build cultural awareness upon graduating. Successfully engaging in international WIL experiences and in an international job market has the potential to benefit graduates in (cultural) mobility across their career (Mueller & Oguro, 2022).

Three key factors contributed to the positive outcomes of the pilot program. The first was creating a connection between academic outcomes and career aspirations. Key learning from the pilot field trip was the need to ensure a better alignment of academic outcomes with implications for professional identity and preparation for the world of work. Courses or programs of study could benefit from embedding principles of work-integrated learning, whether partially as components of a unit, or fully within units such as internships and cooperative education programs. Preparing students for WIL experiences is of vital importance, and programs emphasizing personal, professional and cultural awareness are necessary (Jackson & Pham, 2022).

The second was engaging students as partners. Students demonstrated an interest in taking initiative and leading a part of the program. Key learning highlighted the importance of co-designing and co-delivering programs with and not just for students. It is recommended that students are included in the discussions and delivery of programs, such as field trips. Such inclusion enhances transformative learning as it gives students ownership of the learning experience and the agency to contribute to program development that would benefit other students. Involving past participants of the field trip program as peer facilitators, particularly for initiatives such as the student-led research day would also be beneficial. Involving students also broadens opportunities for them to gain skills that can be articulated and translated into the world of work.

The third was involving stakeholders at various stages. A key lesson learned was the need to broaden the learning and reflections to involve all stakeholders. It is recommended that shared space for knowledge-creating and meaning-making be created to enhance partnerships and ensure that the principles of mutual benefit and reciprocity are valued. Such an approach would underpin the efforts of university-community engagement, thereby conveying the importance of authentic and sustainable partnerships.

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STATEMENT OF PLACE

Valentine Mukuria

I am of African descent, born and raised in Kenya. I have long been an advocate for the recognition and valuing of Indigenous knowledge. During my doctoral program, I delved into studies on the impact of colonization on indigenous cultures and marginalized peoples. I once had the privilege of attending an inspiring university-community engagement conference at a Canadian university that had a profound impact on me. The conference seemed to seamlessly integrate the centrality of First Nations people into the fabric of life and work at the university. I committed to creating opportunities for students to recognize, learn about and value Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing across different countries and contexts.

I recognize the limitations of education systems and I remain an ardent believer in the emancipatory power of education. I have spent decades (re)designing service-learning curricula for transformational learning experiences in higher education.

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